National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods

SIERRA LEONE

Country Gender Assessment Series
Haja Sundu Marah, Chairperson of Koinadugu Women’s Vegetable Cooperative is in charge of 30 women’s groups. In order to help cushion the adverse effect of the Ebola outbreak on the farming communities in the country, the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) provided timely financing to FAO.
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The prevalence of gender stereotypes limits women’s access to power, decision-making, resources and fulfilment of rights. The Government of His Excellency the President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma developed the Agenda for Prosperity (PRS III) with a whole pillar on gender equality and women’s empowerment (pillar 8) whilst gender is also mainstreamed in other 7 pillars. The Ministry of Social Welfare, gender and Children’s Affairs has facilitated the enactment of ‘Gender justice Laws’, policies and plans to effectively address gender inequalities in Sierra Leone. We have a strong belief that transforming gender relations in agriculture sector will also elevate the country’s social and economic status as women make up 52% of the agricultural labour force and play essential roles in food and nutrition security, and in the reduction of rural poverty.

The Government of Sierra Leone established the Smallholder Commercialization Programme in 1997 to focus on improved food security, self-sufficiency, and wealth generation for the most vulnerable population. Despite the significant contribution women make in the agricultural sector, there is still limited capacity to address gender disparities in the sector. Promoting gender equality can reduce poverty as well as increase economic development nationally. However, lack of gender analysis in national policies have led to inadequate interventions for rural women’s empowerment. To address these issues Statistics Sierra Leone has statutory mandate to collect sex disaggregated data and gender sensitive indicators to monitoring progress towards gender equality.

This is why I strongly welcome this Country Gender Assessment Report prepared within the framework of the FAO-ECOWAS technical Cooperation Project on “Gender Responsive Regional and Agricultural Investment Plans for meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge in the ECOWAS region”. It analyses gender-related disparities in the different sectors related to agriculture, food and nutrition security with regards to access to and control over key productive resources and opportunities, and make recommendations to close the existing gender gaps. It provides a good baseline to inform the ongoing formulation of the second generation of national Agriculture Investment Plans in Sierra Leone.

This report is very timely as we prepare for the Sixty-second Session of the Commission on the Status of Women which will take place in March 2018 at the United Nation Headquarters focusing on the theme “Challenging and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”. Additionally, the Government of Sierra Leone is organizing a Side Event on “The Role and Contribution of Rural Women in Food Sovereignty in achieving SDGs by 2030 in March 2018.

I pledge the commitment of the Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs, working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food security, and the other ministries to spearhead gender equality and women’s empowerment, in agriculture, food and nutrition security and management of natural resources. I urge all partners to commit to the elimination of gender inequalities in agriculture in order to increase food security for all citizens of Sierra Leone. It is my hope that this report will provide substantial support to promoting gender responsiveness and sustainable development in agriculture and contribute to achieving the SDGs by 2030.

Hon. Isata kabia  
Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs
Sierra Leone has made great strides through the years since the end of the war increasing its national and economic development by tapping into its natural resources including agriculture. Agriculture is the backbone to Sierra Leone’s economic development, providing employment, food, and, sustaining the livelihoods for the majority of its citizens. Despite, the loss of resources due to country’s troubled past, the Government of Sierra Leone committed to providing food security to its citizens by creating the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security seeks to contribute towards poverty reduction and increasing food and nutrition particularly for women. Women play a pivotal role in agriculture, providing 52 percent of agricultural labour, but persistent gender inequalities stemming from cultural beliefs marginalize them from equal employment across productive sectors. The lack of gender analysis in national policies has led to inadequate interventions on gender in policy, laws, and implementation of programmes.

Efforts to incorporate gender issues and address the accountability in fulfilling gender equality and women’s empowerment have been challenging. To assist in mitigating this concern, the Government of Sierra Leone created the Women in Agriculture and Nutrition Unit in 1997 in order to mainstream gender in the Ministry of Agriculture. However, gap between policy and implementation and limited availability of sex disaggregated data and gender sensitive indicators for sound policy analysis and formulation, have resulted into difficulties to monitor progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

It is with this background that the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) commissioned a Country Gender Assessment of the agricultural and rural sectors in Sierra Leone as an important step towards informing an inclusive agricultural growth agenda. This report reveals gender disparities in access to critical agriculture and rural resources, knowledge, opportunities, services and markets. It explores the existing gender relations and gaps in the various sub sectors of agriculture, and their possible causes and impact on food and nutrition security.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, provides a renewed commitment to end hunger, malnutrition and poverty. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), will create opportunities to address gender inequalities in the agriculture and rural sectors, and in food and nutrition security. Therefore this report is very timely as it will provide a baseline for informing the implementation and monitoring of the SDG in Sierra Leone.

As Sierra Leone has embarked into the development of its second generation of National Agricultural Investment Plan, I recommend that the findings and recommendations of this report are internalized and utilized by the different actors. I am convinced that if we address women’s needs and priorities in agriculture and rural development, we will see an enhancement of livelihoods of families, reduction of rural poverty and an improvement in economic and social empowerment of women. This will ultimately benefit all Sierra Leoneans.

Hon. Monty Jones
Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
Acknowledgements

This Country gender assessment (CGA) was prepared within the framework of the FAO-ECOWAS technical cooperation project “Gender responsive regional and national agricultural investment plans for meeting the Zero Hunger challenge in the ECOWAS region”. The project is implemented in the fifteen ECOWAS member countries under the leadership of M. Bukar Tijani, FAO Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for Africa, and Honourable Dr Siga Fatima Jagne, ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender.

Both FAO and the ECOWAS Commission recognize the centrality of gender equality for achieving food and nutrition security for all for a zero hunger generation, improving agricultural productivity and natural resource management, and providing better livelihoods to rural populations.

The development of the CGA for Sierra Leone was conducted under the leadership of the Country Representative, Ms. Nyabenyi Tito and the overall coordination of Tacko Ndiaye, FAO Senior Gender and Rural Development Officer for Africa. It was spearheaded by Enitor Briggs, former Gender Focal Person for the FAO country Office.

This gender assessment report benefitted from the contribution of a wide range of stakeholders from Government, United Nations organisations, civil society organisations, farmers’ groups and academia at various stages whose interest and commitment were a great asset to the report.

Special recognition goes to: Mr S.T. Kamara, Deputy Chief Agriculture Officer; Mrs Mariama M. Turay, Head of Women in Agriculture and Nutrition Unit (WIAN); Mr. Mohamed Ajuba Sheriff, Deputy Director of Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Statistics Division (PEMSD); and Marie Marilyn Jalloh, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security. Appreciation also goes to all informants and all those who participated in the validation meeting of the report. The information, data and comments they provided enriched the report.

FAO is indebted to the intellectual contribution of Fatamata Sesay, consultant commissioned to prepare this country gender assessment. Her dedication to excellence in undertaking this challenging yet exciting assignment is shown in the quality of the report. Appreciation also goes to Marie Aude Even and Pious Asante, consultants at the FAO Regional Office for Africa who contributed tremendously in the finalisation of the report. Their substantive inputs have enriched the report. FAO would also like to thank Sadhana Ramchander, consultant editor, BluePencil Infodesign, and her team, for the final edition and layout of the report.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABCs</td>
<td>Agricultural Business Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>BPFA</td>
<td>Beijing Platform for Action</td>
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<td>BSL</td>
<td>Bank of Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CGA</td>
<td>Country Gender Assessment</td>
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<td>CPF</td>
<td>Country Programming Framework</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>DWFC</td>
<td>District Women Farmers Cooperatives</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of Western African States</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>FBOs</td>
<td>Farmer Based Organization</td>
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<td>FFLS</td>
<td>Farmer Field and Life Schools</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<td>FSAs</td>
<td>Financial Services Association</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GII</td>
<td>Gender Inequality Index</td>
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<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>GOSL</td>
<td>Government of Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immuno Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>IVS</td>
<td>Inland valley swamps</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFM</td>
<td>Linking farmers to the market</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>MEWR</td>
<td>Ministry of Energy and Water Resources</td>
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<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security</td>
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<td>MMR</td>
<td>Maternal Mortality Rate</td>
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<td>MPI</td>
<td>Multidimensional Poverty Index</td>
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<td>Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs</td>
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<td>NAIP</td>
<td>National Agricultural Investment Plan</td>
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<td>NAFFSL</td>
<td>National Federation of Farmers of Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NGSP</td>
<td>National Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>National Smallholder Agriculture Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>PEMSD</td>
<td>Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Statistics Division</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>P4P</td>
<td>Purchase for Progress</td>
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<td>REAL</td>
<td>Rural Energy Activating Livelihood</td>
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<td>RoSCA</td>
<td>Rotational Savings Association</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SCPIP</td>
<td>Smallholder Commercialization Programme Investment Plan</td>
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<td>SLEDIC</td>
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<td>Social Institution and Gender Index</td>
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<td>SLRA</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Road Authority</td>
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<td>TAA</td>
<td>Technical Assistance Agency</td>
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<td>SUN</td>
<td>Scaling up Nutrition”</td>
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<td>TCPS</td>
<td>Technical Cooperation Programmes</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCT</td>
<td>United Nations Country Team</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Funds</td>
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<td>VSLA</td>
<td>Village Savings and Loan</td>
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<td>WIAN</td>
<td>Women in Agriculture and Nutrition</td>
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Farmers from Koinadugu Women’s Vegetable Cooperative harvesting carrots in the community crops.
Executive summary

Context, objectives and methods

The Sierra Leone Country Gender Assessment (CGA) was a joint effort by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the ECOWAS Commission within the framework of their Technical Cooperation Project: “Gender Responsive National and Regional Agricultural Investment Plans for meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge in ECOWAS member countries”. The purpose of the Country Gender Assessment is to analyze the gender dimensions and inequalities that exist in agriculture, food and nutrition security, natural resources management and rural development; including in access to and control over productive resources, services and markets. The report gives policy recommendations for expanding women’s opportunities in inclusive agricultural growth as a pathway to rural poverty reduction. It is hoped that this assessment will also inform the formulation, implementation, financing and monitoring of the 2nd generation of National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) from a gender perspective, and provides a solid baseline for monitoring the implementation of the ECOWAP 2025, the Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods” and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The preparation of the country gender assessment was carried out through a desk review and interview of key informants. There was review of existing documentation including international, regional, and national instruments, declarations, conventions, strategic plans, laws, policies etc, as well as existing national gender and agriculture data and reports. These helped for an in-depth analysis of the gender gaps in the agriculture and rural sector policies and institutional set-up based on a thorough document analysis, the use of available sex disaggregated data and gender sensitive indicators, and a gender-aware participatory policy diagnosis.

The following documents informed the review: (i) key policy documents of the agricultural and rural sectors in Sierra Leone; (ii) ECOWAS Gender Policy and Supplementary Act relating to Equality of Rights between women and men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS region; (iii) the FAO Policy on Gender Equality; (iv) the methodological guide of the second generation NAIP drafting process prepared by the Directorate of Agriculture of the ECOWAS Commission and other policy documents related to the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy, ECOWAP; (v) the FAO Guide to Prepare Country Gender Assessments of the agricultural and rural sectors; and (vi) national and international instruments on gender equality or women empowerment. These document were used to assess the gender dimension of the socio-economic and political context of the country.

Gender status in agricultural sector

Rural women farmers contribute significantly in the agriculture sector, and deserve better recognition and greater appreciation of their tangible contributions to agriculture and rural development and food security.

- About 70% of women are employed in agriculture and women provide 75% of the labour along the food value chain, from production, processing to marketing. Women’s labour force participation in crop Sierra Leone recorded an increasing development progress over the last decade, farming and in trade and repairs stand at 65.8% and 21.9% respectively. 95% of women are self-employed and with a vulnerable employment against 85% of men. The dominance of women in the self-employed/informal sector with poor working conditions, low salaries and no social protection leaves them open to exploitation and
increases their vulnerability to poverty (World bank gender data base, extracted from ILO database in November 2017).

- Rural women play a crucial role in achieving food and nutrition security. They are particularly vulnerable to nutritional and health problems due to frequent childbirth, coupled with their heavy farm and home workload. In the rural areas, women are the custodians of household food security and health. They typically engage in diversifying the household’s farming to include vegetables and small ruminants, and they have primary responsibility for children’s nutrition and health care, subsistence agriculture, manual food processing and water fetching.

- In rural communities, gender roles are usually rigid and place a heavy work burden on women who contribute to the family farm (notably along planting, weeding, harvesting), assist their husband in its cash crop production and are also tend to the subsistence farm, small scale animal production (poultry and small ruminant). Women are exclusively responsible for manually processing cassava and rice, which is a heavy burden and usually undertake small scale marketing as well. In addition to farm activities, women are responsible for most domestic and reproductive chores such as cooking, fetching water and fuelwood, clean and launder clothes, care of the sick, the elderly and children. Considering the lack of rural infrastructures (roads, less than 50% rural households have access to clean water (GOSL 2013 and MICS 2010), lack of access to energy etc..) and services (child care etc.), such activities take much time and limit women ability to perform their farming and other income generating activities.

Gender inequality is prevalent in access to and control over land, financial services, productive resources, and extension or market services and prevent women to achieve their whole potential.

- Women in agriculture and rural areas have less access than men to productive resources. If women are legally entitled to similar access to land, custom laws often prevail in rural areas. Society practices patrilineal inheritance, so land is generally passed down from father to son. Also, women face the risk of losing control over the land when their husband dies or if they divorce.

- Women have less access to extension services and technologies and finances. Gender difference is observed in literacy level with 59% and 76% registered for females and males respectively in 2015 (HDR, 2016). Extension systems tend to promote innovations that benefit farmers with more assets and higher level of education. They mainly target established farmers, predominantly men, while poor women who desperately need the knowledge tend to be neglected. In addition to women’s limited access to technology (tractors, power tillers and vehicle hire, for instance) for agriculture, they are often excluded from training programmes. This discrimination is justified and normalized by the gender stereotypes and traditional perceptions held by women, which teach them that they do not have the physical capability to undertake hard work or operate machines. Women also have very little or no access to credit and other financial services due to limited financial literacy, poor knowledge of administrative procedures, transportation difficulties and cultural barriers.

- Patriarchal norm and gender based violence impact negatively women agency and their capacity to develop and benefit economic activities. In 2013, 31% of women do not participate in any household decisions which concern their welfare. 62.8% of women believed that a husband is justified in beating his wife for various reasons while 28.6% of women aged 15-49 had been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months. However, women-led households demonstrate better resilience to poverty than male-led households (WB Poverty Profile 2013) do.

- Rural women are often underrepresented in rural organizations and institutions, largely due to time constraints from on and off farm activities, and are generally poorly informed regarding their rights. This prevents them from having an equal say in decision-making processes, and reduces their ability to participate in collective activities, e.g. as members of agricultural cooperatives etc.

Gender integration in legal and political frameworks

Attempt is also made to assess the gender dimension of NAIP on its relevance in relation to FAO’s gender equality policy, effectiveness in using gender assessment if any in shaping the interventions of projects and programmes; efficiency to check for the use of different tools (FAO gender policy, national gender policy etc) and systems (gender focal points, etc.) in ensuring gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation;
likely impact and the possibility of the project’s contribution to closing the gender gap and sustainability which assessed the possibility of on-going gender mainstreaming efforts in all agriculture sub sectors.

There is significant progress by Sierra Leone to advance national legislations and public policies to promote gender equality and women’s rights in agriculture consistent with key international and regional agriculture, and gender equality and women’s empowerment instruments. National laws, policies and programs are for the most part not informed by gender disaggregated data in agriculture. Women in agriculture and rural areas have less access than men to productive resources, and sufficient effort has not been put in place by the GoSL and partners to ensure equitable access to natural resources and means of production.

The Gender equality in land rights will only be attained if there is legal recognition as well as elimination of cultural and social practices that undermine women’s rights to land. There is limited openness and transparency about gender disparities in agriculture and rural development to enhance effective participation of women. The situation of women’s leadership position in farmer based organisations (FBOs), women’s cooperatives and other groups as well as rural women’s contribution to agricultural decision-making is improving. The limited integration of gender sensitive information on agriculture and rural development in national and regional statistics need to be addressed. In regards to the NAIP a two-pronged approach should be utilized to mainstream gender, and collaboration with the gender machinery directly through joint projects with the Ministry of Agriculture should be ensured.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to the GoSL and its financial and technical partners to expand women’s opportunities and gender equality in inclusive agricultural growth.

1. **Reinforce institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in agriculture**

   - **Strengthen the involvement of the Gender Ministry into the task force on agriculture** and place gender focal points placed in sectors that impact agriculture, food and nutrition security and management of natural resources. There is need to invest in training of staff from the relevant ministries and institutions on gender mainstreaming in these sectors.

   - **Mobilize resources to build capacity on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting** for the lead ministry in charge of the national planning process. Government personnel at the local level should be targeted in particular.

   - **Support the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and the establishment of databases** that will systematically integrate gender-sensitive information on gender, agriculture and rural development.

2. **Reinforce gender capacity in agricultural programming**

   - **Strengthen support to WIAN** by ensuring the unit is well equipped, staff participates fully in all agricultural programmes, and a clear budget line is put in place to deliver its programmes and policy work. The development of a gender policy or strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security is also recommended.

   - Provide technical support to ensure that policy documents of all agricultural sub-sectors are informed by a thorough gender assessment, with analysis of gender inequalities, power relations and gendered division of labour, highlighting women and men’s constraints, needs, interests and opportunities.

   - **Facilitate the active participation of women farmers, women agricultural researchers, women land rights activists, women FBOs, women small holders farmers** in the policy process related to the design and implementation of the second generation NAIP and other agricultural policies and programmes.

   - **Develop both qualitative and quantitative monitoring indicators** to inform all agricultural programs, and the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF). This includes baseline sex disaggregated data and information, against which progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment

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1. The recommendation for the gender policy for MAFFS was put forward by participants at the validation of the current report.
should be monitored. The CPF should provide a strategic entry point for mainstreaming gender into GoSL’s agricultural programmes.

- **Ensure the active participation** of women farmers and FBOs, women’s cooperatives involved in agro processing, women agricultural researchers, and CSOs working on gender equality and women’s empowerment in policy forums related to the elaboration of the second generation NAIP and other key policy documents.

3. Enhance access of women to economic opportunities in agriculture

- **GoSL should provide appropriate farm tools, improved crops, technologies and extension services** accessible to women farmers, with support from various development partners.

- GoSL and development partners should offer financial literacy training to ensure that women can compare products and make informed decisions about their production and trading activities. In addition, micro-finance institutions and other financial institutions should promote a gender-sensitive culture throughout their operations. **GoSL shall provide incentives for lending money to women** and attain AU commitments on parity for access to finances.

- GoSL should facilitate legal literacy for rural women so they are aware of their legal rights such as the rights to land, food and decent employment, and know how to exercise these rights.

- GoSL and development partners should provide education on the **differential impact of disaster on men and women** - the vulnerability and ability to recover from disaster is also different for men and women. Gender perspective on climate change vulnerability and adaptation, and on other risks and shocks shall be included.
• The GoSL and its partners should invest in **building capacity of women to manage horticultural businesses** and linking them to markets given women are predominantly in horticulture and vegetable gardening.

• **The GoSL should integrate gender in market analysis, value chain mapping, as well as a stakeholder analysis**, identification of constraints and opportunities for the value chain, and develop a gender sensitive strategic plan of action.

• The GoSL should take appropriate measures to ensure **gender equitable access to natural resources** such as land in line with the SDGs and the **Voluntary guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests** in the Context of National Food Security.
Farmers watering cabbages in Sorbeh community near Kabala Town in Koinadugu District in Northern Sierra Leone.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Sierra Leone is located along the West Coast of Africa, boarded on the south-east by Liberia, on the north, north-west and north-east by Guinea, and on the west and south-west by the Atlantic Ocean. The land area measures approximately 71,740 square km (about 45,000 square miles). Sierra Leone is divided into four administrative regions: north, south, east and west, and further divided into 12 districts. Sierra Leone’s population as at 2015 is 7,092,113 of which 50.77 percent or 3,601,135 represent the female population, with 59 percent of the total population living in the rural areas (SPHC, 2015).

Agriculture is the backbone of the country’s economy owing to the country’s rich natural resources - arable lands, marine and fresh water resources, and wide ranging mineral resources including diamond, gold, bauxite, rutile, iron ore cocoa, coffee, and fish. Nearly two-thirds of the population depends on the agriculture sector comprising food crops, tree crops, livestock, fishery and forestry sub sectors. Data continuously show women’s dominance of the crop and poultry sub-sectors, while men dominate the livestock, hunting, forestry and fishery sub-sectors. The statistics further depict that even though women are the major fish processors and gatherers of fuel wood, fruits, vegetables, nuts and herbs from forests, their dominance may not be properly captured in censuses, hence their low participation rate in forestry and fishing. The Sierra Leone Gender Country Profile on the other hand highlights that women play a major role in fish processing and financing. The country gender profile highlights that women pre-finance the purchasing of nets, engines and other inputs, as well as emphasized the predominance of women in artisanal fisheries post-harvest activities such as micro-fish retailing, fish processing, and fish marketing gives them an important role in the distribution process (AfDB, 2011). Despite the fact that women dominate inland artisanal fishing, marine and fisheries sub-sector employs more men than women.

