

A stylized illustration in shades of orange and red. It depicts three women in agricultural settings. One woman on the left is shown from the back, working with a large, curved object. Another woman on the right is shown from the side, also working with a similar object. A smaller figure is visible in the center, possibly representing a child or a smaller person. The background features abstract, flowing lines that suggest a landscape or agricultural environment.

# Breaking ground:

present and future perspectives for women in agriculture



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**Breaking ground:**  
present and future perspectives  
for rural women in agriculture

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
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# Foreword

Across the developing world, rural women are among the poorest and most disadvantaged groups. They face gender-based discrimination, which is reflected in inequalities in their rights and in their access to resources – especially land, technology and social services, including education and health. Their voices in public life are seldom heard, as women are under-represented in decision-making at all levels. The international community has recognized that accelerated rural development and gender equality are essential in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other agencies are working for gender equality and women’s empowerment as essential instruments for rural poverty reduction, and as issues of fundamental human rights (Hartl, 2004).

The situation of rural women has been on the agenda of international conferences for decades and is highlighted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and in the World Food Summit Plan of Action (1996). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, is considered as the international bill of rights for women. It comprehensively covers civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. It is the only human rights treaty that deals specifically with rural women. In its Article 14, the Convention affirms the rights of rural women to equal access to resources and basic social services. It also stresses that women should participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning and in all community activities.





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This includes their active participation in policy development and decision-making affecting their lives (Hartl, 2004).

This collection of papers offers an appraisal of the role of rural women in ensuring food security in five geographical regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near East. To understand the relationship between gender, rural poverty and food insecurity, an analysis has been made, in each region, of the specific roles and responsibilities of rural women in relation to food security, as producers (of agricultural goods or wage labourers) and consumers in their responsibility to acquire food for the household, through production or through trade.

The Rome Declaration of the World Food Summit of 1996 recognized that the right to development and the full and equal participation of men and women are essential for achieving sustainable food security for all. Similarly, the title of this publication, *Breaking Ground: Present and Future Perspectives for Rural Women in Agriculture*, suggests that the link between rural women and food security is increasingly recognized as important.

Recent studies indicate that rural women carry much of the burden and social cost of globalization. This is because, in recent decades, major economic changes have weighed heavily on traditional life in the countryside, and rural women have assumed different production responsibilities and activities in the changing context of globalization. However, the same aim remains: to change women's status from one of having little recognition for their labour, production, business, family, social and political activities to one of being both participant and income-generator seeking equality of opportunity with men.

In their homes, rural women have devised many coping strategies to feed their families. They cultivate home vegetable gardens, gather and process food, migrate to cities to take up wage labour and send home remittances. Still, as this collection of studies indicates, their employment is precarious, poorly paid and limited in training opportunities, and their work often goes unrecognized in the official statistics.

The current publication illustrates that agricultural and rural development programmes and policies need to change to reflect the current situation and to improve it. No longer should there be gender-based restrictions, such as inequality of

access to public services, technical assistance, land tenure, credit and training programmes or the massive contradiction of granting men land but having it worked by women.

In an attempt to address the above-mentioned problems FAO, under its Plan of Action for Gender and Development (2002–2007), seeks to mainstream gender into its agricultural and rural development policies, programmes and projects. FAO also promotes the integration of Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) into an increasing number of projects, notably those of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS). The achievement of food security and the accomplishment of the region's priority objectives require the active participation of rural women in decision-making.

To this end this publication illustrates that poverty can be reduced, first, through the education of rural women, and then through increasing their access to all productive resources (land, credit, extension) including knowledge. In all regions there is ample illustration of the link between rural women's education and improved food security. Moreover, rural women's representative organizations need to be strengthened to boost their capacity to negotiate, and to give them a voice so they can engage in the creation of a better future in each region.

Clearly rural women play a major role in agriculture and food security around the world. Their increased involvement in both subsistence and commercial agriculture is evident, and the impoverishment of various parts of the world, which have been marginalized by fierce international economic competition and rigorous structural adjustment, would have produced more severe consequences if the women had not stepped up their production efforts in agriculture and the informal economy.

We consider this publication to be an important contribution to the debate on one of the key challenges facing agricultural and rural development. Part of this challenge is to ensure that women, who are instrumental in increasing food security around the world, can be fully recompensed and recognized for their efforts.

## References

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# Preface

Twenty-five years after the adoption of the CEDAW Convention, a decade after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Rome World Food Summit Plan of Action (1996), to what extent can we say that the status of rural women has been advanced and the equality of women and men improved? This publication attempts to provide some insights into this question.

Gender equality is a universal goal which is embedded in many international instruments such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979). The Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which provided strategic objectives and actions in a many areas. The Millennium Declaration adopted by Heads of State at the Millennium Summit in 2000 reaffirmed the primacy of poverty alleviation and gender equality as development goals.

Agriculture is an important component of the economy of many developing countries as it significantly contributes to domestic production and employment. It is also of key relevance because of its contribution to ensuring food security, which remains one major concern in many developing countries and especially least developed countries (LDCs). Women and men are not equally represented in the various agricultural sectors, such as livestock or export crops. Since these sectors are differently affected by trade liberalisation, the consequences for women and men are not the same. Existing gender gaps may increase or shrink. On the other hand, since women and men often have different education, income, living circumstances and abilities, their capacity to respond to policy changes varies as well. It is therefore important to analyse these potential impacts (UNCTAD, 2004).



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The paucity of gender related statistics in agriculture continues to be one of the major impediments to generating in-depth analysis of the gender dimension in agriculture. Within the last decades, an increasing body of literature on gender and the economic impacts of gender inequality on agriculture has been emerging. Researchers, UN agencies and NGOs have undertaken several studies to examine the gender equity implications on the economy and especially in agriculture. Nevertheless, limited empirical information has been generated on both women's involvement in trade expansion and the impact of agricultural trade liberalisation on women's performance in the agricultural and rural sector, as well as on the impact on women wellbeing and food security (UNCTAD, 2004); (SOFA, 2002).

As a recent study on trade and gender states, that “despite the multiple initiatives undertaken during the last 30 years toward empowering women in the economic, social and political spheres, women's participation in public decision-making structures is still very low. In agriculture, women's participation in decision-making is even more restricted, due to the lack of recognition of their role as farmers on their own right. Both farmer's organization and agricultural planning institutions have very few women in decision-making positions and usually agricultural policies do not integrate women's concerns and female related factors associated with agriculture and rural development. The lack of gender considerations in domestic agricultural policies – which also leaves aside factors associated to social reproduction and women's contribution to the rural economy – is also reflected in the formulation of trade policies and domestic related measures.” (UNCTAD, 2004)

Traditional social safety nets in rural areas tend to disappear with the integration of developing countries' agriculture into the global economy. This increases the vulnerability of rural families and women in particular given the additional burden they face, with the migration of their male relatives resulting from the slow death of the family farm and the gradual foray into export-oriented agriculture.

Broad similarities and differences in the issues that face men and women especially have been observed between and within regions. Even though there are regional differences, certain key issues can be identified as significant in understanding why food security problems should be addressed from a gender perspective.

A gender approach requires that we look at rural women's differential access to productive resources such as land, water, credit and knowledge. This analysis, as mentioned above, inevitably leads us to the conclusion that women face increased food insecurity and lower agricultural productivity parallel to lacking the means of participating in the decision making processes that affect their lives. Because women, in comparison to men, face and live under evidently unequal socio-economic and political conditions, this volume adopts a more direct look at women's condition and situation, aiming to discern their roles in agriculture with a view to their present and future perspectives.

The most important challenges facing rural women today are poverty reduction, achieving food security, and increasing rural productivity. To achieve these goals entails improving women's access to and ownership of resources (material, human, and those related to knowledge).

In all the regions surveyed, evidence was found of some key findings highlighted below:

- ▶ Rural women's work suffers from economic invisibility because their productive activities are linked to their domestic responsibilities. Moreover, although they engage in market-oriented agricultural activities, they tend to be primarily responsible for subsistence farming. Standard labour force definitions, validated by cultural perceptions, categorize 'housewives' as economically inactive, a label further corroborated by the fact that production aimed at household consumption does not reach the monetized market economy, and is often overlooked in systems of national accounts. Undervaluation of female labour and production distorts information relating to the agricultural sector, and undermines the quality of policy formulation and planning and programme development for food security.
- ▶ In all regions rural women are consistently disadvantaged in their access to productive assets. There are also pronounced gender gaps in land ownership. Land is the most important asset in any agricultural system, and women formally own a fraction of agricultural land worldwide. Moreover, in many regions rural women are the majority of farm workers, as wage workers or land users. In the latter case, the



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lack of formal ownership hinders investment, by preventing women from using land as collateral to access credit markets.

- ▶ Issues of social capital are highlighted in the case of rural women, as their networks and organizations often fail to link female producers with markets. Resources and services offered by organizations such as cooperatives, water user associations and credit unions, are often accessed through a male relation acting as intermediary. Thus, the specific needs of women in relation to their productive role are likely to be overlooked.
- ▶ Women's agricultural activities are characterized by low levels of mechanization and use of technology because of limited financial capital at their disposal for investment. This translates directly into lower productivity, lower incomes, and fewer means to expand these same agricultural activities. These characteristics cause farming women to fall outside the target groups of many development interventions, which tend to support market-oriented, economically profitable, larger-scale agricultural activities.
- ▶ Gaps in educational levels, between rural women and rural men, urban men and urban women, continue to undermine rural women's capabilities and opportunities. These gaps result from the low priority given to women's human capital in resource allocation, from the household level to national policies. This continues despite the repeated demonstration that the education of girls translates effectively and quickly into better levels of food consumption, health status and nutritional status for present and future generations. Moreover, increased levels of education enhance women's productive capacities, impacting directly on both household and national-level food security.
- ▶ The impact of HIV/AIDS on rural households dramatically illustrates the key role women play in ensuring food security, in as much as the burden of HIV/AIDS rests disproportionately on their shoulders. The workload of women of all generations, as caregivers, is multiplied as the sick and dying are nursed and orphans are brought into the family. Financial resources are drained by

medical and funeral expenses and the increased cost of absorbing additional family members. Household income falls, as production plummets, with the illness and death of adults in their prime years. At the death of the husband, inheritance laws and customs may lead surviving wives into destitution. Immediate survival strategies involve a negative payoff in terms of human capital, which is borne by the next generation, as children are included in the intra and extra-household labour force at the expense of their education.

All these issues offer some understanding as to why rural women are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. The exchange value of resources commanded by women; their time, labour, productive assets, networks, are significantly lower than for men. Women are disadvantaged in relation to men when securing food on a regular basis, and when countering the effects of shocks and variations in food supplies, as they control assets of lesser market value upon which to count as a buffer. Landless rural workers are recognized as the most vulnerable section of the rural population, and women in this category are particularly so.

If there was equality of access, for women and for men, to all resources necessary for agricultural production, how would this impact food security? No region illustrates these conditions. However, analysis of the issues pertaining to rural women as producers and as consumers, favourably indicate that for food security, when given the same inputs as men, women's productivity increases dramatically. Women's education has a direct effect on reduction of child malnutrition, as their income has a more direct impact on the household economy than does a man's.

Assumptions about homogeneity of interests in the rural population conceal factors such as ethnicity, caste, class, age, and the way these shape disparity in access to benefits. In rural households, gender-based differences in access to resources remain hidden. Furthermore, gender is interwoven with other status-conveying criteria including age, ethnicity and caste. As long as these different and sometimes conflicting interests are not taken into account, policies and programmes will fail to address the specific relations between rural poverty and agricultural development.

Gender-specific data on rural women's unpaid and paid labour is the basis for formulating appropriate household-level food security policies. Analysis of the impact



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of trade policies on rural women is particularly relevant, because of the direct impact on food security caused by economic policies affecting women's entitlements.

Agricultural policies, and corresponding budget allocations, must be reviewed from a gender perspective. Gender analysis of national legal frameworks, both formal and customary, are necessary for establishing a legal base for women to legitimately claim assets to enhance their capacities as producers and reduce their vulnerability as consumers.

The importance of women in ensuring food security and the gender-specific obstacles that must be removed have been highlighted in several international conferences and international mechanisms for monitoring implementation of commitments have been designed accordingly. However, as long as issues of integration of small-scale production units into the globalized economy are not addressed, rural women will continue to be marginalized. The need for participatory policy development for the agricultural sector has been identified in the context of a rights-based approach. However, the commercial relevance of this must be demonstrated so that the needs of marginalized farmers can be included into mainstream economic policies.

Development agencies must mainstream gender issues into their programme and project objectives as well as include the promotion of household food security to ensure that the future perspectives for rural women are as bright as those proposed for men and for the rest of the society where they live, labour and contribute.

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Chapter on Agriculture.



# Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asia Development Bank
AID	Dominican Institute of Agriculture
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
AWU	Annual work unit
BOL	Bolivia
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
BSF	Belgian Survival Fund
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CLOC	The Latin American Alliance of Peasant Farmer Organizations
CONAMU	Consejo Nacional de las Mujeres (Ecuador)
COS	Costa Rica
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EAP	Economically active population
ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
ENDS	Environmental Data Service
ENIGFAM	Encuesta de Ingresos y Gastos Familiares
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ESU	European standard unit
EU	European Union
FAMA	International media production and publishing company
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO-RAP	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
FINCA	The Foundation for International Community Assistance
FISE	Emergency Social Investment Fund (Ecuador)
FIVIMS	Food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Chile)
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
FTPP	Forest Trees and People Programme
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
GAD	Gender and Development
GATT	The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade



## Abbreviations and acronyms

GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCP	Global Competitiveness Programme
GDI	Gender-related development index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPI	Gender parity index
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German technical cooperation programme)
HDR	Human Development Report
HIPC	Heavily indebted poor countries
ICT	Information and communication technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IHF	International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights
IICA	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (Argentina)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INCRA	National Institute of Land Settlement and Reform (Brazil)
INEC	El Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (Ecuador)
INTA	Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (Argentina)
IPGRI	International Plant Genetic Resources Institute
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
km	Kilometre
LDC	Least developed countries
LEADER	One of four initiatives financed by the European Union for rural development
LIFDCs	Low-income food-deficit countries
m	Metre
MAD	Ministry of Agriculture and Development, Brazil
MDGS	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MMR	Maternal mortality ratios
MOALR	Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (Egypt)
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NERC	National Environment Research Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PHARE	Phare programme is one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Union to assist applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparations for joining the European Union.
PIN	Per capita production index

POA	Plan of Action
PRA	Participatory rapid assessment
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRIE	El Proyecto Regional de Indicadores Educativos (Regional Education Indicators Project)
PROMUDEH	Ministerio de Promoción de la Mujer y del Desarrollo Humano, Peru
RNE	Regional Office for the Near East
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
SEAGA	Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme
SEARPI	Service for water channeling and regulation of the Pirai river – Bolivia
SERNAM	Chile's National Office for Women
SNA	System of National Accounts (Chile)
SOFA	State of Food and Agriculture (FAO)
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security (FAO)
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme (FAO)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	The joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UWESO	Ugandan Women's Efforts to Save Orphans
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	World Food Summit
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
Dunum	Equivalent to 1 000 m <sup>2</sup>
Feddan	0.42 hectare

The image features a stylized, monochromatic illustration of the African continent centered on a globe. The globe is rendered in shades of gray, with the continent of Africa highlighted in a darker tone. A prominent red horizontal band crosses the middle of the globe, containing the text "The African region". In the bottom left corner, there is a detailed illustration of a wheat stalk with several heads of grain. The overall style is artistic and minimalist.

# The African region



# The African region<sup>1</sup>

## Food security, a major concern



Woman vendor at the vegetable market. Because of the flood, the market had very few vegetables for sale. (A. Proto, 1998)

**Africa is largely agricultural based and around 61 percent** of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is classified as such. Notwithstanding the importance of agriculture and in spite of abundant natural resources, the average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in constant prices was lower at the end of the 1990s than in 1970 (World Bank, 2000). Income inequality is high in the region and about 16 percent of the population lives in countries with an average GDP per capita of less than US\$200 per year, 36 percent in countries with GDP per capita less than US\$300 and 75 percent live in countries with GDP per capita of less than US\$400 (Dixon, Gulliver and Gibbon, 2001). Africa is the only developing region where crop output and yield growth lag seriously behind population growth (Savadogo, Reardon and Pietola, 1994). The region imports one-third of its food grains and nine of its ten largest countries are net importers of food (Gladwin, Thomson, Peterson and Anderson, 2001).

Food insecurity is a major concern of both national and international communities. The World Food Summit Plan of Action states: “*unless national*

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter is based on the work of Dr Ivy Drafor, FAO consultant.

*governments and the international community address the multifaceted causes underlying food insecurity, the number of hungry and malnourished people will remain very high in developing countries, particularly in Africa south of the Sahara, and sustainable food security will not be achieved*” (WFS, 1997). The Plan of Action is part of an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries and to reduce the number of undernourished people by half by the year 2015.

Food security is an income as well as a production issue as it also relates to poverty (Schuh, 1997). In sub-Saharan Africa, close to 300 million people were living in absolute poverty in 1999 and the poverty rate had not declined at all in the ten years prior to that (UN, 2002b). A total of 46.4 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty line. This percentage is projected to increase by 40 percent at which stage Africa will account for 27 percent of the developing world’s poor. It is the rural poor who make up more than 75 percent of the poor in many sub-Saharan and South Asian countries and studies on rural poverty identify small farmers, the landless, women, nomadic pastoralists, artisanal fishers, indigenous ethnic groups and displaced people as the most vulnerable groups in the rural sector (WFS, 1997).

**Table 1.1**  
Population living on less than US\$1 a day  
in selected African countries

Country	%	Country	%
Botswana	23.5	Mauritania	28.6
Burkina Faso	61.2	Mozambique	37.9
Burundi	58.4	Namibia	34.9
Cameroon	33.4	Niger	61.4
Central African Republic	66.6	Nigeria	70.2
Côte d'Ivoire	12.3	Rwanda	35.7
Ethiopia	81.9	Senegal	26.3
Gambia	59.3	Sierra Leone	57.0
Ghana	44.8	South Africa	<2
Kenya	23.0	Tanzania	19.9
Lesotho	43.1	Uganda	82.2
Madagascar	49.1	Zambia	63.7
Malawi	41.7	Zimbabwe	36.0
Mali	72.8		

Source UNDP 2003; figures: 1990–2001.

Income is one of the key determinants of household food consumption (Brown *et al.*, 1995). This is why food security is affected by household incomes, economic assets and prices, demographic factors such as household size, gender and age composition and sociocultural factors such as health and sanitation status, educational level, cultural norms and food consumption habits (Anarfi, 2000). Therefore food security for a growing population cannot be achieved without addressing the underlying issue of rural poverty.



## Food security, a major concern

In Africa, evidence suggests that men spend a higher proportion of their incremental income on goods for personal use, while women are more likely to purchase goods for their children and for general household consumption. A positive nutritional outcome is associated with increasing women's incomes, as households where women control a larger share of the income, are more likely to meet calorie requirements. Poverty is therefore a major threat to the food security both of the family and of particular individuals within the family (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). Inequalities between men and women serve to generate and perpetuate poverty both within and between generations. To address this issue gender biases need to be removed at every level (UNDP, 1999).

Both rural women and men are active agents in agricultural and rural development, though programmes that provide agricultural support systems to farmers mostly ignore women. Moreover, agricultural and rural development policy and planning do not adequately reflect and address the different roles and needs of rural women and men. Changes are taking place, but the effectiveness of development policies can only be achieved with accurate, systematic statistics on rural women and men producers (FAO, 2001a). Although problems, such as gender biases in food consumption or in-house health care, seem to have been overstated, education and the control of productive assets remain real issues (UN, 1996a; Marcoux, 1997).

Most African countries neglect the agricultural sector and government interventions have done little to address the plight of rural women. Few women participate in national and regional policy-making, and they are invisible in national statistics. Their low participation in extension services means that issues of most concern to women in the design and implementation of many development policies and programmes are neglected (FAO, 1996). Projects intending to increase agricultural productivity need to ensure that the distinct needs, labour constraints, knowledge and decision-making roles of women and men are analysed and addressed (IFAD, 2000).

This chapter considers the state of rural African women and their role in ensuring food security. It discusses female-headed households and their access to productive resources and looks at regional trends, women's contribution to agricultural production as well as their participation in other economic activities. Global trends are discussed such as the impact of land degradation, HIV/AIDS and

its effects on agricultural labour for rural women, natural and human-induced disasters and the feminization of poverty. Changes in the policy environment are presented in relation to rural women, the need for their involvement in planning and decision-making at all levels and the policy support required to enhance agricultural productivity and food security. Finally, recommendations are suggested to strengthen rural women's situation and their efforts to ensure food security.

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

**Food security exists when all people** at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their needs for an active and healthy life (WFS, 1997). Undoubtedly, if food is in the market but people have no money to buy it, it is not accessible (Wide Bulletin, 2000). Africa continues to suffer from food insecurity because of wars, unrest, poverty and generally low agricultural productivity. As stated by Elbadawi (1999), sub-Saharan Africa remains one of the most politically unstable regions in the world.

Rural women use different survival strategies to ensure household food security. These include, reducing their own consumption during lean seasons, but maintaining that of their children, and working as casual hired labour on larger farms (i.e. farms owned by others). They also engage in other income-generating activities while continuing their farming activities and household tasks (IFAD, 2000; FAO, 1996).

Rural women play a vital role in addressing household food security and nutrition and are involved in much of agricultural and livestock development. They have proven to be the driving force in achieving project objectives and reducing poverty. Therefore, improving the economic status of the poor is largely concerned with enabling women to fully realize their socio-economic potential and improve the quality of their lives (IFAD, 2000).



## The nature of African agriculture

Since sub-Saharan Africa's independence, agricultural development has been slow, and the gap between population growth and agricultural production has increased significantly. Regional food imports are widespread, though not enough to achieve the populations' recommended daily calorie intake. While food imports increased, agricultural exports declined, especially in the late 1980s. Compounding these problems, the increasing population led to pressure on agricultural land leading to greater use of less fertile land with the resulting decreases in productivity and household income. Men began to migrate into cities and women sought off-farm income-earning opportunities (World Bank, 1992).

Economic performance across the African region has been varied. Countries such

**Table 1.2**  
Net production growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa\*

Year	Agriculture	Crops	Cereals	Roots and tubers	Livestock	Non-food
1992–96	3.9	4.4	5.8	2.4	2.6	3.7
1997	0.5	0.2	-4.2	2.0	1.4	0.3
1998	3.7	4.1	4.1	5.5	2.6	3.9
1999	1.9	1.8	-0.6	4.2	2.5	2.5
2000	-0.3	-1.0	-3.2	0.5	1.4	-0.3
2001**	0.8	0.9	2.4	0.7	0.5	0.6

\*Excluding South Africa; \*\*preliminary. Source: FAO, 2002.

as Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda expect continued growth, which is the result of macro-economic and structural reforms, while in many other countries economic growth, especially in the agricultural sector, continues to be hampered by past, ongoing or new conflicts. Table 1.2 shows the net production growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa from 1991 to 2001. After 1998, non-food production products experienced negative growth, which may have been the result of conflict situations.

Several countries are more dependent on agriculture while others have demonstrated a healthy performance in this sector over several decades. Agriculture accounts for more than half the gross domestic product of Burundi, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, though only 10 percent or less in Botswana and Lesotho. Agriculture in Africa is significantly heterogeneous, varying from extensive slash-

and-burn in the tropical rain forest to irrigated agriculture and pastoralism in drier parts; women are found to play a major part in all these systems (Maxwell, 1998).

In Africa, renewable water resources vary considerably from one country to another and household water use may average 47 litres per person per day. In many communities, water supplies are limited and water-use decisions involve difficult choices. Various users and categories have different needs, priorities and expectations (Rathgeber, 2003). Rural areas lag far behind, and the rural-urban gap in terms of access to safe water is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, where only 45 percent of the rural population has access, against 83 percent for their urban counterparts (Vandemoortele, 2002).

Burundi, Kenya and Rwanda are particularly affected by low unit water supplies of under 10 m<sup>3</sup>. Effective agricultural production requires water to be available at the right place and time to be relevant to a community (Marcoux, 1998). In the face of the increasing global water shortage, resource economists recommend raising water prices for all uses (including domestic) to encourage efficient water use. This increase may have negative implications for the poor, leading to hardship if they are unable to pay the higher price. Often domestic water supply programmes overlook rural women's productive use of water for irrigation, livestock and other enterprises (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). An examination of women's participation in the utilization and management of water resources in the broader context of the social construction of gender roles in different regions needs to be undertaken, as women are under-represented in water management at all levels (Rathgeber, 2003).

## The agriculturally economic active population and the roles of men and women

**Statistics on the economically active population** are of limited value when reviewing women's economic involvement in agriculture, food production and processing, as conventional definitions of the labour force underestimate women's work. Some figures for Africa indicate that women represent only 42 percent of the economically active population involved in agriculture, because of the tendency to register women farmers as 'housewives' (FAO, 1996).

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

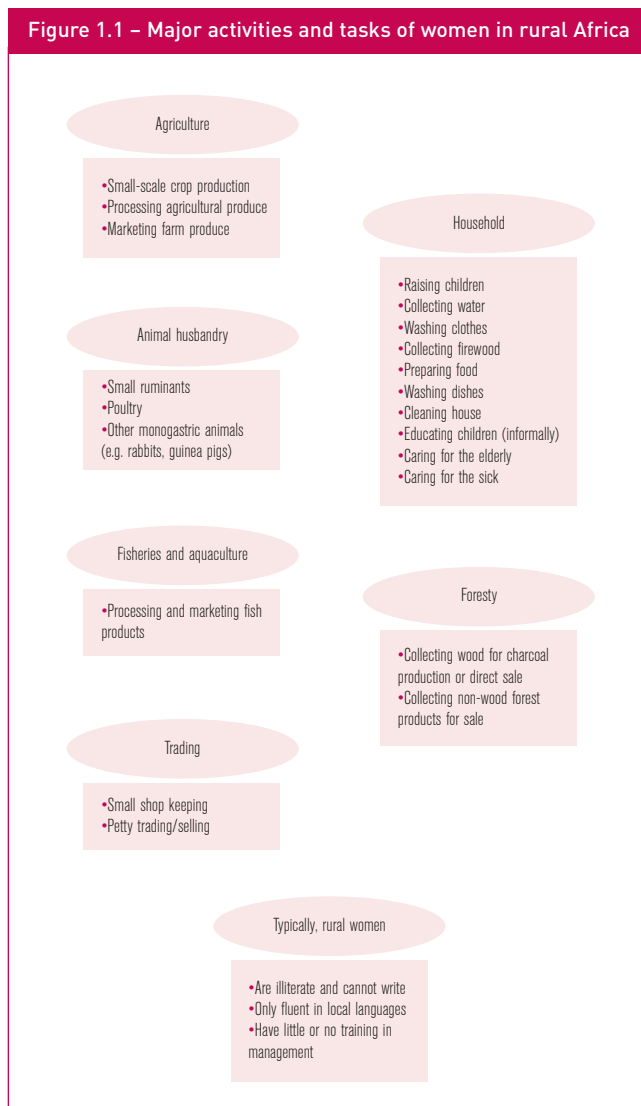
Even so, the percentage of women in the labour force engaged in agriculture is higher than that of men in most countries (World Bank, 2001). The percentage of the active female population working in agriculture attains 98 percent in Burundi, 96 percent in Malawi, 93 percent in Burkina Faso, 87 percent in Angola and 92 percent in Mali and Tanzania. Though this percentage is lower in a few countries: Botswana 3 percent, Kenya 25 percent and South Africa 16 percent (World Bank, 2001).

The division of labour between women and men in agricultural production varies considerably between regions and communities. Usually men are responsible for

highly mechanized large-scale cash cropping, while women take care of household food production and small-scale cultivation of cash crops, requiring lower levels of technology (FAO, 2001a).

Most women in rural Africa are over-burdened with a wide range of activities and agricultural tasks: animal husbandry, the household and sometimes fisheries and aquaculture (Guèye, 2001); much of this work may be unpaid labour and is characterized by low productivity; limited access to credit; land; training and limited use of technology (FAO, 1996).

Gender-specific roles and responsibilities are conditioned by household structure, access to resources, and the specific impacts of the global economy (FAO, 1997). Figure 1.1 gives an overview of the major activities undertaken by rural women in Africa. Being primarily responsible for food production, they fetch water for domestic use and small-scale irrigation; market agricultural produce; care for children, the aged and the sick and undertake minor trading for additional income. They are also involved in processing and marketing of fish products and collection of wood for charcoal production or direct sales.



Adapted from: Guèye, 2001

In the past, household units – men, women and children together – were responsible for the foodstuffs needed to maintain their families. A division of labour existed, but everybody worked for the direct survival of the family. With the introduction of cash crops, men's main responsibility shifted to their production, often with considerable labour contributions from women. Commercial crop production was partly induced by the growing need for cash, necessary for survival in increasingly monetized societies. The introduction of cash crops weakened the traditional gender-based division of intra-household rights and obligations, and farmwomen increasingly undertook tasks previously done by men (Saito, *et al.*, 1994). All this further increased women's responsibility to provide for family food requirements.

The synthesis report on women, agriculture and rural development in Africa, prepared by FAO for the Fourth World Conference on Women and a World Bank report, states that women in sub-Saharan Africa contribute 60 to 80 percent of food-producing labour for household consumption and for sale. Women's contributions to the production of food crops range from 30 percent in the Sudan to 80 percent in the Congo (World Bank, 2001; FAO, 1995). Table 1.3 provides information on women's contribution to agriculture in selected countries.

