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Women's Assets and Empowerment in Agriculture

Thursday 6 December 2012 5.30 – 6.30pm

Ruth Meinzen-Dick International Food Policy Research Institute

Phillipa Weeks Staff Library, ANU College of Law, Building 5, Fellows Rd,
The Australian National University



Gender differences in access, control and use of assets have a profound effect on household welfare and agricultural development. This presentation will provide a conceptual framework from the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Program (GAAP) to explore the linkages between the gendered distribution of assets and various livelihood strategies, shocks, and well-being, and discusses how agricultural development strategies may affect the gender asset gap. It uses a broad definition of tangible and intangible assets—natural capital, physical capital, human

capital, social capital, and political capital, including attention to not only men's and women's assets but also those they share in joint control and ownership.

The presentation will also identify methods for measuring the gender asset gap and welfare outcomes, including the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), a new survey-based composite measure that indicates women's control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community, and economy. Specifically, it focuses on five areas: (1) decisions about farming and agricultural production, (2) power over resources like land and livestock, (3) control over spending and income, (4) leadership in the community, and (5) time use, as well as whether women are as empowered as the men in their household.

Ruth Meinzen-Dick is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), based in Washington DC. She leads the IFPRI Gender Task Force and is Theme Leader on Inclusive Governance and Institutions in the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets. She received her MSc and PhD degrees in Development Sociology from Cornell University. Much of her work has been interdisciplinary research on water policy, local organizations, property rights, gender analysis, and the impact of agricultural research on poverty. She has conducted field work in Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, and India, where she was born and raised. She has over 100 peer reviewed publications, including *Collective Action and Property Rights for Poverty Reduction: Insights from Africa and Asia* and the forthcoming volume *Gender in Agriculture and Food Security: Closing the Knowledge Gap*.

The views expressed in this lecture are those of the presenters and do not necessarily represent the views of The Australian National University.

Presented by

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