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BEHIND



Empowering Africa's
Rural Women
for Zero Hunger
and Shared Prosperity



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KEY MESSAGES



If women have the same access to skills, resources and opportunities as men, they will be powerful drivers in the fight against hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

Empowering women in agriculture, value chains and trade will accelerate the achievement of the Malabo Commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ending hunger by 2025 in Africa is possible if we address the gender inequalities in production and reduce post-harvest losses.

It is essential to tackle food security, nutrition and rural poverty through a holistic approach that integrates the adaptation and mitigation of climate change, biodiversity, and peace and security. This is key for the empowerment of rural women.

Through partnerships, investments and concrete actions, we can improve the status of rural women.



Ending hunger by 2025 in Africa is possible if we address the gender inequalities in production and reduce post-harvest losses.

It is estimated that 56 percent of the African population will live in urban areas by 2050. If we are to meet this growing demand for food, we must harness the full potential of women.

The African Union gender equality commitments focus on achieving 30 percent documented land ownership and 50 percent finance for women. These are pre-requisites to reach the Malabo Commitments.

Giving women decision making power within the household and the community will allow them to have access to economic opportunities. This is in line with the new Malabo indicator on women's economic empowerment in agriculture.

56%
African
population

► Urban areas by
2050



A strong momentum to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in agri-food systems



Almost 60% of the population still live in rural areas in most African countries. **Agriculture is the most important economic sector** that employs over 50% of the population, with women representing about 50% of the labour force in agriculture.

Women contribute extensively to food processing and marketing, household nutrition, and natural resource management. They are also the predominant labour providers in agri-businesses and agro-industries (FAO, 2011a).

Persisting gender inequalities constrain women's productivity and food security and nutrition contribution. Embracing gender transformative approaches is therefore critical to achieve accelerated agricultural growth, shared prosperity, improved livelihoods, and zero hunger.

The African Union (AU) is strongly committed to gender equality through various protocols and policies that address the gender imbalances in agri-food systems. For example:

- The Agenda 2063 emphasizes the need for gender equality, parity and women's empowerment, with a specific emphasis on ensuring that rural women have access to productive assets, such as land, credit, inputs and financial services.
- The 2014 Malabo Declaration promotes women's participation in agri-business and value chain. Its associated evaluation frameworks include a target of 20% of empowered rural women (AUC, NEPAD, 2015 and 2017).
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 promotes a transformative agenda for gender equality, and the empowerment of women in agriculture and value chains, food security and nutrition, and the management of natural resources in the context of climate change.
- The Declaration of "2015, Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063" promotes women's access to productive resources; mechanization; technological innovation; education and skills development. It also calls upon financial institutions to have a minimum quota of 50% to finance women, in order for them to grow their businesses from micro to macro level.
- The "African Union Campaign to confine the hand hoe to the museum" was launched in June 2015. In October 2015, another AU Declaration was endorsed to set a target of 30% documented land rights be allocated to African women by 2025.
- The Declaration of "African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women" was adopted in July 2016 and addresses among others rural women's rights to food, land and decent employment.
- The new AU Gender Strategy 2017-2027 builds on already existing commitments and targets focusing on rural women. It emphasizes a transformative approach to empower women





Embracing gender transformative approaches is therefore critical to achieve accelerated agricultural growth, shared prosperity, improved livelihoods, and zero hunger.

economically, build their resilience and protection, improve gender enabling environment, and reinforce women's voice, leadership, and visibility. (AUC, 2018b).

Based on these premises, **the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have formed a strong partnership to advance a transformative agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in agri-food systems.**

Together, the agencies have prepared a Regional Outlook on Gender and Agri-food Systems to enhance gender considerations in policies, programmes and investment plans. The Outlook reviews the situation of women across agricultural sectors, in line with the Malabo Declaration and along AU major gender commitments. The Outlook builds on an extensive review of existing statistics, more than 100 references, gender audits of 38 National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIP), in-depth country gender assessments (CGA) carried out in 40 countries, and reviews by over 20 experts. This information brief presents the main findings of the Regional Outlook.



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Prevailing gender gaps hinder progress in achieving Malabo impact targets



The Regional Outlook highlights the crucial roles of women in food production and food security. Women contribute to the family farm and they have their own activities to generate income and meet household food needs.

Women tend to dominate subsistence agriculture, non-timber forest products enterprises, small ruminant livestock raising and livestock feeding, and fish processing, amongst others. Women also dominate the transformation, conservation and marketing of agri-food products, mostly in the informal sector, including informal trans-border trade.

Women are also involved in **household food security and nutrition** through the education and care of children, the preparation of safe and nutritious meals, and the diversification of household food intake through their home garden and incomes. Nutrition of the lactating mother is key for children, including their brain formation (FAO; 2017a). Investing in women's education, nutrition knowledge and economic empowerment has

stronger impact on food security and nutrition of children than similar investments in men, as women tend to spend a larger portion of their income on children and family welfare (AfDB, 2011; FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2017). For instance, women's educational levels have a strong impact on child nutrition and health. Women with secondary school education have up to two times less stunting in their children (CGAs Chad, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia). In times of

shocks, women play a key role in the **resilience of households**, mobilizing their assets and developing coping mechanisms.

Increasing women's incomes and coping skills yields significant benefits in terms of family nutrition and health, children's school performance and resilience. Closing productivity gaps could increase production and consumption by 1.5 to 10% and reduce poverty by 1.2 to 13% (Figure 2; AfDB, 2016). Therefore, gender equality

and women's empowerment should be center stage in implementing and monitoring the Malabo Declaration on "Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods".

Important gender gaps are identified in the impact targets of the Malabo Declaration:

- 25.2% of female compared with 23.7% of male are **food insecure** in sub-Saharan Africa (FAO,

Box 1: Malabo Declaration and Commitments

1. Recommitment to the Principles and Values of the CAADP Process
2. Recommitment to enhance investment finance in Agriculture: Uphold the 10% public spending target; Operationalization of Africa Investment Bank
3. Commitment to Zero Hunger – Ending Hunger by 2025: At least double the productivity; reduce Post-Harvest Losses (PHL) at least by half; and reduce stunting to 10%
4. Commitment to Halving Poverty, by 2025, through inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation: Sustain annual sector growth in GDP at least 6%; Establish and/or strengthen inclusive public-private partnerships for at least 5 priority agricultural commodity value chains with strong linkage to smallholder agriculture; Create job opportunities for at least 30% of the youth in agricultural value chains; ensure preferential entry and participation by women and youth in gainful and attractive agribusiness
5. Commitment to Boosting Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Commodities and Services: Triple intra-Africa trade in agricultural commodities and fast track continental free trade area, and transition to a continental Common External tariff scheme
6. Commitment to Enhancing Resilience of Livelihoods and Production Systems to Climate Variability and Other Shocks: Ensure that by 2025, at least 30% of farm/pastoral households are resilient to shocks
7. Commitment to Mutual Accountability to Actions and Results Through the CAADP Result Framework: conduct a biennial Agricultural Review Process