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

**Table 1.3**  
**Women's labour contribution and role in agriculture in selected African countries**

Benin	70 percent of the female population live in rural areas, where they carry out 69 percent of agricultural work and furnish up to 44 percent of work necessary for household subsistence.
Burkina Faso	Women constitute 48 percent of labourers in the agricultural sector.
Democratic Republic of Congo	Women account for 84 percent of those economically active in agriculture and produce more than 80 percent of food crops.
Mauritania	The proportion of agricultural work carried out by men and women is 65 and 79 percent, respectively.
Morocco	Approximately 72 percent of the female population participates in agricultural activities, with greater involvement in animal and less in vegetable production.
Namibia	Women account for 59 percent of those engaged in skilled and subsistence agriculture work, and women continue to shoulder the primary responsibility for food production and preparation.
Sudan	In the traditional sector, women constitute 80 percent of farmers. Women farmers represent approximately 49 percent of farmers in the irrigated sector. Women produce 30 percent of the food.
Tanzania	92 percent of rural women, defined as economically active, are engaged in agriculture and produce a substantial share of the food crops for both household consumption and export.
Zimbabwe	Women constitute 61 percent of farmers in communal areas and comprise at least 70 percent of the labour force.

Source: World Bank, 2001; FAO, 1995.

Rural women make up a considerable portion of the agricultural labour force employed in the informal sector, which accounts for a substantial share of the GDP throughout sub-Saharan Africa. However, customary laws affect the labour rights of African rural women workers. Under customary legal systems, women must provide unpaid and unprotected labour for certain tasks in their husband's fields and work required within the household. Women and men play varied roles in rural agriculture with a gender division of labour; mainly men cultivate cash crops, while women cultivate food crops and/or locally traded crops (Cotula, 2002).

Inequality in resource distribution, which includes the food that is consumed in the household, results in women generally being poorer than men. Therefore, understanding the resource allocation among household members is essential for predicting the outcome of a policy. A person's bargaining power within the family depends not only on asset ownership, but on access to employment, access to communal resources, traditional social support systems, support from NGOs and the state, social norms, and perceptions (IFPRI, 1997).

### Rural female-headed households

**Today women are the majority of smallholder farmers;** they provide most labour and the day-to-day management of their small-scale farms. Women head about 30 percent of rural households in sub-Saharan Africa; in some regions, this share is 60 percent (Akello, 1999; FAO, 1997b). Factors that increase the number of female-headed households include wars; male migration for jobs; changing marriage, bridewealth and dowry arrangements (FAO, 2001c).

Saito *et al.*, classify female-headed households into three groups: i) autonomous households recognized and accepted as headed de jure by women, mostly widows or single women; ii) households headed de facto by wives during the male head's absence for various periods of time, the degree of autonomy and independence of action of these female heads vary with ethnic mores and personal circumstances and whether remittances are received or not; and iii) polygamous households, where co-wives head economic subunits (of themselves and their children) within the household (Saito, *et al.*, 1994). Further investigation is required of the relationship between the economic status of female-headed households, and whether or not the household receives remittances. In some countries, such as Cape Verde, it was found that remittances improved the economic situation of some female-headed households.

In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, male rural-urban migration has been greater than for females, leaving women behind to assume responsibility for farming activities. Migration has contributed to the rise in female-headed households, thus challenging gender-based roles in rural areas, as women assume traditionally male activities. Other factors contributing to the rise in female-headed households include family disintegration, international migration, war and internal displacements (FAO, 2001a; Buvinic and Gupta, 1997).

In Guinea, the economically active rural labour-force aged 20 to 49 is now predominantly female (FAO, 1995a), which may be the result of the high rate of male migration to urban areas and death from HIV/AIDS. Increasing male out-migration from rural areas means that women are increasingly responsible, not only for the family food supply, but for national food security. Alternatively, rural women, especially younger women, migrate to urban areas for work to earn additional income before marrying and to learn skills including batik making,

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances



Farmers meet to plan for the next cropping season. (A. Conti, 1994)

hairdressing and dressmaking. Some young women return to the rural areas while others remain in the cities.

In Sahelian countries female-headed households are under-estimated, because the wives of migrants remain under the authority of the head of the extended family and widows marry their husband's brother or acknowledge their eldest son as head of household. A World Bank study states that about 26 percent of male heads of household were absent (World Bank, 1995); as a result, de facto female heads of household are deprived of resources and revenues

earmarked for heads of households.

Female-headed households tend to be smaller than male-headed households with fewer family members available for farm work and other income-generating activities (Ellis, 2000). To cope, women reduce the crop area under cultivation or change to less labour-intensive crops, some with a lower nutritional value such as cassava. Use of child labour is more common in female than in male-headed households, which reduces children's educational level and learning opportunities. Female heads of households face acute time constraints because of domestic responsibilities, farm and off-farm activities. Women spend up to five hours a day collecting fuelwood and water, and up to four hours preparing food, leaving little time for child care or other productive tasks (IFAD, 2000a). To alleviate labour constraints intra-household labour is reallocated, children may be taken out of school when HIV/AIDS has led to the loss of an adult family member (UNAIDS, 1999).

Table 1.4 shows female-headed households and total fertility rate of women in selected African countries. In most countries births per woman are decreasing, which may be ascribed to improvement in their education levels. The percentage of female-headed households is quite high in Botswana (47 percent); Namibia (39 percent); Cape Verde (38 percent); Ghana (37 percent) and in Kenya (33 percent).

**Table 1.4**  
**Women-headed households and total fertility rate in selected countries in Africa**

Country	Female-headed households %	Total fertility rate (Births per woman)		Country	Female-headed households %	Total fertility rate (Births per woman)	
		1991/1997	1990-1995 2000-2005			1991/1997	1990-1995 2000-2005
Benin	18	6.5	5.7	Mali	8	7.0	7.0
Botswana	47	4.9	3.9	Mauritius	18	2.3	1.9
Burkina Faso	7	7.1	6.8	Morocco	15	3.9	3.0
Burundi	25	6.8	6.8	Namibia	39	5.8	4.9
Cameroon	18	5.7	4.7	Niger	10	8.0	8.0
Cape Verde	38	3.9	3.2	Nigeria	14	6.4	5.4
Central African Rep	21	5.6	4.9	Randa	25	6.7	5.8
Cote d'Ivoire	15	5.7	4.6	Senegal	18	6.1	5.1
Ghana	37	5.3	4.2	Sierra Leone	11	6.5	6.5
Guinea	7	6.4	5.8	Sudan	13	5.3	4.5
Kenya	33	5.4	4.2	South Africa	-	3.3	2.9
Lesotho	23	5.0	4.5	Tanzania	22	5.9	5.0
Liberia	19	6.8	6.8	Uganda	29	7.1	7.1
Madagascar	22	6.2	5.7	Zambia	17	6.3	5.7
Malawi	26	7.2	6.3	Zimbabwe	33	5.5	4.5

Source: UNDP, 2001

Often greater obstacles are faced by female-headed households in meeting household needs than by male-headed households, because women have lower economic and social status and fewer opportunities (FAO, 2001a). Female-headed households have limited access to and control over water, credit and social services. Poor rural female-headed households do not own land or the resources to earn enough for themselves and their children. Access to credit is restricted as loans may require the signature of the partner or land as collateral (FAO, 2001c).

Wives in polygamous families must ensure their children receive sufficient food per day. In Burkina Faso, where at least half of the men in a study area have more than one wife, women are primarily responsible for the feeding, schooling and health care of their children. Where the man has a lower income, responsibilities for child care, including school fees and clothing, transfer almost entirely to the woman (Tsikata, 2000).



## Access to agricultural productive resources

**Women are often disadvantaged** in terms of access to assets, information and formal decision-making (IFAD, 2000; FAO, 2001a). Women's unequal access to resources is rooted in cultural and social institutions as much as in economic processes (Coelho and Coffey, 1996). In sub-Saharan Africa, more women than men are too poor to buy inputs such as fertilizer. Moreover, financial institutions do not consider women creditworthy (Rathgeber, 2003).

### *Access to land*

Rights to land and houses convey status and power within the community, yet these resources are unequally distributed between men and women (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). In sub-Saharan Africa, where women are primarily responsible for food production, land rights are generally limited to user rights. In various parts of

#### Box 1.1 WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS IN BURKINA FASO AND KENYA

In Burkina Faso, legislation does not formally discriminate against women. However, in rural areas customary law is applied. For example, under Mossi customary law, landownership belongs to the ancestors; the chief allocates land (*chef de terre*) and only men can be chiefs. Women do not have direct land rights, but access land through husbands and male relatives. A widow may marry a younger brother of the deceased husband or remain as widow with the in-law family, in which case she maintains access to her husband's family land. Women may borrow land from people outside the family, although they have no secure tenure and their use rights are limited particularly with the cultivation of perennial crop farms.

Under Kenya's Law of Succession Act 1972, female and male children have the same succession rights and widows have life interest in the estate, which they lose upon remarriage. However, inheritance of agricultural lands, crops and livestock continues to be governed by customary law (Section 33), according to which wives and daughters do not inherit family property. In rural areas, it is widespread practice for fathers to leave land to their sons, in the expectation their daughter's husband will care for them. Overall, women's land rights in Kenya are severely limited.

Source: Cotula, 2002

the region, women still lack independent rights to own or manage property. In most countries, legislation does not discriminate against women, although customary laws and traditions are severely limiting.

In much of sub-Saharan Africa, women mainly obtain land rights through their husband as long as the marriage endures. They often lose these rights when divorced or widowed (Tsikata, 2000; World Bank, 2000a; and Brown, *et al.*, 1995). As men primarily own and control land, women may acquire the rights to land through their father. However, women's productivity often remains low

because they may not have the right to make decisions on agricultural practices or are unable to obtain credit without land rights (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001), thus eliminating incentives to invest in the productive resources they use. These rural women do not have the security of returns on their investments (e.g. labour); Box 1.1 illustrates the severe limitations to landownership faced by women in Burkina Faso and Kenya.

Limited land rights increase women's vulnerability, especially during famines. Alternatively, direct access to land minimizes a woman's risk of impoverishment and improves the physical well-being and prospects of her children. Direct access to land is particularly relevant to women in female-headed households as it facilitates access to agricultural support services, as many development specialist programmes seek only heads of households with secure tenure. Rural women claim that secure land rights increase their social and political status, improve their sense of self-esteem, confidence, security and dignity (Crowley, 2001).

Effective access to, use and management of productive inputs, income and wealth are essential for women to realize their economic potential and to provide women the incentive to invest their labour and financial resources. However, land systems and registration acts constrain women's right to own land. In Kenya for example, a daughter may have the right to use her father's land but she cannot own it. In Cameroon, where laws have changed to give women the right to own land, cumbersome administrative procedures may block their ownership (World Bank, 1992a).

## Agricultural development and related services

### *Farm level research and appropriate technology*

Improved technology is recognized as crucial to increasing agricultural productivity, and accelerating rural economic growth (Huvio, 1998). Women's work, especially in rural areas, is strenuous and time consuming and the need for labour-saving and income-generating technologies is acute. Years of research and development experience show that technology is not gender neutral. Most research and development programmes, from the 1970s through the mid-1990s, only partly recognized women's contribution to the development process (Paris, *et al.*, 2001).



## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

Appropriate technology needs to be adopted to help the farming community maintain production levels and respond to increasing demands. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa cereal yields are the lowest in the world, farm sizes are decreasing and traditional soil restoration methods are less feasible; however, the agricultural sector is expected to produce food for the growing rural and urban populations and to provide raw materials for the industrial sector. Future agricultural development will have to rely increasingly on securing higher yields (Saito, *et al.*, 1994).

Women farmers face multiple constraints to obtaining improved seeds, new crop varieties, knowledge of improved cropping systems and other forms of technology. The lack of, or limited access to, appropriate technology is related to widespread poverty among rural women, as most of their productive activities are not market oriented. The absence of legal rights to land limits women's access to credit and membership to farmers' organizations, further restricting access to inputs, services and credit (Cotula, 2002; Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001; and Tsikata, 2000).

Although technological change can generate major social and economic benefits, it can also increase costs; for example, rural households in Asia need more cash to cover costs for new technological inputs, forcing women to work as agricultural labourers. At the same time, women's wage-earning opportunities are reduced by mechanization (FAO, 1996b).

In the past, agricultural research, technical training and extension programmes primarily targeted men (FAO, 1996b). For this reason, technologies and tools introduced to communities to improve productivity were often based on rural men's needs and perceptions, which can substantially differ from those of women farmers. FAO and other agencies realized that more equitable and sustainable technologies should be developed to respond to gender-differentiated needs and priorities to improve food security for all, both at the household and national levels.

Rural women are well informed about traditional technologies, although they may generally have little access to the benefits of modern technology. This is partly because they are excluded from the process of setting research priorities and the generation and dissemination of new technologies. Technological development on its own, without inputs and suggestions from women and men farmers, cannot ensure the sustainable improvement of agricultural production. Research on the gender-related impact of

technological change, in all areas of agriculture, shows that development of new or improved technologies must consider intra-household divisions of labour, income and access to land to assess possible impacts fully. Women's involvement in research, policy-making and planning is essential to ensure that the most productive use of resources meets present and future food-security demands from the household to the global level (Huvio, 1998).

Rural women have yet to obtain significant access to improved inputs. Overall, Africa's women farmers have been unable to benefit from the introduction of new technologies. These were too expensive, difficult to maintain, inefficient to use and inappropriate for crops grown by women farmers or harmful to women's health and safety (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992). Rural women have a great need for economically accessible labour and energy-saving technologies, which means developing an understanding of their specific farming roles and constraints (World Bank, 1992).

### *Educational programmes*

Over the past 20 years, life expectancy increased 20 percent faster for women than for men. Gaps in educational attainment are closing, which increases women's capabilities and expands their opportunities to exercise choices. This results in improved food and nutritional security for the household, society and nation (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). Significant differences remain between male and female adult literacy rates across Africa as shown in Table 1.5. The rate for female literacy is below 20 percent in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger; placing them in a disadvantaged position to obtain information on new farm technology, to participate in planning and decision-making forums and to create new income-generating opportunities. However, literacy rates among females are significantly higher in Botswana; Congo; Lesotho; Mauritius; South Africa and Zimbabwe.

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

**Table 1.5**  
Adult literacy rate by gender in African countries

Country	Adult literacy rate		Country	Adult literacy rate	
	Female	Male		Female	Male
Benin	24.6	53.5	Mali	16.6	36.7
Botswana	80.6	75.3	Mauritania	30.7	51.1
Burkina Faso	14.9	34.9	Mauritius	81.7	88.0
Burundi	42.0	56.9	Mozambique	30.0	61.2
Cameroon	65.1	79.9	Namibia	81.9	83.4
Central African Rep	36.6	60.8	Niger	8.9	24.4
Congo	75.9	88.2	Nigeria	57.7	73.3
Congo, Dem. Rep.	51.8	74.2	Rwanda	61.9	74.5
Cote d'Ivoire	38.4	60.3	Senegal	28.7	48.1
Ethiopia	32.4	48.1	Sudan	47.7	70.0
Gambia	30.9	45.0	South Africa	85	86.3
Ghana	64.5	81.1	Swaziland	79.4	81.3
Guinea-Bissau	24.7	55.2	Tanzania	67.9	84.5
Kenya	77.3	89.5	Togo	44.0	73.4
Lesotho	93.9	73.3	Uganda	58.0	78.1
Madagascar	60.6	74.2	Zambia	72.7	85.8
Malawi	47.6	75.0	Zimbabwe	85.5	93.3

Source: UNDP, 2003

Almost all regions have made progress in achieving universal primary education, but the lowest net enrollment ratios are recorded for sub-Saharan Africa, which is making slow progress. Gender inequalities at all levels of education continue to hinder economic development and social equity. This gap is important because countries that recognize women's rights acknowledge our common human dignity and double their capacities, benefiting from the energies and insights of the other half of their population (UN, 2002b). The world is not on track to achieve the Third Millennium Development Goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005<sup>2</sup>; at the current rate, that target will not be met until 2025. Gender discrimination in primary school enrollment is a concern particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (Vandemoortele, 2002). Gender disaggregated data from the formal school system indicate an increasing female school dropout rate the higher the educational level (GTZ, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Faster progress was made toward gender equality in secondary and tertiary education, but it was not enough to close the gender gap by the agreed date.

### *Extension and training*

In many developing countries today, gender concerns are of low priority in the planning and implementation of extension policies and programmes. Women farmers are rarely reached by extension services, and there has been little technical information to improve the productivity of women's agricultural activities. Another constraint to women's access to extension in agriculture and livestock is the general perception that women are primarily 'housewives', rather than decision-making farmers. Thus, extension services focus on male 'farmers' who are expected to direct the work of female 'family labour' (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992).


Women's full role in production-related activities needs to be brought into the mainstream of extension services and training. A number of changes have been made over the last five years in the extension system. One is the farmer field-school approach, which has a high adoption rate in Kenya and Uganda. Under the farmer field-school system, the establishment of women's groups is encouraged and sometimes solely women make up the schools. These efforts need to be extended to other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Agricultural extension agents are an important source of information for all farmers, particularly women, given their generally lower levels of education. Despite the long tradition of female farming in sub-Saharan Africa, male farmers have more contact with extension services. Few women are agricultural extension agents and agricultural research and extension institutions rarely seek the expertise of local women farmers. The number of female agricultural extension agents needs to be increased particularly in societies where interaction of female farmers with male agricultural extension agents is culturally unacceptable. Agricultural extension agents will need training or retraining in order to be relevant to female farmers (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). According to Quisumbing, *et al.* (1995), yields on women's plots could increase with improved education, experience and inputs (see Box 1.2).

#### **Box 1.2 IMPACT OF EQUAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

Kenyan women farmers could increase their yields by 9 to 24 percent if they had the same experience, education and inputs as men. In Kenya, yields could increase by 24 percent if all women farmers had primary schooling.

Source: Quisumbing, *et al.*, 1995



## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

The effort to empower women both socially and economically is most effective when supported by skills, management and leadership training along with literacy programmes. Women's response to training opportunities has often exceeded expectations in IFAD-supported projects. Training for income generation has drawn the greatest participation and proved most effective when directed at activities chosen by women and that have adequate market opportunities (IFAD, 2000).

When women overcome constraints and gain access to new technologies, they are equally or more likely to be innovators than men. In Zambia, a study revealed that wealthier farm households headed by women are more likely to adopt improved maize varieties than those headed by men (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). As women have a lower risk threshold, because of their vulnerable state related to their productive and reproductive responsibilities, more research would help to understand the particular conditions under which rural women will negotiate their risk aversion and embrace innovation.

### *Credit*

Financial reforms have not targeted women, but have improved the rural financial market for the poor in general (Tsikata, 2000). Socio-cultural constraints and stereotypes of non-creditworthiness exclude women from formal sources of credit: banks, cooperatives and credit unions. An analysis of credit schemes in Kenya; Malawi; Sierra Leone; Zambia and Zimbabwe found that women had received less than 10 percent of credit directed to smallholders and 1 percent of the total credit to agriculture (Du Guerny, 1996).

Often agricultural loans require land title or cattle as collateral, which many farm households do not have (Du Guerny, 1996). In particular, the constraints women face to owning land means they are unable to use it as collateral for credit, which is critical for the timely purchase of inputs such as improved seed varieties and fertilizer. The absence of credit limits women's adoption of new technology, the hiring of labour when required, the growing of crops needing large outlays of cash, the purchase of their own land where they can legally, or to purchase capital goods (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). This creates a negative cycle; without land, farmers cannot obtain credit and without credit, they cannot obtain land.

Some credit programmes have been directed towards women caring for orphans,

such as the Ugandan Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO), which has successfully reached a number of women in Uganda (see Box 1.3).

### *Farmers associations*

Participation in rural organizations such as peasants' associations, agricultural labour unions, cooperatives and project beneficiary committees increases rural men and women's access to productive resources, information, training and commercial networks. Membership in these organizations allows people to present their interests to government authorities and project management. Though no law prohibits female membership, women's access to these organizations is often severely limited because membership is based on the criteria of landownership and/or status as head-of-household (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992; FAO, 1990) or allows for only one member from each agricultural household.

It is important to tackle the challenges of consolidating grassroots organizations as a means to providing women a voice. FAO reports:

*'There is evidence that associations organized at the grassroots level are more effective than those created for a particular project. Women's groups at both grassroots and national levels have been effective in promoting the integration of gender issues into mainstream development activities and the participation of women in decision-making. However, women's groups, at all levels, are faced with problems of inadequate training and skills and insufficient financial resources' (FAO, 1990).*

### **Box 1.3 UGANDAN WOMEN'S EFFORTS TO SAVE ORPHANS (UWESO)**

When Selina Anyodo was widowed, she assumed the sole responsibility for the care of her seven children. As she had no means of earning a living, Selina began to work in other people's kitchen gardens, which enabled her to feed her children only once a day. She was still unable to clothe the children properly or send them to school. Selina was encouraged to join the Ugandan Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO) savings and credit scheme.

She was given a small loan to start a business, and she bought vegetables from her neighbours to sell in the local market. With the profits, she bought seeds and fertilizers, began growing her own produce and diversified her activities by buying a goat. She now has a steady income and a healthy savings account in the local bank. She is able to feed her children three solid meals a day; she built a bathing area and hygienic drying rack for her dishes. She has many plans and hopes for the future.

The UWESO Savings and Credit Scheme began in April 1996 and targets families caring for orphans. Women are a primary focus as on average they care for six children. Clusters of women are trained for at least eight weeks in group solidarity, leadership skills, business management, marketing, savings and credit management. Four thousand loans have been provided to 1 875 people, 87 percent are women. The scheme is supported by the Belgian Survival Fund under its joint programme with IFAD.

Source: IFAD, 2000





## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

### *Information*

In this era of tremendous advancement in information and communication technologies (ICT), rural areas remain outside mainstream information channels and most new technologies are beyond the reach of rural women. Furthermore, sex-disaggregated data are scarce and policy-makers and development agencies are unable to understand women's conditions and reflect their needs in development efforts.

FAO actively participated in the international effort to document, develop and disseminate information and data on the roles and responsibilities of rural women in agricultural production, food security and rural development (FAO, 1999a). The Organization promoted the development of global databases, methodologies and analysis in FAOSTAT, which is available on the internet. FAOSTAT information is based on national data provided by member countries, obtained from their agricultural censuses and annual surveys of agricultural production. Moreover, FAO has established the food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system (FIVIMS) to raise awareness and integrate complementary information about food security issues and to improve the quality of food security-related data and analysis.

One of the objectives addressed by the World Food Summit was to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women. Hereto the Summit recommended increased efforts to improve the collection, dissemination and use of gender-disaggregated data in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development. This corresponds with the increasing demand for gender-specific statistics at the national and regional levels, from researchers, academics, women's groups and non-governmental organizations. All are interested in addressing various socio-economic development issues and participating more actively in decision-making on such topics.

Information technology can also be used to organize information and to empower rural women by increasing their access to information, thus leveling gender and class-based inequalities generated by differential access to information. For effective gender mainstreaming, both men and women need information on women's rights in relation to natural and human resources. Poor women need access to project information to reduce the possibility that wealthier groups (of men or women), connected to the local elite, take control of the benefits of a rural project (IFAD, 2000). This information can be provided through extension service delivery,

education and the use of radio. FAO has undertaken several initiatives to empower women through ICT, in particular using rural radio in Benin, Congo, Mali and Niger (FAO, 2000a).

### Rural women's work as entrepreneurs and off-farm income activities

**In addition to the active role rural women** play in food production, most post-harvest activities are the responsibility of women and children. Food processing, storage and preservation of agricultural produce are nearly exclusively undertaken by women. They transport agricultural produce from the fields to the homestead and market centres on their heads, since most farms are inaccessible to vehicles. Besides, women play a major role in the marketing of agricultural produce (Anarfi, 2000) in its largest sense, as demonstrated in Figure 1.1.

Some programmes have trained women in entrepreneurial skills and

income-generation activities, for example, a FAO project provided training to several women in management, soap manufacture and masonry (Box 1.4).

Although cash crop production such as cocoa, coffee and sheanuts has long been seen as the domain of men, women do play a role in these enterprises. Their participation is significant and it is estimated that 30 percent of cocoa farmers are women. Besides, most male cocoa farmers have a wife or wives who cater to their food needs and make other contributions promoting the success of the enterprise (Anarfi, 2000).


While home-based micro-enterprises may not be profitable enough to improve income levels significantly, they diversify income sources and reduce vulnerability. They build confidence for trading in markets, support credit repayment and

#### Box 1.4 REVOLVING FUND FOR WOMEN'S GROUPS IN MALI

Incomes generated through the formation of women's groups, resulted in increasing the livelihood potential of rural women. In Kayes, a semi-arid district in north Mali, an FAO project supported women in 50 villages. These women did not own land and could not obtain credit without collateral. The project established a revolving fund to enable them to buy seed, fertilizer, water pumps for irrigation and mills to grind millet and sorghum.

More than 900 villagers received training in management, tree cultivation, reforestation, soap manufacture and masonry. Some women created home and market gardens that provide them with additional income to buy essential ingredients for the diets of their families, others have established nurseries for banana, lemon, neem and eucalyptus trees.

Source: FAO, 1997b



## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

contribute to the family cash flow. However, these operations require significantly higher levels of education, business skills, group organization, time and mobility (IFAD, 2000). Some organizations such as IFAD have therefore developed an integrated package combining financial and non-financial services, skills training in management and marketing, credit and organizational assistance for women.

### *Livestock activities*

Livestock provides a high share of household income among poorer and landless families, in particular women. Purchasing livestock is often women's preferred use of credit, for both income and security, as livestock provides food, cash, draft power, fertilizer and gains value through reproduction. Still, women's right to animals varies with culture, class and type of animal. Buying and raising small livestock is more affordable to rural women, though profits are generally low. Women's ownership of larger animals such as cattle and donkeys is limited due to the cost involved in acquiring them (Miller, 2001) and sociocultural norms, which sometimes prevent women from working with draught animals.

Women devote a large amount of time, labour and expertise to agricultural and livestock production. In almost all regions, women have significant responsibilities in the care and management of livestock and the processing of livestock products.

## Global and regional trends

### Structural adjustment programme and related policies

**Structural adjustment programmes (SAP)** and market-oriented economic reforms have special implications for the agricultural sector and rural populations. The broad design of a SAP generally aims to remove urban bias and can sometimes bring better prices to agricultural producers, provide incentives for increasing production, particularly of internally tradable and export-oriented crops. These price changes are accompanied by higher prices for inputs caused by the removal of state subsidies and the indirect taxation of imported inputs via currency devaluation. The matrix of changes in production, consumption and incentives causes re-allocation of resources between sectors, crops and products and within the household (Coelho and Coffey, 1996).

Overall the SAP and market reforms did not achieve their intended re-allocations sometimes failing to take gender factors into account, both at the intra-household level and in the broader economy. It should be recognized that farm-household production decisions on crop choice result from intra-household decision-making, determined by the nature of incentives offered to women and men and the gendered resource allocation in the household (Coelho and Coffey, 1996).

Women farmers in Togo, for example, feel marginalized under rural development policies applied under the structural adjustment programme. These policies do not make any differentiation of gender-specific factors in agricultural production and do not take into account the constraints of customs and social rules limiting women's activities (Kantchati, 2000).

The negative impacts may stem from the fact that the SAP and market reform



Fish vendor in  
the market at Akosombo.  
*(Peyton Johnson, 1969)*

policies aim to allocate resources from the non-traded to the traded sector through price incentives for traded commodities. The success of this attempt depends on the extent to which female labour is mobile across these sectors.

Other fundamental components of the SAP directly affected the livelihood of women. The removal of subsidies required by the SAP was largely borne by women, thus increasing their unpaid workload (Tsikata, 2000).

## Globalization

**Many African countries are rather** weakly connected to the modern global economy. Though international commodity markets continue to expand, Africa's sales into those markets are reducing. Surprisingly, Africa's total volume of exported agricultural

products such as coffee, palm oil and sugar is less today than it was 30-years ago (Paarlberg, 2002). Globalization, together with trade liberalization policies, has favoured large-scale commercial farming and export cash cropping over household subsistence production. Globalization poses particular risks to small-scale farmers who form the backbone of agriculture in many developing countries. Small-scale production systems are thrown off balance by liberalization of trade, privatization of resources and services, structural adjustment policies, new marketing forces, modernization of agriculture and other socio-economic factors. In addition, small farmers compete



Fishmongers busy  
boning and salting fish.  
FAO, 1998.

against cheap imports, much of which are unfairly subsidized (IFPRI, 2001) and produced with more cost-efficient methods.

As a result of gender inequalities and discrimination, women may be more negatively affected by globalization and liberalization processes than men, especially in rural areas. According to FAO's Gender and Development Plan for Action 2002–2007, opening up local markets to less expensive imports and the removal of agricultural subsidies have adversely affected female farmers in particular. They have found it increasingly difficult to reap the fruits of liberalization, which may result from difficult access to agricultural inputs (FAO, 2001a). More than men, rural

women lack training, investment and access to information, which prevents them from being able to compete on the 'global' market. Globalization has contributed to the feminization of agriculture because men leave rural areas in search of paid employment increasing the number of female-headed households (FAO, 2000a).

Long-term development trends suggest that progressive industrialization of agriculture is associated with a decrease in the populations involved in food production. The rapid pace of globalization accelerates the monetization of subsistence producers; farmers are faced with increasing demands for cash and declining earnings from conventional products following the commercialization of agriculture.