Additionally, in spite of women’s contribution to agriculture and the economy, there is still low productivity due to limited technology and infrastructure for food processing and other aspect of value addition. For example, the poorly developed fish distribution system in the country (fish landing-handling-preservation-processing-storage-transport) means that all losses, inconvenience and drudgery inherent in the system are borne by women (AfDB, 2011). When productive resources are scarce in agriculture, women tend to suffer more because their access and use will be limited. The lack of these resources results in relatively high post-harvest losses.

A variety of studies indicate that there are gender differentiations in the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone. These studies highlight that women and men perform different roles in farming activities, grow different crops and carry out different tasks in the field (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Men usually grow and dominate cash crops production - mainly in commercial farming.

To address the current gap in agriculture in the country, the government since 2009 has been implementing a flagship programme: "Smallholder Commercialization Programme". This programme has strong financial and technical support from the government, donors and development partners, in the hope that it will assist farmers increase food production and processing, food self-sufficiency, and increase farmers' income.

2. UN Women in Sierra Leone http://www.unwomenwestandcentralafrica.com/sierra-leone.html
3. UN Women in Sierra Leone http://www.unwomenwestandcentralafrica.com/sierra-leone.html
However, the gender dimension of this project is unclear in terms of addressing the current gender inequalities that exist in agriculture. The Sierra Leone National Development Plan – Agenda for Prosperity does not have clear gender-disaggregated situation analysis, sector analysis, outputs, indicators etc.

Sierra Leone’s increased economic performance is said to be driven mainly by the intensification and expansion of agricultural activities, investment in basic infrastructure, expansion in the construction and services sectors, and equal access to infrastructure and services are imperative. This will increase production and reduce post-harvest losses in agriculture. Furthermore, special attention should be given to the rural area where the country has the highest poverty rate and hosts majority of the poor (majority women), in order to achieve poverty reduction and economic growth.

1.2 Purpose of the Country Gender Assessment

The purpose of the gender assessment is to analyse the gender dimensions and inequalities that exist in agriculture, natural resources management and rural development, and provide recommendations to GoSL, the ECOWAS Commission and FAO and other development partners on how to address these inequalities.

This Country Gender Assessment (CGA) is a joint undertaking by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the ECOWAS Commission within the framework of their Technical Cooperation Project on: “Gender Responsive National and Regional Agricultural Investment Plans for meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge in ECOWAS member countries”. The project was successfully launched in New York on 16 March 2016 during a High Level Ministerial event on the margins of the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The assessment in Sierra Leone was carried out under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security.

It highlights gender gaps in access to and control over productive resources, services and markets, and gives policy recommendations for expanding women's opportunities in inclusive agricultural growth as a pathway to rural poverty reduction. It provides a solid baseline for monitoring the implementation of the ECOWAP 2025, the Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods” and the Sustainable Development Goals. It will also inform the formulation, implementation, financing and monitoring of the 2nd generation of National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) from a gender perspective.

1.3 Objectives of the assessment

The objectives are to:

- Analyze the different experiences and constraints experienced by men and women in accessing productive resources, assets, services and opportunities, and identify discriminatory practices that undermine women’s rights in agriculture and food systems.
- Inform the development of new guidelines for more gender-responsive formulation, financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2nd generation of NAIP.
- Inform the preparation of the ECOWAS Action Plan on Gender and Agriculture, the FAO-ECOWAS regional publication on gender in agriculture, food security and nutrition, and other ECOWAP/CAADP 2025 processes at country level.
- Provide a baseline for monitoring the implementation of agricultural and rural development policies, the roll out of the SDGs in Sierra Leone, and country reporting on the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discriminations against women (CEDAW), using with up-to-date and objective information on the situation of rural women in the country.
- Inform FAO’s Country Programming Framework (CPF) and policy assistance, capacity development and programming activities at country level.

1.4 FAO Presence in Sierra Leone

FAO operations in Sierra Leone commenced in 1978 and the Organization provided continuing support to assist in ensuring food security and contribute to poverty reduction through the agriculture sector. FAO Sierra
Leone continued to support the government since the end of the armed conflict (1991-2002). Most of the interventions then were to assist in rebuilding an economic base and source of food security through the agriculture sector. The focus then was to strengthen government, farmer associations and private institutions. Over the years, FAO Sierra Leone has played a leading role in agriculture, and currently provides technical and financial support to the government on agriculture, and related activities (FAO, 2012). The priority areas in the Country Programming Framework (CPF) for FAO’s cooperation in Sierra Leone for 2012 to 2016 period are:

- Support to Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP)
- Natural Resource Management and Development
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

FAO has contributed greatly to policy and programme formulation in the agriculture sector in Sierra Leone. Most specifically, FAO provided technical assistance to draft the national Guidelines for Agriculture and Bioenergy Investment and most recently support the land sector in the drafting and finalization of the National Land Policy. FAO has recently supported the review of policy and legal framework in food security related sectors such as land, forestry and fisheries. The implementation of a project on ‘Voluntary guidelines on governance of tenure of land, forests and fisheries’ in the last years has contributed to highlighting the situation of women’s access to land. The new land policy has been described as progressive with regards its provision for women’s access to land in compliance with the voluntary guidelines.

For instance FAO, in the course of supporting the government’s course of Ebola recovery, donated a 45 KVA generator to the Koinadugu (the country’s district renowned for vegetable farming by women) Women Vegetable Farmers’ Cooperative. The generator is used to power the cooperative’s 500 bags capacity refrigerator to preserve women’s produces, reduce post harvest losses and increase benefit from the sale of vegetables. In collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, FAO trained 160 (one hundred and sixty) women farmers in cooperative management and governance with the aim of increasing productivity, increasing incomes and ensuring social cohesion. Various other FAO’s projects are geared towards the economic empowerment of rural women.

In delivering on its mandate in Sierra Leone, FAO SL has a total number of 29 staff members as at February 2016.

1.5 Methodology

The preparation of the country gender assessment for Sierra Leone has been carried out through a desk review and interview of key informants. The review of existing documentation included strategies and policies, as well as existing gender and agriculture data and reports.

Specifically, this country gender profile combines an in-depth analysis of gender gaps in the agriculture and rural sectors policy and institutional set-up based on thorough document analysis, use of available sex disaggregated data and gender sensitive indicators, and a gender-aware participatory policy diagnosis.

The review of existing documentation included strategies and policies, as well as existing national gender and agriculture data and reports. Primary data, through key informant discussions and in-depth interview with technical officers from Government, UN Agencies and partner organizations also provided additional information to back the desk review.

The country gender assessment was informed by the following key documents: (i) key policy documents of the agricultural and rural sectors in Sierra Leone; (ii) ECOWAS Gender Policy and Supplementary Act relating to Equality of Rights between women and men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS region; (iii) the FAO Policy on Gender Equality; (iv) the methodological guide of the second generation NAIP drafting process.

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4. The Koinadugu Women Vegetable Farmers’ Cooperative comprises seven hundred women engaged in vegetable farming as a major source of livelihood, from over ten communities in the Koinadugu District.

5. The training is a key activity of the project, Promoting Effective Engagement in Agribusiness for Women’s Cooperatives in Sierra Leone, which is being implemented by FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry. For more information on FAO projects and results for women in agriculture please see: http://www.fao.org/sierra-leone/news/detail-events/en/c/461173/

6. The list of staff members can change quickly given the nature of contract held by most of the staff members which requires them to take contract breaks.
prepared by the Directorate of Agriculture of the ECOWAS Commission and other policy documents related to the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy, ECOWAP; (v) the FAO Guide to Prepare Country Gender Assessments of the agricultural and rural sectors; and (vi) national and international instruments on gender equality or women empowerment.

1.5.1 FAO Policy on Gender Equality

Reducing gender inequalities in the agriculture sector is core to FAO’s mandate to achieve equality between men and women in sustainable food production and rural development, reduce hunger, poverty and injustice in the world. The development of the Policy on Gender Equality demonstrates FAO’s commitment to mainstreaming gender in agriculture.

The Policy provides a framework for guiding the organization’s efforts to achieve gender equality in all its technical work, and for assessing results. The policy asserts “closing the gender gap in agriculture would produce significant gains for society by increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty and hunger and promoting economic growth”. FAO recognises that agricultural production relies heavily on the interdependence, complementarity and partnership that exist between women and men within the family (FAO Policy on Gender Equality, 2013).

The goal of FAO’s Policy on Gender Equality is to achieve equality between women and men in sustainable agricultural production and rural development for the elimination of hunger and poverty. FAO works in advancing equality of voice, agency and access to resources and services between women and men. FAO’s engagement with its member countries, other UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs) and bilateral and private sector partners will be guided by the following objectives:

1. Women participate equally with men as decision-makers in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.

2. Women and men have equal access to and control over decent employment and income, land and other productive resources.

3. Women and men have equal access to goods and services for agricultural development, and to markets.

4. Women’s work burden is reduced by 20 percent through improved technologies, services and infrastructure.

5. The share of total agricultural aid committed to projects related to women and gender equality is increased to 30 percent.

1.5.2 FAO Sierra Leone Country Programming Framework (CPF)

FAO Sierra Leone Country Programming Framework (CPF) is a planning tool that guide, prioritise, and manage FAO’s work at country level. The priority areas outlined in the CPF are jointly agreed upon by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and FAO. In this regard, FAO supported the country’s Smallholder Commercialization Program (SCP), Natural Resource Management and Development, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management as priority areas for the CPF covering the period from 2012 to 2016.

These priority areas of the CPF for 2012-2016 are informed by (i) FAO global goals and related principles outlined in the Organizational Results Based Medium-Term Plan 2010 – 2013, as well as by (ii) Sierra Leone’s UN System Joint Vision, (iii) the country’s national priority in PRSP II - The Agenda for Change, and (iv) the government flagship agricultural programmes. The CPF contributed to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): MDG 1: Eradicate poverty and hunger; MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women; MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability; and MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

The current CPF took effect from June 2017 to 2019. Within this framework, FAO has aligned its programmes and projects in Sierra Leone to the three regional priority areas that were identified and agreed upon during the 28th FAO’s Regional Conference for Africa held in 2012 in Tunisia:

1. Regional Initiative (RI) 1: Renewed partnership for a unified approach to end hunger in Africa by 2025 under the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme;

2. Regional Initiative (RI) 2: Sustainable production intensification and value chain development
3. Regional Initiative (RI) 3: Resilience Building in Drylands of Africa

The priority areas in the CPF are:
1. Improved livelihoods and nutrition outcomes through enhanced productivity and diversification along the food system value chain.
2. Responsible governance and sustainable management of natural resources promoted.
3. Increased resilience and social protection for vulnerable groups.

1.5.3 Guide to prepare a Country Gender Assessment

FAO, in adhering to the minimum standards as contained in the FAO gender policy and in realizing its commitment to undertake country gender assessments and gender stock taking prepared a guide to prepare country gender assessments. The guide is detailed and provides the general objectives of the CGA, the methodology and key steps to be followed and a proposed structure for the report. This guide has been systematically followed in preparing the current report. In addition, FAO and the ECOWAS Commission have jointly prepared a framework for the gender assessment of NAIPs that has also been used as a guidance document.

1.6 Organization of the Report

The first section of the current report has provided the background as well as the purpose and objectives of the CGA. An explanation of the methodology has also been done in the introduction in addition to a quick assessment of the current CPF. The second section, following the background presents a detailed country context with regards gender (in) equality. The country context section has highlighted the main demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics of the country. This section is key to the entire report as it contains general information that provides the background for the country gender assessment.

The section that follows, the third, presents gender analysis of the agricultural and rural sectors. This section presents existing policies as well as the institutional arrangements around the promotion of gender equality. A discussion of the main stakeholders in the agricultural and rural sectors is presented in section four. The fifth section provides a detailed of the implementation and impacts of the NAIP. The sixth session presents the main findings and conclusions while section seven highlights the recommendations.
2.1 Human development and gender

This section presents available data on demographic as well as human development aspects disaggregated by sex, age and urban-rural structures, and an assessment of key thematics that are fundamental to decent livelihood in Sierra Leone.

2.1.1 Demographics

The World Population recorded Sierra Leone’s population as 7.09 million in 2015. From 2004 to 2015 the population has increased from 4,976,871 to 7,092,113, representing an inter-censal percentage increase of 42.5 percent with an average annual growth rate between 2004 and 2015 is 3.2 percent, compared to 1.8 percent from 1985 to 2004 and 2.3 percent from 1974 to 1985 (SPHC, 2015).

In urban areas, male- and female-headed households are equally likely to be poor. The country’s per capita Gross National Income (GNI) was $1,529 in 2015. Based on this analysis, it is projected that the average growth rate in per capita income will be at least 3.9 percent in the next 20 years (UNDP, 2016).

2.1.2 HDI value and rank

Sierra Leone’s HDI value for 2015 is 0.420—in the low human development category—positioning the country at 176 out of 188 countries and territories (UNDP, 2016). Between 1980 and 2015, Sierra Leone’s HDI value increased from 0.255 to 0.420, an increase of 59.4 percent or an average annual increase of about 2.4 percent.

*Figure 1: Human Development Index Value for Sierra Leone over the years*

The country has shown a gradual improvement in the Human Development Index over time, but this increase is not equally shared between men and women. Disaggregating the HDI further reveals that women have a far lower HDI than men.

2.1.3 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)8
Seventy-seven (77) percent of the country’s population live in multidimensional poverty (the MPI “head count”) while an additional 13.1 percent were vulnerable to multiple deprivations. The intensity of deprivation – that is, the average percentage of deprivation experienced by people living in multidimensional poverty – in Sierra Leone is 53 percent. The country’s MPI value, which is the share of the population that is multidimensionally poor adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations, is 0.411.

2.1.4 Gender Inequality Index (GII)9
The Gender Inequality Index (GII) for Sierra Leone reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. The GDI for the country is 0.871 (UNDP, 2016), in the low human development category. In Sierra Leone, 12.9 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 9.5 percent of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 20.4 percent of their male counterparts. For every 100 000 live births, 1100 women die from pregnancy-related causes; and the adolescent birth rate is 104.2 births per 1000 live births. Female participation in the labour market is 66.3 percent compared to 69.1 for men (UNDP, 2016).10

2.1.5 Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)11
The HDI is the average measure of basic human development achievements in a country. Like all averages, the HDI masks inequality in the distribution of human development across the population at the country level. Sierra Leone’s HDI for 2015 is 0.420. However, when the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.262, a loss of 62.4 percent due to inequality in the distribution of the dimension indices.

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2.1.6 Employment

Rural poor predominantly work in the informal sector, evident in the fact that informal employment remains important, persistent and on the rise. There are evident challenges to informal employment. ‘Agriculture – including forestry and fishing, crop farming, and animal production – is the largest industrial sector, employing 59.2 percent of the employed population’ (SPHC, 2015).

The quality of work for poor people in this sector needs to be improved, through vocational training and education, micro-and small-enterprise development and access to credit. Working conditions must be improved and the poor needs to be guaranteed social security coverage. Women represent 49.2 percent of the total labour force as most of them are engaged in the agriculture sector.

2.1.7 Women’s voice and political representation

The participation of women in Sierra Leone is affected in three domains – the self, the private and the public. Women are socialized to be submissive, and men to dominate in decision-making. This has been internalized by women to such an extent that in some cases even where they are offered leadership/decision-making positions, they are not confident enough to accept the same. This demonstrates the lack of decision-making in the “self” (IFAD&FAO, 2011). In the “private” – at the family level, for the most part rural women do not make decisions in their households – they have no say over the number and spacing of children, they cannot say otherwise if the husband decides to withdraw girls from school and send them into marriages (IFAD&FAO, 2011). With regard to decision-making in the “public”, even though the Constitution stipulates that women and men have equal right to vote and be voted for, rural women are challenged when it comes to exercising this right to be voted for, particularly to contest for political office. They need the blessing of the husband and other family members before they can contest in local government elections. There are situations where women whose campaigns have gained momentum were asked or pressured to step down for a man.

At the national level, women are under-represented in elective and appointed offices. For the first time in the history of presidential elections in Sierra Leone, a woman was selected as the running mate of the SLPP flag bearer (the SLPP is the oldest political party in the country). Four other females were also chosen as running mates by other political parties (MSWGCA, 2014). For example, women constituted 12.9 percent of parliamentarians, 10 percent of Cabinet Ministers and 13 percent of deputy Ministers in 2012. The local council elections held in 2012 noted an infinitesimal rise, as merely two additional women were elected. This does not reflect a positive change in women’s representation at the local level. However, there are individual cases of a rise in the number of women elected to office at local council level. For example in Kailahun, the number of elected female councillors increased from 3 to 12, and the district Koinadugu increased its number of female councilors from 6 in 2008 to 8 women representatives. In Bo, Moyamba and Pujehun districts, there were drops in the number of female councilors elected. The role model is the Makeni City Council, where the Mayor and Deputy are women, and 7 out of the 15 councillors are also women (MSWGCA, 2014). The Chairperson of National Electoral Commission (NEC) is a woman, and 40 percent of the Commissioners are also women. The number of women in the Judiciary is increasing following the appointment of a female Chief Justice. In the Supreme Court, out of five judges, two of them are women. In the Court of Appeal, out of six judges, three are women. In the High Court, out of ten judges, four of them are women.

Discrimination in marriage has been partly resolved by the passage of the Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorces Act, particularly for the majority of the rural women who marry customarily, and whose unions are often considered illegal. There is now equality in marriage by law, but systems do need to be put in place to enable the registration of customary marriages. Sierra Leone is also currently working on the Equality Bill which will hopefully guarantee 30 percent women’s representation in decision-making at all levels, and subsequently implement one of the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Actions.

2.1.8 Basic infrastructure

Sierra Leone recognises that safe, reliable, affordable and accessible drinking water and sanitation are essential to good health and development, particularly in the rural areas that suffer more when there is a lack in the country (GoSL, 2013). Sierra Leone has made some strides; for instance, access to water supply has increased from 16 percent in 2008–2010 to well over half of the population, and access to adequate sanitation has grown substantially. Fifty-seven (57) percent access to improved drinking water was reported in MICS-2010, with a wide divide between urban (76 percent) and rural areas (48 percent). Of the 40 percent national
access to adequate sanitation, urban access (58 percent) was much higher than rural (32 percent). This implies that nearly half a million (480,000) more people received access to improved water, and 1.14 million more to adequate sanitation (MICS-2010; JMP 2008, 2010; and DHS 2008, 2010) (Appendix 1).

The data on sanitation reveals a 90 percent improvement from 2008 to 2010. However, poor water and sanitation is still a challenge for rural communities, and exposes rural people to disease, lack of privacy, indignity and poor hygiene. Outbreaks of diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera and Ebola present a burden on the nation and particularly rural women, who have the primary responsibility to take care of the sick. Girls are withdrawn from school to help their mothers with this, or to attend to domestic chores while the mothers take care of the sick. This negatively impacts girls’ school attendance and performance, thereby undermining the country’s output on Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3. The lack of toilet facilities and clean water in many schools, particularly in rural areas, also undermines girls’ attendance, and has, overall, an impact on national development. Poor solid waste management and inadequate drainage contribute to the continued prevalence of water-borne diseases and malaria, even when there is access to clean water and sanitation. The government in the country’s strategy paper Agenda for Prosperity is committed to generally developing infrastructure, and to using Sierra Leone’s abundant water resources to provide access to safe water and improve sanitation facilities across the country. It will also invest in improved solid waste management and drainage. However, the strategy is not explicit on the improvement of water resources and sanitation infrastructure specific to rural communities.

Due to the lack of transportation facilities in rural areas, in turn due to an unavailable or poor road network, the rural poor for the most part have to walk in order to access schools, health centres and markets. Women and girls have to travel long distances to fetch water and wood for family consumption, and in addition, girls also walk long distances to school. Women carry the farm produce on their heads when they go on foot to the market. The lack of transportation facilities, in addition to limited or no electricity supply, increases post-harvest loss in rural areas, making women and girls vulnerable to sexual abuse to and from their way to markets, schools, and fetching wood and water.

2.1.9 Education

Girls’ access to education is improving in Sierra Leone. The country has made great strides in addressing the traditional practice of boy to girl preference to education. There is almost parity in the number of boys and girls enrolled in primary school, but retention and completion of education remains a challenge with high drop-out rates for girls and low enrolment in secondary school.\(^{12}\) The statistics reveal that the literacy rate amongst the youth is 59.3 percent for females and 75.8 percent for male. The gross enrolment for in primary is 100 percent, 36 percent in senior secondary school and 8 percent in tertiary (UNDP, 2016).

Sierra Leone’s adult literacy rate of 48.1 percent is among the lowest in the world (UNDP, 2016). The lack of education, particularly of rural women, affects economic growth and prosperity, and negatively impacts the health, nutrition and socio-economic development of the country. The Agenda for Prosperity acknowledges that an educated labour force will meet employment demands in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, value addition, support the private and public sectors, and reduce dependence on foreign experts (GoSL, 2013).