Source: AUC, NEPAD, 2015



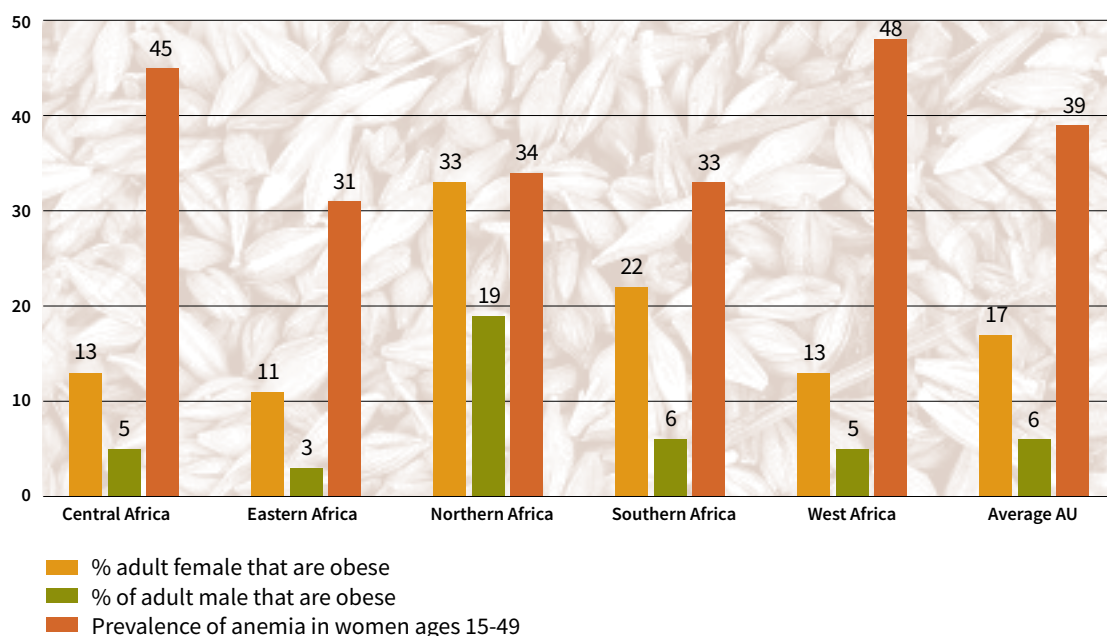
IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2017). 39% of adult females suffer from anemia while obesity increases sharply, reaching 17% for females against 6% of male at AU level (Figure 1).

- **Women's deficits in agricultural productivity** range between 20 and 30% in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (literature review in AfDB, 2016 and Figure 2). Closing such gender gaps could increase production and consumption by 1.5 to 10% and reduce poverty by 1.2 to 13% (Figure 2).

- **Per capita food losses before consumption** are 120 kg to 170 kg/year in Sub-Saharan Africa, over 180kg in Northern Africa. Over 40% of food losses occur at post-harvest and processing stages that are mostly dominated by women (WB, NRI, FAO, 2011). Gender gaps are key contributors to post-harvest losses, as women have less access to adequate technology and equipment (CGAs Zambia, Botswana, Eswatini) and they face severe time constraints to meet post-harvesting required schedule. (Aidoo, Danfoku & Osei-Mensah, 2014).

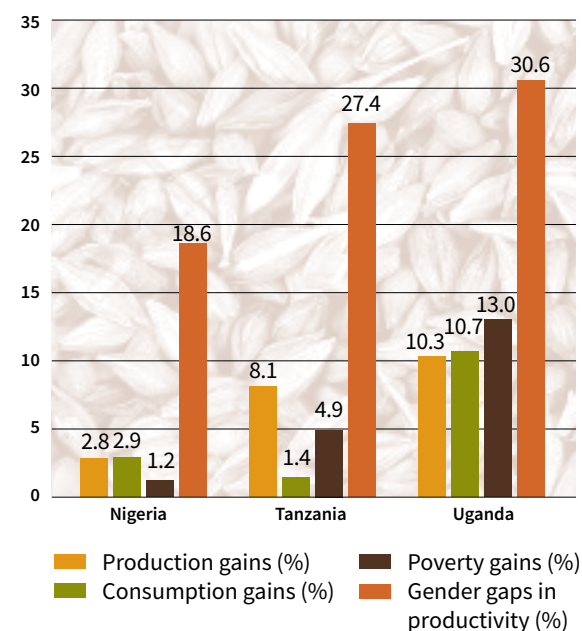
- **Women and female-headed household (FHH) in SSA are at greater risk of living in poverty.** Female earned income (excluding non-market income) represents between 30% (Northern Africa) to 65% of male income (UNDP development indicators series, 2015). FHH, are generally over-represented in poorest categories but they have a **faster poverty reduction rate** and have contributed strongly to the recent poverty reduction trends (World Bank, 2015).

Figure 1: Prevalence of obesity and anemia in 2016



Source: World Bank Gender Database from WHO statistics

Figure 2: Gender gaps and potential gains from gender equality in agricultural productivity



Source: AfDB, 2016a, based on LSMS ISA dataset

- The recent study of 24 African countries covering 80% of African population showed that **the proportion of FHH increased across the continent**, representing now 26% of all households but with differences across countries and within FHHs. 62% of FHH do not have any residing adult male, (69% of female heads not being married). When there is a residing male, it is mostly the son or grandson of the female head, more rarely the spouse (only 19%). Those without residing adult male nor supporting spouse are usually the poorest (World Bank, 2015).
- Women and FHH tend to be **more vulnerable and less resilient to risk, climate change and environmental degradation** as they depend more on natural resources for their income; are responsible for water and fuel wood collection; and have fewer assets and less access to financial services. For instance, women have a 20-30% gap in capacity to come up with emergency funds in case of disasters (Global index database, 2017) such as those caused by the Ebola epidemics, the fall army worm crisis and the drought caused by El Nino. Women also tend to sacrifice their meals and assets when there is a need.

The Regional Outlook reviewed systematically women's constraints and enabling factors to achieve greater gender equality in agri-food systems. The transversal analysis shows that gender gaps and constraints in access to

productive resources, services, skills, markets and decent jobs lead to important gaps at impact level in reaching the Malabo goals. Further analysis shows that such constraints also come from insufficient gender institutional capacities and weak enabling environment. Constraints and enabling factors have been regrouped by categories corresponding to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) results framework and its women empowerment indicator, AU gender strategy and gender equality and women empowerment framework and similar frameworks developed in literature (e.g. BMGF, 2018).

Figure 3 summarizes the results of such analysis. It also identifies three main categories of factors that will be further analyzed in the subsequent sections:

- The inner blue circle represents the **gender gaps (GG) in CAADP level 1 impact indicators** related to food security and nutrition, wealth and poverty, productivity, resilience and sustainability.
- The first category (green circle) includes the **direct drivers** of such gender gaps, i.e. the lower access of women to key productive assets, inputs, productive time, finances, knowledge, market, work opportunities as well as unequal distribution of value generated.

- The second category (orange circle) includes the **institutional factors** that contribute to such gaps (part of CAADP level 3 indicator on institutional capacities and inclusive processes, 3.1. and 3.2): weaker capacity of rural institutions to deliver services that benefit women, weaker capacity and agency of women to lobby for the access to such services, insufficient inclusion of women in the governance of agri-food systems and weaker empowerment of women at household level that constrain their economic opportunities.

- Finally, the third category (brown circle) includes constraints related to **the enabling environment** that is not sufficiently conducive for gender equality and women empowerment, both in the agricultural sector (policy, investment, legal framework and accountability systems - partly CAADP level 3 indicator 3.3.to 3.6) and other dimension (rural infrastructures and services, social context).

- The gender icon serve to identify **important gender issues** that are not specifically addressed in the CAADP result framework but are included in AU gender strategy and most gender equality and women empowerment frameworks.