The reallocation of resources during adjustment from the non-tradable to the tradable sector was expected to raise incomes in the export-oriented sectors, however evidence indicates that in some regions women, being mainly responsible for the production of non-tradable goods, have not been able to reap the benefits of trade liberalization. Market liberalization resulted in the breakdown of local marketing cooperatives, which women would have preferred and thus resulted in a decline in marketed food production by women (FAO, 2001d).

## HIV/AIDS

**HIV/AIDS was originally perceived and dealt with largely** as an urban problem, but evidence shows that HIV incidence tends to rise faster in the rural areas of most developing countries than in urban settings. HIV-infected urban dwellers often return to their village during later stages of their sickness, thus introducing/increasing HIV/AIDS in rural areas. Moreover, rural households provide most of the care for AIDS patients (FAO, 2001). A UNAIDS document shows that rural subsistence households are affected more acutely than urban families (UNAIDS, 1999). HIV/AIDS is perceived as a pandemic challenging the basis of agricultural production and food security in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, which adds to the problems of the rural poor, especially women, who have limited rights to land and restricted access to resources.

Of the 36.1 million people estimated to have been infected by HIV worldwide in 2000, some 25.3 million or 70 percent lived in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2001, there were 16 countries in the region with more than one-tenth of their adult population infected



The national Ugandan AIDS support group, TASO, whose motto is Living Positively with AIDS, honours the memory of deceased friends by quilting their names on banners. The banners are raised during TASO festivities, held to buoy the spirits of people with AIDS and their families. Such quilts have been created in numerous countries as memorials to victims of AIDS. (K. Dunn, 1994)

with the virus. Deaths from HIV/AIDS in the African region increased from 2.2 million in 1999 to 2.4 million in 2000, and created some 12.1 million orphans (FAO, 2001). In some countries, where effective prevention is achieved, the rate of infection is stabilizing.

According to FAO estimates, two person-years of labour are lost in an AIDS-afflicted household by the time one person dies from the disease. In Kenya, a study showed that between 48 to 78 percent of household income is lost

when one person has died of AIDS (Villarreal, 2001). The population groups most at risk are those situated along truck routes to rural areas and near large infrastructure projects. Overall, most of those infected with HIV are rural dwellers and women are relatively worse affected (FAO, 2001).

Studies in Africa show that teenage girls are five to six times more likely to be infected by the HIV virus than boys their age. The HIV infection rate among educated women fell by almost half in the 1990s, whereas there was no significant decrease for women without formal schooling (UNAIDS, 2000). Customarily, in most rural African societies, women are not supposed to be concerned with their husband's sexual behaviour outside marriage and there is little discussion of sex between spouses or generations (Anarfi, 2000).

Women have limited access to productive resources as land, credit, knowledge, training and technology. When a husband dies, a wife may lose whatever access has been gained through the man and her livelihood and that of the children may be threatened (Villarreal, 2001; Du Guerny, 1998). Rural households suffer loss of productive labour, income, food reserves and reduced nutrition. Savings and assets are diverted to meet health care and funeral costs thus reducing children's educational opportunities (Box 1.5) (UNAIDS, 1999). Moreover, labour shortages are particularly severe in agriculture as production is seasonal and timing crucial (FAO, 2001; ILO, 2000).

FAO estimated that in the 25 most affected African countries, seven million

agricultural workers died of AIDS between 1985 and 2000, 16 million more could die within the next 20 years. According to FAO and UNAIDS studies, agricultural output of small-scale farmers in some parts of Zimbabwe may have fallen by as much as 50 percent over the past five years, mainly as a result of AIDS (FAO, 2001; UNAIDS, 1999). Up to 26 percent of the agricultural labour force could be lost in countries of sub-Saharan Africa because of AIDS by the year 2020. Since the disease mainly affects people aged 15–49, who are economically the most productive members of society, HIV/AIDS is a problem of economic and social importance (Villarreal, 2001).

As the agricultural labour force decreases because of AIDS, some land remains fallow and household output declines. Less time may be devoted to weeding, mulching, pruning and clearing land. As a coping strategy, farmers may shift to less labour-intensive crops. In Namibia and Uganda, often livestock is sold to support the sick and to pay for funeral expenses, which reduces household savings and increases vulnerability to new shocks. Moreover, this jeopardizes the livestock industry and long-term food security and survival options, as is already the case in Namibia. The drop in livestock numbers also has soil fertility implications (FAO, 2001).

In line with their traditional roles, women farmers take care of family members afflicted with the disease and their time to engage in agricultural activities is significantly reduced (Du Guerny, 1998). Because women play a vital role in ensuring household food security and child education, children are taken out of school to help the family cope (Du Guerny, 1998). Where land tenure and inheritance traditions favour male inheritance a woman who survives her husband may find her farming activities severely curtailed (Anarfi, 2000).

In many cases diverse coping strategies have been adopted to meet cash and food requirements. In rural Zambia, some households resorted to undertaking a range of income-generating activities such as selling firewood and livestock, tailoring and petty trade. Some household members migrate to urban areas in search of employment so they can send remittances to their rural area. Children as young as ten years old went to work for an income. In Malawi, households worked as casual labour on other farms and young



District of Kibaha,  
Masai women in Magindi  
village returning from milking.



girls resorted to sex work to fulfill short-term income needs (UNAIDS, 1999).

Other impacts of HIV/AIDS include ‘tuberization’ of agricultural production as a result of the change to less labour-intensive crops of lower nutritional value. Fewer cash crops are produced, thus further reducing household income, while medical fees and funeral costs are extremely high (Villarreal, 2001; ILO, 2000). Food consumption falls while spending on health care increases. There is a reduction in the transmission of knowledge between generations and social safety nets weaken. A study in Kenya revealed only 7 percent of agricultural households headed by orphans had adequate knowledge of agricultural production (Villarreal, 2001). Box 1.5 provides a summary of the effects of HIV/AIDS on agriculture and food security.

### Box 1.5 SUMMARY OF THE EFFECTS OF HIV/AIDS ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

- ❖ Loss of agricultural labour, as two person-years of labour are lost when one person dies in a household, decreasing productivity, especially in farming systems where there is a low level of mechanization.
- ❖ Rural dwellers at risk as:
  - rural people are less likely to know how to protect themselves because of poorer access to information and health services;
  - AIDS infected urban dwellers return to their rural homes when they fall ill;
  - time spent on agricultural labour shifts to caring for AIDS patients;
- ❖ Change to less labour-intensive farming systems, growing crops with low nutritional value such as tubers; food consumption decreases;
- ❖ High medical and funeral costs impoverish affected households, reducing their ability to produce and purchase food, thereby placing children’s educational opportunities at risk;
- ❖ Loss of the transmission of agricultural indigenous knowledge between generations;
- ❖ Further exposure to HIV/AIDS through impoverishment and unhealthy coping strategies by women and more children resort to living on the streets.

Source: Villarreal, 2001; UNAIDS, 1999.

### *Human-induced and natural disasters*

Late in 2000, armed conflict left 24 million people in 28 developing and transition

# The African region

## chapter 1

countries and territories, in need of food and other humanitarian assistance. Nearly 80 percent were in sub-Saharan Africa and women and children represented 70 to 80 percent of refugees and internally displaced people uprooted by violence. The impact of war on food security is profound and conflict-induced losses of agricultural output in Africa totaled US\$22 billion between 1990 and 1997. In almost all affected countries, the majority of the workforce depends on agriculture as a livelihood (Messer and Cohen, 2001).

The ability of national governments to preserve internal peace is crucial for agricultural and rural development. Recently, 13 of the 20 most violent conflicts were in African nations (Paarlberg, 2002). Protracted civil wars are one of the most devastating shocks affecting the African continent. Avoiding political instability, especially civil wars, increases the possibility of international and regional support for national reform programmes. Understanding the political economy and avoiding civil strife and ethnic conflicts is pertinent to the establishment of a development strategy for sub-Saharan Africa (Elbadawi, 1999).

Gender issues underlying humanitarian interventions, whether armed conflict or natural disaster, have been summed up in the World Food Programme Gender Policy (2002):

*“Acute or chronic humanitarian crises and poverty tend to accentuate gender gaps because means are limited and women are discriminated against and are expected to make a sacrifice by eating less. In situations of conflict and displacement, often women are exposed to new risks such as physical violence and sexual abuse. In addition, a large portion of households end up headed by women during these crises, with the women burdened with additional tasks owing to their husbands’ and sons’ military recruitment, disappearance, disablement or death. In humanitarian crises, there is the risk that food will not fully reach the beneficiary households if distributed to community leaders, who may allocate it based on political or social considerations. This is the case when food is distributed to the husbands in polygamous family arrangements, even though there are various household units consisting of women and their minor or elderly dependents. Nevertheless, situations of crisis have offered opportunities for change that have proven advantageous for implementing new means of improving women’s access to and control over food, such as issuing the household ration card in women’s names.”*



Farmers queuing for free seed in aftermath of civil war.  
(G. Diana, 1994)

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture

## Environmental degradation

**Environmental degradation is a global phenomenon.** However, the impact is felt more among the poorer segments of the rural population. Rural poverty and the degradation of the environment are mutually reinforced when people's survival is at stake; increasingly they are forced to farm marginal soils, reduce fallow periods, cut vital forests, overstock fragile rangelands and over-fish rivers, lakes and coastal waters (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992).

In Africa the following forms of environmental degradation are observed:

- Forest degradation, including deforestation, is the most widespread environmental problem in the African region, as a result of fuelwood collection and the land requirements of shifting cultivation. In some countries overgrazing is a major cause.
- Land degradation is directly caused by inappropriate land use and unsuitable land management practices such as cultivation of steep slopes without soil conservation measures. These slopes are cultivated because the landless poor need food. Farmers who lack security of tenure may not take soil conservation measures.
- Soil degradation through pollution and over exploitation usually results in loss of soil fertility. Soil erosion caused by rain, streams or floods, is widespread in Africa and may lead to desertification in arid zones. Wind erosion is prevalent in most Sahelian countries such as Chad.
- Chemical degradation of agricultural resources also causes increasing concern, and
- Water pollution is often caused by the industrial sector waste disposal systems, and agricultural chemicals (Marcoux, 1998).

Growth in the agricultural sector cannot be sustained unless environmentally sound farming practices are introduced on a large scale. Environmental degradation directly impacts household food security. Where soil fertility has been drastically reduced as a result of over-cropping; deforestation; overgrazing and erosion; or where there is a lack of fuelwood and potable water, women are often forced to change the dietary practices and standards of their families. Sometimes this means reducing the number of hot meals per day, substantially lowering family levels of nutrition, as some staple foods cannot be digested without prolonged cooking (Roca, 1994).

Chad, Rwanda and Sierra Leone indicated the need to recognize the role of women in improving the environment and population planning, as these two problems are interrelated. They mentioned that measures need to be established to sensitize women and encourage their involvement in environmental and development activities. Programmes listed include literacy and educational activities in the environmental sector such as sensitizing women to the rational management of freshwater and energy resources, hygienic practices, and good sanitation (Marcoux, 1998).

Complex relations exist between poverty, land degradation, high birth rates and food insecurity. Poor smallholders, who are tilling land in the most ecologically fragile regions, need to maintain high birth rates to satisfy the labour demand for household subsistence on lands with diminishing returns. More children result in a higher demand for food, causing additional pressure on the land, which in turn requires increased labour. Because women farmers do not have access to modern, labour-saving or environmentally sound farming techniques, increasingly intensive and time-consuming work is required on their plots, which are often more susceptible to erosion, desertification and other forms of land degradation (Roca, 1994).

Secure access rights to land and pastures are critical in motivating investment for conservation. Women's lack of secure landownership and tenure reduces the likelihood they will adopt environmentally sustainable agricultural practices if these require additional financial or labour inputs. Besides, insecure land tenure reduces women's access to credit, which may be used to rehabilitate eroded soils or to implement labour-saving technologies. On the other hand, increased productivity results in reduced labour needs, which would allow for a lower birth rate, positively influencing the food security situation.

The challenge is the sustainable intensification of agricultural production to improve livelihoods, while safeguarding ecosystems, watersheds and biodiversity. To this end technologies should be promoted that would reduce agriculture-related environmental degradation on vulnerable and food insecure households. Furthermore, there is a need to address the biosecurity risks associated with the exchange of agricultural inputs and products for expanded international trade (FAO, 2001b). Clearly, improvement of crop production in the twenty-first century requires a combination of environmental conservation and increased productivity (Thomson, 2001).



## Policy environment and requirements

**Unless higher priority is given by governments** everywhere to problems of food security and nutrition, the human misery and economic waste embodied in food insecurity and malnutrition will continue at all levels. The cycle of complacency on the part of decision-makers needs to be broken, to realize the goal of reducing the number of food insecure people by half by 2015, as agreed by 187 countries at the World Food Summit in 1996, and the World Food Summit +5 in 2001.

Both opportunities and challenges for Africa are considerable. Opportunities may be created through the development of Africa's human and natural resources, consolidation of democracy and commitment to self-reliance, which is reflected in the



Rural women going to  
work in the fields.  
(G. Diana, 1997)

New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) (UN, 2002b). Improved governance at the national level has a significant impact on reducing hunger and is of highest priority in developing regions where hunger is not yet under control. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of hungry people increases every year. As such, improved global governance, though necessary, is not an efficient answer to the distinctive problems of human malnutrition. Because of the weak connections African countries have to the global economy, stronger international governance of global markets and investments is unlikely to have a great impact on hunger in the region (Paarlberg, 2002).

Between 1971 and 1991, public spending on agricultural research and development in Africa increased only minimally in comparison to increases in other parts of the developing world. Strengthening public agricultural research investment by national governments helps to take improved technology to rural farm communities and may result in increased farm labour productivity and farm incomes, as reported in success stories from Asian countries (Paarlberg, 2002).

Policy issues on gender and affirmative action concerning women are being addressed in global and national media following their endorsement at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. Organizations, such as the United Nations, FAO have worked to address the issue of rural women and aided in improving policies to decrease gender disparity.

This has been accomplished through meetings such as the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (1979); the adoption in 1993 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action; the World Conference on Human Rights and International Conference on Population and Development (1994); and the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Summit for Economic Advancement of Rural Women by IFAD (1991).

Follow-up on plans of action derived from institutional policies, as well as monitoring of commitments to international instruments, will ensure these policies attain their objectives.

## Changes in the policy environment

**Programmes have been launched to reduce the number** of the hungry: the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) initially targeted low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDC), but was adopted by other developing countries. In September 2000 at the Millennium Summit, the United Nations adopted a set of eight millennium development goals (MDGs); one is to halve the amount of those suffering from hunger between 1990 and 2015. The SPFS advocated with donors and governments of developing countries the importance of focusing development efforts on small farmers. These agencies recognized the role of the small farmer in agricultural production, food security, poverty reduction and the sustainable use of natural resources (FAO, 2003).

In past years, programmes targeting women as beneficiaries concentrated on their reproductive role and on home economics. There have been small, dispersed, 'women specific' projects or project components focusing on women's productive role in agriculture, but these have remained isolated from national agricultural planning and policies. More recently, international organizations and national governments have begun to promote awareness of women's issues, including those of rural women



## Policy environment and requirements

and encouraged research on their agricultural and other roles. These organizations served as advocates for change in national policies and legislation affecting women's rights to land, inheritance, employment conditions and wage rates (FAO, 1996).

In many countries, constitutions state equality before the law as one of the foundations of the legal system. International conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995; the follow-up Special Sessions of the General Assembly (Beijing +5 and +10), and the specific reference to women in the millennium development goals, have played an important role in promoting women's legal rights and helping non-governmental and advocacy groups in countries make their national governments accountable. However, if women are poor and uneducated, they may be unaware of the provisions of the law (UN, 2002c; Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001).

National women's associations are an important step in ensuring that women's needs and constraints are included on the national policy agenda (FAO, 1996). In many African countries Ministries of Gender, of Women's Rights and of Women's Affairs have been strengthened or set up to directly address and promote issues of particular concern to women.

The direct impact of these development programmes on rural women is often negligible because of their urban bias, they are frequently situated within social ministries such as health and education and lack influence in the technical ministries. Furthermore, they are often isolated from the planning ministries; with the effect that adequate attention cannot be given women's needs in the development of national strategies and plans (FAO, 1996). Lack of coordination among the different associations has led to duplication of effort and reduced efficiency. Besides, they lack financial and other forms of support from the government and major ministries.

Participatory research was conducted in several African countries to diagnose the state of rural women, identify their constraints and determine their needs. Gender analysis training programmes were undertaken by government officials and agricultural extension agents and women in development (WID) units were created in Ministries of Agriculture. Some male and female extension agents were trained in communication skills, participatory development, gender analysis and household food

security so they could effectively provide extension services to rural women (FAO, 1996). To promote sustainable agriculture, rural development and food security for all people, FAO plans to further its mission to ensure that women, as well as men, have the support and access to resources they need to pursue sustainable livelihoods and an improved quality of life (FAO, 1997).

FAO, IFAD and other organizations, adopted the Gender and Development approach in 1992, to examine gender roles and relationships rather than women alone. For IFAD, gender mainstreaming at the project level means ensuring that the specific roles, needs and constraints of women and men are taken into account at all stages of design and implementation. Sixteen out of 17 of IFAD's projects concerning women only are in countries where sociocultural norms limit the interaction between men and women, though the disadvantage of designing separate activities was fully recognized (IFAD, 2000).

## Appropriate policy support for rural women

**An appropriate policy environment is needed to improve** rural women's living standards and enhance food security. Efforts have been made by different organizations to improve the policy environment and promote the welfare of rural women, which need to be strengthened and enforced. For example, FAO's Gender and Development Service (then Women in Development Service) organized a workshop in 1997 to evaluate experiences in gender sensitive participatory rural appraisal. The aim was to assure women a voice in cultures where men dominate decision-making, train extension staff to work with rural people and to establish mechanisms for needs-based planning processes. Pilot projects were launched in Namibia, Nepal and Tanzania, with the support of the Government of Norway, to improve channels of communication between men and women farmers, extension staff, and policy-makers by using participatory approaches and consultative processes (FAO, 1998). Nonetheless, various forms of discrimination and inequality still exist in relation to women's access to agricultural productive resources and services and their participation in planning and policy-making.





## Policy environment and requirements

The founder of the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in Uganda once said:

*“When women own and control land, there will be more food in each household and more crops for export since most farm work is done by them. They will be protected from eviction when they are widowed or divorced. The current system discriminates against women, which violates the equality provisions of our constitution”* (Women’s Action, 2000).

According to Crowley (2001), enhancing women’s land rights requires that the issue becomes a political priority and a legal possibility, as well as an administrative viability, a social acceptability and a moral legitimacy.

First recognized in 1995 in Beijing, gender mainstreaming is now a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. This involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities at all levels (policy, development, research, advocacy and dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes). Gender mainstreaming requires that an effort be made to broaden women’s equitable participation at all levels of decision-making. Gender mainstreaming strongly supports the empowerment of women, including efforts towards raising awareness, confidence building, expansion of available choices and increased access to and control over resources and actions (UN, 2000).

The demand for gender-specific information is growing and this demand arises from various data-users including policy analysts, researchers, academics, rural planners and business people (Akello, 1999). Gender disaggregated information is essential if appropriate policy recommendations are to be made (FAO, 2000a).

### *Planning and decision-making*

Gender parity in political power, as reflected by representation in parliaments, is still far from realized. No country has reached parity and only 13 countries have achieved or exceeded the 30 percent target called for by the Economic and Social Council in 1990 (UN, 2002b; UNDP 2003). In the African region, only Mozambique and South Africa have attained the 30 percent of seats in parliament held by women, followed by the Seychelles (29 percent), Namibia and Rwanda (26 percent each) (UNDP, 2003).

A study in Lira district in Uganda revealed that although opportunities existed for women to participate in local leadership, they were not well equipped for these roles because of cultural and societal limitations. Women said they lacked the support and consent of men, at the household and community levels, to help them participate in local leadership. As a result, a sensitization programme was introduced to promote leadership roles, which led to increased participation of women in the constitution drafting process (FAO, 2000).

Despite improvements in the human capital of women, in sub-Saharan Africa their educational levels are still low. Investment in rural women's education will help empower them to take up leadership positions in their communities.

### *The role of NGOs*

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Vision 2020 Conference revealed the importance of bringing new perspectives to the issue of food security by engaging different stakeholders in dialogue over social inequities and opportunities for partnerships (IFPRI, 2001). NGOs play an important role in this dialogue, complementing and supplementing national governments. Paarlberg (2002) stated that, in the area of rural poverty reduction and food security, NGOs have performed best when they were in partnership with governments, rather than trying to replace them. NGO participation can help governments target public investments more effectively towards the poor.



## Conclusions and lessons learned

**Sub-Saharan Africa faces widespread** poverty and malnutrition, extensive national food deficits, and high and increasing dependence on food imports and concessionary aid (Hazell, 2001). Meeting the world's future food needs will depend increasingly on women's capabilities and resources. In many developing countries, women are responsible for generating food security for their families, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Women process, purchase, prepare food and play a significant role in national agricultural production, producing both food and cash crops, using different survival strategies to ensure household food security and to alleviate rural poverty. Women provide the bulk of agricultural labour, undertake the reproduction and care of children, manage the home and engage in income-generating activities to enhance household welfare. As traditional caregivers, they provide care for people infected with HIV/AIDS, reducing the time invested in productive activities and leisure. The number of female-headed households is increasing because of family breakdown and the rise in male migration to urban areas in search of income.

Rural women have limited access to and control over agricultural productive resources and lack appropriate policy support. The mechanisms established to improve the productivity of rural women often lack financial support and coordination with other institutions and ministries. Because of higher illiteracy rates among women in Africa, they remain ill informed of their rights and of any possibly available assistance. Moreover, customary laws and traditions hamper enforcement of certain laws and policies. Attention to gender differences regarding property rights can improve the outcome of natural resource management policies and projects in terms of efficiency, environmental sustainability, equity, and empowerment of resource users (IFPRI, 1997). A gender-based differentiation for allocation of labour and resources must be taken into account if technologies are to be developed, targeted and transferred appropriately (FAO, 2000a).

Gender-disaggregated agricultural statistical data are a critical prerequisite for any changes in current policy, planning and research activities and for improving the planning capacities in the framework of gender mainstreaming. Although available data provide sufficient evidence that women produce the bulk of food in most African countries, there are significant data gaps on rural women's roles, their agricultural and non-agricultural activities, and their needs related to food production and processing; while qualitative analyses abound, quantitative information is lacking.

Women are major contributors to agricultural production and play a prime role in ensuring food security and adequate nutritional levels of their household members. However, they could achieve much more in food production, provision and utilization if agricultural researchers, plant scientists, extension staff and policy-makers would provide an enabling environment for playing these roles effectively (Brown, *et al.*, 1995).

Regardless of the fact that projects need to concentrate attention on rural women's roles in agricultural production, reports show that projects targeting rural women are more successful if they seek to address both productive and reproductive roles and needs (FAO, 1996). While research exists on food security and reproductive health as separate issues, researchers have paid little attention to the relationship between the two. The dual roles of women in producing and preparing food, as well as in bearing and rearing children, underscore the need for better understanding of the relationship between reproductive health and household food security (UN, 2000a).

To support rural women in Africa who are working to improve food security, attention should be focused on female-headed households and policies developed to raise their living standards. This will have the dual beneficial effect of reducing gender inequalities in terms of improved income and reduced poverty as well as increasing food security (Ellis, 2000). Policy formulation should ensure the promotion of agricultural productivity but at the same time aim to protect the welfare of small-scale food farmers.



## Recommendations

**In studying women's role in food security** in the Africa region, it was found that national governments and other organizations are increasingly aware of the plight of rural women. The following action-oriented recommendations are therefore to promote women's welfare, increase women's agricultural productivity and income levels, which should result in increased availability of food at all levels.

### **Improving access to natural and agricultural productive resources and services**

- Rural women need secure access to **land**. This must be beyond customary systems that regulate access based on membership of a lineage, community or household. Measures to increase women's control over land are important strategies that will lead to the empowerment of rural women, will improve their participation in the decision-making process concerning food production and improve their access to credit. To this end joint titling of land might be encouraged to improve a rural woman's rights to claim a fair share of land acquired through her husband in the event of death, divorce or separation. Policies covering civil and customary laws should be established to protect a woman's right to land where husbands have more than one wife. These rights should be protected in the event of death, divorce or separation.
- Efforts should focus on increasing the **representation** of rural women **in water resource management programmes and decision-making fora**. As indicated by Rathgeber (2003), targeted efforts should identify potential women leaders in rural communities. They should be provided with the training and skills to facilitate their active membership in water user associations.
- Rural women's needs should be incorporated in **agricultural extension** delivery. Training for agriculture extension staff should include techniques on effectively communicating with women farmers. To this end more female extension staff are needed, especially in communities where cultural norms do not permit interaction between women and men. Short-term training programmes could be designed for existing extension staff to strengthen skills working with women farmers. This training would enhance their knowledge of agricultural extension delivery

methods, and further the trainees' understanding of women's productive and reproductive activities resulting in a more holistic approach. Besides women farmers could be trained to become extension agents using methodologies such as farmer field schools. Such an approach can be cost effective in extension delivery and increase the confidence of other farmers in the source of and information received.

- Bottlenecks must be removed to ease rural women's **access to credit**. These include collateral requirements in forms not readily available to women, i.e. land should not be used as collateral for obtaining credit for women farmers. The current requirement that a husband co-sign a wife's credit application should be revised to allow women direct access to credit facilities. Women will then be able to engage in the timely purchase of agricultural inputs, facilitating their participation in income-generating activities.
- **Formal and informal education** opportunities for rural women demand the attention of national governments, international institutions and non-governmental organizations. The education level of rural women in Africa has been a basis for discrimination and limits their participation in planning and decision-making. It has further contributed to ignorance of their rights and provisions of the law. Efforts should be made to increase school enrollment of girls and informal educational systems need to be established to expand the knowledge of rural women and men on provisions of the law.
- Both rural women and men need to be involved in the development of **agricultural technology**. Given rural women's role in food production, their exclusion from setting priorities for technology generation has implications for food security at the household and national level. Besides, incorporating the views of rural women and men in the development of new technology will increase adoption levels. Furthermore, the gender-differential impact of new technologies should be analysed to avoid any negative impact on rural women; often the household head is assumed to be male and the needs of female-headed households may not be addressed.
- Labour-saving technologies are critical for rural women. Labour shortages are on the increase due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, increased male migration to urban



## Recommendations

areas and the combination of household, agriculture and non-agricultural tasks. Labour-saving technologies will allow women to explore off-farm and non-farm income-generating opportunities, allowing them to improve household food and nutrition security. These new technologies should be developed with a good understanding of the income, resources and time constraints rural women face in Africa. They should aim to improve rural women's access to water and reduce time spent on water collection. Cost-effective energy sources need to be developed for processing agricultural produce and for cooking, which will reduce time spent on collecting fuelwood and at the same time will protect the environment.

- Appropriate technology for poor rural women and men should lead to packages combining traditional and modern ideas. It should be simple to use, but should be amenable to upgrading to avoid confining the rural poor in a low-level technology trap (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992).
- Rural women in war-torn countries, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, need **starter packs** in the form of farm tools, fertilizer and seed. With their vital role in food production and the difficulty they face in replacing farm tools and personal effects, governments, NGOs and international organizations need to jump-start their survival mechanisms and help them pick up where they left off.

## Appropriate policy and institutional support

- Good coordination is required among the different agencies and institutions involved in promoting increased productivity among rural women. Improved coordination and sharing of information among the different organizations will ensure greater efficiency and reduce duplication of effort.
- Policy-makers and government agencies need to be provided with information on rural women. More needs to be known about farmers (men and women) and their needs and priorities to allow for the formulation of effective, sustainable development interventions. Akello (1999) affirmed that this information could be gained from studies on the sociocultural environment of rural communities and critical national and global trends.
- Furthermore, data on different agricultural activities, such as the economically active population and labour provision in agriculture, must be timely and reliable. Relevant

variables should be integrated as far as possible into existing data collection exercises, supported by training on collection, processing and dissemination of gender-disaggregated agricultural data. Time-use surveys in particular can capture important aspects of women's production activities and constraints. Data collection interviewers should address women directly when information about their activities is sought.

- Women's improved access to information and communication technologies will enhance their decision-making capacities for increased farm productivity and effective marketing of farm produce. Support for rural radio broadcasting at times when women are likely to listen will be beneficial.
- Empowerment of rural women will enable them to take up leadership roles in their communities. Although women play vital roles in economic development in many African nations, their representation in leadership positions is limited. They should be encouraged to participate in planning and decision-making of programmes from the initial stages onwards and should be well represented at national fora. Participation in political arenas leads to women being heard at the highest levels of policy formulation. Formation of rural women's groups and strengthening of those existing will enhance this process.
- Planners in Africa need to ensure that both men and women have a voice in planning exercises and that their needs are recognized (FAO, 2000b). Women's skills need to be enhanced to ensure their active participation in the development process. This will be accomplished through changing perceptions by increasing the awareness of both men and women (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). Efforts should be made to include rural women in support programmes to ensure that they have decision-making rights over assets, productive resources and services in their communities.
- General awareness-raising and sensitization is needed concerning the economic participation of men and women in agriculture, and the critical role women play in ensuring food security at the household and national levels, to reinforce recognition of the need for appropriate policy and institutional support. Social and cultural institutions need to create an environment where women may realize their full potential. This will require a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach to the empowerment of women.