To address the current status of education, the country has committed to improving access, completion, and equitable opportunities in education by 2018 in the “Agenda for Prosperity” document. The government is anticipating improved access to all levels of education and a fee-free education. It has invested in education

\(^{12}\) http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/2799.html

Figure 3: Literacy amongst Sierra Leonean youth by gender
by building schools across the country, improving teachers’ salaries, and providing teaching and learning materials. There are also proposals to improve adult education.

2.1.10 Health

There have been some gains in health infrastructure and management systems in Sierra Leone that have positively impacted rural women. The government continues to be committed to health through the increased investment in health infrastructure and the health management system. The national maternal mortality ratio in Sierra Leone is 1,360 per 100,000 reported live births, according to 2015 data (CIA World Factbook), which is one of the highest in the world.

Table 1: Trends in infant and maternal mortality patterns between 2000 and 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2000 level</th>
<th>2005 level</th>
<th>2008 level</th>
<th>2015 level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child mortality (U5s)</td>
<td>286/1000 live births</td>
<td>267/1000 live birth</td>
<td>140/1000 live births</td>
<td>71.3/1000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality Ratio (MMR)</td>
<td>1800/1000 000 live births</td>
<td>1300/1000 000 live births</td>
<td>857/1000 000 live births</td>
<td>1,369/1000 000 live births</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIA World Factbook, 2015

To address this situation, the government is currently looking into the implementation of free health services for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under five nationwide (GoSL 2013). This has contributed to reduction in the rate of maternal and child mortality since the year 2000.

Health care facilities are available in the district headquarter towns in rural Sierra Leone, but they are ill-equipped. Some people in rural communities cannot afford the cost and still have to rely on traditional medicine to address their health needs.

Malnutrition rates in Sierra Leone are among the highest in the world. Some 46 percent of child deaths in Sierra Leone are attributed to malnutrition, the leading cause of child mortality in the country (WFP, 2014). According to the UNICEF SMART survey, 34.1% of children aged six to 59 months are stunted, with 9.5% severely stunted. These statistics are not specific to the rural areas, and there are no available gender disaggregated data for the affected children. However, it is evident that rural areas experience chronic malnutrition as a result of a long hunger season, limited food production and lack of finances to buy food, inadequate nutritional awareness and poor health, sanitation and water facilities (IFAD & FAO, 2011). The situation is worse for women who are exposed to nutritional and health problems due to frequent childbirth, coupled with heavy farm and home workload.

In 2016, Sierra Leone had 5300 new HIV infections and 2800 AIDS-related deaths. There were 67,000 people living with HIV in 2016, among whom 26% were accessing antiretroviral therapy. Among pregnant women living with HIV, 87% were accessing treatment or prophylaxis to prevent transmission of HIV to their children. An estimated <500 (<200 - 1400) children were newly infected with HIV due to mother-to-child transmission (UN AIDS, 2016). The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is 1.7 percent with research highlighting the fact that there is no significant difference in the prevalence rate between men (1.5 percent) and women (2.0 percent) (UN AIDS, 2016). It is worth noting that the figures show that women form the majority of those living with the virus. HIV/AIDS is both a cause and consequence of poverty, so women’s greater vulnerability to poverty should be addressed to avoid the feminization of HIV/AIDS in the country.

13 The 2010 SMART survey was conducted during the same period as the CFSVIA and evaluated the nutritional status of children 6-59 months of age and women of reproductive age.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is practiced in Sierra Leone, with nine out of every 10 girls and women having undergone the procedure. The prevalence of modern contraceptives for family planning has greatly improved over the last five years from 17.28 percent in 2012 to 25.86 percent in 2017 (Family Planning 2020, 2017).

**Ebola Virus Disease**

There is huge socio-economic impact of Ebola on women and girls in areas of education, health, income level etc. In addition to the physical effect of the epidemic on women, where their reproductive roles of taking care of the sick exposed them to the virus, the gains made on economic empowerment of women have been reversed. With specific reference to agriculture, women play a significant role in agriculture and food security. They actively engage in the informal sector in the production and trading of agricultural and handicraft products, so the restriction of movement and closing of the border negatively impacted their income compared to men. Microfinance institutions reduced lending because of the uncertainty and higher risk of financing. Most important is the structural challenge to analyze the gender dimension of the epidemic and collect gender disaggregated data on the socioeconomic impact of the Ebola on men and women.

Some of the proposed intervention of development partners and government at the time of the Ebola crisis included effective social protection where in safety net mechanisms were decentralized so that discharge packages for survivors and compensation for deceased families and orphans are promptly paid. There are still social security needs as the governments and UN agencies should design a comprehensive and robust programme targeting EVD orphans, institutional mechanisms must be provided so that women in agriculture and the informal sector can access financial services to protect their livelihoods and food security especially at times of crisis of such nature.

### 2.2 Policy, legislative and institutional context

#### 2.2.1 Socio-economic and political landscape of the country

Women continue to experience violence, discrimination and violations of their human rights, which hinders their socio-economic development. The IFAD/FAO reports note that the incidence of poverty is higher for male-headed households than for female-headed households in the rural areas (IFAD & FAO, 2013). This, according to the report, is attributed to the fact that female-headed households in rural areas do not rely on agriculture alone for income generation. However, even though women may not be poorer than men in some communities, their vulnerabilities put them at the risk of poverty.

The highly patriarchal social structures and cultural norms are reflected in women’s lack of participation and representation in political and socio-economic decision-making institutions (IFAD & FAO, 2013). Gender inequalities in agriculture are pervasive, even though the employment rate is almost the same among men and women in this sector – 58.7 percent women with 59.7 percent men with women playing an important role in natural resource management and food production (Sierra Leone Statistics, World Bank & ILO, 2015). Women experience inequalities, exclusion and marginalisation in accessing social services or in their participation in politics or decision-making. Access to basic services such as health and education, assets such as land, or economic and financial resources, is challenging for rural women (GoSL, 2013). This is attributed to patriarchy, the systems and structures that promote male dominance and the subjugation of women. Traditional practices and laws reinforce this discrimination in marriage, property rights, sexual offences, education, justice, health care, employment and decision-making. The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has committed to gender equality and women’s empowerment, signing a range of policy declarations and enacting legislation, and the passage of national laws and policies, yet women’s basic human rights remain widely unfulfilled, generally misunderstood, undervalued and unprotected (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Translating these into developmental policy and practice has been a challenge for the country.

The GoSL, however, continues to demonstrate commitment to addressing gender inequalities, evidenced in the country strategy paper, Agenda for Prosperity, through its standalone pillar on Gender and Women’s Empowerment. This is one of the few Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in Africa that specifically sets aside a pillar to empower women and girls through (a) education, reducing socio-economic barriers and supporting

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14. Information in this section was retrieved from UNDP Africa Policy Note
formal and non-formal education; (b) increasing their participation in decision-making in public, private, and traditional institutions, and access to justice and economic opportunities; (c) strengthening prevention and response mechanisms to violence against women and girls; and (d) improving the business environment for women, ensuring them greater access to finance and capacity development (GoSL, 2013).

2.2.2 Legal frameworks

The first part of this section presents a review of key international instruments that Sierra Leone has ratified or committed to at international, regional, or sub regional levels. The second part of the section presents relevant national documents in relation to gender and agriculture.

2.2.3 International legal frameworks

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)\textsuperscript{15}

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) strongly supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The country was on course in reaching the MDGs and initiating the implementation of the SDGs with a vision to become a middle income by 2030, prior to the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic, which reversed these gains. Prior to the Ebola epidemic the main challenge to address was the reduction of maternal and child mortality.

The SDGs present a timely opportunity for the country to overcome remaining and emerging national and global challenges, including health problems in a proportion of least developed nations; growing negative consequences of climate change; rising cross-border organized crimes; illicit financial flows; and governance crises and conflicts in many parts of the world.

Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering women calls for the recognition and value of women’s unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate. Women’s participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making is also essential.

Four (4) out of the five (5) SDGs (Goal 1, 3, 4 and 5) that the Sierra Leonean government has prioritised are consistent with the transformative shift to “leave no one behind” in development by furthering the achievement of the MDGs from reducing to ending extreme poverty, in all its forms. It is important ensure that no person regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities.

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Sierra Leone ratified CEDAW in 1988. This convention addresses discriminatory practices and exclusion experienced by women in areas of economic, social and cultural rights, participation in public activity, sex stereotyping and equality in law. There is urgency and the need for emphasis for the protection of the rights of rural women.\textsuperscript{16} In particular, Article 14 provides protections for rural women and their special problems, ensuring their right to participate in development programmes, "to have access to adequate health care facilities," "to participate in all community activities," "to have access to agricultural credit" and "to enjoy adequate living conditions."

Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (1995).\textsuperscript{17} This is a supplementary provision of the African charter on human and people’s rights that focuses on entrenching women’s rights adopted in Maputo in 2003.

- Article 2 of the Protocol urges all member states to combat all forms of discrimination against women by including the principle of equality between men and women in all national constitutions and legislative instruments, enacting legislative and regulatory measures that prohibit any form of discrimination against women and take corrective action where discrimination against women exists.
- Article 3 addresses women’s right to dignity.


\textsuperscript{16} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_the_Elimination_of_All_Forms_of_Discrimination_Against_Women

\textsuperscript{17} Sierra Leone National Action Plan
• Article 4 addresses women’s right to life, integrity and security. Other articles address the elimination of harmful practices, marriage, separation/divorce/annulment of marriage, access to justice and equal protection before the law, right to participate in the political and decision-making process, right to peace, protection of women in armed conflicts, rights to education and training, economic and social welfare rights, health and reproductive rights, right to food and security, right to adequate housing, right to positive cultural context, right to a healthy and sustainable environment, right to sustainable development, widows’ right, right to inheritance, special protection of elderly women, of women with disabilities and women in distress and articles on implementation.

**Geneva Declaration for Rural Women.** This declaration mobilizes political will for women’s participation in development policies, programmes and projects; the provisions in the declaration include ensuring the economic needs and well-being of rural women are taken into account in all sectoral policies and programmes; improving rural women’s access to resources and equitable distribution of land, capital, labour, technology, social services and infrastructure; launching initiatives that raise productive capacities of men and women, with special attention to disadvantaged rural women; promoting national and household food security, alleviating women’s workload, improving health and nutritional status of mothers, children and the quality of life of the family; providing information, communication and education that meet the needs of rural women; optimizing the role of rural women as agents of change, and creating conditions for their social, political and economic empowerment; creating opportunities for rural women to assume leadership positions in the decision-making process; and promoting, strengthening and disseminating rural women’s organizations in order to establish effective channels for their access to decision-making bodies at all levels.

**African Union Gender Policy 2009:** This is a commitment by heads of States in Africa including Sierra Leone to social and economic development which takes into account the diversity in social, cultural, and traditional settings on the continent. It also sets out to address cultures and practices which militate against enjoyment of freedom and rights by women and girls.

The AU is almost through with the development of a new gender strategy which will achieve the goal of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE), a goal that is common to both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. The new gender strategy will take into account successes and lessons learned in the development of Agenda 2063 and 2030, as well as to take into account other recent commitments of importance to women. This new strategy will build on the on the current AUC policy on GEWE, adopted in 2009, which is the first continent-wide policy of its kind.

**Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies** highlights the importance of the experiences and improvement of the situation of rural women, and the elimination of religious intolerance. It urges financial institutions and international and regional organizations, institutions, development banks and general funding agencies to ensure that their policies and programmes advance the full participation of women as agents and beneficiaries of development. This strategy sets out to ensure that sectoral policies and programmes for development include strategies to promote the participation of women as agents and beneficiaries on an equal basis with men.

**Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989)** has a special focus on the girl child. The objective of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is to protect children from discrimination, neglect and abuse. It is the principal children’s treaty, covering a full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The Sierra Leonean government has taken measures to establish a Child Rights Act which does not only provide a standard definition of a child, as a person under 18, in line with the Convention, it criminalizes all child rights violations and abuses, including sale of children into forced labour and prevention of girl child education.

**Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) (1995).** This promotes women’s economic and political empowerment, education and training. The Beijing Plus 20 review addressed key areas such as rural women’s empowerment, food security, nutrition etc. It recognizes that women continue to face disproportionate barriers to the equitable ownership; control of and access to natural resources and land; the impact of the actions of extractive industries and multinational corporations on women’s rights to land and natural resources,


disregard of rural women’s environmental knowledge and skills, and their role in agricultural decision-making; need for extensive mainstreaming of gender, including the equitable consideration of the needs and vulnerabilities of women and men, girls and boys, in relation to climate change and natural disasters etc. In this regard, recognizes the diversity of women in all societies and that the most disadvantaged rural women are in need of specific measures to improve their status and access to productive resources; it affirms that that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is fundamental to achieving human rights and for equitable, gender responsive, inclusive and sustainable development for the benefit of all persons and societies, notes the overall reductions in the proportion of women and girls living in extreme poverty and improvements in food security for women and girls to name a few.

**UN Resolution 1325 (2000).** Calls for increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional, and international institutions, in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.

**Vienna Convention (1993).** Promotes women’s rights as human rights. Four critical areas in this convention are human rights to education, equal status of men and women, and human rights of women, migrant workers and indigenous people, all of which are strongly relevant to the situation of women and girls in rural areas.

**Rio commitment.** Stresses women’s central contribution in environment management, and acknowledges women’s suffering due to environmental depletion. The latter has now assumed alarming dimensions in the context of climate change. It further highlights that environmental depletion is caused by intensified pollution driven by wasteful consumption, unprecedented growth of the human population, persistent poverty, and social and economic inequalities. This is a big commitment by nation states including Sierra Leone and intersects with gender and the environment, yet nothing or very little has been done to address climate change issues facing women, who are more vulnerable to disaster and have little capacity to recover.

**Regional Policies**

**Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme**

CAADP is the main vehicle for accelerating African agricultural growth, through promotion of public and private sector investment, creating a conducive policy environment and institutional capacity strengthening. The main objective is to help African countries achieve higher economic growth through agriculture led development, thereby eliminating hunger, reducing poverty and ensuring food security. The initiative has also been instrumental in refocusing national and global development support to agricultural development, and has become a platform for a wider stakeholder consultation that involves national governmental bodies, continental and regional organizations, development partners, the private sector and civil society. The CAADP framework provides a common platform for African countries to address agricultural transformation and eradicate hunger and malnutrition, enabling the expansion of exports, and supporting environmental resilience. In 2014, the “Sustaining the CAADP Momentum: the CAADP 10-year results framework” was launched with the aim to accelerate country implementation of CAADP, based on three levels of results. Level 1 on “Agriculture’s Contribution to Economic Growth and Inclusive Development” deals with wealth creation, economic opportunities and prosperity through jobs and poverty alleviation, food security and productive safety nets, nutrition and environmental resilience and sustainability. Level 2 on “Agricultural Transformation and Inclusive Agricultural Growth” addresses agricultural production and productivity, agriculture and food markets, agro-industry and value addition, and management and governance of natural resources for sustainable agricultural production. Level 3 on “Strengthening Systemic Capacity for Effective Execution and Delivery of Results” focuses on policy design and implementation capacity, effective and accountable institutions, evidenced based agricultural planning and implementation processes, coordination, partnership and alliances, investments in agricultural value chains and data quality. CAADP is the main vehicle for accelerating African agricultural growth through promotion of public and private sector investment, creating conducive policy environment and institutional capacity strengthening. CAADP has also been instrumental to refocusing national and global development support to agricultural development, and has become a platform for a wider stakeholder consultation that involves national governmental bodies, continental and regional organizations, development partners, the private sector and civil society.

Declaration on 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Agenda 2063

This declaration, adopted by the African Union Summit in June 2015, sets an ambitious agenda to enhance women's contribution and benefit from formal agriculture and agribusiness value chains. It invites AU member States to increase mechanization, technological innovation, education and skills development for women, intensify their financial inclusion in agribusiness and empower them with knowledge and skills to use modern technologies in agribusiness and agricultural value chains. Another key dimension is to enforce women’s rights to productive assets including land and their access to public procurement processes in agribusiness. The Declaration also calls upon financial institutions to have a minimum quota of 50% to finance women to grow from micro to macro businesses. It stresses the need to ensure that the Continental Free Trade Area promotes the empowerment of women in agribusiness and agricultural value chains.

The ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP/CAADP)

ECOWAP/CAADP represents the ECOWAS countries’ efforts to accelerate implementation of regional and national agricultural programmes in the light of CAADP. It is the coordinating framework for implementation of CAADP in West Africa. Fifteen National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIP) and a Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP) represent the instruments of ECOWAP implementation. The investment plans (regional and national) address issues and national and regional dimensions of agriculture, natural resource management and food security. They cover the agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry subsectors. The Regional Partnership Pact for the Implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP 2025 adopted during the Conference on “ECOWAP+10 and Prospects for 2025” held in Dakar in November 2015 made commitments to improve the governance of agricultural policy by strengthening compliance with the principles of gender equality and equity, and accountability.

The Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods”

The Malabo Declaration was adopted by Heads of State during the AU Summit in June 2014 to acknowledge the persistent efforts made in the implementation of CAADP at national and regional levels and the positive growth performance of the agricultural sector in recent years. The Declaration calls for deliberate and targeted public support for all segments of the population, particularly women, the youth and other disadvantaged groups to participate and directly benefit from the growth and transformation opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods. It also raises concerns about high levels of hunger and malnutrition especially among children and the limited progress made in agro-industries and agribusiness development which hampers value addition and competitiveness of African products in local, regional and international trade, thus depriving African women and youth from gainful employment opportunities. It also highlights the significance of enhancing conservation and sustainable use of all of our natural resources including land, water, plant, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, and these are particularly crucial for women. The Implementation Strategy and Roadmap of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Africa Agriculture Growth and Transformation was elaborated to guide the effective implementation of the Declaration.


Article 75 of the Treaty calls on Member States to put in place mechanisms for the development and value of the African woman through improvements to her social, economic, legal and cultural conditions and ensure full participation of women in the development and activities of the African economic community.

Analysis of international, regional, and sub regional legal frameworks

While the GoSL is committed to implementing the above international, regional and sub regional commitments that could impact positively on gender and agriculture, the country faces challenges posed by weak gender/women machineries, which must lead the mainstreaming process within the relevant ministries related to agriculture. Some of these international/regional instruments do not have implementation plans, or where they exist they are inadequately funded. Serious budgetary cuts in some sectors undermine gender mainstreaming work in the sector.
2.2.4 National laws and policies that promote gender equality

Below is a list of relevant national laws and policies as they pertain to gender (in) equality in general and to women’s situation in agriculture in particular:

National documents

- The 1991 National Constitution that guarantees equal rights of all Sierra Leoneans irrespective of diversity, gender, age, religion, ethnic group and so on. However, while the Constitution of 1991 (Chapter 3, section 27.2) rejects discrimination in consistence with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), section 27.4.d exempts all areas subject to customary law, including marriage and property. In this vein, women have no legal recourse when discriminated against on issues relating to these exemptions, which are at the core of gender relations and as they relate to women’s rights in agriculture. The GoSL is yet to expunge this constitutional clause.

- The Agenda for Change and Agenda for Prosperity emphasise the importance of reforms and programmes to promote gender equality, including through improved access to capital and training for women. In spite of the policy statement in the documents on the commitment to mainstream gender into agriculture, national, district or major sub programmes do not operationalize gender mainstreaming (FAO, 2014). Women remain disadvantaged in their access to extensions services, markets, credit and post-harvest technologies. A review of the Agenda for Prosperity, PRSP III shows that gender is mainstreamed across all pillars in addition, to the inclusion of a standalone pillar on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

- The disaster management policy provides a comprehensive approach to increasing political commitment to disaster risk management. It promotes public awareness and the incorporation of disaster risk management into development planning, and highlights sources of funding. Under section 1.3, which is the problem statement, no analysis was done on gender. There was only one mention of women in the entire document, in strategic objective 3 – increase public awareness of disaster risk reduction, bullet
5: **Strengthen the role of women, youths and vulnerable groups in disaster risk management.** There is minimum provision made for gender integration into the country’s disaster preparedness and response. This is a concern because women, compared to men, are more susceptible and vulnerable to disaster, or could not easily recover due to their socio-economic status. There is need for a review of the draft policy before it is approved.

- **The government’s Private Sector Development Strategy** has been developed and its focus areas are to: (i) improve access to finance; (ii) improve the legal and regulatory framework; (iii) promote and support entrepreneurship; (iv) make markets work better; and (v) improve physical infrastructure.

- **The Decentralisation Policy and the Local Government Act (2004).** This document accelerates the transfer of power to local communities and chiefdoms, and through the devolution process (technical and financial resources), there is enhanced service delivery to small farmers. It pushes for equal participation of men and women at local governance level.

- **The National Land Policy** has been developed, which makes provision for tenure security and land administration. It proposes eight strategies to promote women’s rights to land and property (GoSL, 2016):

  1. Insert in all relevant legislation effective protection of women’s rights to land and other related resources;
  2. Repeal existing laws and outlaw regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against women in relation to land;
  3. Enforce existing laws and establish a clear legislative framework to protect the rights of women in issues of inheritance to land and land-based resources;
  4. Enhance and guarantee women’s access to land and their security of tenure;
  5. Facilitate the acquisition of land by women in their own right, not only through purchase but also through allocations;
  6. Make provision for joint spousal registration and documentation of land rights, and for joint spousal consent to land disposals, applicable for all forms of tenure; 7. Secure inheritance rights of unmarried daughters in line with the practices of the respective communities; and
  8. Ensure proportionate representation of women in institutions dealing with land at all levels.