Figure 3: Key direct and indirect drivers to gender gaps in CAADP impact indicators





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Women do not have equal access and control over productive resources and opportunities



Based on the review of the constraints leading to the gaps identified previously, several common key issues were identified (green in the Figure 3) and are considered important elements in CAADP result framework:

- **Women have less access to and control over land** meanwhile women's secured land tenure has been linked to important gains in women's welfare, productivity, equality and empowerment (GSARS, 2016b).
 - Size of land owned by women is 20 to 70% less than that owned by men (IFPRI, 2013 and reviews of CGAs). Female households

(households without male adult) have on average 45% less land (FAO, Rural Livelihood Information system, 2017).

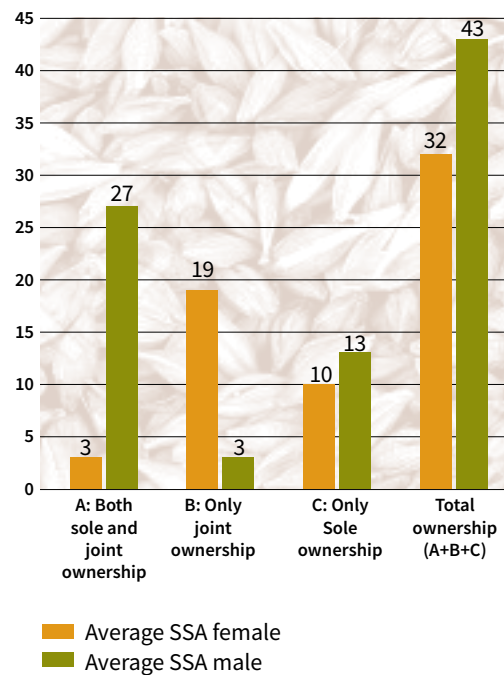
- Land owned by women is often of lower quality with less access to irrigated land.
- About 43% of males against 32% of female¹ own agricultural land in 27 SSA countries through either joint, sole

ownership or both (Figure 4). However, women own land mostly through joint ownership. Only 13% of female against 40% of male have sole ownership on all or part of the land they own (A+C in Figure 4). In 6 countries, land solely owned by women represented 17% of the land while joint land represented 52% of the total land (Figure 5).

- In conjunction with limited sole ownership, women have **insufficient and fragile access to land and water**, with short-term user rights lent by their husbands or traditional authorities and easily withdrawn, preventing them from installing irrigation equipment, planting trees and adopting long term conservation practices (GSARS, 2016b and CGAs reports).
- Women and FHH have **limited livestock assets. Yet, livestock ownership is positively** correlated to poverty reduction and enhanced resilience (FAO, 2012a).
- Women own between 13% to 25% of cattle in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Niger and Gambia (CGAs). The specific analysis of female households (without adult males) show that they own almost 50% less of large ruminants, such as cattle and camel (Figure 6) and the total size of their livestock is half (Figure 7).

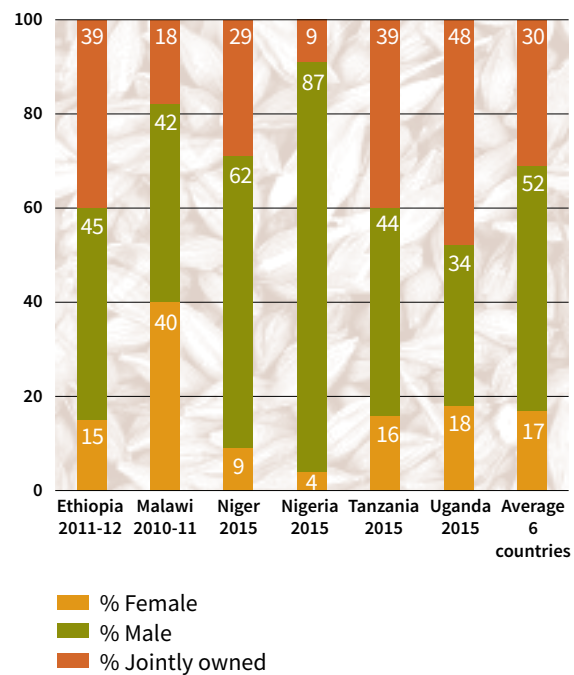
¹ Out of total population, involved or not in agriculture

Figure 4: Type of agricultural land ownership for female and male (average sub-Saharan Africa – 2010-2017)



Source: World Bank Gender Database, from Demographic Health Survey spanning 2010-2017 and covering 27 countries in sub-Saharan Africa

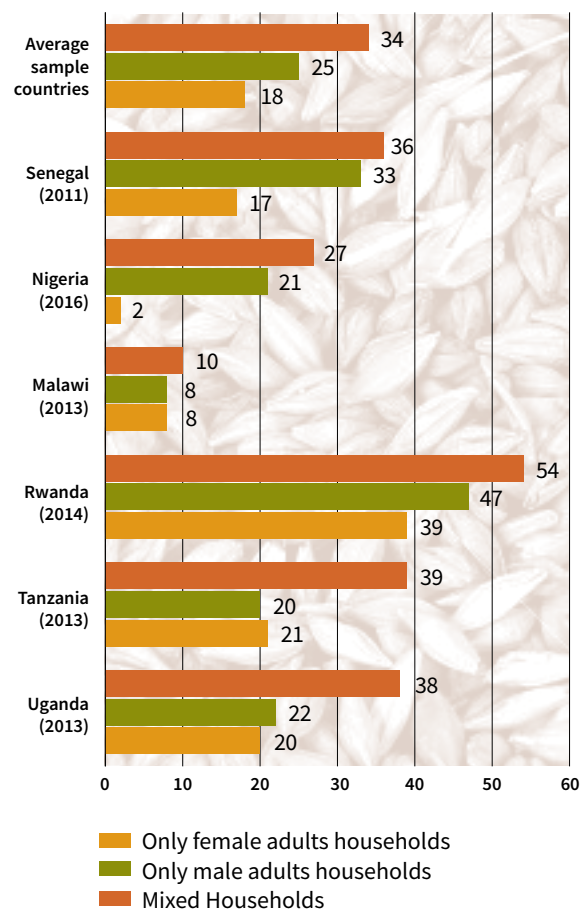
Figure 5: Distribution of agricultural land area for female, male and joint ownership



Source: FAO, gender-land rights-database that compiles here data from LSMS surveys, accessed September 2018, Rome



Figure 6: Gender gaps in large livestock ownership in female, male and mixed household**