### The role of government

- Governments in the African region should work towards ensuring peace and reducing conflict, which is crucial for agricultural and rural development. Conflict and political unrest often lead to the destruction of public infrastructure, displacement of people and interruption of agricultural productive activities. Peace building, together with the improvement of rural infrastructure will enhance the ability of rural women and men to produce and market their food production.
- Gender-sensitive government mechanisms should be strengthened to address rural women's issues. The provisions of laws relating to women's rights should be enforced. Furthermore, rural women need to be informed of their rights and the existing mechanisms for enforcement and assistance.
- Land reforms are needed to improve rural women's access to land. Secure land rights enhance credit worthiness, allowing women to purchase agricultural inputs and to adopt improved farm practices for increased farm productivity. Land reforms will raise the social standing of rural women and empower them to participate in planning and other policy fora; land reform is critical for poverty alleviation.
- Gender-sensitive rural infrastructure programmes are needed: good roads and improved transportation and communication systems. Social infrastructure is also required including health care facilities, cultural, business and information centres (on legal rights, market information). Counseling centres would contribute to rural women's empowerment by offering them greater accessibility to information on marketing, health care, education and networking, as stated by Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick (2001). Provision of health care facilities in rural areas will result in meeting some of the Millennium Development Goals such as reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.

### Off-farm work and income-generating activities

- Opportunities for off-farm and non-farm activities should be explored and encouraged for rural women, as their ability to earn additional income will have a positive impact on household consumption. As noted above, women often spend their additional income on their children and on household food and nutritional

security. Technical and management training could be provided and small grants, credit schemes and starter packs could be made available to women who demonstrate entrepreneurial qualities to help them start their own business.

### Further recommendations

- Considering the negative impacts of structural adjustment programmes and market reform policies on rural women in Africa, a thorough assessment is required to evaluate the gender impacts of the current heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, national poverty reduction strategies and other policies. These programmes require (i) a thorough analysis of gender-differentiated impact on rural agricultural producers, (ii) an agenda for ensuring food security at the household and national levels and (iii) a confirmation of their positive impact on rural women.
- Much has been done to bring the HIV/AIDS epidemic under control in selected African countries. However, projections indicate that the disease will continue to pose a serious threat to agricultural production and food security until at least 2010. A robust political agenda is required to both limit the spread of the disease and to enhance livelihood opportunities for people with the disease. Actions must be gender-sensitive, as women are most vulnerable and affected. The policy approach must be multisectoral and its implementation should be community based.
- Rural women should be encouraged to participate in rural organizations and professional associations so that they might transcend individual isolation and collectively articulate and express their needs. This will increase women's social capital, improve their social status and enable their access to resources and enhance their opportunities to obtain credit.



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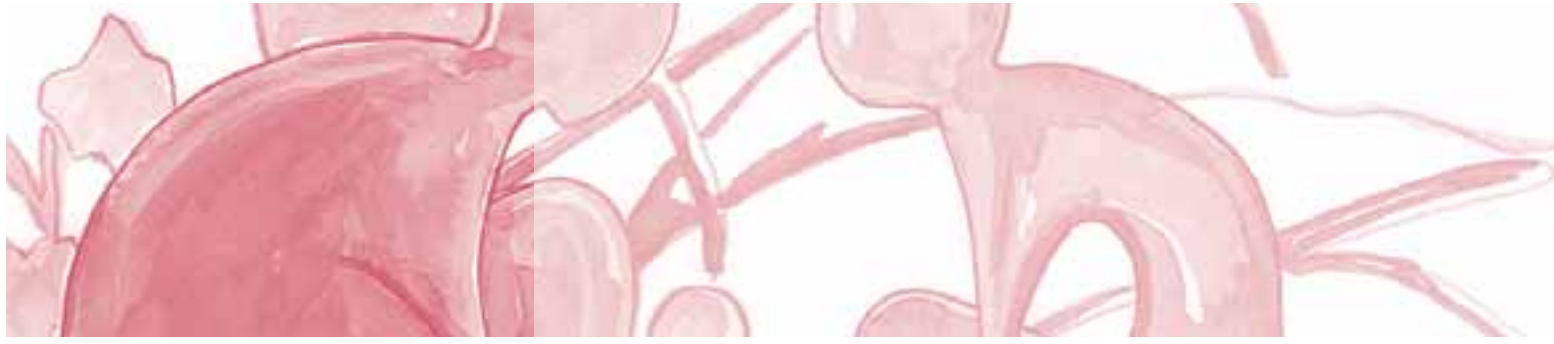
# The African region

## chapter 1

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture

The image features a stylized, monochromatic illustration of the African continent centered on a globe. The globe is rendered in shades of gray, with the continent of Africa highlighted in a darker tone. A prominent red horizontal band crosses the middle of the globe, containing the text "The African region". In the bottom left corner, there is a detailed illustration of a wheat stalk with several heads of grain. The overall style is artistic and minimalist.

# The African region



# The African region<sup>1</sup>

## Food security, a major concern



Woman vendor at the vegetable market. Because of the flood, the market had very few vegetables for sale. (A. Proto, 1998)

**Africa is largely agricultural based and around 61 percent** of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is classified as such. Notwithstanding the importance of agriculture and in spite of abundant natural resources, the average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in constant prices was lower at the end of the 1990s than in 1970 (World Bank, 2000). Income inequality is high in the region and about 16 percent of the population lives in countries with an average GDP per capita of less than US\$200 per year, 36 percent in countries with GDP per capita less than US\$300 and 75 percent live in countries with GDP per capita of less than US\$400 (Dixon, Gulliver and Gibbon, 2001). Africa is the only developing region where crop output and yield growth lag seriously behind population growth (Savadogo, Reardon and Pietola, 1994). The region imports one-third of its food grains and nine of its ten largest countries are net importers of food (Gladwin, Thomson, Peterson and Anderson, 2001).

Food insecurity is a major concern of both national and international communities. The World Food Summit Plan of Action states: “*unless national*

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter is based on the work of Dr Ivy Drafor, FAO consultant.

*governments and the international community address the multifaceted causes underlying food insecurity, the number of hungry and malnourished people will remain very high in developing countries, particularly in Africa south of the Sahara, and sustainable food security will not be achieved*” (WFS, 1997). The Plan of Action is part of an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries and to reduce the number of undernourished people by half by the year 2015.

Food security is an income as well as a production issue as it also relates to poverty (Schuh, 1997). In sub-Saharan Africa, close to 300 million people were living in absolute poverty in 1999 and the poverty rate had not declined at all in the ten years prior to that (UN, 2002b). A total of 46.4 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty line. This percentage is projected to increase by 40 percent at which stage Africa will account for 27 percent of the developing world’s poor. It is the rural poor who make up more than 75 percent of the poor in many sub-Saharan and South Asian countries and studies on rural poverty identify small farmers, the landless, women, nomadic pastoralists, artisanal fishers, indigenous ethnic groups and displaced people as the most vulnerable groups in the rural sector (WFS, 1997).

Income is one of the key determinants of household food consumption (Brown *et al.*, 1995). This is why food security is affected by household incomes, economic assets and prices, demographic factors such as household size, gender and age composition and sociocultural factors such as health and sanitation status, educational level, cultural norms and food consumption habits (Anarfi, 2000). Therefore food security for a growing population cannot be achieved without addressing the underlying issue of rural poverty.

**Table 1.1**  
Population living on less than US\$1 a day  
in selected African countries

Country	%	Country	%
Botswana	23.5	Mauritania	28.6
Burkina Faso	61.2	Mozambique	37.9
Burundi	58.4	Namibia	34.9
Cameroon	33.4	Niger	61.4
Central African Republic	66.6	Nigeria	70.2
Côte d'Ivoire	12.3	Rwanda	35.7
Ethiopia	81.9	Senegal	26.3
Gambia	59.3	Sierra Leone	57.0
Ghana	44.8	South Africa	<2
Kenya	23.0	Tanzania	19.9
Lesotho	43.1	Uganda	82.2
Madagascar	49.1	Zambia	63.7
Malawi	41.7	Zimbabwe	36.0
Mali	72.8		

Source UNDP 2003; figures: 1990–2001.



## Food security, a major concern

In Africa, evidence suggests that men spend a higher proportion of their incremental income on goods for personal use, while women are more likely to purchase goods for their children and for general household consumption. A positive nutritional outcome is associated with increasing women's incomes, as households where women control a larger share of the income, are more likely to meet calorie requirements. Poverty is therefore a major threat to the food security both of the family and of particular individuals within the family (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). Inequalities between men and women serve to generate and perpetuate poverty both within and between generations. To address this issue gender biases need to be removed at every level (UNDP, 1999).

Both rural women and men are active agents in agricultural and rural development, though programmes that provide agricultural support systems to farmers mostly ignore women. Moreover, agricultural and rural development policy and planning do not adequately reflect and address the different roles and needs of rural women and men. Changes are taking place, but the effectiveness of development policies can only be achieved with accurate, systematic statistics on rural women and men producers (FAO, 2001a). Although problems, such as gender biases in food consumption or in-house health care, seem to have been overstated, education and the control of productive assets remain real issues (UN, 1996a; Marcoux, 1997).

Most African countries neglect the agricultural sector and government interventions have done little to address the plight of rural women. Few women participate in national and regional policy-making, and they are invisible in national statistics. Their low participation in extension services means that issues of most concern to women in the design and implementation of many development policies and programmes are neglected (FAO, 1996). Projects intending to increase agricultural productivity need to ensure that the distinct needs, labour constraints, knowledge and decision-making roles of women and men are analysed and addressed (IFAD, 2000).

This chapter considers the state of rural African women and their role in ensuring food security. It discusses female-headed households and their access to productive resources and looks at regional trends, women's contribution to agricultural production as well as their participation in other economic activities. Global trends are discussed such as the impact of land degradation, HIV/AIDS and



its effects on agricultural labour for rural women, natural and human-induced disasters and the feminization of poverty. Changes in the policy environment are presented in relation to rural women, the need for their involvement in planning and decision-making at all levels and the policy support required to enhance agricultural productivity and food security. Finally, recommendations are suggested to strengthen rural women's situation and their efforts to ensure food security.

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

**Food security exists when all people** at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their needs for an active and healthy life (WFS, 1997). Undoubtedly, if food is in the market but people have no money to buy it, it is not accessible (Wide Bulletin, 2000). Africa continues to suffer from food insecurity because of wars, unrest, poverty and generally low agricultural productivity. As stated by Elbadawi (1999), sub-Saharan Africa remains one of the most politically unstable regions in the world.

Rural women use different survival strategies to ensure household food security. These include, reducing their own consumption during lean seasons, but maintaining that of their children, and working as casual hired labour on larger farms (i.e. farms owned by others). They also engage in other income-generating activities while continuing their farming activities and household tasks (IFAD, 2000; FAO, 1996).

Rural women play a vital role in addressing household food security and nutrition and are involved in much of agricultural and livestock development. They have proven to be the driving force in achieving project objectives and reducing poverty. Therefore, improving the economic status of the poor is largely concerned with enabling women to fully realize their socio-economic potential and improve the quality of their lives (IFAD, 2000).

## The nature of African agriculture

Since sub-Saharan Africa's independence, agricultural development has been slow, and the gap between population growth and agricultural production has increased significantly. Regional food imports are widespread, though not enough to achieve the populations' recommended daily calorie intake. While food imports increased, agricultural exports declined, especially in the late 1980s. Compounding these problems, the increasing population led to pressure on agricultural land leading to greater use of less fertile land with the resulting decreases in productivity and household income. Men began to migrate into cities and women sought off-farm income-earning opportunities (World Bank, 1992).

Economic performance across the African region has been varied. Countries such

**Table 1.2**  
Net production growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa\*

Year	Agriculture	Crops	Cereals	Roots and tubers	Livestock	Non-food
1992–96	3.9	4.4	5.8	2.4	2.6	3.7
1997	0.5	0.2	-4.2	2.0	1.4	0.3
1998	3.7	4.1	4.1	5.5	2.6	3.9
1999	1.9	1.8	-0.6	4.2	2.5	2.5
2000	-0.3	-1.0	-3.2	0.5	1.4	-0.3
2001**	0.8	0.9	2.4	0.7	0.5	0.6

\*Excluding South Africa; \*\*preliminary. Source: FAO, 2002.

as Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda expect continued growth, which is the result of macro-economic and structural reforms, while in many other countries economic growth, especially in the agricultural sector, continues to be hampered by past, ongoing or new conflicts. Table 1.2 shows the net production growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa from 1991 to 2001. After 1998, non-food production products experienced negative growth, which may have been the result of conflict situations.

Several countries are more dependent on agriculture while others have demonstrated a healthy performance in this sector over several decades. Agriculture accounts for more than half the gross domestic product of Burundi, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, though only 10 percent or less in Botswana and Lesotho. Agriculture in Africa is significantly heterogeneous, varying from extensive slash-

and-burn in the tropical rain forest to irrigated agriculture and pastoralism in drier parts; women are found to play a major part in all these systems (Maxwell, 1998).

In Africa, renewable water resources vary considerably from one country to another and household water use may average 47 litres per person per day. In many communities, water supplies are limited and water-use decisions involve difficult choices. Various users and categories have different needs, priorities and expectations (Rathgeber, 2003). Rural areas lag far behind, and the rural-urban gap in terms of access to safe water is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, where only 45 percent of the rural population has access, against 83 percent for their urban counterparts (Vandemoortele, 2002).

Burundi, Kenya and Rwanda are particularly affected by low unit water supplies of under 10 m<sup>3</sup>. Effective agricultural production requires water to be available at the right place and time to be relevant to a community (Marcoux, 1998). In the face of the increasing global water shortage, resource economists recommend raising water prices for all uses (including domestic) to encourage efficient water use. This increase may have negative implications for the poor, leading to hardship if they are unable to pay the higher price. Often domestic water supply programmes overlook rural women's productive use of water for irrigation, livestock and other enterprises (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). An examination of women's participation in the utilization and management of water resources in the broader context of the social construction of gender roles in different regions needs to be undertaken, as women are under-represented in water management at all levels (Rathgeber, 2003).

## The agriculturally economic active population and the roles of men and women

**Statistics on the economically active population** are of limited value when reviewing women's economic involvement in agriculture, food production and processing, as conventional definitions of the labour force underestimate women's work. Some figures for Africa indicate that women represent only 42 percent of the economically active population involved in agriculture, because of the tendency to register women farmers as 'housewives' (FAO, 1996).

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

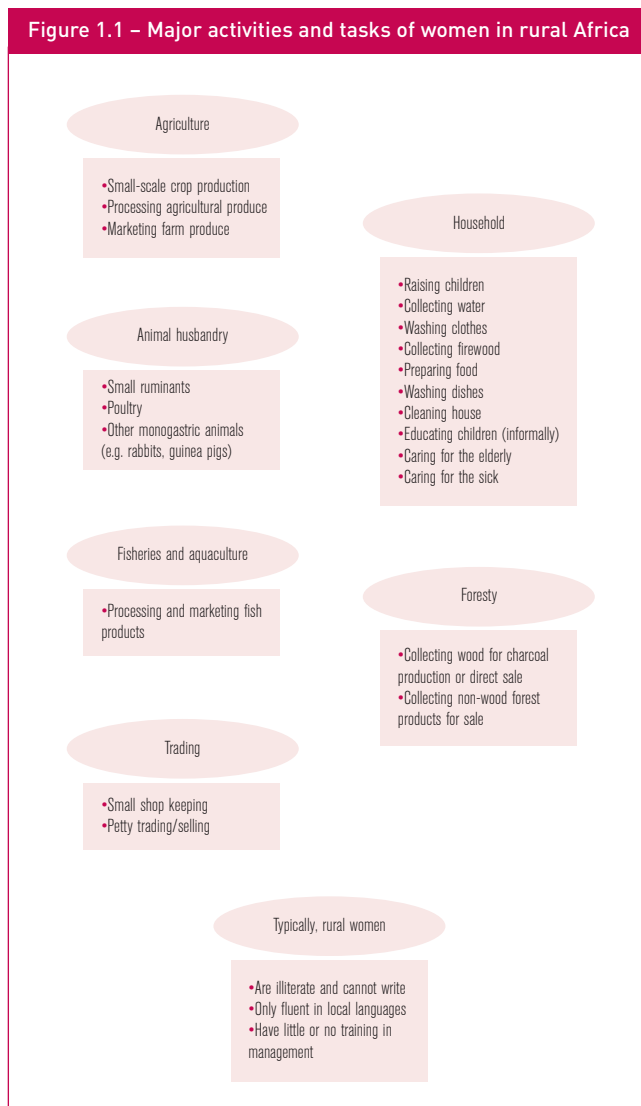
Even so, the percentage of women in the labour force engaged in agriculture is higher than that of men in most countries (World Bank, 2001). The percentage of the active female population working in agriculture attains 98 percent in Burundi, 96 percent in Malawi, 93 percent in Burkina Faso, 87 percent in Angola and 92 percent in Mali and Tanzania. Though this percentage is lower in a few countries: Botswana 3 percent, Kenya 25 percent and South Africa 16 percent (World Bank, 2001).

The division of labour between women and men in agricultural production varies considerably between regions and communities. Usually men are responsible for

highly mechanized large-scale cash cropping, while women take care of household food production and small-scale cultivation of cash crops, requiring lower levels of technology (FAO, 2001a).

Most women in rural Africa are over-burdened with a wide range of activities and agricultural tasks: animal husbandry, the household and sometimes fisheries and aquaculture (Guèye, 2001); much of this work may be unpaid labour and is characterized by low productivity; limited access to credit; land; training and limited use of technology (FAO, 1996).

Gender-specific roles and responsibilities are conditioned by household structure, access to resources, and the specific impacts of the global economy (FAO, 1997). Figure 1.1 gives an overview of the major activities undertaken by rural women in Africa. Being primarily responsible for food production, they fetch water for domestic use and small-scale irrigation; market agricultural produce; care for children, the aged and the sick and undertake minor trading for additional income. They are also involved in processing and marketing of fish products and collection of wood for charcoal production or direct sales.



Adapted from: Guèye, 2001

In the past, household units – men, women and children together – were responsible for the foodstuffs needed to maintain their families. A division of labour existed, but everybody worked for the direct survival of the family. With the introduction of cash crops, men's main responsibility shifted to their production, often with considerable labour contributions from women. Commercial crop production was partly induced by the growing need for cash, necessary for survival in increasingly monetized societies. The introduction of cash crops weakened the traditional gender-based division of intra-household rights and obligations, and farmwomen increasingly undertook tasks previously done by men (Saito, *et al.*, 1994). All this further increased women's responsibility to provide for family food requirements.

The synthesis report on women, agriculture and rural development in Africa, prepared by FAO for the Fourth World Conference on Women and a World Bank report, states that women in sub-Saharan Africa contribute 60 to 80 percent of food-producing labour for household consumption and for sale. Women's contributions to the production of food crops range from 30 percent in the Sudan to 80 percent in the Congo (World Bank, 2001; FAO, 1995). Table 1.3 provides information on women's contribution to agriculture in selected countries.

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

**Table 1.3**  
**Women's labour contribution and role in agriculture in selected African countries**

Benin	70 percent of the female population live in rural areas, where they carry out 69 percent of agricultural work and furnish up to 44 percent of work necessary for household subsistence.
Burkina Faso	Women constitute 48 percent of labourers in the agricultural sector.
Democratic Republic of Congo	Women account for 84 percent of those economically active in agriculture and produce more than 80 percent of food crops.
Mauritania	The proportion of agricultural work carried out by men and women is 65 and 79 percent, respectively.
Morocco	Approximately 72 percent of the female population participates in agricultural activities, with greater involvement in animal and less in vegetable production.
Namibia	Women account for 59 percent of those engaged in skilled and subsistence agriculture work, and women continue to shoulder the primary responsibility for food production and preparation.
Sudan	In the traditional sector, women constitute 80 percent of farmers. Women farmers represent approximately 49 percent of farmers in the irrigated sector. Women produce 30 percent of the food.
Tanzania	92 percent of rural women, defined as economically active, are engaged in agriculture and produce a substantial share of the food crops for both household consumption and export.
Zimbabwe	Women constitute 61 percent of farmers in communal areas and comprise at least 70 percent of the labour force.

Source: World Bank, 2001; FAO, 1995.

Rural women make up a considerable portion of the agricultural labour force employed in the informal sector, which accounts for a substantial share of the GDP throughout sub-Saharan Africa. However, customary laws affect the labour rights of African rural women workers. Under customary legal systems, women must provide unpaid and unprotected labour for certain tasks in their husband's fields and work required within the household. Women and men play varied roles in rural agriculture with a gender division of labour; mainly men cultivate cash crops, while women cultivate food crops and/or locally traded crops (Cotula, 2002).

Inequality in resource distribution, which includes the food that is consumed in the household, results in women generally being poorer than men. Therefore, understanding the resource allocation among household members is essential for predicting the outcome of a policy. A person's bargaining power within the family depends not only on asset ownership, but on access to employment, access to communal resources, traditional social support systems, support from NGOs and the state, social norms, and perceptions (IFPRI, 1997).

### Rural female-headed households

**Today women are the majority of smallholder farmers;** they provide most labour and the day-to-day management of their small-scale farms. Women head about 30 percent of rural households in sub-Saharan Africa; in some regions, this share is 60 percent (Akello, 1999; FAO, 1997b). Factors that increase the number of female-headed households include wars; male migration for jobs; changing marriage, bridewealth and dowry arrangements (FAO, 2001c).

Saito *et al.*, classify female-headed households into three groups: i) autonomous households recognized and accepted as headed de jure by women, mostly widows or single women; ii) households headed de facto by wives during the male head's absence for various periods of time, the degree of autonomy and independence of action of these female heads vary with ethnic mores and personal circumstances and whether remittances are received or not; and iii) polygamous households, where co-wives head economic subunits (of themselves and their children) within the household (Saito, *et al.*, 1994). Further investigation is required of the relationship between the economic status of female-headed households, and whether or not the household receives remittances. In some countries, such as Cape Verde, it was found that remittances improved the economic situation of some female-headed households.

In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, male rural-urban migration has been greater than for females, leaving women behind to assume responsibility for farming activities. Migration has contributed to the rise in female-headed households, thus challenging gender-based roles in rural areas, as women assume traditionally male activities. Other factors contributing to the rise in female-headed households include family disintegration, international migration, war and internal displacements (FAO, 2001a; Buvinic and Gupta, 1997).

In Guinea, the economically active rural labour-force aged 20 to 49 is now predominantly female (FAO, 1995a), which may be the result of the high rate of male migration to urban areas and death from HIV/AIDS. Increasing male out-migration from rural areas means that women are increasingly responsible, not only for the family food supply, but for national food security. Alternatively, rural women, especially younger women, migrate to urban areas for work to earn additional income before marrying and to learn skills including batik making,

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances



Farmers meet to plan for the next cropping season. (A. Conti, 1994)

hairdressing and dressmaking. Some young women return to the rural areas while others remain in the cities.

In Sahelian countries female-headed households are under-estimated, because the wives of migrants remain under the authority of the head of the extended family and widows marry their husband's brother or acknowledge their eldest son as head of household. A World Bank study states that about 26 percent of male heads of household were absent (World Bank, 1995); as a result, de facto female heads of household are deprived of resources and revenues

earmarked for heads of households.

Female-headed households tend to be smaller than male-headed households with fewer family members available for farm work and other income-generating activities (Ellis, 2000). To cope, women reduce the crop area under cultivation or change to less labour-intensive crops, some with a lower nutritional value such as cassava. Use of child labour is more common in female than in male-headed households, which reduces children's educational level and learning opportunities. Female heads of households face acute time constraints because of domestic responsibilities, farm and off-farm activities. Women spend up to five hours a day collecting fuelwood and water, and up to four hours preparing food, leaving little time for child care or other productive tasks (IFAD, 2000a). To alleviate labour constraints intra-household labour is reallocated, children may be taken out of school when HIV/AIDS has led to the loss of an adult family member (UNAIDS, 1999).

Table 1.4 shows female-headed households and total fertility rate of women in selected African countries. In most countries births per woman are decreasing, which may be ascribed to improvement in their education levels. The percentage of female-headed households is quite high in Botswana (47 percent); Namibia (39 percent); Cape Verde (38 percent); Ghana (37 percent) and in Kenya (33 percent).



**Table 1.4**  
**Women-headed households and total fertility rate in selected countries in Africa**

Country	Female-headed households %	Total fertility rate (Births per woman)		Country	Female-headed households %	Total fertility rate (Births per woman)	
		1991/1997	1990-1995 2000-2005			1991/1997	1990-1995 2000-2005
Benin	18	6.5	5.7	Mali	8	7.0	7.0
Botswana	47	4.9	3.9	Mauritius	18	2.3	1.9
Burkina Faso	7	7.1	6.8	Morocco	15	3.9	3.0
Burundi	25	6.8	6.8	Namibia	39	5.8	4.9
Cameroon	18	5.7	4.7	Niger	10	8.0	8.0
Cape Verde	38	3.9	3.2	Nigeria	14	6.4	5.4
Central African Rep	21	5.6	4.9	Randa	25	6.7	5.8
Cote d'Ivoire	15	5.7	4.6	Senegal	18	6.1	5.1
Ghana	37	5.3	4.2	Sierra Leone	11	6.5	6.5
Guinea	7	6.4	5.8	Sudan	13	5.3	4.5
Kenya	33	5.4	4.2	South Africa	-	3.3	2.9
Lesotho	23	5.0	4.5	Tanzania	22	5.9	5.0
Liberia	19	6.8	6.8	Uganda	29	7.1	7.1
Madagascar	22	6.2	5.7	Zambia	17	6.3	5.7
Malawi	26	7.2	6.3	Zimbabwe	33	5.5	4.5

Source: UNDP, 2001

Often greater obstacles are faced by female-headed households in meeting household needs than by male-headed households, because women have lower economic and social status and fewer opportunities (FAO, 2001a). Female-headed households have limited access to and control over water, credit and social services. Poor rural female-headed households do not own land or the resources to earn enough for themselves and their children. Access to credit is restricted as loans may require the signature of the partner or land as collateral (FAO, 2001c).

Wives in polygamous families must ensure their children receive sufficient food per day. In Burkina Faso, where at least half of the men in a study area have more than one wife, women are primarily responsible for the feeding, schooling and health care of their children. Where the man has a lower income, responsibilities for child care, including school fees and clothing, transfer almost entirely to the woman (Tsikata, 2000).

## Access to agricultural productive resources

**Women are often disadvantaged** in terms of access to assets, information and formal decision-making (IFAD, 2000; FAO, 2001a). Women's unequal access to resources is rooted in cultural and social institutions as much as in economic processes (Coelho and Coffey, 1996). In sub-Saharan Africa, more women than men are too poor to buy inputs such as fertilizer. Moreover, financial institutions do not consider women creditworthy (Rathgeber, 2003).

### *Access to land*

Rights to land and houses convey status and power within the community, yet these resources are unequally distributed between men and women (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). In sub-Saharan Africa, where women are primarily responsible for food production, land rights are generally limited to user rights. In various parts of

#### Box 1.1 WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS IN BURKINA FASO AND KENYA

In Burkina Faso, legislation does not formally discriminate against women. However, in rural areas customary law is applied. For example, under Mossi customary law, landownership belongs to the ancestors; the chief allocates land (*chef de terre*) and only men can be chiefs. Women do not have direct land rights, but access land through husbands and male relatives. A widow may marry a younger brother of the deceased husband or remain as widow with the in-law family, in which case she maintains access to her husband's family land. Women may borrow land from people outside the family, although they have no secure tenure and their use rights are limited particularly with the cultivation of perennial crop farms.

Under Kenya's Law of Succession Act 1972, female and male children have the same succession rights and widows have life interest in the estate, which they lose upon remarriage. However, inheritance of agricultural lands, crops and livestock continues to be governed by customary law (Section 33), according to which wives and daughters do not inherit family property. In rural areas, it is widespread practice for fathers to leave land to their sons, in the expectation their daughter's husband will care for them. Overall, women's land rights in Kenya are severely limited.

Source: Cotula, 2002

Brown, *et al.*, 1995). As men primarily own and control land, women may acquire the rights to land through their father. However, women's productivity often remains low

the region, women still lack independent rights to own or manage property. In most countries, legislation does not discriminate against women, although customary laws and traditions are severely limiting.

In much of sub-Saharan Africa, women mainly obtain land rights through their husband as long as the marriage endures. They often lose these rights when divorced or widowed (Tsikata, 2000; World Bank, 2000a; and

because they may not have the right to make decisions on agricultural practices or are unable to obtain credit without land rights (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001), thus eliminating incentives to invest in the productive resources they use. These rural women do not have the security of returns on their investments (e.g. labour); Box 1.1 illustrates the severe limitations to landownership faced by women in Burkina Faso and Kenya.

Limited land rights increase women's vulnerability, especially during famines. Alternatively, direct access to land minimizes a woman's risk of impoverishment and improves the physical well-being and prospects of her children. Direct access to land is particularly relevant to women in female-headed households as it facilitates access to agricultural support services, as many development specialist programmes seek only heads of households with secure tenure. Rural women claim that secure land rights increase their social and political status, improve their sense of self-esteem, confidence, security and dignity (Crowley, 2001).

Effective access to, use and management of productive inputs, income and wealth are essential for women to realize their economic potential and to provide women the incentive to invest their labour and financial resources. However, land systems and registration acts constrain women's right to own land. In Kenya for example, a daughter may have the right to use her father's land but she cannot own it. In Cameroon, where laws have changed to give women the right to own land, cumbersome administrative procedures may block their ownership (World Bank, 1992a).