### 2.2.5 Gender equality and women-specific legal frameworks and provisions:

- **The Domestic Violence Act (2007)** criminalizes sexual, physical, emotional, psychological and economic violence perpetrated against an individual in the domestic setting. This will address issues around property inheritance, such as those related to land.

- **The Devolution of Estates Act (2007)** guarantees access to property of a deceased spouse, and proportional distribution of the same in line with the number of years of the marriage.

- **The Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2009)** legalizes all marriages under the Customary law, Mohamedan, Civil laws and Christian belief, thereby enhancing equality in marriage. Despite the fact that 70 percent of marriages in the country were customary, prior to the passage of this act, they were not considered legal, and this negatively impacted many people, particularly women in rural areas. The Act aims to protect women (particularly rural women) who were married in accordance with customary marriage practices, but were neglected because their marriages were considered invalid.

- **The Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1320 and 1825** aims to protect and empower women and girls vulnerable to sexual violence, preventing sexual violence through the enactment and implementation of laws and above all ensure the active participation and representation of women in leadership positions. Women’s active participation in decision-making in agriculture could be addressed under these action plans.

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21. Sierra Leone National Action Plan
22. Sierra Leone National Action Plan
• The National Gender Strategic Plan (NGSP) sets out to (i) formulate policy on women’s access to land and productive resources; (ii) strengthen women farmer associations in claiming rights to land and productive resources; (iii) provide financial resources/infrastructure to enhance agricultural production, processing, preservation and marketing for female farmers, and (iv) train, campaign and provide extension services to build women’s access to, control and capacity to use improved technology (MSWGCA, 2010).

2.2.6 Institutional level

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs developed and officially launched has a national Gender Strategic Plan 2010-2013 to guide all gender programming in the country. The ministry prioritises six main areas: capacity building, management and oversight; women’s participation in governance; sexual and reproductive health rights; research, documentation and Information & Communication Technology (ICT); women’s empowerment with specific focus on rural women and gender budgeting and accountability.

There are ongoing efforts to mainstream gender into agriculture, evident in the implementation of the below programmes:

• GoSL created the Women in Agriculture and Nutrition (WIAN) Unit in 1997. The mandate of this unit is to mainstream gender in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security’s (MAFFS’) work in a bid to provide support to women, improve access to extension services and promote women’s productivity. Limited interaction between other units in MAFFS and the WIAN unit, as well as the non-participation of the latter in key decision-making, has contributed to making WIAN ineffective. The unit is understaffed, coupled with limited technical expertise to deliver programmes. This unit was set up in response to the ratification of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). Unfortunately, it is not thriving because only lip service has been paid to the BPFA. WIAN has neither the expertise nor decision-making powers to influence policy and undertake research to inform it (AfDB, 2011).
Women farmers preparing food during the inauguration meeting of the arrival of a new electric generator to run a refrigerator for the vegetables at Koinadugu Women’s Vegetable Cooperative in Kabala Town.
3. Gender analysis of agriculture and rural sector

3.1 Agriculture and rural development

The literatures reviewed during this study revealed that women in agriculture and rural areas have less access than men to productive resources. It is evident that gender inequality is prevalent in access to control over land, financial services, productive resources, and extension or market services. There is limited openness and transparency about gender disparities in agriculture and rural development to enhance effective participation of women. Moreover, rural women are often under-represented in rural organizations and institutions, largely due to time constraints from on- and off farm activities. Furthermore, they are generally poorly informed regarding their rights. This prevents them from having an equal say in decision-making processes, and reduces their ability to participate in collective activities, for instance, as members of agricultural cooperatives. There is limited or no systematic integration of gender-sensitive information on agriculture and rural development in national and regional statistics. Sufficient effort has not been made by the GoSL and its partners to ensure equitable access to natural resources and means of production. Rural women farmers deserve better recognition and greater appreciation of their tangible contributions to agriculture, rural development and food security.

3.2 Policy level: political commitments and policies

The Agenda for Change

The Agenda for Change: PRSP II, is aligned with the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP) 2010-2030, and the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP). Both documents highlight women’s role in agricultural development. These plans outline access to extension services, provision of information on improved techniques to farmers, improved access to post-harvest technologies, and processing and storage facilities as prerequisites for increased productivity in agriculture (IFAD & FAO, 2011). These policies also review existing land tenure systems and access to rural finance. Even though these documents consider critical areas in agriculture, and create an opportunity for gender mainstreaming, the CAADP and the NSADP did not do thorough gender assessment of the situation (FAO, 2012). This is a missed opportunity for a policy document that should guide implementation of gender and agriculture in Africa, and Sierra Leone in particular.

National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP)23

The National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP) is the GoSL’s contribution to the CAADP Compact under the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AU/NEPAD) activities. The Plan was developed by the MAFFS as a sector-wide framework aimed at operationalizing the objectives of the Agenda for Change. The vision of the NSADP is to make agriculture the engine of socio-economic growth and development through commercial agriculture, and the promotion of the private sector/farmer-based organization (FBOs). The NSADP articulates the MAFFS’ and its partners’ priorities through the Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP) which is believed to have the potential to achieve the greatest impact in

terms of improved food security and wealth generation for the most vulnerable population in the short- and medium-term framework.

In the situation analysis, the only gender analysis done showed that women and youth are particularly vulnerable to poverty due to persistent discrimination that excludes their participation in local decision-making, access to productive resources, fair targeting of public projects and services and opportunities to integrate into market systems. There was no attempt made to undertake any gender assessment on the main agriculture subsector issues where the different components of the SCP were analysed. The lack of a gender analysis at the programme conceptualization phase undermines the effectiveness of the SCP in addressing gender inequalities in agriculture.

**National Agricultural Investment Plan**

The National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) articulates the cost and activities to be implemented over a four-year period. This plan comprises six components:

i) Smallholder agriculture commercialization: production intensification, diversification, value addition and marketing;

ii) Small scale irrigation development;

iii) Market access expansion;

iv) Smallholder access to rural financial services;

v) Strengthening social protection, food security and productive safety nets; and

vi) SCP Planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

Each of these components has an objective aimed at the promotion of agriculture in the country.

**Component 1**: Smallholder agriculture commercialization (USD 73 million) promotes the commercialization of smallholder agriculture through productivity, value addition, and marketing with emphasis on commodity chain development and institutional strengthening of FBOs.

**Component 2**: Small-scale irrigation development (USD 55 million), aimed at the development of appropriate small-scale irrigation infrastructure in order to boost rice production, a major staple in the country.

**Component 3**: Market access expansion through feeder road rehabilitation (USD 100 million), with the aim to improve the ability of smallholders, market-oriented farmers and agri-businesses (including Agricultural Business Centres [ABCs]) to physically access markets and operate in a profitable way through the rehabilitation and effective maintenance of priority feeder roads.

**Component 4**: Smallholder access to rural financial services (USD 28 million), promote access of smallholders (and their organizations) to rural financial services geared to their needs through: (i) support to Financial Services Associations (FSA) development; (ii) support to the establishment of CBs; (iii) support to the Rural Finance Technical Assistance Agency (TAA).

**Component 5**: Strengthening social protection, food security and productive safety nets (USD 142 million) to promote national growth and development with equity by reducing households’ vulnerability to shocks and disaster, increasing food security and nutrition levels of vulnerable households with a focus on children, promoting human capital potential, and improving livelihoods.

The NAIP has a clear objective of what needs to be done on each component, but there is no clear road map on how these interventions will benefit men and women, and how they will address the existing gender gap in agriculture. No clear gender assessment was done for each of the six components in the NSADP, so it is no surprise that in the expected outcome of each of these components in NAIP, no attempt was made to provide gender disaggregated data. For example, one expected outcome of Component 1 is the establishment of 2750 FBOs. There is no narrative on the number of men and women-led FBOs, or how many women and men

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will be targeted by them. Hundreds of capacity building activities will be organized, but in the same vein, no specifics on the targeted beneficiaries have been disaggregated by gender. Component 4 addresses access to rural financial services. Literature abounds on women’s limited access to rural financial services, but no analysis has been done so that effective strategies can be proposed to address discriminatory practices that undermine women’s financial access. For example, in this instance, programme activities should have specifically targeted women who currently do not benefit the same way as do men. The lack of gender analysis and gender disaggregated data is evident throughout the investment plan.

Energy and water

• A set of Guidelines for Sustainable Bioenergy Investment (BEFS 2012a; BEFS 2012b; BEFS 2012c) has been developed by the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MEWR), with technical support from the FAO Bioenergy and Food Security Project. The guidelines state that sustainable bioenergy investment should promote economic empowerment and food and nutrition security for rural women through three priority areas: (1) access to decent rural employment, (2) women’s associations and (3) access to land (BEFS 2012c). The Guidelines require that each investment be scored and evaluated on gender and youth empowerment.

• The Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, 2016 – There is no gender consideration in the entire document despite women’s important roles in the section, especially with regards to fish processing and marketing.

• The Policy Framework for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Sierra Leone – There is no gender consideration in the document.

3.3 Institutional level

Ministry of Agriculture:

The GoSL has made strides in the establishment of these initiatives, however, the agriculture sector has limited capacity to address gender-related programmes due largely to lack of commitment and budget allocations. With the limited resources, there is no provision to train staff on gender, so MAFFS staff have limited knowledge of gender policies and limited capacity to undertake gender analysis (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Intersectoral linkages between the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs and MAFFS is ineffective, although there is some evidence of collaboration in joint programming like the women’s empowerment supported by FAO and bringing together MSWGCA, MAFFS and MTI.

Staff from Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs have little or no knowledge on agricultural issues, and some of them are also not grounded in mainstreaming gender into their work on different sectors. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs is the least funded government sector. In the 2011 national Budget, only one percent of recurrent expenditures was allocated to this Ministry. It points to the unwillingness of government to deliver on the mandate to effectively mainstream gender. In addition, even though the Agenda for Prosperity did a gender analysis, it failed to develop activities that sufficiently address gender equality issues across line ministries, including MAFFS.

However, even with limited capacity for gender mainstreaming, MAFFS has been able to implement some gender related interventions in the recent past. The Ministry has trained women in the rural communities in production post-harvest processing, and linking farmers to the market. The Ministry has further established the Financial Services Association Banks FSA’s through IFAD to empower women in the rural communities. The Ministry has established a unit on women nutrition to focus on women empowerment. This unit is called ‘Women in Agriculture’.

Ministry of Trade and Industry

Promoting citizen’s welfare in trade & industry has been a preoccupation of the government of Sierra Leone through its work at the Ministry of Trade. This Ministry has embarked on different initiatives geared towards providing the framework to make Agricultural business work well for both men and women. The trade policy requires entrepreneurs to prepare a business plan which they could use to obtain funding from financial institutions. The policy specifically makes provision for registered business within the ECOWAS Countries to
benefit from quota or duty free provisions within the framework of the ECOWAS Trade Liberation Scheme (ETLF). The provision of ETLF in particular favours agriculture as it contains a caveat that in order for a business to benefit from the duty or quota free provision, the product should meet any of the three product originating criteria defined by the ETLS which are: (i) product should be wholly produced from the country of origin and this is basically tied to agricultural commodities and fish products; (ii) product should meet the local content which states that at least 60% of the inputs should originate from Sierra Leone or ECOWAS sub regional countries; and (iii) the value addition criteria of products which require at least 30% value addition. These provisions have not targeted women in particular but they can equally benefit from such provisions if enabled with the capacity to do so.

**Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI):** was established in 2007 through an Act of Parliament as the sole government agricultural research and agricultural technology generating body for the benefit of the farming, fishing and forestry sectors. The institute promotes innovation in Agriculture and facilitates research and technology that will improve agricultural productivity.

**FAO** is supporting the development of ABCs which are owned and managed by FBOs. FAO provides technical and financial support to deliver agricultural services to smallholder farmers through the Smallholder Commercialization Programmes (SCP). FAO engages women and women’s farmer groups through the farmer Field and Life Schools (FFLS) to provide information on improved farming practices and livelihood skills. FAO undertakes all these efforts on mainstreaming gender into agriculture, but these are not reflected in the past Country Programming Framework (CPF) running from 2012 to 2016.

The new CPF will be pursued in partnerships as broad as possible and in alignment with the Government of Sierra Leone and the development partners for enhanced coordination and aid effectiveness. FAO has targeted vulnerable populations (EVD survivors, women/adolescent girls, youth, aged people), and has defined interest and programs that can positively influence food production, decent rural employment and poverty reduction.

**UN Women** in collaboration with the Organization for Inclusive Development (OfID) (civil society) has partnered with the United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) and the Ministries of Local Government and Finance to deliver training on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRB) to senior professionals responsible for institutional planning, budgeting and tracking of implementation of local and central government resources in Freetown. This Training of Trainers (ToT) pilot aimed at improving the budget performance of 16 Managers and Directors from the government’s ministries, departments and agencies.

There has been the development of resource materials for agriculture and food security by FAO, WFP and GoSL. These include the Household Expenditure Survey of 2004, the FAO Chiefdom Vulnerability Assessment of 2003, the World Food Programme (WFP) Vulnerability Assessment of June 2003, and the Government of Sierra Leone’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP, 2004).

**ActionAid International Sierra Leone** is a leading international organization in the country that works on land rights issue. ActionAid Sierra Leone, along with their partners, work with and empower rural women and smallholder farmers to hold governments, international organizations and corporations to account on land rights issues. ActionAid Sierra Leone’s land rights work focuses on four key areas: climate change, smallholder and women farmers, women’s rights to land, and food crises. The smallholder and women farmers programme advocate for public financing for agriculture for women smallholder farmers in an effort to close the gender gap. ActionAid Sierra Leone recognises the importance of secured access to land, productive resources and supportive national laws and policies. The women’s right to land campaign has led a number of campaigns, such as Hungerfree women, to secure women rights to land and productive resources. For example, the Right to Food/HungerFREE campaign supported women farmers in achieving food security by providing seed rice, cassava production and rice milling machines and cash grants.

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ActionAid Sierra Leone monitors and influences land, food and agricultural policies at various levels to reduce hunger and secure the right to food as part of the food crisis programme. Secured access to and control over land increases women’s resilience in the face of hunger and poverty, enabling them to look into ways to manage them sustainably. Between 2010 and 2013, ActionAid Sierra Leone implemented an EU-funded project aimed at enhancing poor and excluded women’s access to and control over land as a strategy for empowerment and fighting hunger.28

CARE International, through its Food Security programme, recognises that climate change, poor governance, competition for resources, and gender inequalities cause food insecurity.29 Over the years, it has demonstrated commitment to ensuring food security among women through the Village Savings and Loan (VSLA) programmes. This programme empowers women to save money together, lend each other money and start small businesses, with the aim of letting them earn their own money. They become more confident by contributing to their household’s income, start claiming their right to decide on its spending – and often use it to buy nutritious food for their families, such as fish and meat at least once a month.30

In 2006, Sierra Leone Export Development Investment Corporation (SLEDIC), with support from Chinese financial assistance, rebuilt the ginger export trade with the aim of providing jobs to 9000 subsistence farmers, of whom 60 percent are women. This was the country’s first export in 22 years, and led to the creation of 150 processor jobs dominated by women with 30 jobs for foremen, loaders, transporters and others.

World Food Programme (WFP), in collaboration with government and other partners, works on feeding the hungry poor. WFP activities are part of the Sierra Leone Agenda for Change (2008–2013), which prioritises the development of agriculture, infrastructure and social services.31 WFP targets the most food insecure communities that do not receive other assistance, and aims at contributing to a comprehensive approach that complements livelihoods, education, and nutrition social safety nets. These activities include Nutrition Support, School Feeding, Food for Training and Food for Work. WFP also promotes health and nutritional status of vulnerable populations (women and children) through integrated Mother-and-Child Health and Nutrition programmes.32 It also provides food assistance to people living with HIV. WFP focuses on the restoration of agricultural production (food and tree crops), education and health. Sierra Leone was one of the 21 countries where WFP’s Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative piloted. WFP, along with its partners, engaged small farmers by supporting their agricultural production and linking them to the market and will then use its purchasing power to procure food from them.

World Vision International Sierra Leone promotes key multisectoral programmes: Agriculture and Food Security, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Community Resilience, Economic Development, and Natural Environment and Climate Issues.33 Through its resilience and livelihood programme, World Vision works with communities and families to develop sustainable food production approaches by providing agricultural inputs and training, as well as enterprise and value chain development. Over 550 savings groups are supported to enhance families’ income and contribute to their children’s well-being.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS): Brings relief and development in countries of need; complementing (in a significant way) Government effort in Agricultural development through training of farmers, provision of seedlings (inputs, grants, etc. under their “farmer-to-farmer” initiative program. The CRS’ work in Sierra Leone among other things focuses on agriculture to improve nutrition and to strengthen agricultural development concentrating in the two least developed districts of Kailahun and Koinadugu. CRS supported farmers in two chiefdoms in Koinadugu between 2013 and 2016 to produce more rice, add value to their crops, markets their produce and manage their finances.34

34. For more information on CRS in Sierra Leone, visit http://static1.sqspcdn.com/static/t/752898/22427355/1369149365997/crs-in-sierra-leone.pdf?token=RuQz2TsS7Hmqqrm5ZtrNUwFTEs%3D accessed on 15th January 2017

Gender analysis of the agriculture and rural sector 25
OXFAM: has been operating in Sierra Leone since 1998. After the 10 year war, the organization shifted its programme of support to more development oriented interventions focusing on improving health, supporting pro-poor water and sanitation policies and in particular strengthening women’s capacity for increased property ownership, literacy rights and greater participation of women in decision making. The organization continues to compliment governments efforts in poverty alleviation through provision of basic services and democracy; supporting women to operate gender friendly machinery through livelihood programmes and promoting local governance through female political empowerment.

Welthungerhilfe (WHH): Promote comprehensive development through Agriculture and livelihood initiatives; the organization has played significant role in agriculture development through improved farming techniques and market access, and on governance of tenure as it relates to land.

Other Civil society organizations (CSOs) play an important role in advocating for women’s land rights. They have been involved in a number of campaigns (Nah All Man Business, HungerFree Women, Women’s Right to Land and Productive Resources, and so on) in collaboration with national, international and UN agencies to challenge land rights policies for women, including both the first and the second draft of the NLP. The aim of these campaigns was to raise awareness of women’s rights to land, advocating for reform of discriminatory laws and articles of the Constitution and providing input to the Draft National Land Policy and its operationalization.
The National Federation of Farmers of Sierra Leone (NAFFSL), formed in 2008, was aimed to support approximately four million small-scale farmers in the country, but lacks capacity and funding to do so effectively. NAFFSL is an apex body representing four officially-approved FBOs, including the District Women Farmers Co-operatives (DWFC). Product-oriented associations and cooperatives also exist in Sierra Leone (FAO, 2014).35

The Sierra Leone Women Farmers Forum (SLeWoFF) was formed in 2014 to promote women in agricultural farming activities at all levels. This women’s forum involves women farmers’ base organization/individuals, in large and small scale farming within the farming context in Sierra Leone irrespective of tribe, religion, culture or political opinion36.

35. FAO, 2014
36. For more information on the objectives of the forum, please see the forum website at https://yellow.place/en/sierra-leone-women-farmers-forum-freetown-sierraleone accessed on 17 January 2017
This section describes the main sources and issues around gender inequality in the different agricultural subsectors and areas of rural development.

4.1 Gender roles and dynamics

It is well documented that patriarchal norms shape gender roles and responsibilities. In rural communities, these roles are usually rigid and place a heavy work burden on women. Women and men undertake different roles and responsibilities in food production and provision in these communities, and this results in different needs, priorities and concerns between the two genders. Women and men have different roles in different kinds of production units, be it small-scale/subsistence, medium-scale and large/commercial farm households (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). Although there is a gendered division of labour in the value chain of production, there are some complementary roles that women and men undertake in the production process – men clear land, women plant and tend crops, then harvest and market them. Women undertake specific work in agriculture, as well as assist their husbands in cash crop production. For example, they are exclusively responsible for manually processing cassava and rice, which is a heavy burden.

In addition to farm production, women also undertake non-farm activities, which are indirect and direct care services. The indirect care is evident in the maintenance of their households and the direct is taking care of family members, including the sick. Women cook, fetch water and fuelwood, clean and launder clothes (often at relatively remote water sources) (IFAD & FAO, 2011). In undertaking reproductive roles, men rarely support women. In taking care of the sick in the family or children under the age of five, rural women are also confronted by challenges in health facilities which are sometimes far, incredibly busy, and where they are often told to come back the following day, which costs them dearly in terms of time. There are no child care facilities for women in rural communities, so women take their young children with them to the farm. They usually have to go check on the children at intervals to make sure they are safe and are not bitten by snakes. This actually slows their work pace (UFAD & FAO, 2011).

The time constraints women face may limit their ability to perform activities such as weeding, which results in lower productivity or quality of produce and which in turn limits their food security and that of their children. Time constraints also mean that women may be too busy to adequately care for their children.

