



A GLANCE AT GENDER

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IN FOCUS

Empowering women in agribusiness is high on the agenda of African countries, as evidenced by the "Declaration on 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063" adopted during the 25th African Union Summit held in Johannesburg in June 2015.

Building Blocks in Gender Mainstreaming

Technology matters in unleashing the full potential of women farmers to contribute equally to and benefit from agricultural growth and transformation in Africa. Women's lower productivity in agriculture is mainly attributed to persistent gender gaps in access to technology and innovation, improved seeds and fertilizers, and extension and financial services. Female headed households have lower use of mechanical equipment than male headed households for all countries for which data is available. There is sufficient consensus on the urgency to invest in labor saving and productivity enhancing technologies for women farmers, food processors and agribusiness owners.

FAO has developed and introduced numerous technologies and innovations to support women in agricultural value chains. Such technologies support the diversity of women's roles as a continuum from the kitchen where they pound yam, extract sesame oil or process peanut butter to the farm where they produce crops and the cooperative where they process food and other forest products.

FAO's technologies range from farming tools to food processing equipment and storage facilities to curb post-harvest losses. These include: fish smoking and fish drying equipment; egg incubators to increase the hatching rate; fuel efficient cookstoves; modern beehives, honey and wax processors and harvesting kits; dehulling machines for various crops, solar dryers, and improved and user friendly granaries and metallic silos that reduce the demand for women's labour and time during the grain storage. FAO will intensify its efforts in this area in support to the "African Union Campaign to banish the hand held hoe to the museum".

To enhance women's contribution and benefit from formal agriculture and agribusiness value chains, the Declaration invites member States to: increase mechanization, technological innovation and skills development for women; intensify the financial inclusion of women in agribusiness; empower women with knowledge and skills to use modern technologies in agribusiness and agricultural value chains; and enforce women's rights to productive assets including land and their access to public procurement processes in agribusiness. It also calls upon financial institutions to have a minimum quota of 50% to finance women to grow from micro to macro businesses.

The Declaration also stresses the need to integrate gender responsive indicators in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Results Framework of the Malabo Declaration and ensure that the Continental Free Trade Area promotes the empowerment of women in agribusiness and agricultural value chains. FAO will strengthen its partnership with the African Union Commission and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordination Agency to promote women in agribusiness.



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Women dehulling soybean using a simple manual dehusser

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Angola: Visit of Hon. Filomena Delgado



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Hon. Filomena Delgado and FAO staff

Angola's Minister of Family and Women's Promotion, Hon. Filomena Delgado, paid a courtesy visit to FAO Representation on 20 April 2015 to mark the strong partnership between FAO and the ministry, and discuss the positive results in the implementation of the Country Programming Framework. In her remarks, she described FAO as a model United Nations agency in supporting rural women and the Ministry of Family and Women's Promotion.

Minister Delgado appreciated the way the FAO Representation has put gender into practice with women holding over 60% of decision-making positions in the office. She expressed her gratitude for FAO's concrete support through two projects: a technical cooperation project to strengthen the institutional and operational capacity of public and voluntary sectors; and the project "Promotion of family horticulture in support of rural women in north-western Angola province of Kwanza Norte" aimed at strengthening the capacities

of 300 women in production and supply to their families healthy foods while improving upon their socio economic conditions. Both projects have had a positive impact on the empowerment of women and youth in rural areas. Minister Delgado also praised FAO's support to national extensive consultations of rural women led by her Ministry in 2013 under the chairmanship of H. E. José Eduardo Dos Santos, President of Angola, which resulted in the formulation of a national programme to support rural women.

The FAO Representative, Mamoudou Diallo, warmly thanked Minister Delgado for her visit to the FAO office which illustrates her appreciation for FAO's work in Angola. He then briefed her on the diversification of FAO's partners which now include the Ministries in charge of fisheries, environment and family and women's affairs in addition to the Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Forests.

As a way forward, Minister Delgado and

Mr Diallo agreed to: upscale and expand the results of the joint initiatives to other provinces and increase their visibility; prepare an action plan for partnership in 2016; and hold a special round table for the Ministry of Family and Women's Promotion and its development partners before end 2015, similar to those facilitated by FAO for the Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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African Union Launches a Campaign to "Banish the Hand Hoe to the Museum"



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The 25th African Union Summit witnessed the launch of the "African Union Campaign to banish the hand held hoe to the museum" on 14 June 2015 in Johannesburg.

Under its aspiration 1 on "A prosperous Africa based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development", Vision 2063 of the African Union strives for a "modern, productive and attractive agriculture, using science, technology, innovation and indigenous knowledge", and states that "the hand hoe will be banished by 2025."

During the launch of the Campaign, Her Excellency

Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission handed over tillers to the President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, AU Chairperson and to President Macky Sall of Senegal, Chairperson of the NEPAD, as an invitation to African Heads of State to provide modern technologies to women farmers.

Women's access to technology is a top priority of FAO to free their time, reduce their drudgery, improve the productivity of their labour and curb post-harvest losses.

Through its Gender Equality policy adopted in 2012, FAO has pledged to work with countries, other UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs) and bilateral and private sector partners to reduce women's work burden by 20% through improved technologies, services and infrastructure.

Zimbabwe: Upscaling and promotion of conservation agriculture through mechanization

Conservation agriculture (CA) promotes mulching which suppresses weeds germination, hence reducing women and children's workload of weeding the CA field. The main focus of the project implemented in 21 districts was capacity building of women and men farmers to implement sustainable farming practices.

FAO in collaboration with NGOs, agriculture colleges and research institutions established about 161 CA demonstration plots country wide. The demonstration plots were used to illustrate the effects of fertilizer rates, time of planting, liming, weeding, mulch and crop rotation and the mechanization of CA. The project introduced alternative CA tillage methods that included use of ripper tines, direct seeders and hand jab planter. It provided women and men farmers with 237 single row animal drawn planters, 24 two-row, three-row and five-row planters and fertiliser



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distributors, 300 ripper tines, 2300 hoes, 500 hand seeders, and 282 jab planters. The project provided training on CA mechanization to 7 985 farmers, a majority of whom are women.

The use of mechanized CA equipment significantly reduces the time and labour demands of women especially in the digging of basins.

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