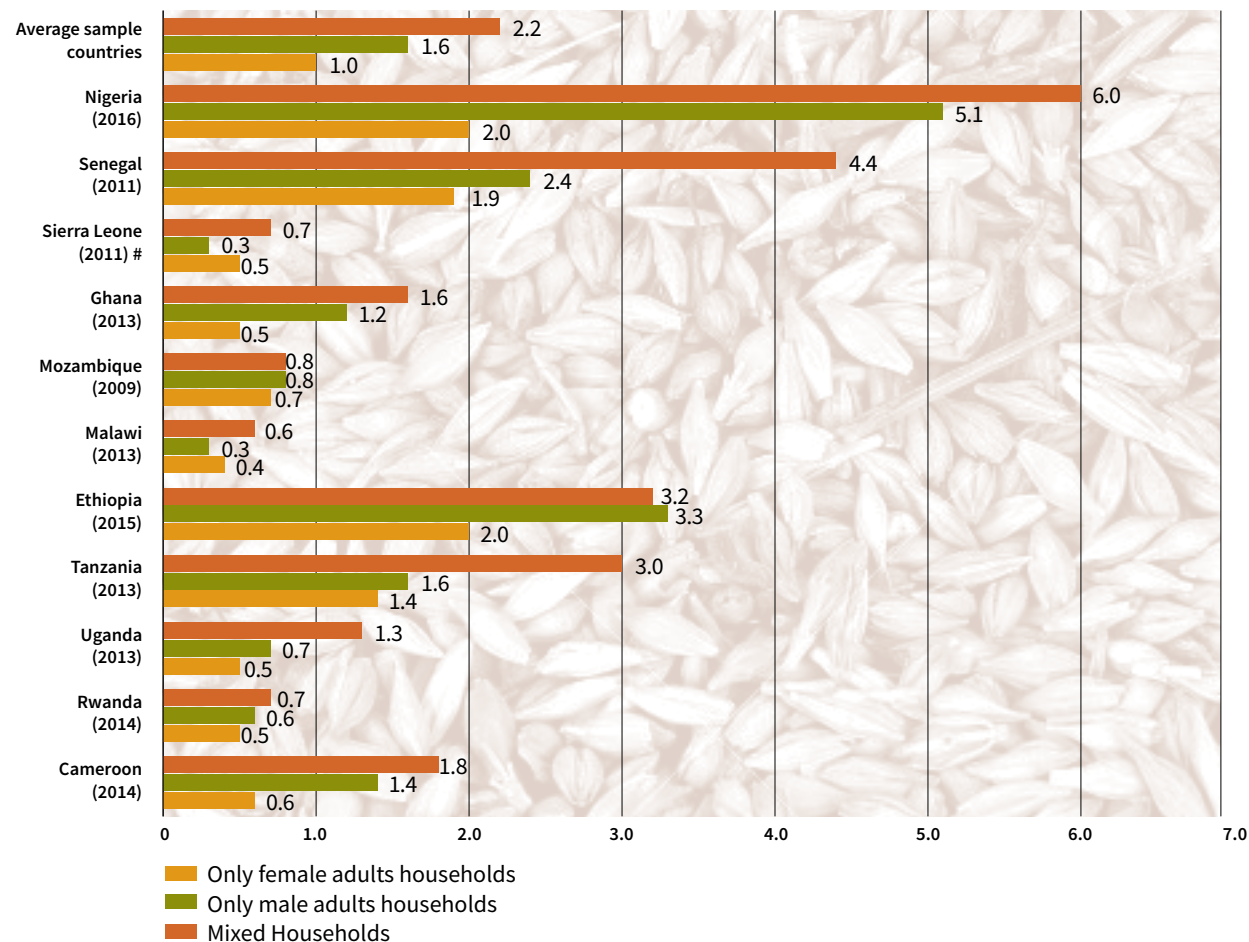


Source: FAO, Rural Livelihoods Information System, Statistics Division, September 2018, Rome

* The tropical livestock unit is a standardized unit developed by FAO that allows to convert different types of livestock and add them up

** Female household refers to the composition of household and not the sex of the head of the household. Female household represent a major sub-category of female-headed household. Such analysis focuses on the household level, rather than individual level and therefore does not capture intra-household gender inequality,

Figure 7: Gender gaps in total tropical livestock unit* held in female, male and mixed household**



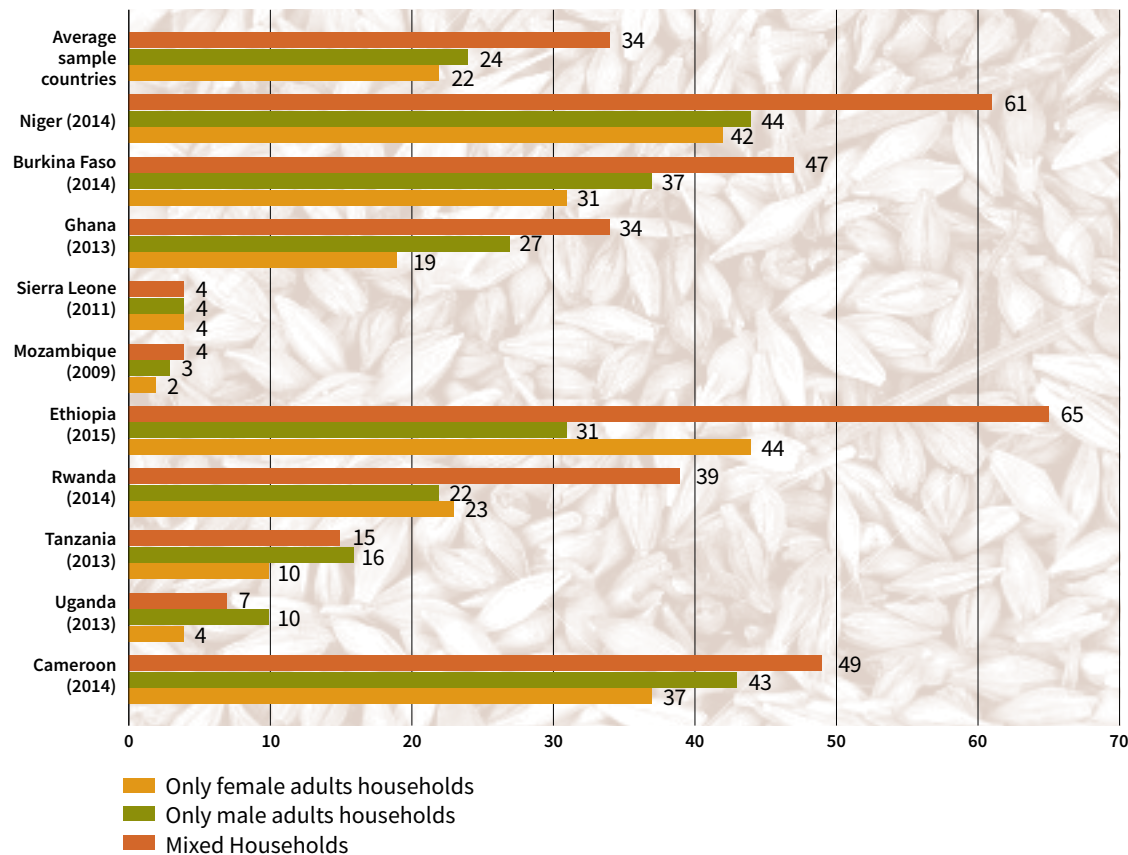
Source: FAO, Rural Livelihoods Information System, Statistics Division, September 2018, Rome

- In countries where data is available, women have 30 to 50% less access to input and animal traction (CGAs reviews, AfDB, 2016). Female households without adult male use 35% less inorganic fertilizer (Figure 8) and nine times less mechanical equipment (Figure 9). Yet, gender-sensitive technology can offer valuable solutions to reduce women's work burden and enhance their productivity (FAO, 2015a).



...gender-sensitive technology can offer valuable solutions to reduce women's work burden and enhance their productivity.