Patriarchal norms entail usually that decision making lies mostly with the head of households, in most case the husband or father. In Sierra Leone, 31% of women do not participate in any household decisions which concern their welfare (like decision to visit their own family, to take care of their health and for major household purchase). Only 45.4% participate to major decisions, mostly jointly with their husbands. The situation has only slightly improved from 2008 to 2013 (from 40.9% participation to 45.4%). The situation of Sierra Leone is comparable to other ECOWAS countries as 35% on average do not participate in any decisions regarding the households.

In 2013, 28.6% of women aged 15–49 were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months while only 40% were making their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care. In 2013, 62.8% of women believed that a husband is justified in beating his wife for...
at least one of 5 common given reasons (like arguing, burning food, neglecting kids etc.). The proportion is higher among the poorest quintile (70%) and least in the richest quintiles (52.8%). The proportion has sharply declined by 20 points since 2005, where it was 88.5% in average, 90% among the poorest and 73% for the richest quintile of the population.

On average in ECOWAS countries (excluding Cap Verde) the average proportion of women believing that husbands are justified in beating their wife for typical reason is about 50% over the period 2010-2017. Sierra Leone remains on the high side, lower than Mali and Guinea (over 80%) but much higher than countries like Benin, Togo, Ghana and Nigeria where the proportion is around 30% or below.

### 4.2 Gender, food security and nutrition

In Sierra Leone, victims of malnutrition and disease are predominantly women and children, who constitute 80 percent of the country’s population (Sierra Leone NAPA, 2007). This is attributed to chronic malnutrition in rural areas during the long hunger season, limited food production and lack of finances to buy food, inadequate nutritional awareness and poor health, sanitation and water facilities (IFAD & FAO, 2011).

Prevalence of anaemia in reproductive mothers is very high in Sierra Leone recording 45 percent (WHO, 2015). 26 percent of the adults are overweight (18 percent men and 34 percent women) whiles 8 percent of adults are suffering from obesity (WHO, 2015).

Similarly as in other ECOWAS countries, overweight has increased sharply since 1999, notably for women, coming from 24% in 1999 to almost 36% in 2016, while for men overweight increased from about 13% till almost 18% over the same period.

Rural women are particularly vulnerable to nutritional and health problems due to frequent childbirth (due to women’s inability to ensure safe sex, number and spacing of children and so on), coupled with their heavy

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**Table 2: Participation of women to household decisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row labels</th>
<th>year 2008</th>
<th>year 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women participating in decision of visits to family, relatives, friends (% of women age 15-49)</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women participating in making major household purchase decisions (% of women age 15-49)</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women participating in none of the three decisions (own health care, major household purchases, and visiting family) (% of women age 15-49)</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women participating in the three decisions (own health care, major household purchases, and visiting family) (% of women age 15-49)</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank gender data base

**Table 3: Social norms about gender based violence since 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%)</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%): Q1 (lowest)</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%): Q2</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%): Q3</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%): Q4</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%): Q5 (highest)</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank data base
farm and home workload (IFAD & FAO, 2011). In addition, gender inequalities along the production food chain “from farm to plate” undermines the attainment of food and nutritional food security (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). Women are the key to household food security in the country, as they cultivate food crops as well as produce commercial crops alongside the men (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). IFAD and FAO research in Sierra Leone revealed that rural women are at the forefront of household food security and health. They engage in household farming that includes vegetables and small ruminants, subsistence agriculture, manual food processing and water fetching. Interventions aimed at enhancing women’s roles as agricultural producers and primary caretakers of the family will impact food security, an important component for sustainable agricultural development and the bedrock for social and economic development as a whole (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009).

In the rural areas, women are the custodians of household food security and health. They typically engage in diversifying the household’s farming to include vegetables and small ruminants, and they have primary responsibility for children’s nutrition and health care, subsistence agriculture, manual food processing and water fetching.

4.3 Gender and rural development planning

Rural women and men should be adequately involved in multistakeholder processes in the agricultural and rural sectors so that they can articulate and present their perspectives and priorities.

Women and gender issues are usually marginalised in rural development planning. Most authorities responsible for development planning fail to recognise gender and women’s issues as an important aspect of their work. Most often, the national planning process is gender neutral. There is no capacity to mainstream gender in the planning institution. It was only recently that planning personnel at the Ministry of Finance were targeted in a gender responsive training session organized by UN Women. Although UNFPA began some initial work on gender budgeting, it had little or no impact on the budgeting process. In rural development planning specifically, a majority of the planners fail to take into consideration the complex nature of gender relations and division of labour in agriculture. Men, unlike women, have been ascribed the role of decision makers, so they are always consulted in planning processes, and this undermines women’s participation. With the campaign for women’s involvement in development planning, there have been some attempts to involve women in planning generally, but in agriculture, as highlighted earlier, women are not always consulted, particularly in issues related to

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land. Where women are consulted in agriculture planning, their active participation could not be guaranteed because of heavy farm and reproductive work. Overall, women’s burdens make participation in development planning, political processes, community meetings and knowledge dissemination workshops difficult (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Time constraints imposed by subsistence activities are a key reason why vulnerable women do not manage to participate in women’s FBOs and CSOs (IFAD & FAO, 2011).

The GoSL made a commitment at the international level by signing key international instruments, and domesticating them by passing laws and policies to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. These have been reviewed in this study. The GoSL through the MSWGCA developed two twin policies on gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women, but unfortunately, no major steps have been taken to effectively mainstream gender into government policies and programmes. The Country’s Agenda for Prosperity thoroughly assessed the gender landscape in its priority areas, but there were no concrete activities developed within other sectors that are targeted at women. The same applies to FAO CPF which provides strategic direction to the country’s agricultural work. Both documents do not have any gender disaggregated data on baseline information on gender and agriculture, activities, budgets, and monitoring indicators.

4.4 Gender and representation in rural organizations

Women contribute 75 percent of the labour force in food production, processing, preservation, marketing and preparation, yet they are not part of key decision-making processes in agriculture (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Women’s FBOs should have been platforms where they exercised rights to decision-making in the agricultural sector, but unfortunately this is not the case. This is a reflection of women’s limited access to decision-making process in other facets of society. Women farmers are not consulted when it comes to making decisions in agricultural activities in terms of land identification for agriculture, when to undertake farming activities, find seeds, or assess soil suitability.

Although the rationale for the formation of women’s FBOs was to address the dominance and control experienced by women at the hands of men in mixed farming groups, it has become evident that this dominance and control has spilled over to women’s FBOs (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Poor, landless women with no productive resources are excluded from the FBOs. According to the FAO and IFAD, “FBOs are spheres of social inclusion and the most timid, insecure, malnourished, sick, disabled and socially excluded women may not be easily admitted or may not venture to participate in these organisations (IFAD & FAO, 2011 p. 34). There is not sufficient evidence in the literature reviewed on the promotion of women’s rights, women’s agency and their voices. The GoSL and its development partners need to build capacity on leadership skills, and create platforms for women to engage stakeholders on discriminatory practices and inequalities in agricultural sector.

The country is a signatory to the Beijing Platform for Action, which recommends 30 percent women’s representation in parliament. In view of this, there is currently a Gender Equality Bill underway that guarantees 30 percent representation of women at all levels of decision-making.

4.5 Gender and rural finance

Sierra Leone’s Constitution guarantees equal access to financial credit for all citizens, but rural people, especially women, have very little or no access to credit and other financial services.

Women tend to save less money than men (63.6% instead of 67.4% in 2014) and they notably save less within a financial institution (8.4% of women compared to 13.7% of men). Less women also save in a club or person outside the family (37.8% against 40.9% for men). Also, in 2014, 57% of women against 63% of men borrowed money (Table 4, World Bank gender data base).

According to IFAD and FAO research, women interviewed in Koidu Town, Kono were refused loans from commercial banks because of lack of collateral required to guarantee repayment. Women resorted to obtaining loans from money lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates. This limits their opportunities to improve their agricultural production and commercialization. FAO and IFAD research attributes women’s lack of access to rural finance to their lack of ability to present business plans, and limited knowledge of banks’ administrative processes.

This review partly agrees that the majority of rural women are unable to present business plans and are not knowledgeable of banks’ administrative processes. However, this study presents additional information
to show that the underlying factors for women’s lack of access to rural finance are the prevalent gender discrimination and inequalities that permeate the agricultural sector. Rural women, unlike men, are largely uneducated. The widespread illiteracy among women could also be attributed to boy over girl preference to education in different cultures in the country. Participation in rural finance requires approval from men, who are unsupportive of their wives’ involvement in rural finance. Women themselves consider rural finance, financial service associations (FSAs), or community banking to be “men’s business” or for women who are already established in agriculture. These attitudes keep women from participating and contributing meaningfully to decision-making on gender and rural finances.

The financial resources widely available in rural areas are the informal Rotational Savings Associations (RoSCA), commonly known as osusu, and this only supports entrepreneurial activities such as petty trading. They help women with start-up money to do small business alongside agricultural labour. Women’s access to financial services is imperative because women are usually the poorest of the poor, vulnerable, lack access to productive assets, and invest in the health and nutritional status of the family as a whole (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). Evidence abounds to show that the financial services to reduce poverty for rural women are predominantly microfinance. Financial services for women should not be limited to microfinance, but rather women’s access to financial services at all levels must be promoted (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). Access to well-designed financial services for women will enable them to build assets, effectively engage with the market, reduce their vulnerability to crises, give them a voice, enhance gender equality and empowerment, and position women to control household resources and not just household well-being (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009).

### 4.6 Gender and agricultural value chains and markets

Women producers are predominantly found in the horticulture sector. This is attributed to a number of factors, but is primarily because women’s reproductive roles within their families limits their being able to undertake management of medium- or large-scale commercial farms, compared to men. This implies that rural women have limited opportunity to access the formal sector in urban and developed markets. The increased demand for high value products such as vegetables could have been an opportunity for women, however, the same is undermined by women’s lack of control over their agricultural production, processing and marketing. The limited or lack of infrastructural support (see details below), such as the development of cold chain, transportation, and communication, make it difficult, challenging and sometimes impossible for women to access local and regional markets.

With regard to the value chain, women and men have different responsibilities along the chain of production. The division of labour implies that there is gender specific knowledge along the value chain of production. The challenge to this is that neither women nor men may have a complete knowledge of all the different steps in the value chain. Also, within the value chain, there is a conflict between men and women in terms of right to access and ability to control productive resources – land, input and information. In order for the FAO to foster or facilitate links that connect women to the market, targeted analysis and programme intervention in the value chain is required.

### 4.7 Gender and agricultural labour

The employment structure of Sierra Leone has not changed much in the last 25 years. Women represent about 49.2% of the employed population force. About 63% of women are employed in agriculture against 56.4 percent of men, meanwhile 4.9% of women are employed in the manufacturing or secondary industry against 12.2% of men. In the formal or service sector, women comprise 28.5% with being men having 23.3%.

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### Table 4: Savings among women and men in Sierra Leone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row labels</th>
<th>av 2011</th>
<th>av 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saved any money in the past year, female (% age 15+)</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved any money in the past year, male (% age 15+)</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved at a financial institution, female (% age 15+) [ts]</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved at a financial institution, male (% age 15+) [ts]</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved using a savings club or a person outside the family, female (% age 15+) [ts]</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved using a savings club or a person outside the family, male (% age 15+) [ts]</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank gender data base
The Agenda for Prosperity strategy recognises that unemployment and underemployment are high, and informal employment remains predominant and is growing (GoSL, 2013). Women and youths are mostly unemployed, underemployed and are usually employed in the informal sector. Indeed, according to ILO models estimates, 95% of women are self-employed and with a vulnerable employment against 85% of men. Own account workers represent 83% of women employment and 73% of men. Only 5.6% of women have a waged or salaried work against 15.5% of men, so three times more men have access to salaried or waged work. The situation has hardly improved since 1998 (Figure 6).

Although gender inequalities are challenging to quantify in the agricultural sector, this report reveals (as reflected in other documents and reports) gender differences in access to land, market and technology; the inexistence of non-contractual agreement in formal markets; the informal market were women predominantly work have no work benefits, as there is no adherence to labour laws regarding maternity leave, wage gap, issues of violence, health and safety for rural women (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009).

In addition, casual or temporary workers in poor communities, most likely women, do not have access to medical, unemployment benefits and pension. This gender difference in employment could be attributed to discriminatory practices that accord less value to women’s labour in society. Society has also ascribed a reproductive role to women and productive roles to men, so it is no surprise that women are disadvantaged in paid employment, or where they are employed, work under deplorable situations.

The country strategy paper, Agenda for Prosperity, generally acknowledges that the quality and productivity of informal work needs to be improved through training and education, small enterprise development and access to credit, improvement in labour conditions and adequate remunerative employment opportunities for all who those willing to work (GoSL, 2013).

4.8 Gender and agricultural extension and rural advisory services

In Sierra Leone, extension services are the main channels for information dissemination about new and improved agricultural technologies. Extension systems tend to promote innovations that benefit farmers with
more assets and higher level of education. In Sierra Leone, high priority for extension service delivery is provided by the MAFFS to cash crop production, and the majority of extension agents prefer to work with better-resourced farmers. Although the IFAD and FAO study highlights the fact that extension service delivery is not a direct gender marginalisation and is associated more with the scale and type of cultivation, the conclusion of this study differs from that.

From the desk review undertaken in this research, it is evident that men are mainly involved in medium- to large-scale production, and so are considered to be cash crop producers. Ultimately, men, compared with women, get to benefit from extension services and have access and control over productive resources. But women's contribution in cash crop production is not recognised, due to a number of reasons. They cannot produce cash crops at the same level as men due to the unequal gender division of labour in agriculture, which limits women to producing crops for subsistence, gives them limited access to natural and productive resources, and restricts them due to the cultural practices that assume men have the right to be in charge of farm produce with high economic value.

The FAO/IFAD study revealed that many women are not aware of the names of the seed varieties they desire access to, which undermines their ability to find and secure the same for replanting (IFAD & FAO, 2011). In addition, women are not aware of improved varieties such as Nerica and do not have the access to knowledge sharing that would allow them to find out about such information. Yet, extension services only target established farmers, predominantly men, while poor women who desperately need the knowledge tend to be neglected. In rural areas, it has been observed that men are not comfortable having their wives around men in places where these services are available. The dearth of women extension workers makes the situation precarious for women farmers.

It is against this backdrop that the national strategy on agricultural development sets out to address some key areas in agriculture to increase productivity. The strategy emphasizes that to enhance women's agricultural productivity, women should have access to extension services, information on improved techniques, and improved access to post-harvest technologies, in particular processing and storage facilities.

4.9 Gender and agricultural technologies

Agriculture contributes 46 percent to Sierra Leone's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and provides employment for 75 percent of its population (FAO, 2012). In spite of the contribution agricultural productivity makes to the economy, the country is incapable of providing appropriate technologies that will reduce the current high post-harvest losses during food processing and related areas of value addition. Both men and women are constrained in their access to technology in rural Sierra Leone. Women are particularly disadvantaged because though they are engaged in the majority of the processing jobs in agriculture, they do not make the decisions on the use of the limited, available technology. For example, women still have to grate cassava, and beat rice with their bare hands (IFAD & FAO, 2011). This does not only delay production processes, or increase post-harvest losses, but also leads their having calluses on their hands, the very hands with which they have to perform reproductive roles within their households.

In addition to women's limited access to technology (tractors, power tillers and vehicle hire, for instance) for agriculture, they are also excluded from training programmes. For example, in Kailahun, women were not included in training programmes on the use of rice mills. Only men who participated in the training benefited. It is no surprise that there is only one woman among the 46 mill operators in the country (IFAD & FAO, 2011). This discrimination is justified and normalized by the gender stereotypes and traditional perceptions held by women, which teach them that they do not have the physical capability to undertake hard work or operate machines (IFAD & FAO, 2011). The Government is optimistic that when ABCs become operational throughout the country, women may be able to benefit from agricultural technology and mechanization (IFAD & FAO, 2011).

4.10 Gender and social protection

Women and men are confronted by different risks and vulnerabilities with regard to gender and social protection. Gender and social protection will be discussed under four headings:

(i) protection measures for rural women on safety net for income,
(ii) measures to avert deprivation,
(iii) measures to enhance real income and
(iv) transformative measures to enhance social equity (OECO, 2009).

During the review of the different thematic areas, the study documented that there are no protective measures or safety nets for rural women’s income and consumption in periods of crisis and stress. This is evident when disaster strikes, or when crops are destroyed by insects or pesticides. Under the discussion on gender and labour, it was shown that women are predominantly employed in the informal sector, where there are limited or no social insurance opportunities, pension or maternity fees. Unfortunately, some of the activities they are engaged in expose them to health hazards. Women dominate fisheries and aquaculture, for instance. They process the produce while standing in water, which opens them up to health hazards. Women’s real incomes are also not protected. Due to the gender division of labour within households, women tend to do more reproduction work which is undervalued and unpaid; they are engaged in subsistence farming which makes less money than cash crop production, which the men dominate. Empowerment is strongly undermined by specific gender inequalities and discrimination, and women are constantly discriminated against in regard to access and ownership of productive resources in agriculture. The desk review in this study reveals that when women are given social protection, they can improve their children’s health and nutritional status, school attendance, and reduce intergenerational hunger.

4.11 Gender and land and water

Rural women and men depend on natural resources for their food and livelihood. Subsistence farmers, fisheries, hunters and gatherers and agricultural wage workers depend on usable land, water, and plants for their livelihood. Land rights, whether customary or formal, is a form of economic access to key markets and nonmarket institutions.

Married men and married women have equal ownership rights to property and in fine 38.5% of men and 35.5% of women own land. However, almost 20% of men own land alone whereas only 5.1% of women own land alone, the rest own land jointly with someone, likely husband, father or brother (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row labels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married men and married women have equal ownership rights to property (1=yes; 0=no)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men who own land alone (% of men)</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men who own land both alone and jointly (% of men)</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men who own land jointly (% of men)</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who own land alone (% of women age 15-49)</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who own land both alone and jointly (% of women age 15-49)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who own land jointly (% of women age 15-49)</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank gender data base

Sierra Leone has a dual system of land tenure: the communal land system where land is vested in the Government and the customary land system where land belongs to a particular family in the community. In the Provinces, women’s access to land is determined by traditional and religious customs that remain deeply rooted in patriarchal value. The tenure system in Sierra Leone lacks proper legal definitions and clear allocation procedures of property rights in land, owing mainly to the unwritten nature of customary law. This creates confusion and legal insecurity (country profile, gender land rights database).

Cultural and local practices discriminate against women when it comes to ownership of land, and in rural areas these practices are often more powerful than the written law, which allows women to own land. Sierra Leone society practices patrilineal inheritance, so land is generally passed down from father to son. In situations where fathers do not have sons, the brothers, nephews or other male relatives inherit the property. Women (daughters) do not usually inherit land in rural areas, even though they are of the same lineage. This practice is associated with the belief that since daughters are married off to another family or community, and since wives are part of the responsibility of the husband, giving land to women entails that it will be controlled by
the husband and his lineage. This practice is responsible for land disputes between men and women, such as those between brothers and sisters upon the death of parents, and between a husband and his first wife once he marries a second wife, or if a couple divorces. Also, women face the risk of losing control over the land when their husband dies or if they divorce. Male children from the marriage inherit the land but if there are no children and if a woman remarries into her late husband’s family, she can continue to cultivate the land. A woman who returns to her patrilineal family regains her rights to land for cultivation from the male head of her family (country profile, gender land rights database).

The FAO and IFAD research revealed that where a woman wishes to acquire land, for instance, a woman of a female-headed household, a male relative will usually act on her behalf. This has increased the number of women seeking and acquiring land. However, the land tenure system in rural Sierra Leone only guarantees access to land, and not ownership. Chiefs and landholders are now more likely to facilitate women’s access to land, particularly for project activities. These gains could be attributed to the on-going nationwide campaign for women’s rights to land. Based on the stronghold that culture has in rural communities, national laws and policies such as the Interstate Succession Act 2007, a law that provides for intestate succession and other inheritance-related issues, and could present a means for accessing gender equity in terms of property and inheritance laws, is insufficient to guarantee women’s land rights. For example, the law that promotes equal distribution of property is usually not accepted and enforced in rural communities with strong cultural ties and belief systems regarding inheritance. Women’s low status in society, illiteracy and/or limited education keeps them from pursuing their rights to land. However, there is some light at the end of the tunnel with the new National Land Policy of 2015 that has been described as progressive. The prospects of increasing women’s access to land as contained in the NLP however will be higher with the transformation of the policy into a law.

With regard to water utilisation, women and men use water for drinking, domestic purposes, gardening, irrigation, fisheries, food processing and other small business uses. Women and girls are primarily responsible for fetching water, and men rarely fetch water for household consumption, especially in rural areas. When there is environmental degradation, rural women’s household labour intensifies as they have to walk long distances to fetch water. Twenty four percent of the total population rely on rivers and streams as a water source for drinking and domestic use 67.5% of the population have to travel half a mile to access water. (SPHC, 2015).

