



# RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP NETWORK

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United Nations Commission on the Status of Women  
General Discussion  
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“Access and Participation of Women and Girls in Training, Science and Technology” including for the promotion of Women’s Equal Access to Full Employment and Decent Work

Opening Statement by

Starry Krueger

Rural Development Leadership Network

For the

## Rural Caucus

Good Morning Mr. Chairman, distinguished members, and NGO representatives. I am Starry Krueger, president of the Rural Development Leadership Network in the United States, representing the CSW Rural Caucus. As you know, one quarter of the world’s population consists of rural women and in many countries they produce most of the food. They are the backbone of their families and communities. Yet they are at the bottom of the list of priorities. At CSW events since 1994, rural women from many countries have told us that they are not enough rural women at these meetings. They say that they need to be more represented and women here. The representation, even more than specific issues.

Rural women from all continents say that their voices are not heard in national and international arenas. From the U.S., we have heard from Latinas who are farm workers in a rural America who are former sharecroppers and small farmers, women living on Indian reservations in Appalachia, immigrant, and refugee communities in the hinterlands, and women in remote areas.

Rural women face different challenges and live further away from the urban centers of power, men’s issues, and media. We lack transportation and information.

To overcome these barriers, we must sit at the table of power where decisions are made about us. At the local, state, national and international levels our voices must be heard. We can achieve our own

craft development of our communities under our leadership.

National and international policy must be changed to promote the availability of land, transportation, markets, credit, health care, education, suitable housing, appropriate technology, green energy, environmental protection and other elements that advance the wellbeing and social equity of poor rural women and their families.

Current conditions in rural areas are not sustainable. The world's rural population is growing rapidly and the world's rural communities are underserved in these areas.

We ask that, starting now, CSW officials seek meaningful engagement by poor rural women in planning for the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty eradication, development and current challenges." Grassroots rural women need to be prominent and visible in these proceedings.

We thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on behalf of poor rural women and girls.

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