## Agricultural development and related services

### *Farm level research and appropriate technology*

Improved technology is recognized as crucial to increasing agricultural productivity, and accelerating rural economic growth (Huvio, 1998). Women's work, especially in rural areas, is strenuous and time consuming and the need for labour-saving and income-generating technologies is acute. Years of research and development experience show that technology is not gender neutral. Most research and development programmes, from the 1970s through the mid-1990s, only partly recognized women's contribution to the development process (Paris, *et al.*, 2001).



## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

Appropriate technology needs to be adopted to help the farming community maintain production levels and respond to increasing demands. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa cereal yields are the lowest in the world, farm sizes are decreasing and traditional soil restoration methods are less feasible; however, the agricultural sector is expected to produce food for the growing rural and urban populations and to provide raw materials for the industrial sector. Future agricultural development will have to rely increasingly on securing higher yields (Saito, *et al.*, 1994).

Women farmers face multiple constraints to obtaining improved seeds, new crop varieties, knowledge of improved cropping systems and other forms of technology. The lack of, or limited access to, appropriate technology is related to widespread poverty among rural women, as most of their productive activities are not market oriented. The absence of legal rights to land limits women's access to credit and membership to farmers' organizations, further restricting access to inputs, services and credit (Cotula, 2002; Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001; and Tsikata, 2000).

Although technological change can generate major social and economic benefits, it can also increase costs; for example, rural households in Asia need more cash to cover costs for new technological inputs, forcing women to work as agricultural labourers. At the same time, women's wage-earning opportunities are reduced by mechanization (FAO, 1996b).

In the past, agricultural research, technical training and extension programmes primarily targeted men (FAO, 1996b). For this reason, technologies and tools introduced to communities to improve productivity were often based on rural men's needs and perceptions, which can substantially differ from those of women farmers. FAO and other agencies realized that more equitable and sustainable technologies should be developed to respond to gender-differentiated needs and priorities to improve food security for all, both at the household and national levels.

Rural women are well informed about traditional technologies, although they may generally have little access to the benefits of modern technology. This is partly because they are excluded from the process of setting research priorities and the generation and dissemination of new technologies. Technological development on its own, without inputs and suggestions from women and men farmers, cannot ensure the sustainable improvement of agricultural production. Research on the gender-related impact of

technological change, in all areas of agriculture, shows that development of new or improved technologies must consider intra-household divisions of labour, income and access to land to assess possible impacts fully. Women's involvement in research, policy-making and planning is essential to ensure that the most productive use of resources meets present and future food-security demands from the household to the global level (Huvio, 1998).

Rural women have yet to obtain significant access to improved inputs. Overall, Africa's women farmers have been unable to benefit from the introduction of new technologies. These were too expensive, difficult to maintain, inefficient to use and inappropriate for crops grown by women farmers or harmful to women's health and safety (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992). Rural women have a great need for economically accessible labour and energy-saving technologies, which means developing an understanding of their specific farming roles and constraints (World Bank, 1992).

### *Educational programmes*

Over the past 20 years, life expectancy increased 20 percent faster for women than for men. Gaps in educational attainment are closing, which increases women's capabilities and expands their opportunities to exercise choices. This results in improved food and nutritional security for the household, society and nation (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). Significant differences remain between male and female adult literacy rates across Africa as shown in Table 1.5. The rate for female literacy is below 20 percent in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger; placing them in a disadvantaged position to obtain information on new farm technology, to participate in planning and decision-making forums and to create new income-generating opportunities. However, literacy rates among females are significantly higher in Botswana; Congo; Lesotho; Mauritius; South Africa and Zimbabwe.

## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

**Table 1.5**  
Adult literacy rate by gender in African countries

Country	Adult literacy rate		Country	Adult literacy rate	
	Female	Male		Female	Male
Benin	24.6	53.5	Mali	16.6	36.7
Botswana	80.6	75.3	Mauritania	30.7	51.1
Burkina Faso	14.9	34.9	Mauritius	81.7	88.0
Burundi	42.0	56.9	Mozambique	30.0	61.2
Cameroon	65.1	79.9	Namibia	81.9	83.4
Central African Rep	36.6	60.8	Niger	8.9	24.4
Congo	75.9	88.2	Nigeria	57.7	73.3
Congo, Dem. Rep.	51.8	74.2	Rwanda	61.9	74.5
Cote d'Ivoire	38.4	60.3	Senegal	28.7	48.1
Ethiopia	32.4	48.1	Sudan	47.7	70.0
Gambia	30.9	45.0	South Africa	85	86.3
Ghana	64.5	81.1	Swaziland	79.4	81.3
Guinea-Bissau	24.7	55.2	Tanzania	67.9	84.5
Kenya	77.3	89.5	Togo	44.0	73.4
Lesotho	93.9	73.3	Uganda	58.0	78.1
Madagascar	60.6	74.2	Zambia	72.7	85.8
Malawi	47.6	75.0	Zimbabwe	85.5	93.3

Source: UNDP, 2003

Almost all regions have made progress in achieving universal primary education, but the lowest net enrollment ratios are recorded for sub-Saharan Africa, which is making slow progress. Gender inequalities at all levels of education continue to hinder economic development and social equity. This gap is important because countries that recognize women's rights acknowledge our common human dignity and double their capacities, benefiting from the energies and insights of the other half of their population (UN, 2002b). The world is not on track to achieve the Third Millennium Development Goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005<sup>2</sup>; at the current rate, that target will not be met until 2025. Gender discrimination in primary school enrollment is a concern particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (Vandemoortele, 2002). Gender disaggregated data from the formal school system indicate an increasing female school dropout rate the higher the educational level (GTZ, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Faster progress was made toward gender equality in secondary and tertiary education, but it was not enough to close the gender gap by the agreed date.

### *Extension and training*

In many developing countries today, gender concerns are of low priority in the planning and implementation of extension policies and programmes. Women farmers are rarely reached by extension services, and there has been little technical information to improve the productivity of women's agricultural activities. Another constraint to women's access to extension in agriculture and livestock is the general perception that women are primarily 'housewives', rather than decision-making farmers. Thus, extension services focus on male 'farmers' who are expected to direct the work of female 'family labour' (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992).


Women's full role in production-related activities needs to be brought into the mainstream of extension services and training. A number of changes have been made over the last five years in the extension system. One is the farmer field-school approach, which has a high adoption rate in Kenya and Uganda. Under the farmer field-school system, the establishment of women's groups is encouraged and sometimes solely women make up the schools. These efforts need to be extended to other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Agricultural extension agents are an important source of information for all farmers, particularly women, given their generally lower levels of education. Despite the long tradition of female farming in sub-Saharan Africa, male farmers have more contact with extension services. Few women are agricultural extension agents and agricultural research and extension institutions rarely seek the expertise of local women farmers. The number of female agricultural extension agents needs to be increased particularly in societies where interaction of female farmers with male agricultural extension agents is culturally unacceptable. Agricultural extension agents will need training or retraining in order to be relevant to female farmers (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). According to Quisumbing, *et al.* (1995), yields on women's plots could increase with improved education, experience and inputs (see Box 1.2).

#### **Box 1.2 IMPACT OF EQUAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

Kenyan women farmers could increase their yields by 9 to 24 percent if they had the same experience, education and inputs as men. In Kenya, yields could increase by 24 percent if all women farmers had primary schooling.

Source: Quisumbing, *et al.*, 1995



## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

The effort to empower women both socially and economically is most effective when supported by skills, management and leadership training along with literacy programmes. Women's response to training opportunities has often exceeded expectations in IFAD-supported projects. Training for income generation has drawn the greatest participation and proved most effective when directed at activities chosen by women and that have adequate market opportunities (IFAD, 2000).

When women overcome constraints and gain access to new technologies, they are equally or more likely to be innovators than men. In Zambia, a study revealed that wealthier farm households headed by women are more likely to adopt improved maize varieties than those headed by men (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). As women have a lower risk threshold, because of their vulnerable state related to their productive and reproductive responsibilities, more research would help to understand the particular conditions under which rural women will negotiate their risk aversion and embrace innovation.

### *Credit*

Financial reforms have not targeted women, but have improved the rural financial market for the poor in general (Tsikata, 2000). Socio-cultural constraints and stereotypes of non-creditworthiness exclude women from formal sources of credit: banks, cooperatives and credit unions. An analysis of credit schemes in Kenya; Malawi; Sierra Leone; Zambia and Zimbabwe found that women had received less than 10 percent of credit directed to smallholders and 1 percent of the total credit to agriculture (Du Guerny, 1996).

Often agricultural loans require land title or cattle as collateral, which many farm households do not have (Du Guerny, 1996). In particular, the constraints women face to owning land means they are unable to use it as collateral for credit, which is critical for the timely purchase of inputs such as improved seed varieties and fertilizer. The absence of credit limits women's adoption of new technology, the hiring of labour when required, the growing of crops needing large outlays of cash, the purchase of their own land where they can legally, or to purchase capital goods (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). This creates a negative cycle; without land, farmers cannot obtain credit and without credit, they cannot obtain land.

Some credit programmes have been directed towards women caring for orphans,



such as the Ugandan Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO), which has successfully reached a number of women in Uganda (see Box 1.3).

### *Farmers associations*

Participation in rural organizations such as peasants' associations, agricultural labour unions, cooperatives and project beneficiary committees increases rural men and women's access to productive resources, information, training and commercial networks. Membership in these organizations allows people to present their interests to government authorities and project management. Though no law prohibits female membership, women's access to these organizations is often severely limited because membership is based on the criteria of landownership and/or status as head-of-household (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992; FAO, 1990) or allows for only one member from each agricultural household.

It is important to tackle the challenges of consolidating grassroots organizations as a means to providing women a voice. FAO reports:

*'There is evidence that associations organized at the grassroots level are more effective than those created for a particular project. Women's groups at both grassroots and national levels have been effective in promoting the integration of gender issues into mainstream development activities and the participation of women in decision-making. However, women's groups, at all levels, are faced with problems of inadequate training and skills and insufficient financial resources' (FAO, 1990).*


### **Box 1.3 UGANDAN WOMEN'S EFFORTS TO SAVE ORPHANS (UWESO)**

When Selina Anyodo was widowed, she assumed the sole responsibility for the care of her seven children. As she had no means of earning a living, Selina began to work in other people's kitchen gardens, which enabled her to feed her children only once a day. She was still unable to clothe the children properly or send them to school. Selina was encouraged to join the Ugandan Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO) savings and credit scheme.

She was given a small loan to start a business, and she bought vegetables from her neighbours to sell in the local market. With the profits, she bought seeds and fertilizers, began growing her own produce and diversified her activities by buying a goat. She now has a steady income and a healthy savings account in the local bank. She is able to feed her children three solid meals a day; she built a bathing area and hygienic drying rack for her dishes. She has many plans and hopes for the future.

The UWESO Savings and Credit Scheme began in April 1996 and targets families caring for orphans. Women are a primary focus as on average they care for six children. Clusters of women are trained for at least eight weeks in group solidarity, leadership skills, business management, marketing, savings and credit management. Four thousand loans have been provided to 1 875 people, 87 percent are women. The scheme is supported by the Belgian Survival Fund under its joint programme with IFAD.

Source: IFAD, 2000



## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

### *Information*

In this era of tremendous advancement in information and communication technologies (ICT), rural areas remain outside mainstream information channels and most new technologies are beyond the reach of rural women. Furthermore, sex-disaggregated data are scarce and policy-makers and development agencies are unable to understand women's conditions and reflect their needs in development efforts.

FAO actively participated in the international effort to document, develop and disseminate information and data on the roles and responsibilities of rural women in agricultural production, food security and rural development (FAO, 1999a). The Organization promoted the development of global databases, methodologies and analysis in FAOSTAT, which is available on the internet. FAOSTAT information is based on national data provided by member countries, obtained from their agricultural censuses and annual surveys of agricultural production. Moreover, FAO has established the food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system (FIVIMS) to raise awareness and integrate complementary information about food security issues and to improve the quality of food security-related data and analysis.

One of the objectives addressed by the World Food Summit was to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women. Hereto the Summit recommended increased efforts to improve the collection, dissemination and use of gender-disaggregated data in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development. This corresponds with the increasing demand for gender-specific statistics at the national and regional levels, from researchers, academics, women's groups and non-governmental organizations. All are interested in addressing various socio-economic development issues and participating more actively in decision-making on such topics.

Information technology can also be used to organize information and to empower rural women by increasing their access to information, thus leveling gender and class-based inequalities generated by differential access to information. For effective gender mainstreaming, both men and women need information on women's rights in relation to natural and human resources. Poor women need access to project information to reduce the possibility that wealthier groups (of men or women), connected to the local elite, take control of the benefits of a rural project (IFAD, 2000). This information can be provided through extension service delivery,

education and the use of radio. FAO has undertaken several initiatives to empower women through ICT, in particular using rural radio in Benin, Congo, Mali and Niger (FAO, 2000a).

### Rural women's work as entrepreneurs and off-farm income activities

**In addition to the active role rural women** play in food production, most post-harvest activities are the responsibility of women and children. Food processing, storage and preservation of agricultural produce are nearly exclusively undertaken by women. They transport agricultural produce from the fields to the homestead and market centres on their heads, since most farms are inaccessible to vehicles. Besides, women play a major role in the marketing of agricultural produce (Anarfi, 2000) in its largest sense, as demonstrated in Figure 1.1.

Some programmes have trained women in entrepreneurial skills and

income-generation activities, for example, a FAO project provided training to several women in management, soap manufacture and masonry (Box 1.4).

Although cash crop production such as cocoa, coffee and sheanuts has long been seen as the domain of men, women do play a role in these enterprises. Their participation is significant and it is estimated that 30 percent of cocoa farmers are women. Besides, most male cocoa farmers have a wife or wives who cater to their food needs and make other contributions promoting the success of the enterprise (Anarfi, 2000).


While home-based micro-enterprises may not be profitable enough to improve income levels significantly, they diversify income sources and reduce vulnerability. They build confidence for trading in markets, support credit repayment and

#### Box 1.4 REVOLVING FUND FOR WOMEN'S GROUPS IN MALI

Incomes generated through the formation of women's groups, resulted in increasing the livelihood potential of rural women. In Kayes, a semi-arid district in north Mali, an FAO project supported women in 50 villages. These women did not own land and could not obtain credit without collateral. The project established a revolving fund to enable them to buy seed, fertilizer, water pumps for irrigation and mills to grind millet and sorghum.

More than 900 villagers received training in management, tree cultivation, reforestation, soap manufacture and masonry. Some women created home and market gardens that provide them with additional income to buy essential ingredients for the diets of their families, others have established nurseries for banana, lemon, neem and eucalyptus trees.

Source: FAO, 1997b



## Rural women and food security – present circumstances

contribute to the family cash flow. However, these operations require significantly higher levels of education, business skills, group organization, time and mobility (IFAD, 2000). Some organizations such as IFAD have therefore developed an integrated package combining financial and non-financial services, skills training in management and marketing, credit and organizational assistance for women.

### *Livestock activities*

Livestock provides a high share of household income among poorer and landless families, in particular women. Purchasing livestock is often women's preferred use of credit, for both income and security, as livestock provides food, cash, draft power, fertilizer and gains value through reproduction. Still, women's right to animals varies with culture, class and type of animal. Buying and raising small livestock is more affordable to rural women, though profits are generally low. Women's ownership of larger animals such as cattle and donkeys is limited due to the cost involved in acquiring them (Miller, 2001) and sociocultural norms, which sometimes prevent women from working with draught animals.

Women devote a large amount of time, labour and expertise to agricultural and livestock production. In almost all regions, women have significant responsibilities in the care and management of livestock and the processing of livestock products.

## Global and regional trends

### Structural adjustment programme and related policies

**Structural adjustment programmes (SAP)** and market-oriented economic reforms have special implications for the agricultural sector and rural populations. The broad design of a SAP generally aims to remove urban bias and can sometimes bring better prices to agricultural producers, provide incentives for increasing production, particularly of internally tradable and export-oriented crops. These price changes are accompanied by higher prices for inputs caused by the removal of state subsidies and the indirect taxation of imported inputs via currency devaluation. The matrix of changes in production, consumption and incentives causes re-allocation of resources between sectors, crops and products and within the household (Coelho and Coffey, 1996).

Overall the SAP and market reforms did not achieve their intended re-allocations sometimes failing to take gender factors into account, both at the intra-household level and in the broader economy. It should be recognized that farm-household production decisions on crop choice result from intra-household decision-making, determined by the nature of incentives offered to women and men and the gendered resource allocation in the household (Coelho and Coffey, 1996).

Women farmers in Togo, for example, feel marginalized under rural development policies applied under the structural adjustment programme. These policies do not make any differentiation of gender-specific factors in agricultural production and do not take into account the constraints of customs and social rules limiting women's activities (Kantchati, 2000).

The negative impacts may stem from the fact that the SAP and market reform



Fish vendor in  
the market at Akosombo.  
*(Peyton Johnson, 1969)*

policies aim to allocate resources from the non-traded to the traded sector through price incentives for traded commodities. The success of this attempt depends on the extent to which female labour is mobile across these sectors.

Other fundamental components of the SAP directly affected the livelihood of women. The removal of subsidies required by the SAP was largely borne by women, thus increasing their unpaid workload (Tsikata, 2000).

## Globalization

**Many African countries are rather** weakly connected to the modern global economy. Though international commodity markets continue to expand, Africa's sales into those markets are reducing. Surprisingly, Africa's total volume of exported agricultural

products such as coffee, palm oil and sugar is less today than it was 30-years ago (Paarlberg, 2002). Globalization, together with trade liberalization policies, has favoured large-scale commercial farming and export cash cropping over household subsistence production. Globalization poses particular risks to small-scale farmers who form the backbone of agriculture in many developing countries. Small-scale production systems are thrown off balance by liberalization of trade, privatization of resources and services, structural adjustment policies, new marketing forces, modernization of agriculture and other socio-economic factors. In addition, small farmers compete



Fishmongers busy boning and salting fish. FAO, 1998.

against cheap imports, much of which are unfairly subsidized (IFPRI, 2001) and produced with more cost-efficient methods.

As a result of gender inequalities and discrimination, women may be more negatively affected by globalization and liberalization processes than men, especially in rural areas. According to FAO's Gender and Development Plan for Action 2002–2007, opening up local markets to less expensive imports and the removal of agricultural subsidies have adversely affected female farmers in particular. They have found it increasingly difficult to reap the fruits of liberalization, which may result from difficult access to agricultural inputs (FAO, 2001a). More than men, rural

women lack training, investment and access to information, which prevents them from being able to compete on the 'global' market. Globalization has contributed to the feminization of agriculture because men leave rural areas in search of paid employment increasing the number of female-headed households (FAO, 2000a).

Long-term development trends suggest that progressive industrialization of agriculture is associated with a decrease in the populations involved in food production. The rapid pace of globalization accelerates the monetization of subsistence producers; farmers are faced with increasing demands for cash and declining earnings from conventional products following the commercialization of agriculture.

The reallocation of resources during adjustment from the non-tradable to the tradable sector was expected to raise incomes in the export-oriented sectors, however evidence indicates that in some regions women, being mainly responsible for the production of non-tradable goods, have not been able to reap the benefits of trade liberalization. Market liberalization resulted in the breakdown of local marketing cooperatives, which women would have preferred and thus resulted in a decline in marketed food production by women (FAO, 2001d).

## HIV/AIDS

**HIV/AIDS was originally perceived and dealt with largely** as an urban problem, but evidence shows that HIV incidence tends to rise faster in the rural areas of most developing countries than in urban settings. HIV-infected urban dwellers often return to their village during later stages of their sickness, thus introducing/increasing HIV/AIDS in rural areas. Moreover, rural households provide most of the care for AIDS patients (FAO, 2001). A UNAIDS document shows that rural subsistence households are affected more acutely than urban families (UNAIDS, 1999). HIV/AIDS is perceived as a pandemic challenging the basis of agricultural production and food security in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, which adds to the problems of the rural poor, especially women, who have limited rights to land and restricted access to resources.

Of the 36.1 million people estimated to have been infected by HIV worldwide in 2000, some 25.3 million or 70 percent lived in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2001, there were 16 countries in the region with more than one-tenth of their adult population infected



The national Ugandan AIDS support group, TASO, whose motto is Living Positively with AIDS, honours the memory of deceased friends by quilting their names on banners. The banners are raised during TASO festivities, held to buoy the spirits of people with AIDS and their families. Such quilts have been created in numerous countries as memorials to victims of AIDS. (K. Dunn, 1994)

with the virus. Deaths from HIV/AIDS in the African region increased from 2.2 million in 1999 to 2.4 million in 2000, and created some 12.1 million orphans (FAO, 2001). In some countries, where effective prevention is achieved, the rate of infection is stabilizing.

According to FAO estimates, two person-years of labour are lost in an AIDS-afflicted household by the time one person dies from the disease. In Kenya, a study showed that between 48 to 78 percent of household income is lost

when one person has died of AIDS (Villarreal, 2001). The population groups most at risk are those situated along truck routes to rural areas and near large infrastructure projects. Overall, most of those infected with HIV are rural dwellers and women are relatively worse affected (FAO, 2001).

Studies in Africa show that teenage girls are five to six times more likely to be infected by the HIV virus than boys their age. The HIV infection rate among educated women fell by almost half in the 1990s, whereas there was no significant decrease for women without formal schooling (UNAIDS, 2000). Customarily, in most rural African societies, women are not supposed to be concerned with their husband's sexual behaviour outside marriage and there is little discussion of sex between spouses or generations (Anarfi, 2000).

Women have limited access to productive resources as land, credit, knowledge, training and technology. When a husband dies, a wife may lose whatever access has been gained through the man and her livelihood and that of the children may be threatened (Villarreal, 2001; Du Guerny, 1998). Rural households suffer loss of productive labour, income, food reserves and reduced nutrition. Savings and assets are diverted to meet health care and funeral costs thus reducing children's educational opportunities (Box 1.5) (UNAIDS, 1999). Moreover, labour shortages are particularly severe in agriculture as production is seasonal and timing crucial (FAO, 2001; ILO, 2000).

FAO estimated that in the 25 most affected African countries, seven million



agricultural workers died of AIDS between 1985 and 2000, 16 million more could die within the next 20 years. According to FAO and UNAIDS studies, agricultural output of small-scale farmers in some parts of Zimbabwe may have fallen by as much as 50 percent over the past five years, mainly as a result of AIDS (FAO, 2001; UNAIDS, 1999). Up to 26 percent of the agricultural labour force could be lost in countries of sub-Saharan Africa because of AIDS by the year 2020. Since the disease mainly affects people aged 15–49, who are economically the most productive members of society, HIV/AIDS is a problem of economic and social importance (Villarreal, 2001).

As the agricultural labour force decreases because of AIDS, some land remains fallow and household output declines. Less time may be devoted to weeding, mulching, pruning and clearing land. As a coping strategy, farmers may shift to less labour-intensive crops. In Namibia and Uganda, often livestock is sold to support the sick and to pay for funeral expenses, which reduces household savings and increases vulnerability to new shocks. Moreover, this jeopardizes the livestock industry and long-term food security and survival options, as is already the case in Namibia. The drop in livestock numbers also has soil fertility implications (FAO, 2001).

In line with their traditional roles, women farmers take care of family members afflicted with the disease and their time to engage in agricultural activities is significantly reduced (Du Guerny, 1998). Because women play a vital role in ensuring household food security and child education, children are taken out of school to help the family cope (Du Guerny, 1998). Where land tenure and inheritance traditions favour male inheritance a woman who survives her husband may find her farming activities severely curtailed (Anarfi, 2000).

In many cases diverse coping strategies have been adopted to meet cash and food requirements. In rural Zambia, some households resorted to undertaking a range of income-generating activities such as selling firewood and livestock, tailoring and petty trade. Some household members migrate to urban areas in search of employment so they can send remittances to their rural area. Children as young as ten years old went to work for an income. In Malawi, households worked as casual labour on other farms and young



District of Kibaha,  
Masai women in Magindi  
village returning from milking.

girls resorted to sex work to fulfill short-term income needs (UNAIDS, 1999).

Other impacts of HIV/AIDS include ‘tuberization’ of agricultural production as a result of the change to less labour-intensive crops of lower nutritional value. Fewer cash crops are produced, thus further reducing household income, while medical fees and funeral costs are extremely high (Villarreal, 2001; ILO, 2000). Food consumption falls while spending on health care increases. There is a reduction in the transmission of knowledge between generations and social safety nets weaken. A study in Kenya revealed only 7 percent of agricultural households headed by orphans had adequate knowledge of agricultural production (Villarreal, 2001). Box 1.5 provides a summary of the effects of HIV/AIDS on agriculture and food security.

### Box 1.5 SUMMARY OF THE EFFECTS OF HIV/AIDS ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

- ❖ Loss of agricultural labour, as two person-years of labour are lost when one person dies in a household, decreasing productivity, especially in farming systems where there is a low level of mechanization.
- ❖ Rural dwellers at risk as:
  - rural people are less likely to know how to protect themselves because of poorer access to information and health services;
  - AIDS infected urban dwellers return to their rural homes when they fall ill;
  - time spent on agricultural labour shifts to caring for AIDS patients;
- ❖ Change to less labour-intensive farming systems, growing crops with low nutritional value such as tubers; food consumption decreases;
- ❖ High medical and funeral costs impoverish affected households, reducing their ability to produce and purchase food, thereby placing children’s educational opportunities at risk;
- ❖ Loss of the transmission of agricultural indigenous knowledge between generations;
- ❖ Further exposure to HIV/AIDS through impoverishment and unhealthy coping strategies by women and more children resort to living on the streets.

Source: Villarreal, 2001; UNAIDS, 1999.

### *Human-induced and natural disasters*

Late in 2000, armed conflict left 24 million people in 28 developing and transition

# The African region

## chapter 1

countries and territories, in need of food and other humanitarian assistance. Nearly 80 percent were in sub-Saharan Africa and women and children represented 70 to 80 percent of refugees and internally displaced people uprooted by violence. The impact of war on food security is profound and conflict-induced losses of agricultural output in Africa totaled US\$22 billion between 1990 and 1997. In almost all affected countries, the majority of the workforce depends on agriculture as a livelihood (Messer and Cohen, 2001).

The ability of national governments to preserve internal peace is crucial for agricultural and rural development. Recently, 13 of the 20 most violent conflicts were in African nations (Paarlberg, 2002). Protracted civil wars are one of the most devastating shocks affecting the African continent. Avoiding political instability, especially civil wars, increases the possibility of international and regional support for national reform programmes. Understanding the political economy and avoiding civil strife and ethnic conflicts is pertinent to the establishment of a development strategy for sub-Saharan Africa (Elbadawi, 1999).

Gender issues underlying humanitarian interventions, whether armed conflict or natural disaster, have been summed up in the World Food Programme Gender Policy (2002):

*“Acute or chronic humanitarian crises and poverty tend to accentuate gender gaps because means are limited and women are discriminated against and are expected to make a sacrifice by eating less. In situations of conflict and displacement, often women are exposed to new risks such as physical violence and sexual abuse. In addition, a large portion of households end up headed by women during these crises, with the women burdened with additional tasks owing to their husbands’ and sons’ military recruitment, disappearance, disablement or death. In humanitarian crises, there is the risk that food will not fully reach the beneficiary households if distributed to community leaders, who may allocate it based on political or social considerations. This is the case when food is distributed to the husbands in polygamous family arrangements, even though there are various household units consisting of women and their minor or elderly dependents. Nevertheless, situations of crisis have offered opportunities for change that have proven advantageous for implementing new means of improving women’s access to and control over food, such as issuing the household ration card in women’s names.”*



Farmers queuing for free seed in aftermath of civil war.  
(G. Diana, 1994)

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture

## Environmental degradation

**Environmental degradation is a global phenomenon.** However, the impact is felt more among the poorer segments of the rural population. Rural poverty and the degradation of the environment are mutually reinforced when people's survival is at stake; increasingly they are forced to farm marginal soils, reduce fallow periods, cut vital forests, overstock fragile rangelands and over-fish rivers, lakes and coastal waters (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992).

In Africa the following forms of environmental degradation are observed:

- Forest degradation, including deforestation, is the most widespread environmental problem in the African region, as a result of fuelwood collection and the land requirements of shifting cultivation. In some countries overgrazing is a major cause.
- Land degradation is directly caused by inappropriate land use and unsuitable land management practices such as cultivation of steep slopes without soil conservation measures. These slopes are cultivated because the landless poor need food. Farmers who lack security of tenure may not take soil conservation measures.
- Soil degradation through pollution and over exploitation usually results in loss of soil fertility. Soil erosion caused by rain, streams or floods, is widespread in Africa and may lead to desertification in arid zones. Wind erosion is prevalent in most Sahelian countries such as Chad.
- Chemical degradation of agricultural resources also causes increasing concern, and
- Water pollution is often caused by the industrial sector waste disposal systems, and agricultural chemicals (Marcoux, 1998).

Growth in the agricultural sector cannot be sustained unless environmentally sound farming practices are introduced on a large scale. Environmental degradation directly impacts household food security. Where soil fertility has been drastically reduced as a result of over-cropping; deforestation; overgrazing and erosion; or where there is a lack of fuelwood and potable water, women are often forced to change the dietary practices and standards of their families. Sometimes this means reducing the number of hot meals per day, substantially lowering family levels of nutrition, as some staple foods cannot be digested without prolonged cooking (Roca, 1994).