4.12 Gender and forestry

The country strategy paper, PRSP II Agenda for Change, is silent on gender issues in forestry. In many rural communities, women are in charge of reproductive roles, which are household activities that involve forest-based food and firewood gathering, but information on their forest use and access was not easily obtained during this study. It is inferred, however, that due to the limitations on ownership and access to productive resources such as, women in Sierra Leone often rely on non-wood forest products for income and nutrition. Since a gender assessment of the forestry sector has not been undertaken in the country, women’s concerns are less likely to be part of consultations in the sector. IFAD/ FAO research (IFAD & FAO, 2011) found out that “in addition to the heavy burden of farm work on every crop and every aspect of the farming system, women are the primary care-givers in the home. This means they cook, fetch water and fuel-wood.” According to the Population and Housing census of 2015, 64.7% of the Sierra Leoneans rely on fuel wood for cooking and 32.2% rely on charcoal, out of these majority of them are in the rural areas. (SPHC, 2015)

4.13 Gender and fisheries and aquaculture

Fisheries and aquaculture are a crucial economic activity for people in the traditional, small-scale sector of fish production in Sierra Leone. Fish and other aquatic animals are also vital to food security. 33.6% of all households are engaged in fishery and aquaculture (SPHC, 2015). With regard to the gender dimension of fisheries and aquaculture, men fish and are exposed to occupational health and safety risks. Women are mostly involved in post-harvest activities, like processing and marketing. Gender discrimination stems from the low value attached to women’s work in this sector and women remain in it, which perpetuates their limited access to credit, processing technology, storage facilities and training.

4.14 Gender and animal production and protection

71.8% of rural women and men participate in small-scale animal production. Men predominantly manage large animals, whereas women are responsible for poultry and small ruminants. In comparison to women, male livestock keepers benefit from greater access to training and technology. Despite the fact that men
and women are involved in livestock production, discriminatory practices deny women access to resources, rights and services. There are gender differences in the risk associated with production income. Men’s income may be more at risk from outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, whereas for women, the primary dangers to health and economic risks stem from avian influenza.

4.15 Gender and crop production

Women contribute significantly to the agricultural sector, providing an estimated 75 percent of the active labour force in food production, processing, preservation, marketing and preparation (IFAD & FAO, 2011). A total of 85.4% of the households are engaged in crop production. Women’s labour is noticeable in most stages of every crop, including cash crops, vegetables, fruit and all rice varieties, and also in caring for ruminants and fowl. Weeding is predominantly performed by women, and women would join labour gangs to weed on large rice farms for cash payments. Manual cassava and rice processing are specifically done by women. Both men and women are heavily involved in swamp rice labour (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Women are often involved in the pre-, during and post-harvest processes of the household farming of each crop, which leaves them with little time to engage in other productive activities. Time constraints undermine women’s ability to perform activities such as weeding, which leads to lower productivity or quality of produce, and subsequently undermines food security, participation in FBOs and CSOs, and community processes. Men, on the other hand, have time to rest after work, as well as socialize outside the home.

Despite the central role of women in agriculture, they have the least access to means to significantly increasing output and yields (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). Their role is unrecognised in crop production, household food security and household nutrition. They face continued marginalisation and lack of recognition or evaluation of their efforts in development strategies (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Available literature on women and agriculture does not report statistics on women’s yields, women’s technology adoption rates, and women’s uses of input, which proved problematic in developing gender disaggregated data in this sector (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). The lack of evaluation and data results in policies that do not address the gender dimension to agricultural outputs, food and nutritional insecurity. The poverty among rural women points to the fact that there is a need to improve strategies to enhance equity and access, as women rely heavily on agriculture as form of livelihood.

4.16 Gender and rural infrastructure

Rural infrastructure facilitates business environment. It includes markets for post-harvest processing and storage, as well as wholesale and assembly markets (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). There are other rural infrastructures that include transport, energy, information and community technology (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). Many rural villages have no functional markets, and the problem is compounded by poor road network. Men and women are negatively impacted by the long distances they have to cover in order to market produce, but the situation is extremely bad for women who sell perishable items such as fruits and vegetables, unlike rice, palm oil and other cash crops produce by men (IFAD & FAO, 2011). There have been recommendations to women that harvest of fruits and vegetables be done in the morning to minimise post-harvest losses, but unfortunately, women’s reproductive roles – child care, cooking, fetching water and so on – do not allow them to do everything as planned. There is a lack of cold storage facilities in many areas, which affects fresh produce because even in cases where the women harvest on time, they may not be able to sell the items early enough (IFAD & FAO, 2011). In addition, even if transportation is available, women have financial constraints that limit their use of the same, and they must instead transport their produce on their heads (IFAD & FAO, 2011).

4.17 Gender and climate change

The country’s current Strategy Paper PRSP III recognises that climate change affects agricultural production. IFAD and FAO research also highlights some of the gendered implications of climate change. Rural women and youths are identified as being the most vulnerable in terms of their resilience to natural and climatic hazards, market risk and other livelihood shocks (IFAD & FAO, 2011). In some ways, this captures a certain degree of gender perspective on climate change. PRSP III recommends that mitigating measures be carefully designed and introduced, but unfortunately this is not captured in the log-frame of the document. The Government in
PRSP III made a commitment to come up with a framework to combat risk after the strategy was approved (GoSL, 2013). This is ironic because it is expected that the proposals be made in the country strategy paper, and be approved with all other thematic areas, issues, and interventions. Strategies required to create sustainable livelihoods without risk and uncertainty need planning for the long term, and should respond to the needs, constraints, and challenges faced by men and women.

### 4.18 Gender and disaster risk reduction and management

Disaster adversely undermines development gains, and impacts men and women differently. Gender inequalities make women more vulnerable to disaster. When disasters strike, women are the worse hit, and their ability to recover is slow. Yet, there is lack of research on gender and disaster. Men and women not only experience disaster differently, but even their response and recovery are unique, depending on the gender. According to a World Bank report on Sierra Leone, the division of labour and coping strategies of women is crucial to effective recovery. The report cited that an agricultural rehabilitation was ineffective because of the implementation strategy. After a disaster, seeds were distributed at household levels, without fully analysing who was in charge at the household level. Since men are considered to be the heads of households, they were the only people consulted on the kind of seeds to be distributed. This negatively impacted women because men and women farm different crops, and hence require different sets of tools and seeds (UN IASC, 2006). The issue was later resolved when Care International intervened, using an alternative approach of distributing seeds to all adults rather than household heads. Women received the seeds they grow, and this contributed to their income generation and empowerment alongside men.

In spite of the provisions in the Hyogo Framework for Action, which prescribed how nation states should address disaster risk reduction and management, Sierra Leone did not mention any of them in the current strategic plan, Agenda for Prosperity (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). These are governance systems, which include organizational, legal and policy frameworks; risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning; knowledge management and education; reducing underlying risk factors; and preparedness for effective response and recovery. Unfortunately, these are not reflected in the current country strategy. These steps should be thoroughly followed through from a gender perspective. In addition, interventions should address sociocultural practices that have the propensity to undermine women’s capacity to adapt, and provision should be made for insurance. Women should be allowed to fully participate in adaptation financing.
5. Stakeholder analysis

The inclusion of a stakeholder analysis in this report is meant to provide complimentary information for FAO in identifying potential partners for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in agriculture and the rural sector in Sierra Leone. In addition to providing a short description of the stakeholders, their objectives and main areas of work, it is important to include an explanation of the reason why they have been recommended to FAO as potential partners.

This research clearly spells out different sectors that are related to, or contribute to, agriculture, food and nutrition security at household and community level. This has been analysed in Section 3 and the relevant subsections. This demonstrates that there should be an inter-thematic relationship between the agricultural sector and other related sectors, which is presently not necessarily the case. Representatives from the following sectors: disaster risk reduction and management, climate change, rural infrastructure, crop production, animal production and protection, fisheries and aquaculture, social protection, land and water, rural finance and so on, will be key stakeholders. Most importantly, each of these sectors will be crucial to mainstreaming gender into agricultural-related processes.

For example, rural finance is crucial in agriculture, and more important is the need to eradicate gender inequalities in accessing finance for agricultural purposes. Each of these related sectors should be committed to the process and endeavour to mainstream gender within their respective sectors. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs should be capacitated to provide technical and play an oversight role to the Ministry of Agriculture, and sectors related to agriculture. Women-led FBOs, and women smallholder farmers should be capacitated so they can partner with the Ministry of Agriculture in implementing standalone projects for women in this sector. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender, together with related sectors, should collaborate to address gender inequality in agriculture and related areas to ensure household and community food security in the country.

The number of organizations/institutions working in agriculture are numerous and are not easy to present in a small subsection of this report. This is the case, especially, when the broader aspect of agriculture (food production, livestock, fisheries, forestry, natural resource management and so on), the mandate of FAO, is considered. This subsection therefore does not claim to be exhaustive, but presents information on some of the most commonly-cited organizations providing support to agriculture-related government ministries.

UN agencies and other international agencies working on agriculture in Sierra Leone should be strengthened so they might be in a position to provide technical support, advocacy and policy work, project implementation, provide technical and oversight support to the government, fund agricultural programmes and projects and so on.
Vegetables market in Freetown.

©Sebastian Liste/NOR for FAO
5. Gender assessment of the implementation and impacts of NAIPs

The Country Gender Assessment is now required to include a review of the implementation of the NAIP. This is because the NAIP has been the main focus of implementation of agriculture and rural sector programmes in the last five years. It is therefore expected that results obtained during the implementation of the NAIP contain up-to-date information on the sector. The review of the NAIP is done in two stages: (i) a review of the NAIP document, using a framework designed for this purpose and (ii) discussion with officials in charge of the implementation of the NAIP in the country.

6.1 A detailed review of the NAIP

This Sierra Leone NAIP (code-named the Smallholder Commercialization Programme Investment Plan [SCPIP]) emerged from the assessment of the *Agenda for Change*, Sierra Leone’s second PRSP, which identified agriculture as one of four strategic priorities and a critical factor in meeting MDG 1, reducing poverty and food insecurity. The NSADP (explained on page 20) is a broad, sector wide framework for putting the above objectives into action and also served as Sierra Leone’s adaptation of the CAADP Compact and the ECOWAP Compact. Its six thematic objectives are based on the CAADP pillars. The Operational Plan of the NSADP was the SCP, which was further developed into the NAIP (the NAIP is explained on pages 20-21).

Assessing the NAIP from a gender perspective revealed that the “intent” to ensure gender mainstreaming as a principle of implementation as stated in the NAIP document is not backed by specific gender targets and gender-related interventions, nor were the proposed modalities of gender mainstreaming explained. This presents a picture of the usual inclusion of a phrase or paragraph to give an impression of some attention being paid to gender issues.

Most specifically, a detailed analysis of the six thematic objectives of the NAIP from a gender perspective is presented below:

**Component 1: Smallholder Commercialization**

Production intensification, diversification, value addition and marketing (USD 69.472 million) with three main sub-components: (i) production intensification through FFS and FBO development; (ii) ABC establishment; and (iii) improved agricultural services.

The stated objectives for Component 1 are potentially beneficial activities for all small-scale farmers. These benefits however can be limited by gender-related factors such as lack of access to land, lack of security over held land, inhibiting investment and small and fragmented land, participation of both men and women in ABCs, none of which encourage progressive commercialization. Finally, access to finance is key to procurement of inputs. Given these potentially inhibiting factors, gender should be given more priority in the planning of similar activities, and gender mainstreaming mentioned in the document requires more baseline analysis and better conceptualization.

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39. An initial assessment of the NAIP in discussing “Policy level: political commitments and policies” in sub section ii is presented in pages 20-22 but this presents the document in a summary form. The analysis in section 5 reviews the NAIP in details and backs up the review with results of key informant discussions.

40. The italics texts under each of the components of the NAIP are author’s own analysis.
Component 2: Small scale irrigation development

The main objectives: development of small scale gravity irrigation systems, particularly inland valley swamps (IVS), in order to boost rice production. Also, other types of small scale irrigation (such as wells and boreholes systems in Boliland) will be supported on a small-scale basis to test their technical, social and financial feasibility.

This component discussed one of the main challenges of developing low-lands for rice farming, which relates to the tenure of low-lands. The youth are identified as a particular group that is disadvantaged though they are often the ones, as land borrowers, working on low-lands. The lack of mention of women, especially in the discussion of low-lands where rice is the chief crop farmed mainly by women, is a grave omission that reflects the gender issues in the NAIP. The document even recommends the full participation of land borrowers in the discussion of the rehabilitation of low lands. Though not stated, this is expected to include women as they form a large portion of land borrowers.

Gender assessment of cropping patterns will show that women farmers are dominant in low-land rice cultivation. Small scale irrigation schemes have proven more gender-responsive than large ones. This component should be specifically and explicitly organized around women rice farmers, not only to identify their felt needs but also to incorporate their knowledge in the conceptualization of improvement programmes, including to secure space for women in the rice value chain. The programme design is gender-neutral in spite of recognising women as actors.

Component 3: Market access expansion through feeder road rehabilitation

The objective of this component is to improve the ability of smallholders, market-oriented farmers and agri-businesses (including ABCs) to physically access markets and operate in a profitable way through the rehabilitation and effective maintenance of priority feeder roads.

The emphasis of this component of the NAIP is on the infrastructure aspects of market access: feeder roads, which must be complemented by the “soft issues” of market and access, as discussed below. The construction of feeder roads alone is a necessary condition but not one that is sufficient to guarantee market access for women. In paragraph 68 of the document, selection criteria for the prioritisation of road maintenance or construction is presented with no mention on the involvement of women in the identification of roads for maintenance or using the criteria of female-dominated crops as a way of complementing other roads to be maintained/constructed, which are most likely to be selected on the basis of male farmers’ preference.

Market development will benefit from better access to roads to supply centres; this could be beneficial to women if activities supporting management of their stock are included in order to reap temporal gains. Modern market development can exclude women if too capital-intensive and insensitive of other aspects of marketing in which they currently show their strength. Productivity improvement is also made complementary by increasing women’s market share through more economical activities; organizational linkages are key and these are omitted, often keeping women from linking with larger markets; price information will be key to ensure better bargaining. These are critical areas for gender-sensitive market development.

Component 4: Smallholder access to rural financial services

The objective of this component is access for smallholders and the rural poor and their organisations to rural financial services geared to meet their needs. This entails the use of Micro Finance Institutions or support to Financial Services Associations (FSAs) development; establishment of community banks and support to the Rural Finance Technical Assistance Agency (TAA).

This component will build on the known strength of women producers through existing FBO/cooperatives and ensure their greater access to informal credit. Transformation of these into more formalized MFIs does not consider constraints that erstwhile informal credit associations faced in accessing more formal systems. Thus,

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41. Youths are not gender neutral and this is usually the mistake of policy planners. Efforts should be made to disaggregate youths in all policy documents such as ‘young men’ and ‘young women’.

42. This that requires further explanation. It needs to be clear on whether the interventions are women or men small holder farmers. They are different, there issues/needs/contributions etc are different.
there is great possibility that women’s access to finance will be enhanced, but if and only if mechanisms for special targets of outreach, addressing collateral restrictions, bureaucracy vis a vis their literacy level and so on are required, which should be more gender-explicit.

The document, however, does not go into any details regarding the importance of establishing mechanisms for increased financing to women farmers, or the use of the mechanisms described and their benefit to all groups of farmers. This is a limitation on the gender-responsiveness of the document. Even though a component on increase in rural finance is expected to benefit women, as they are often the ones most disadvantaged with regard to access to finance, this benefit should not be assumed and should be explicitly stated to aid implementation.

**Component 5: Strengthening social protection, food security, productive social safety nets**

The three core strategies (a triangle of interventions) will be (i) providing safety nets and employment opportunities and productive asset creation; (ii) protecting the health and nutrition of pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children of food-insecure vulnerable households while promoting early education; and (iii) strengthening national capacity in disaster early warning and disaster/risk response mainly through buffer stock programmes.

Given that this is a component where a majority of (poor) rural women will be targeted for assistance, it is imperative that the modalities are transformative for all women and not only those in extreme vulnerability. The activities are potentially transformative, especially with the training and employment component.

Given the serious rate of malnutrition of children under 5 years, targeting of the most acute children will be supported through supplementary feeding and nutritional support. Feeding for children under 2 years will be universal, with complementary nutritional support for all. Targeted supplementary feeding will be provided to malnourished PLW. Nutritional support packages will be combined with support training sessions on food and nutrition at community and institutional levels. A national school feeding programme will be supported to improve food intake and nutrition of all primary school students. This initiative will be complemented by establishing school gardens and tree planting in all primary schools.

The social protection component has both implicit and explicit benefits for specific categories of women, as well as women in general through improved health and nutrition of their children. A two-step targeting approach using geographic targeting of high-poverty districts, followed by district targeting of the most vulnerable chiefdoms with high numbers of poverty and persons within the intended category, will lead to a better catchment of poor female-headed households.

Food for work beneficiaries will be voluntary (due to lower wages). Women in extreme poverty, especially landless women, will self-identify. Food for training beneficiaries will be those involved in trainings selected for food assistance, prioritising FFS. This will impart sustainable capacity to poor women in agriculture. It is expected that women and youth will comprise about 50 percent of those benefiting from these activities.

The social protection intent is necessary but not sufficient for the majority of women farmers who are vulnerable to transient poverty due to lack of resources, assets and linkages to knowledge systems and markets. This is the transformative category – those who need leverage for developing their subsistence economies. Social protection for women farmers needs to identify various categories and their needs. For instance, the only category of women specifically mentioned are PLW; this is a transient mechanism that is not necessarily transformative. Social protection of the appropriate kind should be programmed to target women in different circumstances, such that this component contributes to achieving the Zero Hunger goal but also transformative such that its impacts are sustainable. Social protection should not be limited to hunger. It should also address the health and security of women overall.

This component is firmly entrenched through a social protection policy. Linking gender-equitable outcomes with the national gender policy would be more sustainable. This was not mentioned in the policy conception.

**Component 6: Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP) planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation**

This incorporates information and knowledge sharing, baseline studies, annual participatory workshops and beneficiary impact assessment.
Roles of the gender ministry and other women’s groups, activities and so on are not specified in the coordinating system for the implementation and monitoring and evaluation (MeE) of the NAIP. However, the only gender-sensitive strategy in the NAIP coordination is that “Gender mainstreaming will be promoted throughout SCP including management and operations and MeE, where indicators will be developed to track gender mainstreaming.” A framework of such gender evidence was not presented to assess how they respond to the ECOWAP-CAADP outcome/results framework as well as indicators of Zero Hunger.

Overall NAIP document assessment

The Sierra Leone NAIP document holds great potential for greater impact on men and women, given the selected components that are to be implemented. Component 2, on irrigation, has a focus on small scale irrigation that is likely to equally benefit men and women; Component 3 on access to markets holds great potential to benefit both men and women if feeder road selection includes the needs of both, but more so if increasing market access were to be ensured beyond the production of feeder roads; Component 4, on access to rural financial services, especially with an emphasis to “bring financial services” closer to communities, will have a positive impact on women’s access to finance if the conditions for the same in formal institutions (collateral and so on) are not applied in community banks. One of the three core strategies of Component 5 (social protection, food security, productive social safety nets) is entirely dedicated to protecting the health and nutrition of pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children of food-insecure vulnerable households while promoting early education. Components 1 and 6 leave more room for improvement with regard to integration of gender issues. Indeed, Component 1 did not mention the key role of women-based ABCs in agricultural productivity, and how these can be harnessed further, and Component 6 did not highlight the strong role of women farmers’ groups in the country and their importance in providing feedback and monitoring.

So the conclusion is that without being explicit, the Sierra Leone NAIP is relatively gender-responsive, but this could be improved upon greatly if women-specific issues were mentioned and systematically and comprehensively addressed in each of the components.

6.2 Critical issues and outcomes of the NAIP (applying the NAIP Assessment Framework)

Key informant interviews and in-depth discussions have been held to complement information obtained from the review of the NAIP documents to assess gender integration, from preparation/planning to implementation, monitoring and reporting. The framework for assessing NAIPs (see Annex 1) is used and the results obtained are discussed below. The results have been analysed using five assessment criteria, each with specific areas of focus and questions. The preparation and implementation of the NAIP is assessed on the bases of (i) relevance, (ii) effectiveness, (iii) efficiency, (iv) likely impact, and (v) sustainability using a gender lens.

Relevance

The relevance of the NAIP, with regard to integration of gender, is assessed on three bases; (R1) national development priorities; (R2) participation of relevant stakeholders in the process of preparation and implementation and (R3) budget allocation.

All respondents indicated involvement in the process of developing the NAIP, except for the Head of the Women in Agriculture and Nutrition Unit (WAIN), who had not been employed at the time the document was being prepared. According to the Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, “everyone as a Ministry is involved, in consultations, drafting the document etc. he emphasized that the NAIP stems from the CAADP and we are all involved as Ministry.” He continued explaining the process, recalling that fortnightly meetings were held to report on the development of the document and that these meetings continued during implementation by providing regular implementation progress. In drafting the document, they had consultants but worked alongside them.