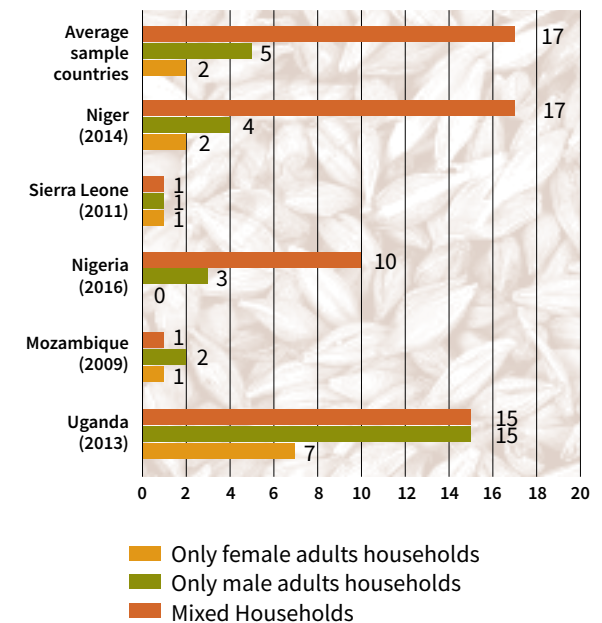
Figure 8: Share of female, male and mixed households* using inorganic fertilizer



Source: FAO, Rural Livelihoods Information System, Statistics Division, September 2018, Rome

* Female household refers to the composition of household and not the sex of the head of the household. Female household represent a major sub-category of female-headed household. Such analysis focuses on the household level, rather than individual level and therefore does not capture intra-household gender inequality,

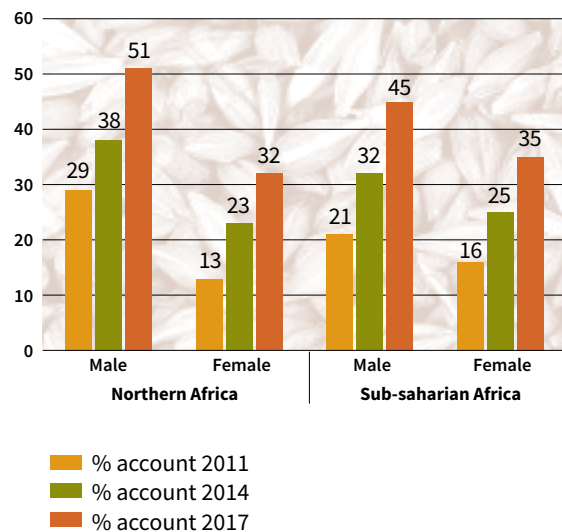
Figure 9: Share of female, male and mixed households* using mechanical equipment



Source: FAO, Rural Livelihoods Information System, Statistics Division, September 2018, Rome

- Women also have **less knowledge and capacities to access and use efficiently and sustainably their resources to generate income**. They are 22% less literate than males (54% literacy rate against 69% as shown in Figure 11), with lower literacy rates and higher gender gaps in rural areas. They have **13 to 200% less access to advisory services in the countries where data sets are available (World Bank, 2013; GFRAS, 2013; FAO, 2011)**.

Figure 10: Evolution of bank account ownership in northern Africa (NA) and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) since 2011



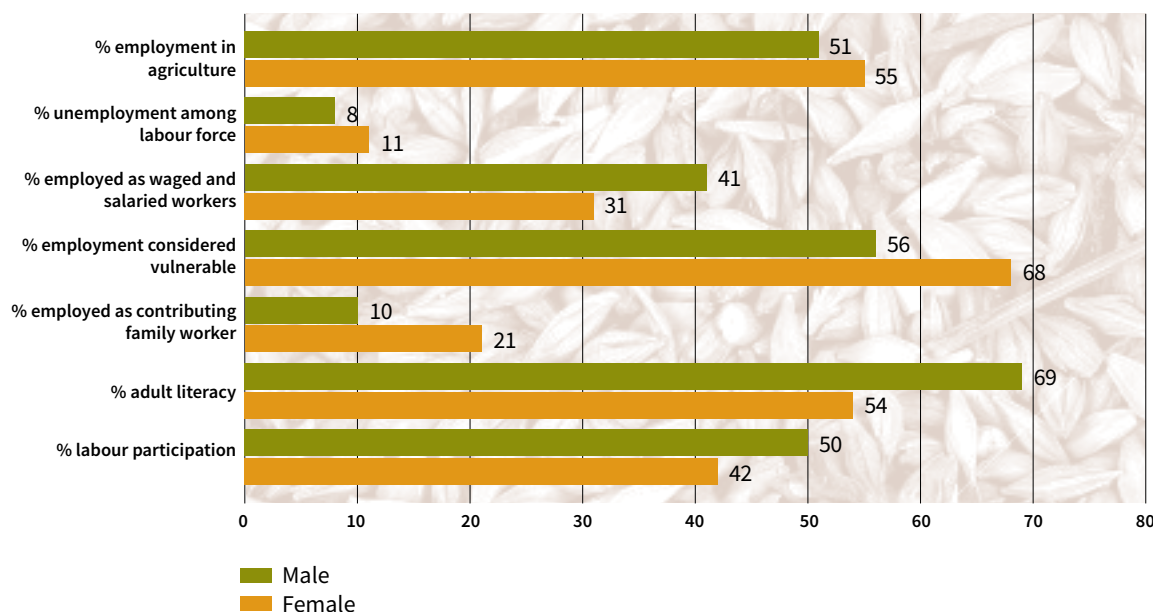
Source: Findex database 2017

- It is estimated that African agricultural output could more than triple if farmers were able to access the finance they need to expand both the quality and quantity of their produce (AfDB, 2013). Women face stronger **constraints in their access to cash income and rural financial services** (see Figure 10 and AUC, 2015), and that limits their use of productive resources (inputs, technology, product) and services (mechanization, processing etc.). In 2017, 51% of male against 32% of female owned a bank account in Northern Africa, and 45% against 35% in SSA. **Mobile accounts ownership** have doubled in SSA since 2014, reaching 27% of men and 20% of women and contributing to women financial inclusion (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2018).
- **Social protection schemes** that favor women have a greater and more beneficial net impact on food security, nutrition and poverty reduction (FAO, 2015b); meanwhile social protection measures can empower women (De la O Campos, 2015). If most social protection measures tend to include single mothers and lactating mothers among key targets, insufficient attention to gender issues and women positive roles in alleviating poverty may limit their effectiveness (Fisher, E. et al, 2017).
- Women usually have **less access to diversified and remunerated employment** (see Figure 11). A lower proportion of women are economically

active (42% against 50% for men), they have 21% higher rate of vulnerable employment than men (68% against 56%), 37% higher unemployment rate (11% against 8%). They are more employed in agriculture (55% against 52%) and have 25% less access to waged and salaried work. In 6 countries, women receive wages 14 to 60% lower than men in rural areas.

- The African labour market will have to absorb 440 million youth by 2030 with the urgent need to create jobs, seizing strong opportunities lying in the agri-food systems (FAO, 2018b). **Such requires reducing gaps for female youth** (AUC, NEPAD, 2016), with 15% less participation in labour market (60% less in Northern Africa), 16% higher unemployment rate (19% against 16%). Literacy rate is higher for youth with lower gender gap (70% for female against 78% for male with parity achieved in southern Africa but higher gender gaps observed in central Africa and western Africa), with situation likely worse in rural areas.
- Agri-business input supply, processing, marketing and retailing contributes 20% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 10% to the region's exports (World Bank, 2013) and provide strong employment opportunities. However, investments tend to focus on production, neglecting processing and trade activities. Women tend to dominate such upstream segment but face several barriers to participate

Figure 11: Gender gaps in access to employment and literacy



Source: ILO statistics compiled in World Bank Gender Database, accessed in August 2018

in formal and more remunerative value chains and develop inclusive partnerships (AUC, NEPAD, 2018a; AfDB, 2015, FAO, 2016a).