Chad, Rwanda and Sierra Leone indicated the need to recognize the role of women in improving the environment and population planning, as these two problems are interrelated. They mentioned that measures need to be established to sensitize women and encourage their involvement in environmental and development activities. Programmes listed include literacy and educational activities in the environmental sector such as sensitizing women to the rational management of freshwater and energy resources, hygienic practices, and good sanitation (Marcoux, 1998).

Complex relations exist between poverty, land degradation, high birth rates and food insecurity. Poor smallholders, who are tilling land in the most ecologically fragile regions, need to maintain high birth rates to satisfy the labour demand for household subsistence on lands with diminishing returns. More children result in a higher demand for food, causing additional pressure on the land, which in turn requires increased labour. Because women farmers do not have access to modern, labour-saving or environmentally sound farming techniques, increasingly intensive and time-consuming work is required on their plots, which are often more susceptible to erosion, desertification and other forms of land degradation (Roca, 1994).

Secure access rights to land and pastures are critical in motivating investment for conservation. Women's lack of secure landownership and tenure reduces the likelihood they will adopt environmentally sustainable agricultural practices if these require additional financial or labour inputs. Besides, insecure land tenure reduces women's access to credit, which may be used to rehabilitate eroded soils or to implement labour-saving technologies. On the other hand, increased productivity results in reduced labour needs, which would allow for a lower birth rate, positively influencing the food security situation.

The challenge is the sustainable intensification of agricultural production to improve livelihoods, while safeguarding ecosystems, watersheds and biodiversity. To this end technologies should be promoted that would reduce agriculture-related environmental degradation on vulnerable and food insecure households. Furthermore, there is a need to address the biosecurity risks associated with the exchange of agricultural inputs and products for expanded international trade (FAO, 2001b). Clearly, improvement of crop production in the twenty-first century requires a combination of environmental conservation and increased productivity (Thomson, 2001).



## Policy environment and requirements

**Unless higher priority is given by governments** everywhere to problems of food security and nutrition, the human misery and economic waste embodied in food insecurity and malnutrition will continue at all levels. The cycle of complacency on the part of decision-makers needs to be broken, to realize the goal of reducing the number of food insecure people by half by 2015, as agreed by 187 countries at the World Food Summit in 1996, and the World Food Summit +5 in 2001.

Both opportunities and challenges for Africa are considerable. Opportunities may be created through the development of Africa's human and natural resources, consolidation of democracy and commitment to self-reliance, which is reflected in the



Rural women going to  
work in the fields.  
(G. Diana, 1997)

New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) (UN, 2002b). Improved governance at the national level has a significant impact on reducing hunger and is of highest priority in developing regions where hunger is not yet under control. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of hungry people increases every year. As such, improved global governance, though necessary, is not an efficient answer to the distinctive problems of human malnutrition. Because of the weak connections African countries have to the global economy, stronger international governance of global markets and investments is unlikely to have a great impact on hunger in the region (Paarlberg, 2002).

Between 1971 and 1991, public spending on agricultural research and development in Africa increased only minimally in comparison to increases in other parts of the developing world. Strengthening public agricultural research investment by national governments helps to take improved technology to rural farm communities and may result in increased farm labour productivity and farm incomes, as reported in success stories from Asian countries (Paarlberg, 2002).

Policy issues on gender and affirmative action concerning women are being addressed in global and national media following their endorsement at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. Organizations, such as the United Nations, FAO have worked to address the issue of rural women and aided in improving policies to decrease gender disparity.

This has been accomplished through meetings such as the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (1979); the adoption in 1993 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action; the World Conference on Human Rights and International Conference on Population and Development (1994); and the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Summit for Economic Advancement of Rural Women by IFAD (1991).

Follow-up on plans of action derived from institutional policies, as well as monitoring of commitments to international instruments, will ensure these policies attain their objectives.

## Changes in the policy environment

**Programmes have been launched to reduce the number** of the hungry: the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) initially targeted low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDC), but was adopted by other developing countries. In September 2000 at the Millennium Summit, the United Nations adopted a set of eight millennium development goals (MDGs); one is to halve the amount of those suffering from hunger between 1990 and 2015. The SPFS advocated with donors and governments of developing countries the importance of focusing development efforts on small farmers. These agencies recognized the role of the small farmer in agricultural production, food security, poverty reduction and the sustainable use of natural resources (FAO, 2003).

In past years, programmes targeting women as beneficiaries concentrated on their reproductive role and on home economics. There have been small, dispersed, 'women specific' projects or project components focusing on women's productive role in agriculture, but these have remained isolated from national agricultural planning and policies. More recently, international organizations and national governments have begun to promote awareness of women's issues, including those of rural women



## Policy environment and requirements

and encouraged research on their agricultural and other roles. These organizations served as advocates for change in national policies and legislation affecting women's rights to land, inheritance, employment conditions and wage rates (FAO, 1996).

In many countries, constitutions state equality before the law as one of the foundations of the legal system. International conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995; the follow-up Special Sessions of the General Assembly (Beijing +5 and +10), and the specific reference to women in the millennium development goals, have played an important role in promoting women's legal rights and helping non-governmental and advocacy groups in countries make their national governments accountable. However, if women are poor and uneducated, they may be unaware of the provisions of the law (UN, 2002c; Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001).

National women's associations are an important step in ensuring that women's needs and constraints are included on the national policy agenda (FAO, 1996). In many African countries Ministries of Gender, of Women's Rights and of Women's Affairs have been strengthened or set up to directly address and promote issues of particular concern to women.

The direct impact of these development programmes on rural women is often negligible because of their urban bias, they are frequently situated within social ministries such as health and education and lack influence in the technical ministries. Furthermore, they are often isolated from the planning ministries; with the effect that adequate attention cannot be given women's needs in the development of national strategies and plans (FAO, 1996). Lack of coordination among the different associations has led to duplication of effort and reduced efficiency. Besides, they lack financial and other forms of support from the government and major ministries.

Participatory research was conducted in several African countries to diagnose the state of rural women, identify their constraints and determine their needs. Gender analysis training programmes were undertaken by government officials and agricultural extension agents and women in development (WID) units were created in Ministries of Agriculture. Some male and female extension agents were trained in communication skills, participatory development, gender analysis and household food



security so they could effectively provide extension services to rural women (FAO, 1996). To promote sustainable agriculture, rural development and food security for all people, FAO plans to further its mission to ensure that women, as well as men, have the support and access to resources they need to pursue sustainable livelihoods and an improved quality of life (FAO, 1997).

FAO, IFAD and other organizations, adopted the Gender and Development approach in 1992, to examine gender roles and relationships rather than women alone. For IFAD, gender mainstreaming at the project level means ensuring that the specific roles, needs and constraints of women and men are taken into account at all stages of design and implementation. Sixteen out of 17 of IFAD's projects concerning women only are in countries where sociocultural norms limit the interaction between men and women, though the disadvantage of designing separate activities was fully recognized (IFAD, 2000).

## Appropriate policy support for rural women

**An appropriate policy environment is needed to improve** rural women's living standards and enhance food security. Efforts have been made by different organizations to improve the policy environment and promote the welfare of rural women, which need to be strengthened and enforced. For example, FAO's Gender and Development Service (then Women in Development Service) organized a workshop in 1997 to evaluate experiences in gender sensitive participatory rural appraisal. The aim was to assure women a voice in cultures where men dominate decision-making, train extension staff to work with rural people and to establish mechanisms for needs-based planning processes. Pilot projects were launched in Namibia, Nepal and Tanzania, with the support of the Government of Norway, to improve channels of communication between men and women farmers, extension staff, and policy-makers by using participatory approaches and consultative processes (FAO, 1998). Nonetheless, various forms of discrimination and inequality still exist in relation to women's access to agricultural productive resources and services and their participation in planning and policy-making.



## Policy environment and requirements

The founder of the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in Uganda once said:

*“When women own and control land, there will be more food in each household and more crops for export since most farm work is done by them. They will be protected from eviction when they are widowed or divorced. The current system discriminates against women, which violates the equality provisions of our constitution”* (Women’s Action, 2000).

According to Crowley (2001), enhancing women’s land rights requires that the issue becomes a political priority and a legal possibility, as well as an administrative viability, a social acceptability and a moral legitimacy.

First recognized in 1995 in Beijing, gender mainstreaming is now a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. This involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities at all levels (policy, development, research, advocacy and dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes). Gender mainstreaming requires that an effort be made to broaden women’s equitable participation at all levels of decision-making. Gender mainstreaming strongly supports the empowerment of women, including efforts towards raising awareness, confidence building, expansion of available choices and increased access to and control over resources and actions (UN, 2000).

The demand for gender-specific information is growing and this demand arises from various data-users including policy analysts, researchers, academics, rural planners and business people (Akello, 1999). Gender disaggregated information is essential if appropriate policy recommendations are to be made (FAO, 2000a).

### *Planning and decision-making*

Gender parity in political power, as reflected by representation in parliaments, is still far from realized. No country has reached parity and only 13 countries have achieved or exceeded the 30 percent target called for by the Economic and Social Council in 1990 (UN, 2002b; UNDP 2003). In the African region, only Mozambique and South Africa have attained the 30 percent of seats in parliament held by women, followed by the Seychelles (29 percent), Namibia and Rwanda (26 percent each) (UNDP, 2003).

A study in Lira district in Uganda revealed that although opportunities existed for women to participate in local leadership, they were not well equipped for these roles because of cultural and societal limitations. Women said they lacked the support and consent of men, at the household and community levels, to help them participate in local leadership. As a result, a sensitization programme was introduced to promote leadership roles, which led to increased participation of women in the constitution drafting process (FAO, 2000).

Despite improvements in the human capital of women, in sub-Saharan Africa their educational levels are still low. Investment in rural women's education will help empower them to take up leadership positions in their communities.

### *The role of NGOs*

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Vision 2020 Conference revealed the importance of bringing new perspectives to the issue of food security by engaging different stakeholders in dialogue over social inequities and opportunities for partnerships (IFPRI, 2001). NGOs play an important role in this dialogue, complementing and supplementing national governments. Paarlberg (2002) stated that, in the area of rural poverty reduction and food security, NGOs have performed best when they were in partnership with governments, rather than trying to replace them. NGO participation can help governments target public investments more effectively towards the poor.



## Conclusions and lessons learned

**Sub-Saharan Africa faces widespread** poverty and malnutrition, extensive national food deficits, and high and increasing dependence on food imports and concessionary aid (Hazell, 2001). Meeting the world's future food needs will depend increasingly on women's capabilities and resources. In many developing countries, women are responsible for generating food security for their families, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Women process, purchase, prepare food and play a significant role in national agricultural production, producing both food and cash crops, using different survival strategies to ensure household food security and to alleviate rural poverty. Women provide the bulk of agricultural labour, undertake the reproduction and care of children, manage the home and engage in income-generating activities to enhance household welfare. As traditional caregivers, they provide care for people infected with HIV/AIDS, reducing the time invested in productive activities and leisure. The number of female-headed households is increasing because of family breakdown and the rise in male migration to urban areas in search of income.

Rural women have limited access to and control over agricultural productive resources and lack appropriate policy support. The mechanisms established to improve the productivity of rural women often lack financial support and coordination with other institutions and ministries. Because of higher illiteracy rates among women in Africa, they remain ill informed of their rights and of any possibly available assistance. Moreover, customary laws and traditions hamper enforcement of certain laws and policies. Attention to gender differences regarding property rights can improve the outcome of natural resource management policies and projects in terms of efficiency, environmental sustainability, equity, and empowerment of resource users (IFPRI, 1997). A gender-based differentiation for allocation of labour and resources must be taken into account if technologies are to be developed, targeted and transferred appropriately (FAO, 2000a).

Gender-disaggregated agricultural statistical data are a critical prerequisite for any changes in current policy, planning and research activities and for improving the planning capacities in the framework of gender mainstreaming. Although available data provide sufficient evidence that women produce the bulk of food in most African countries, there are significant data gaps on rural women's roles, their agricultural and non-agricultural activities, and their needs related to food production and processing; while qualitative analyses abound, quantitative information is lacking.

Women are major contributors to agricultural production and play a prime role in ensuring food security and adequate nutritional levels of their household members. However, they could achieve much more in food production, provision and utilization if agricultural researchers, plant scientists, extension staff and policy-makers would provide an enabling environment for playing these roles effectively (Brown, *et al.*, 1995).

Regardless of the fact that projects need to concentrate attention on rural women's roles in agricultural production, reports show that projects targeting rural women are more successful if they seek to address both productive and reproductive roles and needs (FAO, 1996). While research exists on food security and reproductive health as separate issues, researchers have paid little attention to the relationship between the two. The dual roles of women in producing and preparing food, as well as in bearing and rearing children, underscore the need for better understanding of the relationship between reproductive health and household food security (UN, 2000a).

To support rural women in Africa who are working to improve food security, attention should be focused on female-headed households and policies developed to raise their living standards. This will have the dual beneficial effect of reducing gender inequalities in terms of improved income and reduced poverty as well as increasing food security (Ellis, 2000). Policy formulation should ensure the promotion of agricultural productivity but at the same time aim to protect the welfare of small-scale food farmers.



## Recommendations

**In studying women's role in food security** in the Africa region, it was found that national governments and other organizations are increasingly aware of the plight of rural women. The following action-oriented recommendations are therefore to promote women's welfare, increase women's agricultural productivity and income levels, which should result in increased availability of food at all levels.

### **Improving access to natural and agricultural productive resources and services**

- Rural women need secure access to **land**. This must be beyond customary systems that regulate access based on membership of a lineage, community or household. Measures to increase women's control over land are important strategies that will lead to the empowerment of rural women, will improve their participation in the decision-making process concerning food production and improve their access to credit. To this end joint titling of land might be encouraged to improve a rural woman's rights to claim a fair share of land acquired through her husband in the event of death, divorce or separation. Policies covering civil and customary laws should be established to protect a woman's right to land where husbands have more than one wife. These rights should be protected in the event of death, divorce or separation.
- Efforts should focus on increasing the **representation** of rural women in **water resource management programmes and decision-making fora**. As indicated by Rathgeber (2003), targeted efforts should identify potential women leaders in rural communities. They should be provided with the training and skills to facilitate their active membership in water user associations.
- Rural women's needs should be incorporated in **agricultural extension** delivery. Training for agriculture extension staff should include techniques on effectively communicating with women farmers. To this end more female extension staff are needed, especially in communities where cultural norms do not permit interaction between women and men. Short-term training programmes could be designed for existing extension staff to strengthen skills working with women farmers. This training would enhance their knowledge of agricultural extension delivery

methods, and further the trainees' understanding of women's productive and reproductive activities resulting in a more holistic approach. Besides women farmers could be trained to become extension agents using methodologies such as farmer field schools. Such an approach can be cost effective in extension delivery and increase the confidence of other farmers in the source of and information received.

- Bottlenecks must be removed to ease rural women's **access to credit**. These include collateral requirements in forms not readily available to women, i.e. land should not be used as collateral for obtaining credit for women farmers. The current requirement that a husband co-sign a wife's credit application should be revised to allow women direct access to credit facilities. Women will then be able to engage in the timely purchase of agricultural inputs, facilitating their participation in income-generating activities.
- **Formal and informal education** opportunities for rural women demand the attention of national governments, international institutions and non-governmental organizations. The education level of rural women in Africa has been a basis for discrimination and limits their participation in planning and decision-making. It has further contributed to ignorance of their rights and provisions of the law. Efforts should be made to increase school enrollment of girls and informal educational systems need to be established to expand the knowledge of rural women and men on provisions of the law.
- Both rural women and men need to be involved in the development of **agricultural technology**. Given rural women's role in food production, their exclusion from setting priorities for technology generation has implications for food security at the household and national level. Besides, incorporating the views of rural women and men in the development of new technology will increase adoption levels. Furthermore, the gender-differential impact of new technologies should be analysed to avoid any negative impact on rural women; often the household head is assumed to be male and the needs of female-headed households may not be addressed.
- Labour-saving technologies are critical for rural women. Labour shortages are on the increase due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, increased male migration to urban



## Recommendations

areas and the combination of household, agriculture and non-agricultural tasks. Labour-saving technologies will allow women to explore off-farm and non-farm income-generating opportunities, allowing them to improve household food and nutrition security. These new technologies should be developed with a good understanding of the income, resources and time constraints rural women face in Africa. They should aim to improve rural women's access to water and reduce time spent on water collection. Cost-effective energy sources need to be developed for processing agricultural produce and for cooking, which will reduce time spent on collecting fuelwood and at the same time will protect the environment.

- Appropriate technology for poor rural women and men should lead to packages combining traditional and modern ideas. It should be simple to use, but should be amenable to upgrading to avoid confining the rural poor in a low-level technology trap (Jazairy, *et al.*, 1992).
- Rural women in war-torn countries, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, need **starter packs** in the form of farm tools, fertilizer and seed. With their vital role in food production and the difficulty they face in replacing farm tools and personal effects, governments, NGOs and international organizations need to jump-start their survival mechanisms and help them pick up where they left off.

## Appropriate policy and institutional support

- Good coordination is required among the different agencies and institutions involved in promoting increased productivity among rural women. Improved coordination and sharing of information among the different organizations will ensure greater efficiency and reduce duplication of effort.
- Policy-makers and government agencies need to be provided with information on rural women. More needs to be known about farmers (men and women) and their needs and priorities to allow for the formulation of effective, sustainable development interventions. Akello (1999) affirmed that this information could be gained from studies on the sociocultural environment of rural communities and critical national and global trends.
- Furthermore, data on different agricultural activities, such as the economically active population and labour provision in agriculture, must be timely and reliable. Relevant



variables should be integrated as far as possible into existing data collection exercises, supported by training on collection, processing and dissemination of gender-disaggregated agricultural data. Time-use surveys in particular can capture important aspects of women's production activities and constraints. Data collection interviewers should address women directly when information about their activities is sought.

- Women's improved access to information and communication technologies will enhance their decision-making capacities for increased farm productivity and effective marketing of farm produce. Support for rural radio broadcasting at times when women are likely to listen will be beneficial.
- Empowerment of rural women will enable them to take up leadership roles in their communities. Although women play vital roles in economic development in many African nations, their representation in leadership positions is limited. They should be encouraged to participate in planning and decision-making of programmes from the initial stages onwards and should be well represented at national fora. Participation in political arenas leads to women being heard at the highest levels of policy formulation. Formation of rural women's groups and strengthening of those existing will enhance this process.
- Planners in Africa need to ensure that both men and women have a voice in planning exercises and that their needs are recognized (FAO, 2000b). Women's skills need to be enhanced to ensure their active participation in the development process. This will be accomplished through changing perceptions by increasing the awareness of both men and women (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001). Efforts should be made to include rural women in support programmes to ensure that they have decision-making rights over assets, productive resources and services in their communities.
- General awareness-raising and sensitization is needed concerning the economic participation of men and women in agriculture, and the critical role women play in ensuring food security at the household and national levels, to reinforce recognition of the need for appropriate policy and institutional support. Social and cultural institutions need to create an environment where women may realize their full potential. This will require a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach to the empowerment of women.

### The role of government

- Governments in the African region should work towards ensuring peace and reducing conflict, which is crucial for agricultural and rural development. Conflict and political unrest often lead to the destruction of public infrastructure, displacement of people and interruption of agricultural productive activities. Peace building, together with the improvement of rural infrastructure will enhance the ability of rural women and men to produce and market their food production.
- Gender-sensitive government mechanisms should be strengthened to address rural women's issues. The provisions of laws relating to women's rights should be enforced. Furthermore, rural women need to be informed of their rights and the existing mechanisms for enforcement and assistance.
- Land reforms are needed to improve rural women's access to land. Secure land rights enhance credit worthiness, allowing women to purchase agricultural inputs and to adopt improved farm practices for increased farm productivity. Land reforms will raise the social standing of rural women and empower them to participate in planning and other policy fora; land reform is critical for poverty alleviation.
- Gender-sensitive rural infrastructure programmes are needed: good roads and improved transportation and communication systems. Social infrastructure is also required including health care facilities, cultural, business and information centres (on legal rights, market information). Counseling centres would contribute to rural women's empowerment by offering them greater accessibility to information on marketing, health care, education and networking, as stated by Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick (2001). Provision of health care facilities in rural areas will result in meeting some of the Millennium Development Goals such as reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.

### Off-farm work and income-generating activities

- Opportunities for off-farm and non-farm activities should be explored and encouraged for rural women, as their ability to earn additional income will have a positive impact on household consumption. As noted above, women often spend their additional income on their children and on household food and nutritional

security. Technical and management training could be provided and small grants, credit schemes and starter packs could be made available to women who demonstrate entrepreneurial qualities to help them start their own business.

### Further recommendations

- Considering the negative impacts of structural adjustment programmes and market reform policies on rural women in Africa, a thorough assessment is required to evaluate the gender impacts of the current heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, national poverty reduction strategies and other policies. These programmes require (i) a thorough analysis of gender-differentiated impact on rural agricultural producers, (ii) an agenda for ensuring food security at the household and national levels and (iii) a confirmation of their positive impact on rural women.
- Much has been done to bring the HIV/AIDS epidemic under control in selected African countries. However, projections indicate that the disease will continue to pose a serious threat to agricultural production and food security until at least 2010. A robust political agenda is required to both limit the spread of the disease and to enhance livelihood opportunities for people with the disease. Actions must be gender-sensitive, as women are most vulnerable and affected. The policy approach must be multisectoral and its implementation should be community based.
- Rural women should be encouraged to participate in rural organizations and professional associations so that they might transcend individual isolation and collectively articulate and express their needs. This will increase women's social capital, improve their social status and enable their access to resources and enhance their opportunities to obtain credit.



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# The African region

## chapter 1

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture



# Asia and the Pacific



# Asia and the Pacific

## Conditions and perspectives<sup>3</sup>



Woman vendor at  
Suva market.  
(P. Behlen-Dexter, 1998)

**In spite of economic growth and improved human** development, in the twenty-first century the Asia-Pacific region remains critically challenged by food security. Significantly, the availability, access to and stability of food continues to be a key issue. Moreover, increased population pressures, environmental degradation and emerging regional trends beg the question, ‘Can the world [including the Asia-Pacific region] produce enough food at reasonable prices, provide access to food by the poor, and not destroy the environment in the process?’ (Falcon, 1996).

It is known that across the Asia-Pacific region rural women play essential roles ensuring food security, through their activities in food production and providing economic access to available food and nutritional security for household members, both in normal and stressful times. Notwithstanding these activities their roles are generally constrained, undervalued (Laier, Davies, *et al.* 1996) and usually executed in the face of enormous social, cultural and economic constraints (Quisumbing, Brown, *et al.* 1995).

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At the local level, food security depends on the capacity of individuals and households to produce buy and use food of sufficient quantity and quality throughout life cycles and seasons. Understanding the status and different roles of women and men in the household is essential to comprehending the different strategies households pursue to control access to resources and promote food security. The majority of households and communities in Asia manage their rural production systems based on clear gender divisions of labour that affect the achievement of food security.

A lack of awareness and appreciation of the productive roles of rural women in many developing Asian countries is the result of historical undervaluation of their contribution. This has resulted in enduring discrimination in women's access to resources and opportunities in education and health. In the Pacific Islands, the semi-subsistence and communal nature of local economies, in which women and girls play an integral role in family production and resource management systems, has traditionally provided the foundations for family food security, ensuring the production of food and essential items for family use.

Until today, development and academic communities have paid scant attention to the state of rural women. Sachs noted that 'feminist theorists, as well as rural social theorists, remain inattentive to rural women's concerns; their urban-focused, theoretical work inadequately addresses the context of rural women's lives' (Sachs, 1996). Given the role of women in achieving food security for their families, meeting the world's food needs in the year 2020 will depend increasingly on the capabilities and resources of women (Brown, Feldstein, Haddad, Pena and Quisumbing, 1995). In this context, it is essential that a study be made of rural women in the Asia-Pacific region, to identify opportunities to integrate gender dimensions in all aspects of agricultural and rural development.

Sustainable food security can only be achieved with the full participation of women as equal partners. It is therefore essential to understand their roles and responsibilities in the household, community and local economy, as well as the range of constraints and inequalities they face on a daily basis. However, a critical impediment is the absence of sex-disaggregated data on urban-rural and gender-differences, on women's multiple roles in agriculture (at the household, community and national level) and factors affecting their participation. Because of this scarcity of pertinent data, the following presentation and analysis draws heavily on available macro data and local case studies.



## Differences and dilemmas



A woman drawing drinking-water from a village pump in northern India. In the background is a public toilet. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) is helping many developing countries pipe water directly to their rural communities.

*(J. Isaac, 1986)*

**The countries making up the Asia-Pacific Region** are diverse showing a broad variety in their geography, culture, religion and political systems, economic performance and social development. The region includes two of the most populous countries in the world and the world's smallest states. It contains the second largest economy on the globe, as well as some of the smallest; some countries are at the pinnacle of economic development, others are nomadic or agrarian (ADB, 2001). Differences in religion, culture and traditions vary significantly between East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific and Oceanic countries, influencing gender bias in both discriminatory and affirmative ways. These differences are further accentuated by ethnic diversity and linguistic distinctions that contribute to a rising sense of cultural uniqueness, and shape politics and civil conflicts in new ways.

The twenty-plus island countries in the South Pacific are characterized by significant differences in physical size, degree of isolation, resource endowment, stage of development (Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are least developed countries) and cultural background. All face the physical disadvantage of being remote, small and dispersed; at the same time there are few opportunities for realizing economies of scale. Agriculture has been the main source of livelihood security across the Pacific Islands, with semi-subsistence farming being the principle form of production. Food security has emerged as a serious development concern where a focus on economic production, backed by spiraling population growth and accelerated urban drift, may upset the fine balance maintained by family-based semi-subsistence systems.

Over the past two decades unprecedented economic and agricultural growth have transformed the Asia-Pacific region, accompanied in many places by impressive social gains and improvements in living conditions. In addition to favourable economic performance, lowered population pressures have played an important part in social transformation. Despite impressive gains, extreme inequities persist in terms of economic prosperity and food security between and within, countries and between rural and urban areas.

Initially unbridled enthusiasm for globalization across the region was later tempered by the realities of internal vulnerabilities, notably the lack of safety nets for the working and rural poor at times of economic crisis. In spite of the recent crisis, it was realized that globalization cannot be circumvented, but must be properly managed to benefit the wider population rather than enrich the few. The current reality is that regional economic integration – formal and informal – continues to exert an impact on household food security in Asia and the Pacific.

A household's access to 'food basket' commodities depends on economic and social circumstances beyond their local farming system. For example, labour migration and overseas remittances strongly affect household food security in many rural Asian communities. Similarly, aid and remittances play a major role in the relatively small economies of the South Pacific. For instance, in several Pacific Island countries aid per capita is amongst the highest in the world and in many cases, remittances exceed export earnings.

The economic transformation accompanied a steady reduction in the relative share of agriculture to the gross domestic product (GDP) across the region. This reduction was striking in some countries, in Thailand the contribution of agriculture to GDP fell from 23.2 percent in 1980 to 9.1 percent in 2000; it was not uniform as illustrated in Table 2.1. Although the relative share of agriculture in the economy decreased in Asia-Pacific as a whole, agriculture continues to make an important contribution to the economy and by extension to food security and poverty alleviation in many individual countries. In 2000, agriculture accounted for 59.9 percent of the



Woman watering a communal garden. Home and communal gardens grow the quality vegetables that, once properly prepared to local taste, are the long-term solution to the problem of vitamin A deficiency in rural Viet Nam. *(Peyton Johnson, 1992)*



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GDP of Myanmar and Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal and Uzbekistan each derived more than a third of their GDP from agriculture, while this sector contributed a quarter or more to the GDP of Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vietnam. It is noteworthy that China and India – the two most populous countries in the region – continue to derive a significant portion of their GDP from agriculture, 15.9 percent and 25.3 percent respectively.

In the health sector, the spread of HIV/AIDS in many parts of rural Asia has

served as a wakeup call for action, overtaking the traditional stance of silence and denial, at the same time nutritional deficiencies among women and children in South Asia is seen as a major crisis in the making.



Portrait of village children.  
(G. Bizzarri, 1996)

Most countries that are substantially dependent on agriculture are low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). The paradox seems to be that countries that are dependent on agriculture lag behind in improving food security. These data suggest that where countries are highly reliant on the agriculture sector, rural populations, including women, may face

the highest risk of food insecurity and low incomes.

