



PRESS RELEASE

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FARM-Africa Celebrates International Women's Day with Arsema

Arsema has much to celebrate on March 8, International Women's Day. Thanks to the advice of a Community Legal Worker, in her rural Ethiopian village, Arsema and her mother were able to escape illegal and traditional practices around widow inheritance that threatened their human rights.

On the death of Arsema's father, her mother was compelled by traditional pressure, faced by many widows, to marry her brother-in-law to ensure that land remained within the brother's family.

Thanks to the support of Ayelech, a Community Based Legal Advisor (CBLA), trained by FARM-Africa through its Women's Enterprise Development Project, Arsema and her mother challenged the marriage and the inheritance of land on legal grounds. Based on Ethiopian law, it is illegal to marry a person who already has a marital relationship with the family.

A year on Arsema has her father's land and she is married to a partner of her choice and her mother is divorced and lives peacefully with her daughter. Arsema and her mother are a generation of women turning their backs on illegal traditional practices thanks to women's growing access to legal advice in rural Ethiopia.

FARM-Africa's Women's Enterprise Development Project aims to improve the status and welfare of women in Ethiopia. Last year the project marked International Women's Day with a panel discussion in the town of Durame which was attended by over 200 women's group leaders and was followed by play showing women's rights in action.

The Women's Enterprise Development Project equips women with the skills to play a greater role in economic, social and cultural life, increasing their access to resources, rights, opportunities, services and knowledge.