- Women tend to specialize in subsistence crops while men specialize in commercial crops. Yet, the women, they play key roles in value chains with strong potential for regional import substitution or export such as fruits and vegetables, dairy production, poultry production, animal fattening, non-timber forest products

and traditionally processed products with strong niche potential (shea butter, processed fish, beverage etc.).

- **Women tend to dominate local markets and retail sales while men tend to be more involved in wholesale and large-scale and international marketing activities.** Women represent up to 70% of **informal cross-border traders** that make up an estimated 30-40% of trade in southern and eastern Africa (FAO, 2017b).

In addition, women face specific gender-based constraints that have been included in a new gender indicator of the 2017 Malabo reporting framework but **that are yet to be included in CAADP result and activity framework** (gender icon in Figure 3):

- **Women face additional time constraints and have less time for productive and remunerative activities** (AfDB, 2014; FAO, 2015; World Bank, 2016). Women spend between 15 to 22% of their time on domestic and reproductive unpaid tasks, which is 3 to 7 times more than men, this is equivalent to adding 8 to 10 hours more per week of work than men (CGAs and World Bank gender database). Such additional time is higher in rural areas because of the long time spent collecting water, fuel wood and preparing food. One estimate suggests that **some 40 billion hours a year are spent collecting water in sub-Saharan Africa** (UN Women, 2015).
- Finally, due to their limited control and power in the household, **women often have weaker control and benefit less from both the resources of the household and the income** they generate both from their family farms and from their own activities (FAO, 2011b).

Women spend **3 - 7** times more than men on domestic and reproductive unpaid tasks



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Women's insufficient influence and collective capacity further constrain their opportunities in agri-food systems



The gender gaps analyzed previously relate notably to weak gender capacities of institutions and insufficient women's voice and leadership from household to national levels (see orange circle in Figure 3):

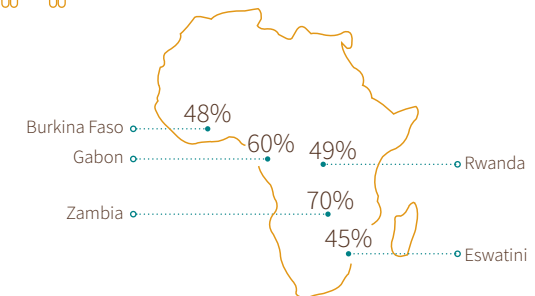
- Ministries and rural institutions lack sufficient capacities to address gender in the services they provide (FAO; 2016b, GFRAS, 2013, CGAs reviews). They usually do not have specific gender targeting mechanisms, they have very few female staff (five to 30% of field officers are women, 12 to 20% of staff in Ministry of agriculture are female), limited gender

capacities, and they rarely include gender analysis and consultation with women in the design and monitoring of their interventions. As a result, services usually target male dominated sectors or do not meet women's schedule and constraints (e.g. lower literacy, lower mobility etc.).

- Women have insufficient individual and collective capacities, leadership and voice to access services and influence institutions to better address their concerns and needs. Cooperatives generally have less female members (e.g. 15% to 30% reported in Niger, Benin and Togo CGAs) and the female members tend to have less access to leadership positions. However, several countries show higher participation rates (45% in Eswatini, 48% in Burkina Faso, 49% in Rwanda, 60% in Gabon, 70% in Zambia), strong presence of women's cooperative and gender mainstreaming mechanisms (ICA, 2016).



Example of countries with higher female participation rates in cooperatives



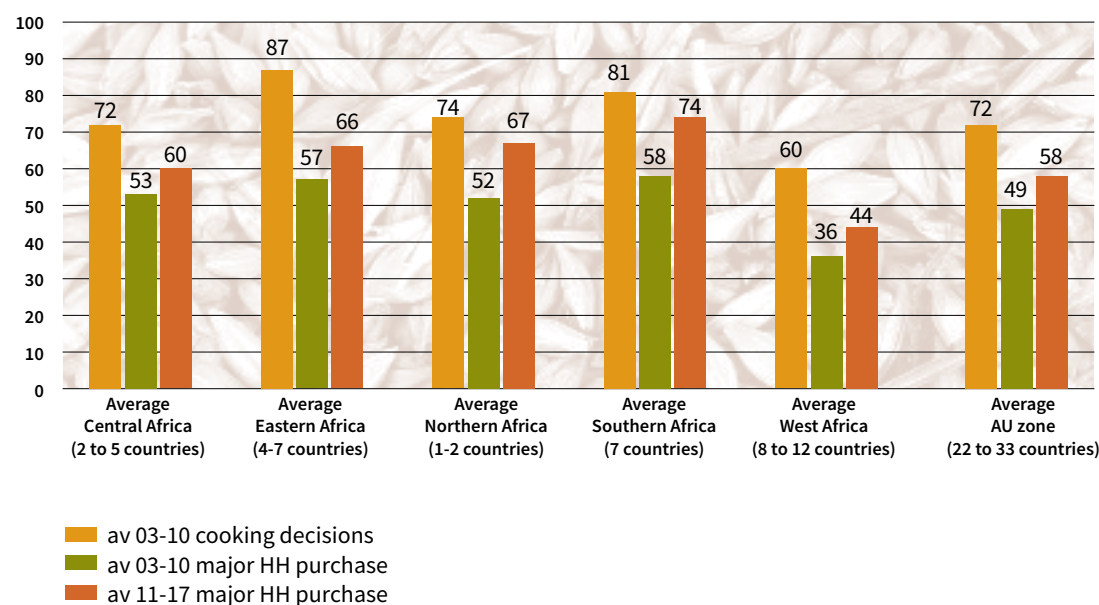
- Finally, there is often insufficient space for women to participate and influence decision making in governance systems and public-private partnerships. Too few governance mechanisms involve women and gender institutions. (CGAs reviews).

- **At household level, a lack of voice and participation in decision-making** limits women's capacity to seize economic opportunities and contribute directly to unequal access and use of assets (land, livestock etc.), employment, decisions on marketing and use of income, amongst others (CGAs, FAO, 2011b). Around 70% of women participate in

deciding what to cook (Figure 12). Less than 60% of women participate in major decisions regarding household purchases, with around 40% in western Africa and around 60% in other regions. On the family farms, heads of households tend to take all major decisions for the family farm. Women have more decision-making power in their own activities (GSARS,

2017) but with remaining constraints in several countries, (e.g. sales of animals, limitations to mobility that constrains their capacity to access training, institutions, market etc., right to embark on activities, to access credit and training etc.). Despite strong progress achieved, legal framework still restricted married women's exercise of trades and professions in 30% of African countries in 2014 (AfDB, 2014).