Economic structural transformation, marked by decreasing reliance on agriculture, has several implications for the economic role of rural women and food security. First, fundamental changes in national economic systems and the agricultural sector result in loss of livelihood opportunities. Second, subsistence food production to satisfy household food needs may be unsustainable and households become increasingly dependent on the cash economy to access food. Third, displaced rural women need viable livelihood alternatives within the rural production system to provide an economic return on their labour. Finally, as agriculture production becomes

**Table 2.1**  
**Contribution (percent) of the agriculture sector to GDP in selected**  
**countries in the Asia-Pacific region**

Asia region	Low-income food-deficit country	1980	1990	2000
Bangladesh	Yes	41.2	29.4	24.6
Bhutan	Yes	56.7	43.2	33.2
Cambodia	Yes	...	56.6	37.1
China, PRC	Yes	30.1	27	15.9
India	Yes	38.1	31	25.3
Indonesia	Yes	24.8	19.4	16.9
Kazakhstan	Yes	26.0	41.8	8.6
Korea, DPR	Yes	...	...	...
Korea, Republic of		...	...	...
Lao, PDR	Yes	...	61.2	53.2
Malaysia			15.2	8.6
Mongolia	Yes	13.6	15.2	33.4
Maldives	Yes	...	...	9.5
Myanmar		46.5	57.3	59.9
Nepal	Yes	61.8	51.6	39.8
Pakistan	Yes	29.6	26	26.3
Philippines	Yes	25.1	21.9	15.9
Sri Lanka	Yes	26.2	22.9	19.4
Tajikistan	Yes	...	27.1	27.4
Thailand		23.2	12.5	9.1
Uzbekistan	Yes	...	33.1	34.9
Vietnam		50	38.7	24.3
Southwest Pacific region	Low-income food-deficit country	1980	1990	2000
Cook Islands		...	21.2	16.6
Fiji Islands		22.1	...	18.4
Kiribati	Yes	31.5	18.6	...
Marshall Islands		...	13.9	13.5
Papua New Guinea	Yes	33.1	29	28.7
Salomon Islands		...	...	22.1
Tonga		38.5	35.1	28.5
Vanuatu	Yes	...	20.7	15.8
Western Samoa	Yes	...	...	16.2

Source: Asian Development Bank, Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries (Table 13: Sectoral share of GDP), 2001. FAO, Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries: <http://apps.fao.org/notes/876-e.htm>



## Differences and dilemmas

more competitive amidst increased global economic connections, rural women with limited skills and a low level of education face greater risk of economic vulnerability.

Development in the Asia-Pacific Region focused attention on fast-growing urban centres, while recent reports estimate that the number of rural Asians is unlikely to decline. The Asia Development Bank estimated there are likely to be 2.2 billion rural Asians by the year 2020. This rural population will have reduced access to health and education, and a lower level of general well-being (ADB, 2000). Aging and a changing gender balance in rural areas – intensified as men and the young are pulled to urban centres in search of better opportunities – are likely to further complicate rural population patterns.

Uneven development in the region – largely at the expense of rural areas – has amplified the difficulties facing the majority of rural men and women who continue to act as rural producers on family farms and subsistence agriculture, and who play a vital role in export-driven agriculture production. Although parts of rural Asia and the Pacific have undergone unprecedented technological and economic transformation, the resulting economic growth has not translated into improved welfare for most rural residents. Mainly this is a result of the general lack of supportive institutions, particularly health and education services, and inadequate attention to improvements in rural infrastructure. At the same time, the significant contributions of women to rural production and food security have generally been ignored in agricultural and rural development-sector reform strategies and budgetary allocations.

# Challenges to equality

**Achievements in gender equality** differ considerably throughout Asia and the Pacific, reflecting the overwhelming diversity in economic and human development indicators both between and within countries. Within the Region's complex resource environment, and amid the debate on trade versus self-sufficiency in food for enhanced food security, gender equity is marked by enormous disparity as illustrated in the human and gender development index rankings in Table 2.2. In particular, countries in South Asia (such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan), which are predominantly represented among low-income food-deficit countries, are notable for their poor performance in both human and gender-related development indicators. As expected, countries at the other end of the development continuum such as Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand score very well on these indicators.

Furthermore, the progress achieved by a large number of urban women across Asia disguises the low human development indicators and extreme gender inequality among rural women in many parts of the continent, especially South Asia. Rural women continue to struggle under the dual responsibilities of economic production and domestic labour. Most are confronted by poverty, illiteracy, high health risks, inadequate access to productive resources and denial of market access in the profitable food sectors. It has been observed that 'for many, being female and living in rural Asia is doubly discriminatory' (Bloom, Craig, *et al.*, 2001).

In general, the state of rural women across Asia is shaped more by customary law and social sanctions than by the norms of equality, which are subscribed to in the global arena. The relative gender equity gains of women in East Asia – particularly in comparison to South Asia – can be attributed to social norms of equality fostered by political philosophy, ethnic culture and educational achievements. Yet the visible presence of women in the public realm in East Asia tends to mask hidden inequalities in their struggle to provide for their families.



Women rice harvesters going to work on a supplementary pollination operation.  
(G. Bizzarri, 1996)

While most Pacific Island countries (such as the Cook Islands, Fiji and Palau) have significantly progressed in the area of human development indicators, others such as Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu lag behind. Gender equality, differences between women and men in the Pacific Island countries are generally less pronounced than in Asia; because of the complexity of gender relations in the Pacific; however, care should be taken when generalizing

indices. It is noteworthy that women generally outscore men in the human development index (indicated by a score of more than 100 in the gender ratio column) in some Pacific Island countries. The differences between women in Asia and the Pacific Islands may be related to the fact that rural and urban communities in the Pacific are more homogenous than in Asia. In general, women in urban and rural parts of the Pacific Islands have similar employment options and choices. In addition, where major urban areas are developing in Pacific countries such as Fiji, New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea, strong networks have emerged, linking people in towns with those remaining in rural areas.

Neglect of the agriculture sector in many countries throughout Asia and the Pacific has made agriculture the career of last resort for men and women with other more profitable options. As a result, those with fewer options – generally poor, illiterate rural women – are compelled to take on a major role in the agriculture sector, resulting in the ‘feminization of farming’. Bangladesh, China and India have sought to generate employment in small-scale rural industries, micro-enterprises, town and village enterprises, as capable young women and men have been lured away from agriculture, intensifying this trend. At the same time, internal migration has acted as a pull factor, drawing younger people to urban areas in search of more lucrative opportunities and leaving the elderly, particularly older women, behind as the principal farmers. This contributes to the ‘greying’ of farming as witnessed in

**Table 2.2**  
Human and gender development in selected Asia-Pacific countries<sup>i</sup>

Asia	Human development index <sup>ii</sup> : rank	Gender-related development index <sup>iii</sup> : rank
Bangladesh	Low	121
Bhutan	Low	...
Cambodia	Medium	109
China, PRC	Medium	76
India	Medium	105
Indonesia	Medium	92
Japan	High	11
Kazakhstan	Medium	...
Korea, Republic of	High	29
Lao, PDR	Low	119
Malaysia	Medium	55
Maldives	Medium	69
Mongolia	Medium	104
Myanmar	Medium	107
Nepal	Low	120
Pakistan	Low	117
Philippines	Medium	62
Sri Lanka	Medium	70
Tajikistan	Medium	93
Thailand	Medium	58
Uzbekistan	Medium	86
Vietnam	Medium	89
Southwest Pacific		
Australia	High	2
Fiji Islands	Medium	63
New Zealand	High	17
Papua New Guinea	Medium	110
Samoa (Western)	Medium	...
Vanuatu	Medium	...
	Low GDI	

<sup>i</sup> HDI and GDI data are unavailable for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

<sup>ii</sup> The Human Development Index (HDI) measures average achievements in three basic areas: a) a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy); b) knowledge (measured by adult literacy rate and combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio); and c) a decent standard of living, measured by GDP per capita (purchasing power parity in US\$).

<sup>iii</sup> The Gender-related Development (GDI) Index adjusts the average achievements measured by the HDI to reflect inequalities between men and women in the same areas.

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 2001, pp. 212–213, 241–242.





## Challenges to equality

China. Overall, the state of women in Asia can be summed up as a 'duality', characterized by the co-existence of gender equality gains and gaps, set in the context of the economic dualism of new prosperity and persistent abject poverty.

A macro analysis of women throughout Asia and the Pacific depicts a scenario of diversity, characterized by disparity in women's economic achievements, political participation, educational advancement and social expression. This regional diversity and the prevailing urban-rural duality are a reflection of differences in national priorities for the advancement of rural women, as well as differing resource commitments for interventions to support gender parity in development. Overall, the central challenges to equity in the region are the:

- achievement of gender equality gains for women in agriculture and rural communities that match the gains made in urban areas;
- creation of opportunities for rural women so they can become the principal agents in poverty eradication for food security in the context of the declining importance of agriculture within national economies;
- achievement of household food security with gender equality within the nexus of current intra-household economic and social realities;
- prevention of further marginalization of rural women in the context of the accelerated pace of global economic integration and the commercialization of the agriculture sector; and
- empowerment of rural women with the capacity to function effectively in a complex world shaped by new technologies in the agriculture and information sectors.

# Women in the agriculture sector

**In developing countries in Asia and the Pacific**, women make up a substantial portion of the agricultural labour force, yet there is no systematic body of relevant data and information on their roles and contributions. The increased number of micro-level gender studies throughout the region is a positive development, balancing the limited availability of macro-level data. A renewed focus on farming systems has given rise to several studies of gender roles in specific agro-zones or locations, and the remarkable growth in participatory rural appraisal has provided qualitative data on the contribution of rural women to local production. However, these studies were produced independently of each other and by researchers with varying skills and expertise. As a result, they differ in quality, reliability and accuracy, and it is difficult to generalize and extrapolate local findings to a broader national situation. In this context, this section will present a synthesis of the existing aggregate data on the participation of women in the labour force and agriculture sector, illustrated by available case studies on women's involvement in various types of productive work in the food and agriculture sectors.

The macro data presented in Table 2.3 illustrates female participation in economic activity throughout Asia and the Pacific, and the relative share of the male and female labour force participation in agriculture. This data indicates that in South Asian countries such as Bangladesh; Bhutan; India; Nepal and Pakistan, a high percentage – more than 60 percent and up to 98 percent – of women are employed in the agriculture sector. Indeed, more women than men are employed in agriculture in each of these countries.

In Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam women contribute substantially to the agriculture sector. For instance, among the economically active population, women's participation in the agriculture sector in Cambodia is 78 percent, and 81 percent in Lao PDR. Indeed, the data show that in most Asian countries, a larger number of women than men are



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employed in agriculture as a percentage of the economically active population. This finding is significant given that the data for the economically active population in agriculture in Table 2.3 excludes rural women's unpaid work in farm and family economies. As a result, it is reasonable to believe that a considerable proportion of women's contribution to agricultural labour throughout the region is invisible in these statistics. If unpaid work were included, the figures for female employment in agriculture would be higher.

While a higher percentage of Pacific Island women are employed in the service sector than in agriculture, Table 2.3 shows that a significant number of women throughout the Pacific are engaged in various agricultural activities, ranging from lows of 1 to 3 percent in the atoll countries of Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands (where there is an acute shortage of arable land) to highs of 80 percent in Vanuatu and 84 percent in Papua New Guinea, where the share of women employed in agriculture exceeds that of men (UNDP, 1999). Although the data in Table 2.3 display significant differences in the share of women employed in agriculture as a portion of the economically active population in the Pacific, other existing studies demonstrate that women and girls play an integral role in family production and resource management systems throughout the Pacific.

Moreover, the use of different definitions and periods in data collection together with an overall scarcity of data, make it difficult to generalize the contribution of these women to the agricultural workforce. In addition, gender roles in some Pacific Island countries – such as Tonga where cultural mores dictate that agriculture is male work – discourage the formal participation of women in this sector.

Even within the constraints of insufficient data, it is clear that with few exceptions, women across the Asia-Pacific region are major players in the labour force, and make a substantial contribution to the agriculture sector. The data illustrate that countries with low and medium achievements in the areas of human development and gender, which tend to be low-income food-deficit countries, have a larger share of women in agriculture. In general, these findings and observations support the notion that the feminization of farming is taking place in many countries throughout the region.

Table 2.3 also presents the female adult literacy rate and shows the female literacy rate as a percentage to highlight gender differences. Given that the literacy data presented is not disaggregated by place of residency (urban versus rural), it is reasonable to assume that adult literacy among rural women is even lower. For instance, in Bangladesh, the adult literacy rate for rural women is just 36.2 percent, compared to 60 percent for urban women, and to 56.1 percent for rural men and 75.4 percent for urban men (Pal, 2001).



A group of women working at sewing machines to produce articles of clothing. The sewing industry is one of a number of rural activities supported by United Nations loans.

The state of women's education in the Pacific region countries is illustrated by Table 2.3, which gives data on the gender ratio of adult literacy. The data from Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands – which is particularly poor for female adult literacy – confirms that women there have had less access to education than men over a long period (UNDP, 1999). Low literacy levels prevent women accessing information and technology, and influences their ability to participate in decision-making at the family, community and national level, thus affecting their capacity to work for change. The relationship between low literacy rates and the high participation of women in agriculture in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands warrants further study.

With the exception of developed countries and a few developing countries such as the Maldives, Malaysia and some Pacific Island countries, this analysis shows that the vast majority of rural women lag far behind men in literacy. Specifically, Bangladesh; India; Lao PDR; Nepal; Pakistan and Papua New Guinea reveal particularly low adult literacy rates for rural women. In the context of the feminization of farming, no progress has been made in improving female literacy, which has serious implications for the future of the agriculture sector and food security across the region, because it depends on female labour with little or no formal

**Table 2.3**  
Gender patterns in education and economic activity in selected Asia-Pacific countries

Asia	Low-income food-deficit country	Female adult literacy rate (age 15 and above)		Female economic activity rate (age 15 and above)		Economically active in agriculture as a percent of total population	
		Rate (%) 1999	As % of male rate 1999	Rate (%) 1999	As % of male rate 1999	Female 1990-99	Male 1990-99
Bangladesh	Yes	29.3	57	65.8	76	78	54
Bhutan	Yes	...	...	58.0	65	98 <sup>a</sup>	92 <sup>a</sup>
Cambodia	Yes	...	...	81.5	96	78 <sup>a</sup>	69 <sup>a</sup>
China, PRC	Yes	75.5	83	73.0	86	76 <sup>a</sup>	69 <sup>a</sup>
India	Yes	44.5	66	42.0	50	74 <sup>a</sup>	59 <sup>a</sup>
Indonesia	Yes	81.3	89	55.0	67	42	41
Japan		...	...	51.1	67	6 <sup>u</sup>	5 <sup>u</sup>
Kazakhstan	Yes	...	...	60.6	...	...	...
Korea, Republic of		96.2	97	53.0	63	...	...
Lao, PDR	Yes	31.7	50	74.6	84	81 <sup>a</sup>	76 <sup>a</sup>
Malaysia		82.8	91	47.9	60	15	21
Maldives	Yes	96.2	100	65.9	79	28 <sup>a</sup>	35
Mongolia	Yes	52.1	72	73.2	87	30 <sup>a</sup>	34 <sup>a</sup>
Myanmar		80.1	90	65.8	75	70 <sup>a</sup>	78 <sup>a</sup>
Nepal	Yes	22.8	39	56.9	67	98 <sup>a</sup>	91 <sup>a</sup>
Pakistan	Yes	30.0	51	35.0	41	66	41
Philippines	Yes	94.9	100	49.4	61	27	47
Sri Lanka	Yes	88.6	94	42.4	55	49	38
Tajikistan	Yes	98.7	99	57.1	...	45 <sup>a</sup>	37 <sup>a</sup>
Thailand		93.5	96	72.9	84	50	52
Uzbekistan	Yes	84.0	90	62.0	...	35 <sup>a</sup>	34 <sup>a</sup>
Vietnam		91.0	95	73.5	90	70	71
<b>Southwest Pacific</b>							
Australia		...	...	55.6	76	4 <sup>u</sup>	6 <sup>u</sup>
Cook Islands		...	...	...	...	6	15
Fiji Islands		90.5	96	35.4	44	28	47
Kiribati	Yes	...	...	...	...	1	10
Marshall Islands		...	...	...	...	3	28
New Zealand		...	...	56.9	78	6 <sup>u</sup>	11 <sup>u</sup>
Papua New Guinea	Yes	56.0	78	67.0	78	84	71
Western Samoa	Yes	78.8	97	...	...	67	73
Solomon Islands		...	...	...	...	85	87
Tuvalu	Yes	...	...	...	...	34	45
Vanuatu	Yes	...	...	...	...	80	69



Columns 2 and 3: Adult literacy is used as an indicator of female educational achievement since alternative data are unavailable for all countries listed.

Columns 4 and 5: calculated based on data on the economically active population and total population from ILO (1996). The percentage shares of employment by economic activity may not equal 100 because of rounding or the omission of activities not classified. For detailed notes on data, see ILO (1996 and 1999).

Columns 6 and 7: **u** indicates use of UNDP data. **a** indicates use of ADB data. Refers to 1990 or the nearest reference year. Figures for Cook Islands; Fiji; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Nauru; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu and Vanuatu refer to the economically active population as a percent of the total population over 15 years.

Source: Column 1: FAO LIFDC data; columns 2 and 3: UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) 2001, Table 23; columns 4 and 5: UNDP HDR 2001, Table 24; columns 6 and 7: UNDP HDR 2001 Table 24 and Asian Development Bank, 2002. Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries: Table 5 and Table 7.



## Women in the agriculture sector

education. While poorly educated rural women are more likely to encounter the adverse effects of structural changes in the economy, particularly in the agriculture sector oriented to the competitive global market, they are less likely to be able to respond positively. These shortfalls in rural female literacy, along with the feminization of farming, mean that rural women's skills and knowledge must be improved to ensure their technological and economic empowerment and, at the same time, provide support to agricultural development and food security.

### Rural women's work

**Rural women throughout the Asia-Pacific** region make a crucial contribution to household production and food security. While the exact nature of this contribution varies across countries, it is clear that the majority of rural women have taken on an increasing share of household labour and that their lives are characterized by mounting drudgery. A variety of studies, produced in different countries in the

region, provide important findings on gender roles with guidance for policies and interventions to improve the productivity of rural households. However, no systematic synthesis has been made of findings, which hinders efforts to construct a realistic scenario of rural women's roles in household food security. Although a general pattern of gender roles emerges from these studies indicating both rural men and women in Asia and the Pacific contribute to production. However, gender roles vary within and between countries by agro-ecological and farming systems, crops grown, linkage to livestock and fish production, and opportunities for the off-farm occupation of family members.



Women farmers transplanting rice in a trial field belonging to the Directorate of Rice Research in Hyderabad.  
*(G. Bizzarri, 1996.)*

The approach used is to synthesize existing information from various sources and to develop a conceptual view illustrating the diversity of rural women's contributions, the constant drudgery and constraints they face accessing resources within the household and community. The role of rural women in household production covers production on the farm, in the home, off-farm and in the community; they contribute labour and management and local and traditional knowledge and expertise. The community and

household factors that affect women's roles and responsibilities and govern their access to food and resources are illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Rural women's work, and their economic and social contributions, can be grouped under two broad categories – those in the community and those in the household. In most countries, rural women contribute actively to community production improving social linkages and kinship relationships, and facilitating resource exchange at times of need. In the household nexus, ideology of gender roles is shaped by tradition and founded on cultural and religious tenets that determine how rural women participate in household production.

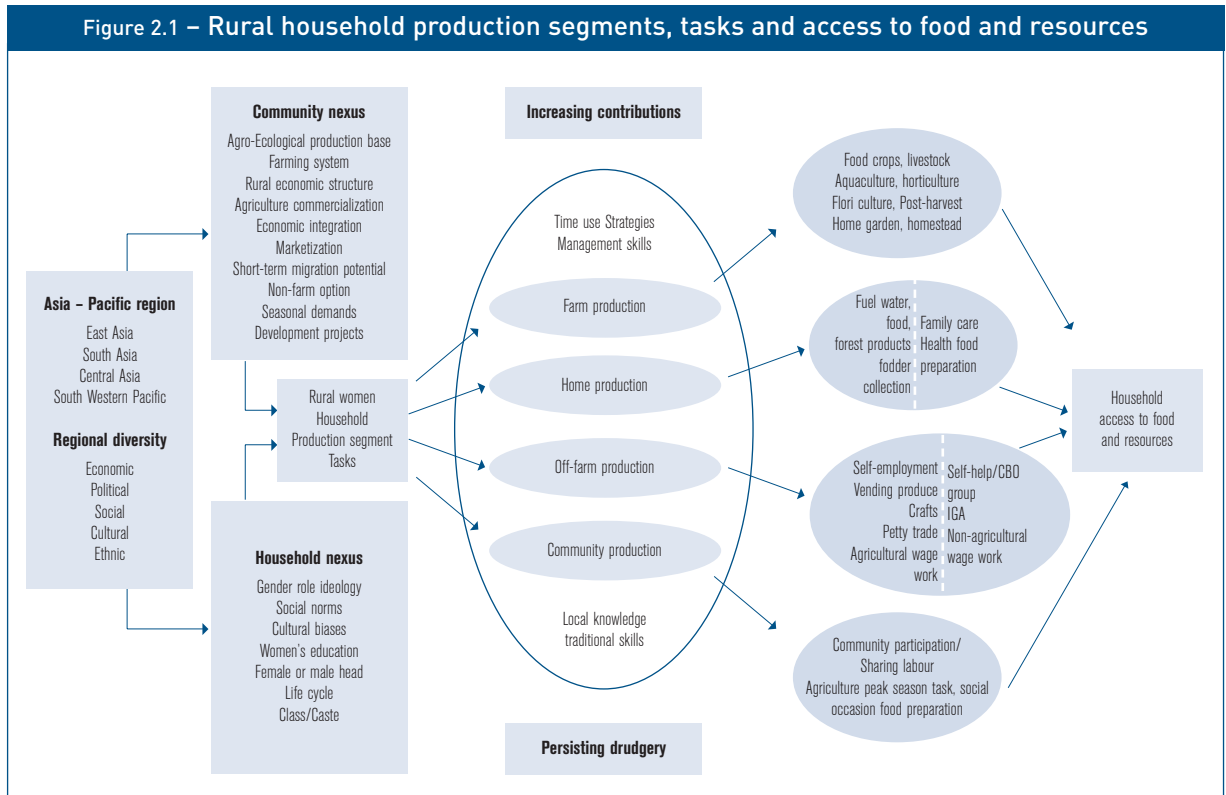
The contributions made by women in the household are increasingly affected by changes that are external to the household. For instance, rural poverty has acted as a push factor while new economic opportunities outside the household have encouraged rural women to cross existing gender role boundaries and participate in the economy outside the household. For instance, recent developments in agricultural diversification, accompanied by commercialization and market trends, have generated opportunities for off-farm paid work, even though a low educational level, inadequate training and social immobility prevent rural women in many places from responding to these opportunities. Even as short-term internal migration is induced by economics and the seasonal aspects of agriculture may cause new work patterns for rural women, gender roles in household production remain fixed



Mother washing her small child at road side.  
(Asupi, 1993)



Figure 2.1 – Rural household production segments, tasks and access to food and resources



Source: Adapted from:  
FAO, 2000.  
Balakrishnan; R. Widening  
gaps in technology  
development and technology  
transfer in support of rural  
women. In *Human resources;  
Agricultural and rural  
development*. Pg. 89

## Increasing economic contributions

**In the Asia-Pacific region,** rural women's work patterns are marked by change, continuity, flexibility and rigidity (Gurung, 1999). Change and flexibility is characterized by women taking on new production roles on-farm, off-farm and in the community to ensure family access to food and resources. Continuity and rigidity relates to social norms defining gender roles and dictate that rural women and girls should be responsible for home production in rural households. Intra-household decisions on allocation of labour are often biased and relegate domestic tasks to women and girls. Faced with economic pressures, gender roles may become flexible enabling women to take on work traditionally regarded as male. Meanwhile, the rigidity of gender roles means that men do not perform household tasks.

## South Asia

**In Bangladesh, participation in economic** activities varies considerably according to gender, type of activity and place of residence. Rural women have traditionally played an important role in income-generating activities such as post-harvest; cow fattening and milking; goat farming; backyard poultry rearing; pisciculture; agriculture; horticulture; food processing; cane and bamboo works; silk reeling; handloom; garment-making; fishnet-making; coir production and handicrafts. A significant number of rural women, particularly from extremely poor landless households, are engaged in activities such as construction, earthwork and field-based agricultural work, which have traditionally fallen within the men's domain.

Unpaid family workers, among whom women are disproportionately represented, are a major source of labour in the agriculture sector in Bangladesh (Pal, 2001). One study on the intra-household organization of rice production (based on a relatively small sample) indicates that the extent to which male and female household members are involved in irrigated agriculture and irrigation management is related to the amount of land owned by the household and their religion. Female family labour plays a more important role in rice production than male family labour; the study notes differences between households in different economic categories. For instance, a higher percentage of female labourers from middle-class households are involved in rice production (mostly transplanting and crop processing tasks) compared to marginal farmer households. In the middle strata, women in Hindu male-headed households contribute 54 percent of all labour in rice production, compared to 31 percent in Muslim male-headed households.

When comparing task allocations, a changing pattern emerges. Apart from the traditional crop processing tasks, women in the family make seedbeds, uproot and transplant seedlings, apply fertilizer, weed and harvest, which are all traditional male activities. Some 40–50 percent of field irrigation and non-farm water management is also carried out by women, almost equal to the contribution of male family labour (Jordans, Zwarteveen, 1997).

In India, according to the National Sample Survey Organization, the national work participation for rural women is 22 percent. However, as shown in Figure 2.2, this national average masks significant regional variations among states because of



## Women in the agriculture sector

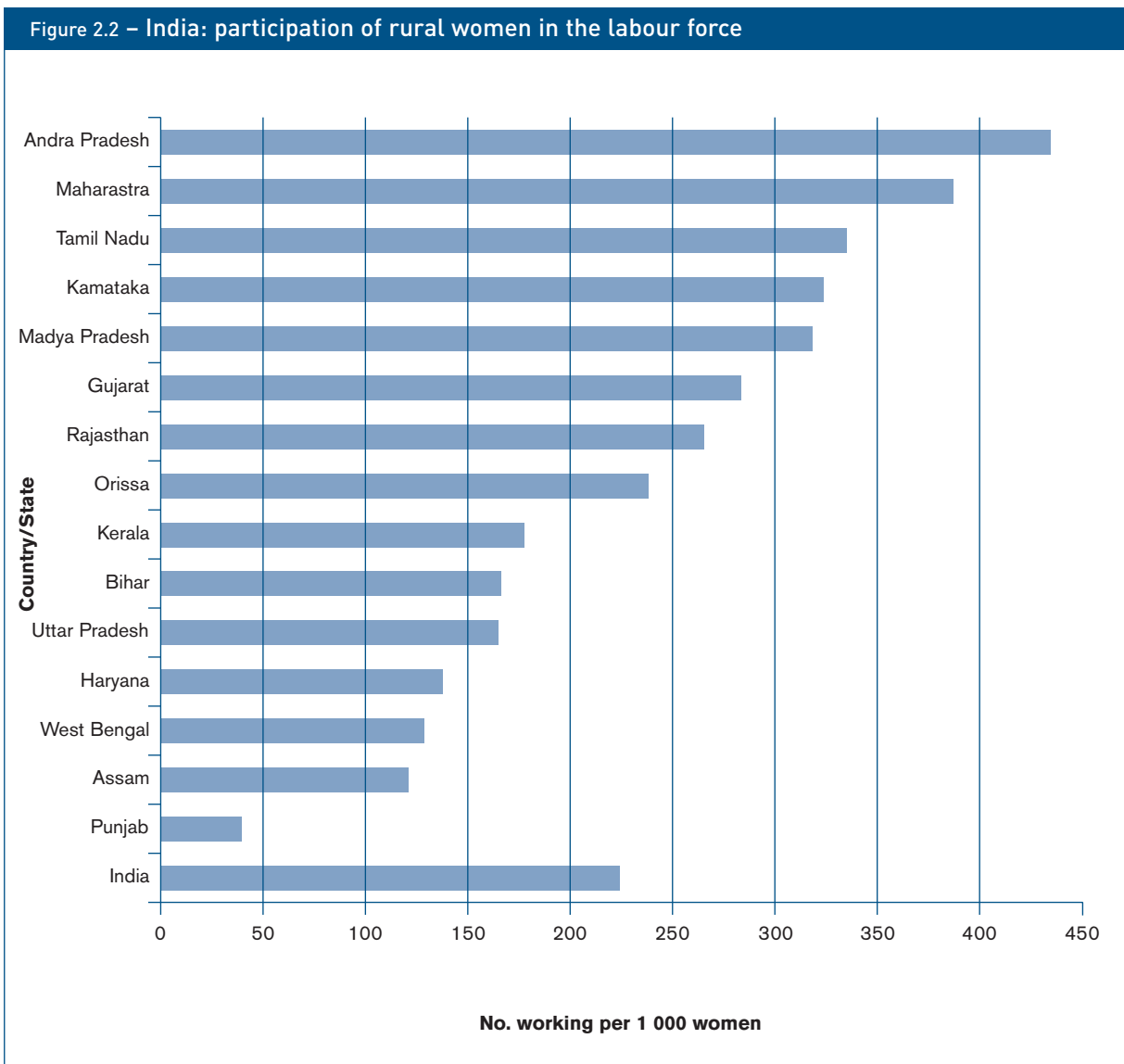
diversity among population groups, agro-ecological systems, and the social and economic organization of production. The level of mechanization in the agricultural sector helps explain the variations in women's participation in the rural labour force. For instance, in Punjab, where the Green Revolution ushered in prosperity and agriculture is highly mechanized, the work participation of rural women is the lowest. In comparison, Andhra Pradesh, which depends on women for labour-intensive crops such as cotton and groundnut, which are grown in dry conditions, show the highest level participation rate for rural women.