On the specific questions of whether a “gender assessment was carried out as part of the country or sectoral context of NAIP,” the responses were a no from all respondents:

Participation in the process of developing the NAIPs and in direct implementation: On the question of consultation in preparing the document, especially with regard to the involvement of individual women and women’s groups, the responses were mixed. Some respondents hold that individual women and women’s
groups were consulted, but these are “influential” women’s groups in the cities whose needs are often different from those in rural areas. Other respondents do not see a distinction regarding influential women and agreed that some consultations took place, but this was not sufficient. The respondents could not affirm the inputs from women that have been included in the NAIP.

On the questions of allocation of budget, given that no gender assessment was undertaken, the process was not consultative enough with regard to the integration of gender issues. It was then obvious that programmes and projects proposed in the NAIP did not reflect the situation of men and women, boys and girls, and a budget was not allocated on this basis.

Notwithstanding, with regard to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, including curbing food waste and post-harvest losses, the main results framework is closely linked to the CAADP and ECOWAP Zero Hunger goals:

- Increase agriculture sector growth from its current estimate of 4 percent to 7.7 percent per annum by 2015 (SAM Analysis, 2009).
- Increase incomes of farming households by 10 percent.
- Increase household food security by 25 percent.

But this is not done from gender equality and women’s empowerment perspective. This is not surprising, since, as discussed in the policy section, the CAADP and the NSADP did not do a thorough gender assessment of the situation (FAO, 2012). The insufficient gender assessment in such a strategic document that informs national programmes on agriculture does have an impact on how gender is mainstreamed at the country level. CAADP needs to be reviewed to adequately integrate gender concerns in agriculture for it to have the desired effect on women and agriculture.

**Effectiveness**

This category assesses the effective strategic and programmatic responses of the NAIP, both in the preparation of the document and in its implementation. Effectiveness is assessed in three ways.

**E1: Institutional capacity for (gender) programming** which looks at the extent to which the NAIP has used (or not used) existing gender-related country structures like gender focal points in relevant institutions to support the integration of gender in the NAIP process; the establishment of partnerships for gender mainstreaming; capacity building which includes (i) institutional through producer organizations, (ii) individual through extension services, (iii) sex disaggregated data and (iv) training on the use of improved and labour-saving technology.
E2: Monitoring and Evaluation which reviews the indicators used for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the NAIP and in particular interrogates the use of sex disaggregated data.

E3: Gender-sensitive outputs which assess specific focus on results for women and gender equality.

The findings of the in-depth and key informant discussions with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture is that the NAIP preparation and implementation process did not use existing gender mainstreaming structures in a systematic way. However, the NAIP implementation process has built on strong partnership with development partners and non-governmental organizations for gender mainstreaming of the process. UN Women was cited by all those interviewed as one strategic partner, and it seems there have been more recent interaction between the UN agency and the Ministry. USAID and WFP were also cited. Most specifically, a programme, “Scaling up Nutrition” (SUN), which is being implemented along with the NAIP, has increased active collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Gender and draws on technical backstopping from CSOs like the Focus 1000, as mentioned by Mrs Mariama M Turay, Head, Women in Agriculture and Nutrition Unit (WIAN) and Mohamed Ajuba Sheriff, Deputy Director, Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Statistics Division (PEMSD), MAFFS. Madam Turay also indicated that the MAFFS now works with the Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Health on gender focal points and nutritionists, especially with regard to the SUN programme. She emphatically noted that “We do collaborate with the Ministry of gender; we have a project together with this Ministry and FAO on helping women in agriculture business; we work with women farmers’ groups through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs.”

On capacity building for effective implementation of gender-responsive interventions in the NAIP, it is noted from the interviews that there are no current efforts for the systematic collection and use of sex disaggregated data. The Deputy Director of PEMSD noted that there is “not much provision for sex disaggregated data or capacity to collect such in the NAIP.” He added that a lot has been done on project implementation, but not on gender disaggregated data and that projects do not budget for this data collection. The situation is different for capacity for extension services, where the head of WIAN stated that in fact the WIAN unit is housed under the Extension Service division and that district-level extension service providers work together with women in agriculture and nutrition units to provide these services to women farmers and build capacity. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture added in this case, that there are demonstration plots specifically for women farmers in all districts in the country. “In 2013, 2014, and 2015 I was doing capacity building myself with demonstration farms providing extension services specifically to women across the country,” she stated.

No additional information on relevance was noted during the discussions on the involvement of women and women’s groups in monitoring and evaluation of the NAIP specifically, as well as on gender-sensitive outputs. The Head of WIAN emphatically noted that the unit monitors and collects feedback from women and mentioned plans to go out into the field to monitor the use of recent financial “donations” in the form of checks distributed to women’s groups. Monitoring entails collecting information from women and is being carried out, but this seems specific to a particular intervention and not a general practice for the running of the NAIP as a whole.

Efficiency:

This category of assessment checks on the efficient use of natural resources. Three areas are looked at:

E1: Natural resource management assessing how the NAIPs address resource use efficiency.

E2: Technological efficiency assessing how labour is used in the NAIP implementation process.

E3: Value chain development and access to markets analysing how the business models related to public-private partnerships, private sector value chains, and public procurement for agricultural products, works and services address gender equality.

Natural resource management is not a major component of the NAIP, so discussions with key informants did not elicit much information on this category. The Head of the Women in Agriculture Unit acknowledged that the Unit is not very involved in the forestry aspect/work of the Ministry, but mentioned that the Deputy

43. For more information on the SUN project, please see http://scalingupnutrition.org/sun-countries/sierra-leone/
Director of the forestry division is a woman, which of course does not necessarily entail that the integration of women in natural resources management is receiving any further attention. The use of alternative energy sources to reduce deforestation is high on the agenda of the implementation of the NAIP. The Deputy Chief Agriculture Officer mentions that wood is being replaced by charcoal; charcoal is being changed to biogas and women now prefer biogas or general methane gas for domestic use. He also noted that the Ministry of Agriculture has procured “pilet machines” to convert waste products into energy, but these are yet to be tested. He noted the Ministry’s community forests that can be used as energy sources. The responses to the NAIP’s provision of farm-level efficiency (fertilizer, seeds, tools and so on) for women farmers and labour-saving technologies to promote their productivity had not produced positive responses, indicating that the NAIP has made no such provisions for technological efficiency.

There were consistent positive responses among the key informants with regard to the value chain development, and the involvement of women in this process and linking women to markets. On linking women to markets, the LFM (linking farmers to the market) project was mentioned. The WIAN ensures that women are included as part of this project; there is also promotion of the linking of women-specific crops, like vegetables, to markets. Also, the Ministry of Agriculture is providing machines to help reduce post-harvest losses in those areas and crops where women play a dominant role. Training programmes are being provided in post-harvest management for farmers within the ABCs. Examples of the machines being introduced include rice mills, threshers, parboiling tanks and so on. Rice processing activities have historically been the domain of women, and given that some ABCs are entirely women, it is expected that value addition on rice processing will have a positive impact on them.

There are almost no interventions on expanding women’s activities from on-farm to off-farm in the NAIP, as one of the respondents noted: “We concentrate on on-farm activities.” There are also no provisions for women’s groups’ access to public procurement for agricultural products, nor promotion of private investment flow into women’s value chain enterprises.

**Likely impact of the NAIP**

The likely impact of the NAIP is being assessed on two fronts:

I1: Decent rural employment, which includes how the NAIPs provide for the following: gender-equitable decent wage employment opportunities for rural women, men and youth and improvement of working conditions in rural areas.

I2: Food security, which reviews how the NAIPs address the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition from gender equality and women’s empowerment perspective, including in curbing food waste and post-harvest losses.

The findings indicate that whereas food security is a major component of the NAIP and women are being supported through the ABCs in food processing, especially rice, there are no specific activities being implemented to eradicate negative working conditions for women in agriculture and its value chains. The Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer noted that there is “no discrimination on the role played by women in agriculture in general and at the Ministry of Agriculture in particular.” He added that there is, now, a lot of openness towards women’s leadership of various divisions and conditions of work are the same for women and men.

Generally, there is not much information forthcoming from the respondents on the changes that are likely to occur after the implementation of the NAIP, which technically ended in 2015. Respondents could not provide information on any evaluation report of the programme. However, a study on “Drivers of Success CAADP Implementation in Sierra Leone, case study” (Gbla, Spencer & Wilson, 2014) prepared in 2014 (towards the end of the implementation of the NAIP), provides a glimpse of its possible impact. The report noted public investment in agriculture as one of the main drivers of success in this sector. The report also cited the encouragement given to smallholder farmers’ formation of groups known as ABCs and supported by the government and other development partners in the form of improved inputs, tractors and processing equipment as a contributing factor to the success observed in increased agricultural productivity in recent years.
It is worth mentioning that the CAADP Technical Review Panel undertook a technical review of the Sierra Leone NAIP.44 Some of the findings of this review are consistent with the NAIP assessment review being carried out by ECOWAS/FAO. For instance, one of the recommendations of the CAADP review was for the plan to include a section describing in greater detail the consultation process of the formulation of the NAIP, and that the investment plan should more elaborately define the M&E system and how it will support dialogue, transparency and accountability measures. The CAADP review is not a gender assessment of the NAIP, but provides useful insights on what is required for it to be more responsive to the country’s needs and challenges in agriculture, which often leads to better addressing the needs of women and men.

Finally, it must be noted that the impact of the NAIP, especially with regard to the gendered impact of its implementation, is quite difficult to ascertain at this point for several reasons. First, the NAIP itself has not been designed with a gender lens in mind, even though some aspects of its implementation considered the special needs of women both by design and also by default.45 Second, the implementation of the NAIP has only now been concluded. In addition, several other initiatives, programmes (the SUN programme, for instance) and projects were being implemented alongside the NAIP, some of which had a stronger focus on women. An assessment of the impact of the NAIP is therefore difficult to single out, since observable positive impacts are either directly a result of the implementation of these other programmes or projects, or they have contributed to the results obtained, in some indirect manner. A detailed assessment of the likely impact of the NAIP might be required at a later stage.

**Sustainability**

The assessment criteria on sustainability is meant to assess the strategy for putting policy into action, which includes:

**S1:** Financial inclusion, which reviews the special measures, if any, undertaken in the NAIP to ensure the financial inclusion of women and youth farmers and their producer organizations and agribusinesses.

**S2:** Resilience of agriculture and food systems, which reviews how the NAIP addresses resiliency from a gender perspective.

The discussion with the respondents did not produce much information on the NAIP’s intervention in increasing access to finance for women. Instead, the officials mentioned that this measure is one of the components of the NAIP and that the ministry worked closely with community banks to increase access to finance for the rural population. The discussions and the NAIP document are not specific on regarding the provision of financial access to women, but there are current efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure financial inclusion of women. All key informants mentioned recent checks of monies distributed to women’s farmers’ groups. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture stated that financial access for women is improving as there are specific programmes designed for their use, like vegetable farming. She also mentioned that the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security had provided funds for the “three month hunger/lean period” for each of the groups of 25 farmers. There are about 1000 such groups in the country and they each received 25 million Leones (roughly USD 3500).

However, the recent hand-outs of checks to women’s farmers’ groups, though a good move for an initial boost, should not be construed as a means of sustainable financing for women’s agricultural productivity. The lack of a gender-responsive budget or even specific portions of the NAIP budget being allocated for women-specific activities and gender equality activities questions the sustainability of its few interventions that attempt to address women and men’s needs, concerns and interests in agriculture. There are no specific interventions to ensure resilience of agriculture and food security; instead, Component 5 focuses on strengthening social protection, food security and productive social safety nets, which are often short-term measures to reduce vulnerability of farming populations and not sustainable means of increasing productivity in the midst of adversities, weather or otherwise.

44. CAADP Post Compact Review, Sierra Leone, Technical Review Report, Dakar, June 2010 by the CAADP Technical Review Panel
45. The focus of some of the components of the NAIP (increase in rural financing, rice processing etc) are typical agricultural activities carried out by women.
6.3 Key lessons learnt on the implementation of the Sierra Leone NAIP

The experience from discussions with key informants from the Ministry of Agriculture on the preparation and implementation of the NAIP has produced some key lessons that can be shared here:

- Having a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Agriculture responsible for highlighting the needs, interests and concerns of women farmers is a big step to integrating gender issues in agriculture. But equipping this unit with qualified officials should also be prioritised, as should be providing the requisite funding for the Unit’s work.

- Having dedicated officials in the decentralised structures of agriculture at the district level is an additional institutional structure that will reinforce the integration of gender not only at the central level, but also at the district level.

- A lot more gender-related and women-specific work in agriculture is noted during the in-depth interviews and key informant discussions, unlike during the desk review of the NAIP. This could either be due to recent efforts made after the design of the NAIP, or could point to the fact that gender issues have not been well captured in the document.

- Direct support to women (financial support) as a particular disadvantaged group in farming and agro processing is likely to close the gender inequality gap in agriculture, especially if this initiative is meant to be done sustainably and not as a one-time activity.

- Collaboration between the gender machinery and the Ministry of Agriculture directly through joint projects could yield more benefits for the economic empowerment of rural women.

- Political leadership and directives from senior management on the integration of gender is key to success, in addition to the availability of women in senior management positions. Having a woman deputy minister who is passionate about gender issues has seen some changes being introduced, elevating the situation of women in agriculture.
7. Findings and conclusions

7.1 Key findings

Gender prescribes social relations in the country and in this context, the agricultural sector. It determines opportunities, aspirations, standard of living, access to resources, status in society, as well as self-perception. It is therefore imperative for gender to be mainstreamed in all aspects of the agricultural sector in order to achieve gender equality or women’s empowerment in agriculture specifically, and in the country as a whole. This section of the report presents both the findings and recommendations for an analysis. The recommendations follow specific findings and these are placed in italics in the text.

Legal, political and institutional gender context

There is significant progress by Sierra Leone to advance national legislations and public policies to promote gender equality and women’s rights in agriculture consistent with key international and regional agriculture, and gender equality and women’s empowerment instruments.

However, national laws, policies and programs for the most part are not informed by gender disaggregated data. Data is only available on sectoral issues such as agriculture, forestry, land and so on. A majority of the sectoral policies do not have gender disaggregated data so current implementations on gender and agriculture are not informed by the same.

Discrimination in marriage has been partly resolved by the passage of the Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorces Act, particularly for the majority of the rural women who marry customarily, and whose unions are often considered illegal. There is now equality in marriage by law, but systems do need to be put in place to enable the registration of customary marriages. Sierra Leone is also currently working on the Equality Bill which will hopefully guarantee 30 percent women’s representation in decision-making at all levels, and subsequently implement one of the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Actions.

Although legislative progress is being made, discriminatory practices remain widespread, and the lives of women, particularly rural women, remain largely unchanged. This is due to many reasons, including legislative deficits and lack of sufficient measures for implementation and enforcement, limited funding and lack of proper monitoring of gender programmes.

Political leadership and directive from senior management on the integration of gender is key in addition to the availability of women in senior management position. Having a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Agriculture responsible for highlighting the needs, interests, concerns of women farmers is one big step to integrating gender issues in agriculture.

The country gender assessment is limited in providing information on the responsibility of local councils as a devolved function to distribute agricultural resources and other opportunities to women. There is also need to better highlight the role of the private sector, the banks and other financial institutions in support of agriculture and women’s participation in the sector. Subsequent and similar studies should consider the role of the local councils in enhancing gender equality and improve women’s access to agricultural resources and should examine and acknowledge in more details the role of private sector.
**Situation of women in social, economic and political development**

At the national level, women are under-represented in elective and appointed offices. For example, women constituted 15 percent of parliamentarians, 10 percent of Cabinet Ministers and 13 percent of deputy Ministers in 2012.

There is almost parity in the number of boys and girls enrolled in primary school, but retention and completion of education remains a challenge with **high drop-out rates** for girls and low enrolment in secondary school.\(^46\)

The literacy rate amongst the youth is 59.3 percent for females and 75.8 percent for male. The gross enrolment for in primary is 100 percent, 36 percent in senior secondary school and 8 percent in tertiary (UNDP, 2016). The employment structure of Sierra Leone has not changed much in the last 25 years.

Women represent about **49.2% of the employed population force**. About **63%** of women are employed in **agriculture** against 56.4% of men, meanwhile 4.9% of women are employed in industry against about 12.2% of men. In the formal or service sector, women comprise 28.5% with being men having 23.3%. According to ILO models estimates, there are **95% of women who are self-employed and with a vulnerable employment against 85% of men**. Own account workers represent 83% of women employment and 73% of men. **Only 5.6% of women have a waged or salaried work against 15.5% of men**, so three times more men have access to salaried or waged work. The situation has hardly improved since 1998 (Figure 7).

![Figure 7. Evolution of type of employment and its vulnerability for male and female since 1998](source: Base de données genre de la Banque Mondiale accede en avril 2018, extradite de la base de données ILO en novembre 2017)

**Women, gender roles and household management**

Patriarchal norms shape gender roles and responsibilities. In rural communities, these roles are usually rigid and place a heavy work burden on women. Men clear land, women plant and tend crops, then harvest and market them. Women undertake specific work in agriculture, as well as assist their husbands in cash crop production. For example, they are exclusively responsible for manually processing cassava and rice, which is a heavy burden. In addition to farm activities, women are responsible for most domestic and reproductive chores. Women cook, fetch water and fuelwood, clean and launder clothes (often at relatively remote water

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sources). In undertaking reproductive roles, men rarely support women who take care of the sick, the elderly and children, with no child care services available. The time constraints women face may limit their ability to perform activities such as weeding, which results in lower productivity or quality of produce and which in turn limits their food security and that of their children.

Patriarchal norms entail usually that decision making lies mostly with the head of households, in most case the husband or father. In Sierra Leone, 31% of women do not participate in any household decisions which concern their welfare (like decision to visit their own family, to take care of their health and for major household purchase). In 2013, 28.6% of women aged 15-49 were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months while only 40% were making their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care. In 2013, 62.8% of women believed that a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of 5 common given reasons (argues with him; refuses to have sex; burns the food; goes out without telling him; or when she neglects the children...). The proportion is higher among the poorest quintile (70%) and least in the richest quintiles (52.8%). The proportion has sharply declined by 20 points since 2005, where it was 88.5% in average, 90% among the poorest and 73% for the richest quintile (World bank gender data base, extracted from Demographic and health survey).

Rural infrastructure and women burden

Poor water and sanitation is still a challenge for rural communities, with about 48% access to improved water instead of 57% for urban areas, and 32% access to improved sanitation against 58% in urban areas (GOSL 2013 and MICS 2010). This situation exposes rural people to disease, lack of privacy, indignity and poor hygiene. It also charge women with additional burden as they are mostly responsible to collect water and firewood for domestic and productive use.

Due to the lack of transportation facilities in rural areas, women and girls have to travel long distances to fetch water and wood for family consumption. Women carry the farm produce on their heads when they go on foot to the market. The lack of transportation facilities, in addition to limited or no electricity supply, increases post-harvest loss in rural areas, making women and girls vulnerable to sexual abuse on the road.

Situation of women in agriculture, food and nutrition security

Women contribute significantly to the agricultural sector, providing an estimated 75 percent of the active labour force in food production, processing, preservation, marketing and preparation (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Women’s labour is noticeable in most stages of every crop, including cash crops, vegetables, fruit and all rice varieties, and also in caring for ruminants and fowl.

In Sierra Leone, victims of malnutrition and disease are predominantly women and children, who constitute 80 percent of the country’s population (Sierra Leone NAPA, 2007). Overweight has increased sharply since 1999, notably for women, rising from 24% in 1999 to almost 36% in 2016, while the proportion of overweight men increased from about 13% to almost 18% over the same period (world bank gender data base, extracted from World health organization data base). Rural women are particularly vulnerable to nutritional and health problems due to frequent childbirth, coupled with their heavy farm and home workload. In the rural areas, women are the custodians of household food security and health. They typically engage in diversifying the household’s farming to include vegetables and small ruminants, and they have primary responsibility for children’s nutrition and health care, subsistence agriculture, manual food processing and water fetching.

Women in agriculture and rural areas have less access than men to productive resources. Cultural and local practices discriminate against women when it comes to ownership of land, and in rural areas these practices are often more powerful than the written law, which allows women to own land. Sierra Leone society practices patrilineal inheritance, so land is generally passed down from father to son. Also, women face the risk of losing control over land when their husband dies or if they divorce. Distribution of water and land is a major factor in fighting against poverty. Discriminatory practices such as laws that deprive women of access are often the cause of such poverty. Gender equality in land rights will only be attained if there is legal recognition as well as elimination of cultural and social practices that undermine women’s rights to land. Sufficient effort has not been put in place by the GoSL and partners to ensure equitable access to natural resources and means of production.

Women have less access to extension services and technologies. Extension systems tend to promote innovations that benefit farmers with more assets and higher level of education. They mainly target established
farmers, predominantly men, while poor women who desperately need the knowledge tend to be neglected. In rural areas, it has been observed that men are not comfortable having their wives around men in places where these services are available. The dearth of women extension workers makes the situation precarious for women farmers. In addition to women’s limited access to technology (tractors, power tillers and vehicle hire, for instance) for agriculture, they are also excluded from training programmes. This discrimination is justified and normalized by the gender stereotypes and traditional perceptions held by women, which teach them that they do not have the physical capability to undertake hard work or operate machines.