Figure 12: Evolution of participation of women in household decision mechanisms in terms of cooking decision and major household purchase from 2003-10 to 2011-17



Source: Author's calculations from Demographic and health household surveys accessed through World Bank gender database, extracting average from 2003-2010 and 2011-17 dataset

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Agricultural policies, investment and rural context do not provide an enabling environment sufficiently conducive to gender equality and women's empowerment



The last set of constraints are related to overall enabling environment within and outside agriculture

(see brown circle in Figure 3):

- Despite substantial gender gaps, regional and **national agricultural investment plans (NAIP) insufficiently address gender inequalities and do not provide an enabling environment** for women's empowerment in agri-food systems (incentives, levels of investments, conducive legal and policy framework, institutional

gender capacity etc.). The gender audit of 38 NAIP shows they rarely integrate a thorough gender analysis and do not always use sex-disaggregated data. The effective participation of women's organizations and gender institutions in the elaboration process of such plans remains too often insufficient. Only few NAIPs

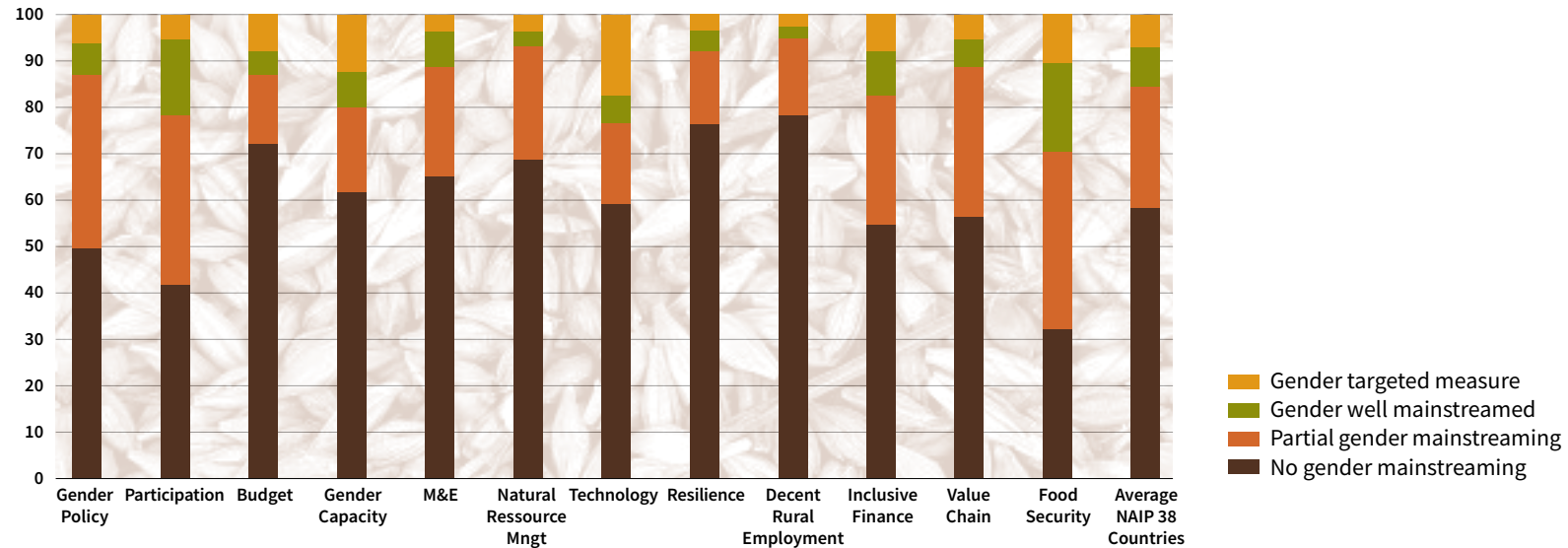


Despite substantial gender gaps, regional and national agricultural investment plans insufficiently address gender inequalities and do not provide an enabling environment for women's empowerment in agri-food systems...

have specific gender outputs and activities, while most activities neglect gender, with few affirmative actions and no adequate budget dedicated to their effective implementation. Most countries do not include any measures to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities for gender mainstreaming. Finally, most NAIPs do not address core transversal constraints to women's empowerment, in terms of social norms, unequal intra-household dynamics, unpaid care and domestic activities and unequal access to relevant rural infrastructures and services, and decent employment. In general, the NAIPs are not adequately aligned with the national gender policy.

- **Accountability to gender equality in agriculture remains weak. AU countries are bound to several gender accountability frameworks, referencing agriculture**, as highlighted in the previous sections of this document. However, accountability remains voluntary.

Figure 13: Level of gender mainstreaming across NAIPs in 38 countries across sub-Saharan Africa



Source: Gender audit carried out along the Country Gender Assessment

11 African countries have not submitted any report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reports. The 2018 Malabo reporting framework included only one gender indicator and one with a specific reference to women (AUC, NEPAD, 2017). Only 36% of countries reported on CAADP gender indicators (AUC, 2018a). Activities to reinforce statistics do not include gender, and most targets, monitoring and evaluation frameworks are not consistently gender sensitive. Forty percent of countries

have data on sex of HH head, food security, cooperative membership but we could not find sex-disaggregated data on value chain, intra-household dynamics and environment.

- Finally, **several transversal constraints go beyond the agricultural sector and relate to rural infrastructures, services and norms.** Weak access to water, energy, fuel wood and transportation overburdens rural women, constrain their time, their mobility, therefore limiting their access to resources, markets and

services, de facto limiting their productivity. Lower education, limited empowerment at household and community levels, and prevailing patriarchal norms and customs restrain women's economic empowerment (AUC, 2018b). They notably contribute directly to an unequal share of work in the households, limiting women's access and ownership to resources and freedom to move and engage in activities, and tend to contribute to unequal share of income and limited decision-making.

Encouraging progress and good practices across countries provide foundations to move forward



It is however worth noting that, even if gender gaps remain, we can identify in the CGAs several progressive trends as well as good practices for reducing gender gaps in specific countries across all domains of analysis:

- Several countries have **strong enabling environment for gender equality**, including adoption of gender sensitive budgeting, gender targets, gender sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), inclusive governance, specific programmes for women's empowerment and gender capacities etc. Several countries also have institutions in agriculture with a strong gender unit, cross-sectoral

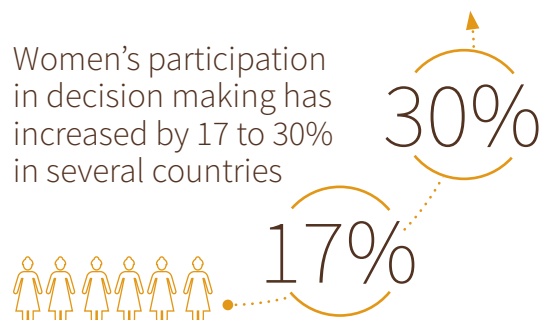
coordination and resource mobilization mechanisms for gender, gender training programmes and specific guidelines to mainstream gender in agriculture etc.

- Several countries are implementing **gender sensitive value chain programmes**, targeting women or providing incentives to enhance women participation. Several countries have managed to enhance women's financial

inclusion and reduced gender gaps in access to credit and inputs, which has often included a strong role of mobile bank innovations and private sector involvement (Demirgüç-Kunt et. al. 2018, AfDB, 2013). Several countries are also taking pro-active steps to facilitate women's access and ownership of land, promote inclusive governance, gender sensitive accountability systems and joint ownership for household land. Several initiatives on gender sensitive labour-saving technologies and practices have proven effective in decreasing women's work burden (for instance, improved cooking stoves, women adapted tools, etc.-FAO, 2015a.). Several food security, social protection and resilience programs have targeted female headed households and women, recognizing their vulnerability but also their specific roles to reduce further food insecurity and poverty (FAO, 2016c, O Campos, 2015).

- **Most regional farmer organizations and several national ones have taken steps to enhance women's participation**, created specific women's unit and adopted a gender strategy (CGAs, ICA strategy). For instance, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) includes activities to support farmers' organizations and civil society to participate in the CAADP cycle, including

Women's participation in decision making has increased by 17 to 30% in several countries



the establishment of a gender network. Civil society and regional producer organizations have issued guidelines on how to mainstream gender and produce specific gender knowledge (Roppa, 2016, 2017 and Cultivons, 2016). We also identified several platforms seeking to advocate for gender in agri-food sector (e.g. African Women Agribusiness Network-East Africa).