The discrimination women face in crop production undermines their full participation, and this results in low agricultural productivity, food shortages and rural poverty (IFAD & FAO, 2011). For the most part, women’s contribution to farming has always been associated with food security, but it is worth noting that they also participate in commercial agriculture, alongside food production. This statement is deliberately made to emphasize, or not limit, women’s participation in commercial crop production.

Rural women and men participate in small-scale animal production. Men predominantly manage large animals, whereas women are responsible for poultry and small ruminants. In comparison to women, male livestock keepers benefit from greater access to training and technology. Despite the fact that men and women are involved in livestock production, discriminatory practices deny women access to resources, rights and services. Sierra Leone’s Constitution guarantees equal access to financial credit for all citizens, but rural people, especially women, have very little or no access to credit and other financial services. Reasons include limited financial literacy, poor knowledge of administrative procedures, transportation difficulties and cultural barriers.

The study required more evidence on women’s leadership positions in FBOs, women cooperatives, women farmer groups and so on as well as rural women’s contribution to agricultural decision-making. A two-pronged approach needs to be undertaken to ensure women’s participation in decision-making. There is need for effective training and empowerment among membership and leadership in women’s organizations, cooperatives, workers’ unions and so on to ensure they have a voice and decision-making powers.

Social protection for women is critical to addressing constraints and barriers men and women face. In addressing social protection issues, it should be analysed at three levels: the gender-specific, which include societal norms and practices that apply to men and women by virtue of their gender; gender-intensified, which apply to the inequalities between household members, reflecting norms and customs on the distribution of agricultural input; and gender-imposed, the forms of gender advantage that reflect discrimination in the wider public domain.47

Distribution of water and land is a major factor in fighting against poverty. Discriminatory practices such as laws that deprive women of access are often the cause of such poverty. Gender equality in land rights will only be attained if there is legal recognition as well as elimination of cultural and social practices that undermine women’s rights to land.

There is limited openness and transparency about gender disparities in agriculture and rural development to enhance effective participation of women at all levels.

Gender capacity for agricultural development

There is a presidential task force on agriculture – it is an inter-ministerial committee on government flagship programme – SCP (GoSL, 2013). This task force includes MAFFS, who is in charge of production, diversification, value addition and market; small scale irrigation; and coordination, planning, communication, and monitoring and evaluations. The Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) is responsible for access to market through feeder roads. The Bank of Sierra Leone (BOSL) is in charge of access to rural financial services and the National Commission for Social Action (NACSA) responsible for social protection and productive safety nets. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs is conspicuously absent from the task force. This points to the fact that gender is not considered a substantive issue in agriculture. All the other sectors that are considered important have representation in the task force. This should be revisited so that the Ministry of Gender is part of the group. The MSWGA needs to have quality representation in this task force. The same applies for the MSWGA, where there is a task force but MAFFS is not represented. The task forces consist

mainly of agencies and government departments that are in charge of redress in situations of violence such as police, judiciary and so on. Discrimination and abuse occur across a broad range of fields, so MSWGCA should open the task force up to other ministries.

Since agriculture contributes significantly to the country’s economy, and women play an integral role in this sector, it would have been worthwhile for the Gender Ministry to prioritise some standalone initiatives for empowering women in agriculture.

Each of the ministries related to agriculture is supposed to have a gender focal point that will provide technical support to mainstream gender into their thematic work. Unfortunately, not all line ministries make provision for this position, and where the position exists, there are weak capacities. The gender focal point needs to be grounded on agricultural issues for them to be able to support the process.

7.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to the GoSL and its financial and technical partners to expand women’s opportunities and gender equality in inclusive agricultural growth.

7.2.1 Reinforce institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in agriculture

GoSL should:

• **Strengthen the involvement of the Gender Ministry into the task force on agriculture.** It would be advisable for the GoSL to set up an inter-ministerial committee at political and technical level on agriculture and food security to include MSWGCA, MLCPE, MAFFS and MOFED. GoSL should also ensure the placement of gender focal points in sectors that impact agriculture, food and nutrition security and management of natural resources.

• **Invest in training of staff** from the relevant ministries and institutions on gender mainstreaming in all sub-sectors of agriculture, with support from various development partners including FAO.

• **Mobilize resources to build capacity on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting** for the lead ministry in charge of the national planning process. Government personnel at the local level should be targeted in particular.

• **Conduct an agricultural census to ensure the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data and the establishment of databases** that will systematically integrate gender-sensitive information on gender in agriculture, food and nutrition security and natural resource management.

FAO should:

• **Work with the UNCT to continue to build capacity on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting for the lead ministry in charge of the national planning process**, with a focus on agriculture, food and nutrition security and natural resource management. Government personnel at the local level should be targeted in particular.

• **Support the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data to inform sound policies and programmes** in the agricultural sector. The availability of Sex-disaggregated data collected through agricultural and livestock censuses and surveys will help inform and improve the design, implementation and effectiveness of laws, policies, programmes and projects.

7.2.2 Strengthen capacities to integrate gender in agricultural policies and programmes

The review of policy and programme documents related to the agricultural sector revealed the limited expertise to mainstream gender in agriculture in Sierra Leone.

The following recommendations are made:

• **Strengthen support to WIAN** by ensuring the unit is well equipped, staff participates fully in all agricultural programmes, and a clear budget line is put in place to deliver its programmes and policy work. The development of a gender policy or strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security is also recommended.48

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48. The recommendation for the gender policy for MAFFS was put forward by participants at the validation of the current report.
• Provide technical support to **ensure that policy documents of all agricultural sub-sectors are informed by a thorough gender assessment**, with analysis of gender inequalities, power relations and gendered division of labour, highlighting women and men’s constraints, needs, interests and opportunities.

• **Facilitate the active participation of women farmers, women agricultural researchers, women land rights activists, women FBOs, women small holders farmers** in the policy process related to the design and implementation of the second generation NAIP and other agricultural policies and programmes.

• **Develop both qualitative and quantitative monitoring indicators** to inform all agricultural programs, including the second generation of agricultural investment plans. This includes baseline sex disaggregated data and information, against which progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment should be monitored. The CPF should provide a strategic entry point for mainstreaming gender into GoSL’s agricultural programmes.

• **Ensure the active participation** of women farmers and FBOs, women’s cooperatives involved in agro processing, women agricultural researchers, and CSOs working on gender equality and women’s empowerment in policy forums related to the elaboration of the second generation NAIP and other key policy documents.

**FAO should:**

• Ensure that its Country Programming Framework (CPF), Technical cooperation projects and other projects and programmes adequately address gender inequalities in agri-food systems and natural resource management.

• Strengthen the gender dimension of its policy support to the GoSL including within the framework of the elaboration of the second generation NAIP.

**ECOWAS Commission should:**

• Provide technical and financial support to GoSL for domesticating the Supplementary Act relating to Equality of Rights between women and men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS region, as it relates to agriculture, food security and nutrition.

7.2.3. **Enhance access of women to economic opportunities in agriculture**

The following recommendations are made to the GoSL, working in tandem with various partners:

• GoSL and development partners should offer **financial literacy training** to ensure that women can compare products and make informed decisions about their production and trading activities. In addition, micro-finance institutions and other financial institutions should promote a gender-sensitive culture throughout their operations. **GoSL shall provide incentives for lending money to women** and attain AU commitments on parity for access to finances.

• GoSL should facilitate **legal literacy** for rural women so they are aware of their legal rights such as the **rights to land, food and decent employment**, and know how to exercise these rights.

• GoSL and development partners should provide education on the **differential impact of disaster on men and women** - the vulnerability and ability to recover from disaster is also different for men and women. Evidence has showed that in situations of disaster, rural women and youths are identified as the most vulnerable in terms of their resilience to natural and climatic hazards, market risk and other livelihood shocks (IFAD & FAO, 2011). Gender perspective on climate change vulnerability and adaptation, and on other risks and shocks shall be included.

• The GoSL and its partners should invest in **building capacity of women to manage horticultural businesses** and linking them to markets given women are predominantly in horticulture and vegetable gardening.

• **The GoSL should integrate gender in market analysis, value chain mapping, as well as a stakeholder analysis**, identification of constraints and opportunities for the value chain, and develop a gender sensitive strategic plan of action.

• The GoSL should take appropriate measures to ensure **gender equitable access to natural resources** such as land in line with the SDGs and the **Voluntary guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests** in the Context of National Food Security.

• The ECOWAS Commission and FAO should **support the GoSL in designing programme documents on empowering women in agribusiness** for resource mobilisation within the framework of the second generation NAIP.


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## Annex 1: Gender assessment of NAIP Framework

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<td>R1: policy conception</td>
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<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicit in the food and nutrition security status. The assessment was not systematic through the Plan.</td>
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<td>Relevance of the interventions in the NAIPs relative to FAO’s (gender equality) Mandate/ goal or to government priorities (NDPs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>The poverty and food security status indicates that “women and youth are particularly vulnerable and trapped in perpetual poverty ……This undermines their participation in local decision-making, access to productive resources…”, equitable participation in public projects and services and opportunities to integrate into market systems. Specific indicators were presented for nutrition status of children and youth in poverty, but none provided for women. The nutrition and health component are informed by explicit indicators of child and women’s health but there were no indicators on gender in the production system itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security and nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) This section will review how the NAIPs address the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition from gender equality and women’s empowerment perspective, including in curving food waste and post-harvest losses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there targets designed to achieve gender equity in the programme?</td>
<td></td>
<td>G2a</td>
<td>“Gender mainstreaming will be promoted throughout Smallscale Commercialization Programme (SCP) which is a core NAIP strategy, including management and operations and M&amp;E, where indicators will be developed to track gender mainstreaming”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there outputs, outcomes designed to achieve the goal of gender equality and eradication of hunger and food insecurity?</td>
<td></td>
<td>G2a</td>
<td>In a limited number of cases, yes. Under the social safety net programme, “A target of about 36,000 of the most food insecure Pregnant and lactating Women (PLWs) will receive supplementary feeding rations annually”. Target outputs for child nutrition supplement and school feeding programmes as stated have positive impacts on women in poor households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there provision for the role of women in curbing food waste and post-harvest losses in the NAIP?</td>
<td></td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>None reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there interventions to address issues of malnutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td><strong>Component 5: Strengthening Social Protection, Food Security, Productive Social Safety Nets</strong> “30 percent of food insecure households in the country will be supported in meeting basic food security and nutritional needs, as will other identified vulnerable groups, namely infants, PLWs, children under 5 years and primary school students”.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **R2: Participation**  
**Participation in the process of developing the NAIPs and in direct implementation** | Is gender analysis incorporated in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of all field programmes and projects (evidence).          | G2a                    | “Indicators will be developed to track gender mainstreaming”. This is a recognition of gender-based need. However the modalities were not specified for systematic implementation. |
|                                                                                 | Is the process of preparing the NAIP explained?                                                                                           | G1                     | Wide consultative process down to the grassroots implies such sensitization and communication. Gender equality strategies including FAO’s mandate require that inclusion of women’s representation be explicit. |
|                                                                                 | Does it show the participation of different stakeholders?                                                                               | G1                     | Yes, Many are specified but women’s participation was not mentioned.                                                                                                                                    |
| **Leadership and participation**                                                 | Did the NAIP implementation process involve the Ministry of Gender, Gender Commission and any other gender mainstreaming institution?   | G0                     | Not reported                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                 | Are women’s groups consulted in the preparation of the NAIP?                                                                             | G1                     | A widely consultative process including civil society and CBOs. Implicitly, women’s groups involved                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                 | Did women’s groups play a specific role in the preparation of the NAIP?                                                                   | G0                     | Not reported                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                 | Did the gender focal person in the Ministry of Agriculture involved in the preparation of the NAIP?                                         | G0                     | Not reported                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                 | Does the NAIP clearly reflect the input of women’s groups?                                                                               | G0                     | Not reported                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| **R3: Budgeting**  
**Agriculture and rural development financing and investments**         | Does the NAIP systematically allocate resources to address women as well as men’s experiences, needs and priorities?                   | G2a                    | Explicit only in the food and nutritional security component reported only for PLW, not all poor women.                                                                                                  |
<p>|                                                                                 | Does the NAIP budget for a standalone programme or project that specifically target women to address gender inequality and existing gender gap between men and women? | G2a                    | Only in components targeting pregnant and lactating women (PLW) were targeted’                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                 | What percentage, if any, of the NAIP budget is allocated to women-specific targeted Interventions (FAO’s minimum standard target is 30%) | G2a                    | ‘nutrition safety for PLW budget head’ Other possible areas are not disaggregated by sex.                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                 | Does the NAIP make provision for gender responsive budgeting?                                                                             | G0                     | Not reported                                                                                                                                                                                          |</p>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong> <em>(Effective strategic and programmatic responses)</em></td>
<td>To what extent has the process made use of relevant country supporting institutional framework (like GFPs) in preparing the NAIP?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E1: institutional capacity for (gender) programming</strong></td>
<td>Are there effective partnerships established for gender mainstreaming in agricultural policies and programmes?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Gender mainstreaming mentioned throughout the SCP but the process/method was not discussed nor activities specified for needed capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service delivery systems and institutional capacity</strong></td>
<td>To what extent has the preparation of the NAIP made use of relevant regional and country gender reports (like ECOWAP+10) in preparing the NAIP?</td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td>The Plan emanated from the agricultural component of the &quot;Agenda for Change&quot;, hinged on CAADP and ECOWAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(9)</em></td>
<td>Has the NAIP incorporated processes for institutional capacity building of women agricultural producer organisations?</td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td>Through Farmer Field Schools (FFS), &quot;The estimated number of direct beneficiaries supported by FFS and FBO strengthening include 82,500 producers forming about 2750 FBOs organised into 650 ABCs. It is expected that about half of these will be women and youth&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(9)</em></td>
<td>Does the NAIP make provision for capacity building for gender-sensitive extension services?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicit in the planned training of an estimated 700 MAFFS and SLARI staff at decentralised and central levels. In addition, about 4,500 District and Ward Council members will benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture and food systems:</strong></td>
<td>Is there provision for building capacity for availability of sex disaggregated data and gender statistics?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Mentioned but not elaborated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(1)</em></td>
<td>Are processes for collective action through cooperatives encouraged in the NAIPs?</td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td>As reported above – formation of FBOs and Agri-Business Centers. However the threat posed by community leaders in very patriarchal system at the chiefdoms may exacerbate exclusion of women; explicit equity strategies are required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does NAIP incorporate training targeted to enhance rural women’s use of improved technologies?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicit in Component 1 via “gender mainstreaming”, unclarified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is NAIP enhancing gender-sensitive research for labour saving technology?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
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Annex 1: Gender assessment of NAIP framework
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<tr>
<td><strong>E2: Monitoring and Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Are there gender sensitive indicators?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicit in the assessment of food insecure and malnourished population only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a role for monitoring or collecting feedback from women and girls in the M&amp;E framework?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implied but not elaborated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the sex disaggregated data being used to highlight the differences of anticipated impacts of programmes on men and women?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Planned but modalities not elaborated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E3: Gender sensitive Outputs</strong></td>
<td>Are there any specific outputs in the NAIP that address women and girls productivity in agriculture?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicitly through their participation in FFS, assured through targeting throughout the SCP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there any other gender sensitive outputs?</td>
<td>G2a</td>
<td>Safety net protection would cover about 650,000 children under 5 years, 385,000 primary school students and 180,000 PLWs, totaling 1,218,070 persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are women and girls identified as a specific beneficiary group?</td>
<td>G2a</td>
<td>The estimated number of direct beneficiaries supported by FFS and FBO strengthening include 82,500 producers forming about 2750 FBOs organised into 650 ABCs. It is expected that about half of these will be women and youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there outputs on labour saving technologies for women?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>None reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency: resource use efficiency</strong></td>
<td>To what extent has the NAIP incorporated principles of conservation of agricultural resources and biodiversity that taps into indigenous knowledge of rural women?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E1: Natural resource management</strong></td>
<td>Has the role and status of women being considered in the processes of natural resource management?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there processes for soil and seed management that include women?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does NAIP make provision for alternative energy sources for women to reduce deforestation?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there provision for development of integrated farming systems?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E2: Technological efficiency (labour use)</strong></td>
<td>Does NAIP provide for farm level efficiency (fertilizer, seeds, tools etc) for women farmers?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Within the Component 1 if systematically gender mainstreamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are labor-saving technologies provided use to promote women’s productivity?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E3 Value chain development and access to markets</strong></td>
<td>Are there programmes and initiatives that link women farmers to national, regional and global markets?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicit in Component 3: “increased self-reliance and empowerment of smallholder FBO/ABCs derived from improved understanding and information of markets, management and business planning capacity, bargaining power and networking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Processes to expand women’s activities from on-farm to off-farm included?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>None reported; possible impact if component 3 is implemented if planned market development programmes are gender-sensitive manner, by identifying felt needs of women marketers and processors, beyond infrastructural development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are women’s networks being strengthened for value-chain participation?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicit in the gender mainstreaming of the SCP; “increased self-reliance and empowerment of smallholder FBO/ABCs derived from improved understanding and information of markets, management and business planning capacity, bargaining power and networking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will women’s groups access to public procurement for agricultural products be enhanced?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Implicit in the gender mainstreaming of the SCP; Also reliance on FBOs for outreach, including their training and networks for input supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will NAIP promote private investment flow into women’s value chain enterprises?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Through the MFI/FSAs created to promote access to micro-credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there training programmes for post-harvest management for women farmers?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>None specifically reported</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likely Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1: Decent Rural employment</td>
<td>Will implementation of the NAIP contribute to gender-inclusive agricultural transformation?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Not explicit; but this is a possible outcome dependent only on explicit strategies to remove gender-based constraints in the core components such as the SCP and sustainable farm management etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will NAIP implementation increase rural women’s employment?</td>
<td>G2a</td>
<td>Through the gender-mainstreamed SCP and the Food for work and food for training programmes in Component 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there initiatives to provide care services for women farmers?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will there be reduction in unpaid farm labour of women and youths?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will NAIP promote the integration of youths into productive farming?</td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td>Explicit mention of youth integration into many of the components of the NAIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will more women and youths be employed in new agricultural value chains?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Not explicit but indirectly as beneficiaries of livelihood programmes. Benefits include “improved livelihoods notably for youth, women and deprived groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will social protection programmes for women in agriculture be provided?</td>
<td>G2a</td>
<td>In Component 5; Targeted to the poorest households by self-identification. Majority of such would be women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will there be measures to eradicate negative working conditions for women in agriculture and its value chains?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there any provisions in the document that are likely to perpetuate further gender inequality?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Absence of asset-building programmes for women especially land and savings; Compare “facilitating access of the youth to secure land”. Focus of marketing development on feeder roads and not facilitating women’s production and market constraints, especially processing/preservation and storage; This would strengthen middle men rather than women farmers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2: Food security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will the national food self-sufficiency be improved from implementing the NAIP?</td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a reduction of the food insecure population?</td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a reduction of the proportion of women among the food insecure population?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a reduction in the malnourished population?</td>
<td>G2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a reduction in the proportion of females in the malnourished population?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>In a limited way; except through PLW targeted for food assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3: Zero hunger</td>
<td>Indicate the progress made towards zero hunger during the implementation of the NAIP</td>
<td>G2a</td>
<td>Through food assistance for the vulnerable; zero hunger will also be achieved through enhanced production income for small scale farmers in the SCP; this is not sufficiently gender-sensitive</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability Strategy for putting policy into action which include financing</strong></td>
<td>Does the NAIP promote financial support for rural women farmers.</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Through the MFIs-FSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S1: Financial inclusion</strong> (5) This section will review the special measures undertaken in the NAIPs to ensure the financial inclusion of women and youth farmers and their producer organisations and agribusinesses.</td>
<td>Is their provision in the NAIP to partner with financial institutions to provide access to credit for women?</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Partnership between FSAs and Community Banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is financial inclusion being promoted through producer organisations and agribusinesses. (e.g women's trust fund etc)</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>increased self-reliance and empowerment of smallholder FBO/ABCs derived from improved understanding and information of markets, management and business planning capacity, bargaining power and networking;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S2: Resilience of agriculture and food systems</strong> (6) Promotion of sustainable and climate resilient agriculture from a gender perspective is essential. This section will review how NAIPs address resiliency from a gender perspective.</td>
<td>Are women being strengthened to practice climate smart agriculture?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the NAIPs support securing women's asset base?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are women farmers being supported in crop insurance programmes?</td>
<td>G0</td>
<td>Not planned</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Gaps between policy commitment and implementation, and limited availability of sex disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators to inform sound policies, programmes and budgets have kept women marginalized in many sectors. No baselines mean no measurement of progress in effectively implementing the array of commitments towards gender equality and women’s empowerment in agriculture, food security and nutrition, rural development and management of natural resources. This report was jointly prepared by FAO and the ECOWAS Commission within the framework of their technical cooperation project on “Gender responsive regional and national agricultural investment plans for meeting the Zero Hunger challenge in the ECOWAS region”. It reveals gender disparities in access to critical agriculture and rural resources, knowledge, opportunities, services and markets. It explores the existing gender relations and gaps in the various sub sectors of agriculture, and their possible causes and impact on food and nutrition security, and makes policy recommendations to address them.