- Clear progress has been achieved in **school enrolment and literacy** of women and girls. We identified several good examples of gender sensitive advisory services women's (CGAs, FAO2016b and, 2016c; e.g. along farmer field and life schools, rural radio programmes, household approaches).
- **Women's empowerment is progressing.** Women's participation in decision making has increased by 17 to 30% in several countries. We also identified several efforts to support women's empowerment, adopting

gender sensitive household approach, building awareness and promoting dialogue at household and community levels etc. (examples in IFAD, 2017).

Similar positive trends can be seen in **international and continental agricultural policy frameworks.**

- More recent Regional Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIP) and NAIP that have built on the Malabo declaration and follow up commitments are often more gender sensitive as they build on AU and NEPAD gender frameworks, and those of regional economic communities.
- The **2017 AU guidelines** to report on Malabo includes a women's empowerment indicator that stresses the importance to empower women from household to national level (AUC, NEPAD 2017). AU and NEPAD have just released a **new toolkit** that addresses gender more consistently, explaining the women's empowerment indicator and providing guidelines on how to carry out gender review and integrate gender (AUC, NEPAD, 2018b). However, the CAADP result framework has not been modified and does not include outputs and activities related to women's empowerment and gender constrains (e.g. specific rural infrastructures and services, activities to transform norms, and empower women at household and community level).

- Finally, **SDGs provide an overall framework** to enhance comparable sex disaggregated data, while several global statistical programs have made efforts to enhance gender mainstreaming, providing foundations for enhanced national data (e.g. gender in world program of agricultural census (FAO, 2015c) and agris (GSARS, 2018), guidelines to produce sex-disaggregated data (GSARS, 2017).
- **Several guidelines** incorporate gender quite prominently (e.g. framework on land (AUC, AfDB, ECA, 2010), voluntary guidelines on natural resources and fishery ((FAO, 2012b), responsible investments (CFS, 2014). Specific guidelines have been produced to support countries better integrate gender in the various sectors (e.g. guidelines to mainstream gender in climate change, FAO and World Bank, 2017), in livestock sector (FAO, 2013b), to address gender in post-harvest losses (FAO, 2018b), rural advisory services (FAO, 2016b) to mainstream gender in value chain support (FAO, 2016a) and to review good gender practices in rural sector (IFAD, 2017) etc.





Recommendations and next steps to move from commitments to actions



Reducing gender gaps is a low hanging fruit and a quick win for achieving zero hunger and sustainable development. In addition, empowered women can be powerful drivers of change to lift themselves and their family members out of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Gender equality and women's empowerment are critical success factors to achieving Agenda 2063 and Malabo Declaration goals. Significant efforts are required to address structural causes of gender inequality and ensure that investments equally benefit men and women. **The following recommendations are made to the AU, its member countries and their technical and financial partners.**

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First, specific efforts are required to **promote an enabling environment and strengthen accountability mechanisms** for gender equality and women's empowerment. There is need to:

- Elevate the gender benchmarks in the planning, monitoring and accountability mechanisms related to CAADP and the Malabo Declaration. This includes making regional and national agricultural investment plans more responsive to women's needs and priorities, integrating compulsory gender analysis and enhancing women's effective participation in key policy processes. Specific gender outputs may need to be developed to reinforce gender capacities in agricultural institutions, producers' organizations and to tackle transversal gender constraints (e.g. women's empowerment in household and time constraints etc.).
- **Make an effective "Gender data revolution" in the agri-food sector, to inform sound policies and programmes** and facilitate gender sensitive analysis, monitoring and evaluation. An observatory could be built to valorize gender data and good practices, support AU reporting mechanisms and ensure transparency on gender commitments.
- **Reinforce women's collective capacity** to advocate further for their needs, reinforce accountability mechanisms and ensure



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that rural women can identify and benefit from the opportunities offered across agricultural investment.



Promote an enabling environment and strengthen accountability mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Then, specific attention is required on several themes that are crucial to achieve Malabo goals:

- **Develop women targeted programmes in the field of food security, nutrition and resilience** to address women's specific vulnerabilities

and their key role in household nutrition and resilience. This involves: gender-responsive social protection; support to women diversified garden production and gender sensitive nutrition; education programmes that take into account men and women's role within the household; and seek to transform negative social norms that impact women's nutrition, including detrimental food taboos.

- **Effectively enforce women's land rights** through improving legal and customary frameworks, enhancing accountability, reinforcing women's voice and participation, and ensuring that land institutions deliver gender sensitive services and procedures accessible to illiterate and rural women.
- **Scale up women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in agribusiness** so that they can supply the growing urban market

for high-value and differentiated products. This involves promotion of large-scale women-owned agribusiness enterprises along with promising value chains for women's economic empowerment and development of agro-processing facilities. Value chain programs could notably integrate gender analysis, affirmative action (preferential procurement processes), incentive mechanisms, and enhanced women participation through strengthened cooperatives. The AU Continental Strategy for Geographic Indications for Africa (2018-2023) targets enhanced participation of women in origin-linked marketing.

- **Make public-private partnerships (PPPs) more inclusive of women** to enhance their participation in value chains and stimulate broad-based investment. This involves the establishment of gender criteria for the development of agribusiness PPP, ensuring

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participation of women smallholder farmers in PPP, and strengthening the gender analytical capacity of national agribusiness apex bodies.

- **Ensure equitable financial inclusion of women and men** to scale up investments in agricultural productivity, post-harvest, downstream marketing and agro-processing activities. Governments shall provide incentive through guarantee funds, subsidized loans, gender capacity programs and legislative arrangements. They should engage financial institutions to adopt innovative practices to meet 50% AU targets, including: de-risking financing for agribusiness development for women, simplifying banking procedures, reducing transaction costs and broadening outreach to illiterate women and women in rural areas. The Fund for African Women established in 2010 by the African Union and dedicated to the African women decade is a good starting point that should serve as a basis for mobilizing resources for increased support to women enterprises.

Finally, such efforts cannot be achieved alone but require partnerships and coordination.

- **Develop multi-sectorial programmes with other institutions to tackle gender issues that go beyond the agricultural sectors** (e.g. rural infrastructures, education, social norms). Joint



Ensure equitable financial inclusion of women and men to scale up investments in agricultural productivity....

programmes could be developed with media and teaching institutions to valorize positive rural women's models and promote dialogue on constraining norms.

- **Implement flagship programmes** to enhance capacities and exchanges of good practices on the effective implementation of key AU gender equality priorities and provide incentives for their replication. Such policy priorities include: 30% documented land ownership for women; women's equal access to finance and mobile banking revolution (50%), agricultural mechanization for women in line with the "AU Campaign to banish the hand hoe to the museum", enhanced support to post harvest sector and women's empowerment (20% target).

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Empowering Africa's
Rural Women
for Zero Hunger
and Shared Prosperity

This brochure presents the key findings and recommendations of the study entitled “the Regional Outlook on Gender and Agri-food Systems,” which was jointly conducted by FAO and the African Union Commission. The brochure describes gender gaps in (i) access to and control over productive resources and opportunities, (ii) influence and collective capacity, and (iii) agricultural policies, investment and rural context. Additional analysis on progress and good practices across countries in Africa informed the brochure further to provide recommendations and next steps to move from commitments to collective actions.



...reducing gender gaps is a low hanging fruit and a quick win for achieving zero hunger and sustainable development. In addition, empowered women can be powerful drivers of change to lift themselves and their family members out of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

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