Social customs, traditions and cultural considerations affect the type of work performed by men and women in India. A study undertaken by IFAD in the tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh in 1997 recognized male-female sharing of domestic and productive work. It was found that both women and men work in agriculture, collect and sell non-timber forest products during certain months of the year and engage in wage labour. However, this equality in work activities was not reflected in decision-making concerning income allocation in which men played a dominant role (IFAD, 1997). Another study, which covered three ecologically distinct and fragile regions in India, concluded that while agriculture is a household enterprise, social norms demarcate the division of labour based on sex and age. In general, land preparation and ploughing are seen as the responsibility of men, transplanting and weeding are regarded as women's jobs, while harvesting and post-harvesting are performed by both women and men. In certain areas, at times of heavy labour demand, women undertake some of the heavier traditional male activities such as land preparation. In the case of little-millet cultivation in the Kolli Hills, women are responsible for most agronomic practices and post-harvest operations including seed storage, supply and exchange (Rengalakshmi, *et al.*, 2002).

In the Maldives, socio-economic changes reinforced the segregation of tasks between the sexes and exacerbated inequalities. Traditionally men were engaged in fishing and women in small-scale fish processing, the resulting product, known as 'Maldives fish', was recognized as a delicacy in countries like Sri Lanka and exported widely. At the time when 'Maldives fish' formed the country's main merchandise export, the participation of women in the labour force was greater than 50 percent, which was one of the highest rates in the developing world. Since then, modernization

of the fishing industry has created opportunities for fishers, allowing them to increase their catch and sell it directly to collection vessels, which export it frozen or provide canning factories for processing. As a result women are less engaged in fish processing; their participation fell to 21 percent in 1985 and 19 percent in 1996 (Dayal, 2001). At the same time, women became increasingly involved in subsistence agriculture, practiced as home gardens on small plots, and seed selection (Kanvinde, 1999).

Source: Menon-Sen, Kumar, 2001.





## Women in the agriculture sector

In Nepal, about 40 percent of women are economically active. Most are employed in the agriculture sector, most work as unpaid family labourers in subsistence agriculture, which is characterized by low technology and primitive farming practices. Indeed, with more men moving out of farming, agriculture is becoming increasingly feminized (Acharya, Acharya and Sharma, 1999). In addition to a culturally-based division of labour, women's work load has increased because of i) factors related to geography and infrastructure; ii) out-migration; and iii) new activities promoted through development projects (IFAD, 1997).

Significant changes in the traditional agro-pastoral economy and increases in non-agricultural activities have created formal and informal employment opportunities in the export-led industrial market, which relies heavily on low-wage female labour. This is in response to a mix of basic survival needs and new desires generated by increased exposure to the world beyond the village. A nationwide study identified three resource development strategies adopted by rural families: family farm economy, local market economy and short-term migration. About 67 percent of women participate in the family farm economy, 59 percent in the local market economy, while 75 percent engage in short-term migration. It should be noted that the strategy adopted by women varied according to busy and slack agriculture periods (Shtrii Shakti, 1995).

In Pakistan, women are key players in the agriculture sector, which employs almost 12 million women in the production of crops, vegetables and livestock. The cotton crop, which accounts for half of national export earnings, depends heavily on female labour. Women are exclusively responsible for cotton picking, thus exposing themselves to health hazards arising from intensive pesticide use (Bari, 2000). One study on gender in Pakistan found overwhelming evidence of a division of labour based on gender and family status in which men are responsible for 'market' work: farming, herding and other income-generating activities, and women for home production activities (Fafchamps, Quisumbing, 1999).

Since the days when women from Southern India were recruited to satisfy the labour demands of colonial plantations in Sri Lanka, becoming the first wage earners in the country, women have continued to play an important role in the agriculture sector. In 1997, around 42 percent of working women in Sri Lanka were engaged in

agricultural activities. Gender roles in *Chena* (slash and burn), rice paddies and home gardens vary according to the production process. Men are extensively engaged in land preparation, sowing, application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and marketing, while women are involved in transplanting, post-harvesting and household level processing of home garden produce (M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, 1999). Despite the contribution of women to the sector, their role is seen as secondary to that of men. As a result, women farmers in Sri Lanka are normally seen as farmers' wives rather than economic producers in their own right. The failure to develop local industries in the rural sector has further limited women's access to off-farm employment opportunities (Jayaweera, 1999).

## East Asia

**In China, variations in agro-ecological** characteristics and livelihood options result in variability in the state of rural women. The pace of economic growth and the move towards a market-based economy have both positively and negatively influenced rural women's lives throughout the country. Some rural women benefited from these new economic opportunities, while others have encountered new challenges and greater struggle in their daily lives.

An IFAD study found that rural women in China spent more time in their reproductive role (56.7 percent) than in their productive role (43.3 percent). It should be noted that use of time varied among the provinces studied by age and education. Women over 50 spend most of their day on housework, as physical labour in the fields is considered too taxing. Middle-aged women play a key role in the home and share crop and livestock activities with men. As in many places, younger women often prefer alternatives to farming whenever possible. The study also recognized seasonal differences in time use patterns in rural areas. For example, women might work from 8 to 10 hours in the fields during the busiest agricultural season, while they engage in green house production and other income-generating activities during less busy periods (IFAD, 1995).

A case study in the mountainous Yunnan Province found that women perform 80 percent of agricultural work and are involved in all activities (including cultivation and crop management, harvesting and marketing) with the exception of ploughing.



## Women in the agriculture sector

Once again, the involvement of women in agriculture appeared to be determined by their place in the family. Younger women and middle-aged women are responsible for most agriculture and forestry activities, such as collecting fuelwood, non-timber products and pine leaves for barnyard manure, from November to January, during the slacker farming season. Women older than 60 do not take part in agricultural activities, while girl children help with household chores and look after their younger sisters or brothers. Boy children's activities are less structured (Jieru, 1999).

A third study from a different province in China found women are not habitually excluded from off-farm employment opportunities and economic development does not uniformly increase gender inequalities in Chinese households. It was observed that, although men are more likely than women to be employed off-farm, women's off-farm work opportunities improve significantly when local and regional commercialization creates a shortage of male workers and compels employers to hire women. It was further noted that the relative size of contributions to household income for male and female non-farm workers narrows incrementally with increased commercialization. At the same time, women left to perform agricultural work are more likely to become heads of household. This position brings greater household decision-making power to female family members (Matthews and Nee, 2000).

In Mongolia, nomadic households play a role in both productive and reproductive economies, and household rights and responsibilities are differentiated by gender. Traditional nomadic herding maintains clear distinctions between men's and women's work, although this is marked by a mix of cooperation and specialization. Privatization has blurred distinctions between men's and women's work and more women and boys take on work traditionally perceived to be a man's. It has also provided opportunities to increase herd size and expand milk processing, traditionally the work of women in the *ger*, which in turn has resulted in more work for women. While the volume of productive work both paid and unpaid, considered women's responsibility has increased, a few traditional work divisions are strictly maintained. As a result there is flexibility in a number of work activities, where women and boys take on men's work, and continuing rigidity in others, where women's tasks remain theirs alone despite an increase in workload; overall women's workload has intensified (UNIFEM, 2001).

### South–East Asia

**Women in Cambodia play a leading role in the agriculture,** forestry and fishery sectors. According to the Cambodia Human Development Report, 55 percent of the labour force in agriculture, forestry and fisheries is made up of women, compared to only 45 percent of men (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2000). The organization of labour appears to be centered on household availability of exchange and hired labour. In this way, men and women share many farm activities, such as carrying water and fuelwood and tending livestock (Gray and Wouters, 1999).

In Indonesia, women are the mainstay of rural households and provide family and farm labour. Agriculture accounts for the highest share of rural employment, with around 63 women per 100 men working in agriculture. Since most rural households control small amounts of land, or have no land at all, rural women often seek to supplement household income and food security through off-farm employment in small and medium enterprises; some of these are linked to agricultural production (Mugniesyah, 2002). In Lao PDR, studies show that women and girls perform 50 to 70 percent of agriculture and productive tasks in addition to household activities. Women farmers mostly produce for household consumption and rural women obtain as much as 30 percent of the family diet and household needs from foraging (UNICEF, 1996). Gender roles and the involvement of women household members in decision-making processes concerning agriculture and aquaculture vary by region and ethnic group (Murray, Kesone, 1998).

Malaysia, one of the South-East Asian success stories, has experienced a fundamental shift in its employment patterns over the past 15 years. In Malaysia, agro-forestry, livestock and fishing were once major sources of employment for women. In 1995, these sectors employed only 15.9 percent of female workers and 20.3 percent of male workers. Malaysian women took advantage of the economic transformation to move into relatively better-paid opportunities in other sectors. Today, the manufacturing sector is the single largest employer of women, followed by community, public, social services, trade and agriculture (Ahmad, 1998). In comparison, the majority of working women in the Philippines – more than 50 percent in 1997 – continue to work in the agricultural sector. Women dominate the rural informal employment market (APEC North-South Institute, 1999); data from





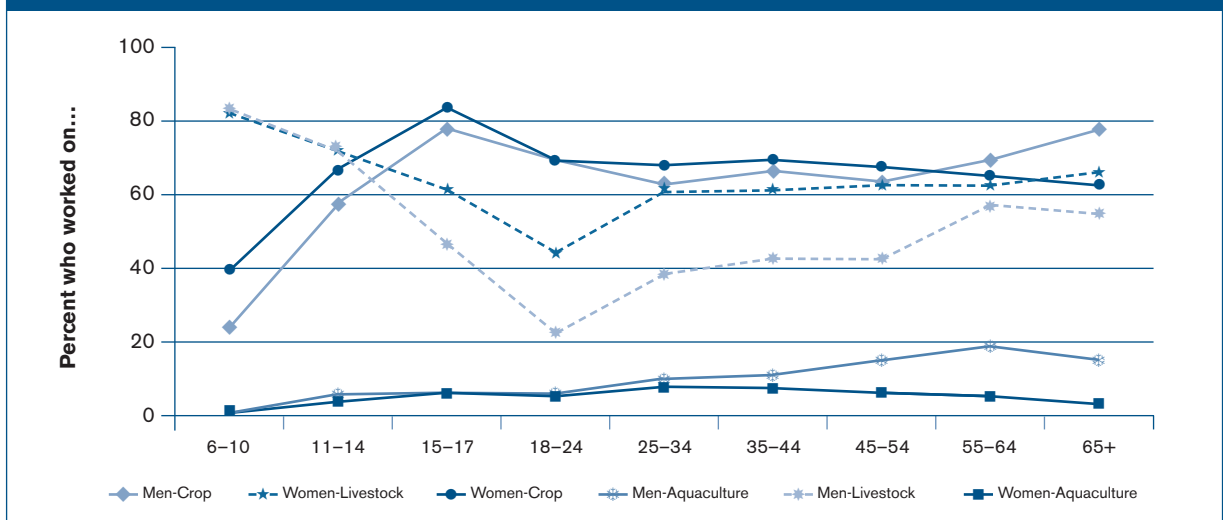
## Women in the agriculture sector

five rice-growing villages indicate that women work as much as men in both farm and non-farm activities (Estudillo, Quisumbing, *et al.*, 2001).

In Thailand, women play a major role in rural systems of production and income generation, about 40 percent worked in agriculture in 1995. All members of small-holder households, regardless of age and sex, play a role in agricultural production. Though participation of rural women in the labour force is highest – approximately 80 percent – among older age groups (30–34, 35–39, and 40–49 years) (Thonguthai, Thomson and Bhonsung, 1998). As opportunities for wage and self-employment outside rural households have increased with economic transformation, participation of rural women in the economy has begun to resemble that of urban women. A study in one Bangkok neighbourhood confirmed the importance of women in marketing agriculture produce; a survey of ten agricultural produce markets indicated that about 80 percent of fruit and vegetable stalls were owned by women (Korsieporn, 2000).

In Vietnam, data from the recent Vietnam Living Standards Survey demonstrated the extensive participation of women in the agriculture sector. As illustrated in Figure 2.3, the data show how the contribution of rural women exceeds that of rural men in livestock production, and is comparable to men in crop

**Figure 2.3**  
Vietnam: participation of the labour force in crop production, livestock maintenance and aquaculture



Source: Desai, 2001

production. The survey data further reveal that in the five-year period between 1992–1993 and 1997–1998, wage employment increased from 26 to 32 percent among male and female adults in the 18 to 64 age group. Moreover, most of this increase occurred for women in rural areas, with no change in urban areas. Another recent study corroborates these findings on women's contributions to rural production systems and reiterates the major role of women in livestock rearing. It found that women's labour accounted for an average of 69 percent of a household's total labour (Desai, 2001).

In Southeast Asia countries, such as Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, women normally play an important role in processing and marketing fish. Although, in many parts of South Asia, notably Bangladesh and India, purdah and other cultural norms have traditionally restricted women's movement and limited their participation in fish harvesting. In Bali, women are active in fish marketing, but in South Sulawesi men completely control this activity (Felsing, Brugere, Kusakabe and Kelkar, 2000).

## Pacific Islands

**In the countries of the Pacific Islands**, smallholders represent the major production unit, producing goods for use in the home, exchange, and sale in domestic and export markets. Traditionally, women and girls assume primary responsibility for food production and family food security by growing crops in homestead gardens, rearing small livestock, producing handicrafts and engaging in other value-added activities, such as copra making, fish drying, weaving, coconut oil production, preparation of traditional medicines, planting materials and seeds, while men engage in cash cropping. Over time, as cash cropping became more important because of its economic value and contribution to national development, the types of agricultural work performed by women have remained associated with food security and are regarded as less important in the emerging economic model.

While some reports indicate that agricultural production may be declining in the Pacific, the limited available data show women's role in agriculture is increasing throughout the entire production and post-production chain. The most up-to-date data on women and men's work in the family smallholder system is from the 1999 Samoa Agricultural Survey, which indicates that women of all ages are engaged in farm management, production and marketing. For instance, the survey shows that the



## Women in the agriculture sector

overwhelming majority of farm operators are male (17 993) as opposed to female (185), that two out of every five farm labourers are female, that women are responsible for almost half of agricultural trading, and that women outnumber men in handicraft production by a ratio of nine to one. Given the similarities with neighbouring countries, this data set reinforces the view that sharing tasks by gender is the norm in family systems throughout the Pacific Islands.

**The Samoa Agricultural Census further** reflects the role of women in waged agricultural employment, and indicates new trends for women's involvement in part-time farming. Women in part-time employment spend an average of 58 hours per month in agriculture, close to the time recorded for agricultural workers (63 hours) and more than part-time male workers (53 hours). Women in full-time waged employment spend roughly 8 hours per week working in agriculture, in addition to their full-time job. These trends were also observed in the neighbouring Pacific Island nations and may reflect a loss of confidence in agriculture, a desire to spread risk, a need to supplement income because of the increased cost of living and/or the low level of regular or specialized input required. High levels of female participation in part-time agricultural work reflect unique local factors. In Samoa they are probably linked to a shortage of agricultural labour caused by migration, while in Tuvalu they indicate an absence of men who are employed on seagoing vessels.

Available studies indicate that women in Fiji and Samoa play a significant role in the dairy industry, and women in Vanuatu are involved alongside men in pasture establishment, weeding and fencing on 73 percent of cattle smallholdings. Studies on Fiji showed that, among inhabitants of the same village, women recognize and use more plants, which can be explained by their multiple family and community responsibilities (Lechte, 1998).

Deteriorating economic conditions in Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu stimulated a marked increase in informal trading by women, particularly in agricultural goods such as crops, marine goods, livestock, handicrafts and cooked foods, which augurs well for family food security. A random sample from the Solomon Islands shows that some 66 percent of women (two out of every three) are engaged in informal trade, compared to 70 percent in Samoa. The survey stressed the

importance of income from informal trading in these countries where it represented the only income for as much as 70 percent of families in the Fiji sample, 33 percent in the Solomon Islands and 24 percent in Samoa.

As an essential part of local economies in the Pacific Islands, deep-sea fishing was the traditional domain of men, while women and girls gleaned the reef and inshore lagoons for marine foods. Recently, increasing global demand for marine products, new technology (in the aquaculture and seaweed industries), depleting fish stocks and the need to earn cash has initiated changes in the traditional gender divisions of labour. As a result, women are more involved in fishing, particularly in atoll communities such as Kiribati where marine products have become key export goods.

These snapshots of the lives of rural women in various Asian and Pacific Island countries illustrate the crucial role women of all ages play in food production and food security. The extensive and diverse responsibilities of these women in local agricultural and non-farm production systems are a factor of the community and household nexus in which they function, as well as national and global factors beyond their control.

## Persisting household drudgery

**It is a social reality throughout the Asia-Pacific** region that rural women work long hours and suffer drudgery in their daily existence. Moreover, poor women pursue a number of survival strategies to earn enough cash to feed and maintain their families – one facet is the inordinate extension of working hours inside and outside the home. A review of available case studies provides evidence that suggests poor access to basic services, such as water and sanitation and the need to search for fuel and food supplements extends and intensifies a rural woman's typical day. A case study on mountain women in Darjeeling, India, indicated increased difficulty finding fuelwood in the forest following deforestation, and the resultant increase in women's workload and corresponding toll on their health (Gurung, 1999).

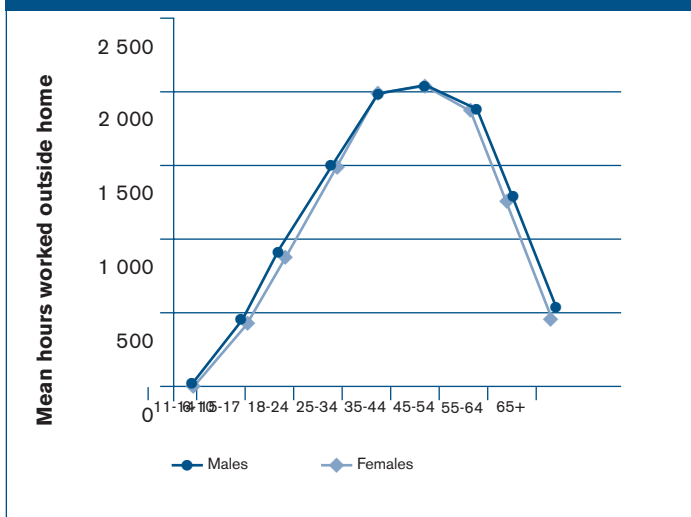
Similarly, women in Nepal assume the double burden of working for the family and on the farm (Acharya, Acharya and Sharma 1999). A recent IFAD study found women in Nepalese hill districts faced heavy workloads and a high level of physical vulnerability, albeit with differences between classes and castes, they worked around

## Women in the agriculture sector

16 hours per day, compared to 9 to 10 hours for men. In addition to being overworked, the study found that many of these women were also hungry (IFAD, 1999).

In Pakistan, the plight of many rural women and girls is little different, their responsibilities include fetching water, food preparation, agricultural and other household duties that are physically demanding and rob girls of the opportunity to study (Bari, 2000). At the same time, the 'invisibility' of women as farmers means that little attention is paid to perilous aspects of their work such as the detrimental health effects of pesticides on Pakistani cotton pickers who are exclusively female (Nathan, *et al.*, 1999).

**Figure 2.4**  
Vietnam: hours worked in income-generation in the past year



Source: Desai, 2001

yet available (UNIFEM, 2001).

In Vietnam relatively few differences are found in the amount of time men and women spend on income-generating activities (see the Vietnam Living Standard Survey for 1997–1998 as shown in Figure 2.4). Women spend almost twice as much time as men on household work (as shown in Figure 2.5). Consequently, the total number of hours worked by women is consistently greater than that of men at each point in the life cycle (Desai, 2001).

In the Pacific Island countries, households balance the amount of time spent on subsistence farming and cash cropping with social obligations, domestic duties, and

off-farm business and employment commitments. A comparison of women's and men's domestic work in Samoa reveals an interesting pattern whereby young men, between the ages of 10 and 24 years, appear to spend more time cooking than women. However, because women continue to play a predominant role in child care and washing, traditional female domains, it is likely that they continue to face drudgery.

The drudgery of rural women's work raises considerations of gender equality concerning rural women and their efforts to improve household food security. Time is the key resource in strategies pursued by women in accessing food and livelihood commodities; most rural women in Asia and the Pacific do not have enough time.

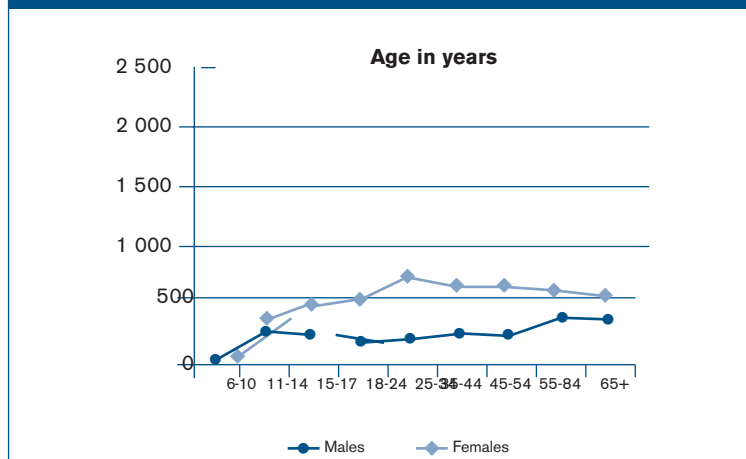
Moreover, a heavy work burden leaves them little time to participate in capacity improvement interventions, even if they are available. According to an assessment by the World Bank, women in developing countries generally work longer hours than men and bear a disproportionate share of the responsibilities and time for household maintenance and care activities.

The amount of time devoted to such responsibilities frequently means that women have fewer opportunities than men to participate in market-based work or to earn income independently. In turn their bargaining

and decision-making power within the household is affected, and they have less free time for rest and personal care (World Bank, 2001). In recognition of these challenges, the World Bank and others proposed a range of gender-responsive actions to reduce the burden on women's time. In Cambodia interventions were proposed to improve physical infrastructure to reduce women's travel time, and develop user-groups as a means to reduce the time spent by women gathering water and fuel and on water resource management (World Bank, 2002).

As agricultural diversification continues to shift labour-intensive activities into the domain of rural women, it is increasingly important to understand the effects of

**Figure 2.5**  
Vietnam: hours worked in household maintenance activities in the past year



Source: Desai, 2001.



## Women in the agriculture sector

women's increased work burden on the well-being of rural households, and to ensure that interventions seeking to empower women also focus on providing for their practical needs to reduce household drudgery. The work burden of rural women should be reviewed in the context of the emerging discourse on work intensity and its gendered effects on well-being, which have implications for intra-household 'bargaining' and the gender division of labour.

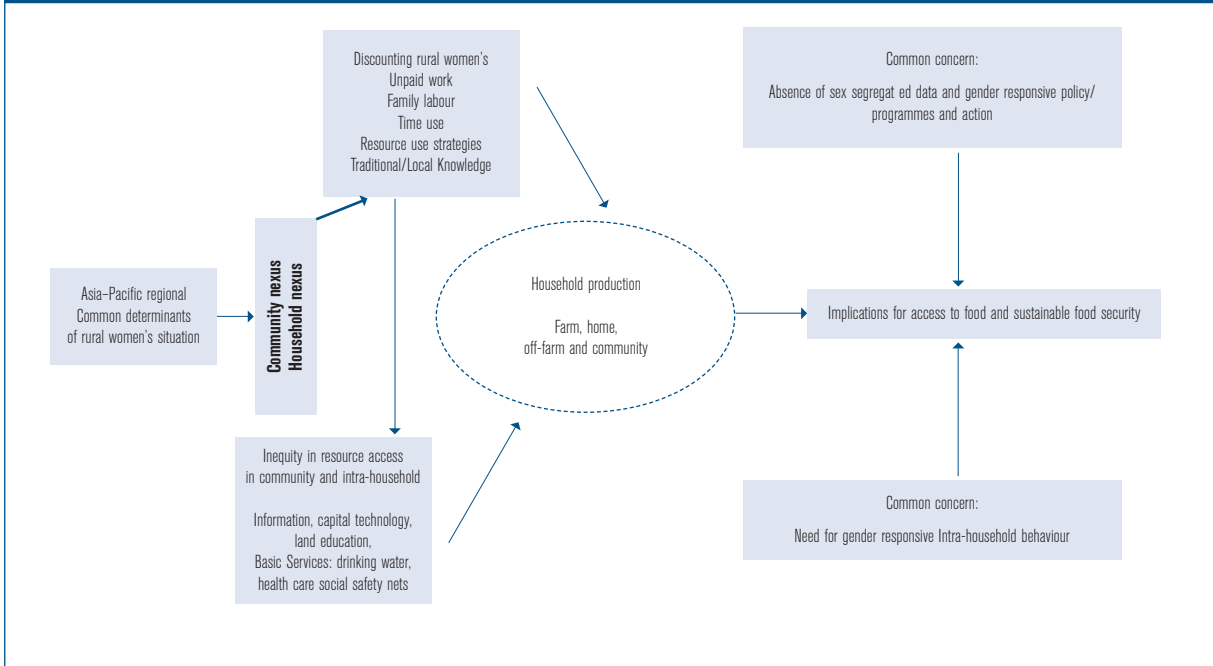
According to Jackson and Palmer-Jones, the 'justification for the emphasis on physical arduousness in the continuing context of absolute poverty, in both agriculture and natural resource-based livelihoods, testifies to the poverty of these populations' (Jackson and Palmer-Jones, 1998). Given this situation, correcting rural neglect, as manifested in working women's inadequate access to water, fuelwood, sanitation and health resources, should be an important priority on the gender equality manifesto.

### Persisting indifference

**An analytical review of rural women** throughout the Asia-Pacific region identifies two common determinants: the persisting undervaluation of rural women's work by the community and the household and unequal access to resources as shown in Figure 2.6. As a result of the indifference to rural women's work, at both the household and community level, women's contributions to agricultural and household production is routinely discounted and/or ignored. Combined social ignorance and economic indifference lead to both explicit and implicit inequity in women's access to various resources, necessary to support and improve their contributions in a range of activities.

Entrenched attitudes further undervalue the worth of women within the household, resulting in gender bias that spill over into community interactions and the policy arena. The limited availability of data on rural women's work, coupled with a lack of attention to and value of unpaid work in the agriculture and rural development sector, further perpetuates this situation. This results in sector policies and development strategies that ignore rural women and ultimately obstruct efforts to promote agricultural development and enhance food security.

**Figure 2.6**  
Common determinants, rural women in the Asia-Pacific region



Source: R. Balakrishnan

## Unpaid work – social ignorance and economic indifference

**A persistent challenge to complete** understanding of the state of rural women in Asia and the Pacific is the general absence of systematically gathered and objectively analysed reliable data. In particular, the undercounting of women in production, in agriculture and income-generation and in the rural economy is a common weakness of available macro statistics in the region.

In Bangladesh, for example, women account for 83.2 percent of the 42.5 percent of unpaid family helpers in rural areas (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1996). In Cambodia, women account for 66 percent of unpaid family workers in the labour force over 15 years of age.

In India, national statistics classified 22 percent of rural women as workers in 1997. However, national data collection agencies recognized the serious under-

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture





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counting of women's contribution as workers, and the National Sample Survey estimated that at least 17 percent of rural women and nearly 6 percent of urban women were incorrectly recorded as 'non-workers'. As a result of the prevailing, erroneous social perception of what constitutes work, the majority of rural women workers are invisible to national statistics, which fail to recognize unpaid work in the household, on family land or in family enterprises, such as cooking, cleaning, care of children and the elderly, the collection of water, fuel and fodder (Menon-Sen and Kumar, 2001).

This statistical invisibility is illustrated in Pakistan where only 15 percent of women are registered in the Labour Force Survey, even though the 1980 Agricultural Census estimated that 73 percent of women in agricultural households were economically active. The 1990/91 Labour Force Survey reported a female economic activity rate of 7 percent using the conventional questionnaire. This rate increased to 31 percent when respondents were questioned about specific activities: transplanting rice, picking cotton, grinding, drying seeds and tending livestock. In countries with Pakistan's cultural norms, where women's waged work seems to threaten the male ego and identity, women are insufficiently remunerated for their considerable contributions to multiple home-based economic activities (Bari, 2000).

In the Philippines, excessive undercounting of women in the rural workforce largely results from confusion and ambiguity in the definitions of 'productive work', 'housework' and 'the worker'. The main reason for women's work being excluded from the calculation of the gross national product is that much is subsistence and carried out within the family (APEC North-South Institute, 1999). In other countries, changes in the rural economy fundamentally affected the type of work performed by women, which is reflected in national employment statistics. In the Maldives, the development of an export-oriented fishing industry deprived women of opportunities to work for a cash income, causing them to become invisible unpaid family labourers (Dayal, 2001).

Although statistics indicate that women play a vital role in the economies of Pacific Island countries, women in several of these countries struggle to have a say in the management of community fisheries because their informal day-to-day fishing activities are not recognized as work by governments, industry and banks. As a result, they may not be able to take out loans to develop small businesses, are less likely to

receive skills training in manufacturing positions, and are less likely to receive valuable information about conservation practices (Robinson, 2000).

Summarizing the findings of studies on mountain women in the Hindu-Kush area of the Himalayas, Gurung asserts that 'suffering from the myopia of labeling women's subsistence work 'domestic' and therefore trivial, development planners have not, until recently, recognized the critical contribution of women's work to agriculture production and the very survival of the family' (Gurung, 1999). As a result of this short-sightedness, the enormous role and contribution of rural women in unpaid work throughout the Asia and Pacific region continues to be ignored in economic analyses and undervalued in society. Because their contribution to agriculture and food security is held in such low esteem, few if any supportive measures are locally available to improve women's situation and reduce hardships that cause inequities in their access to resources.

At the same time, the general lack of national economic analyses, that consider the distinct contribution of working women, gives rise to gender-blind policies and programmes that have a negative effect upon national productivity. In this context, ambiguities in work definitions must be clarified so that the contributions of currently invisible women workers are no longer concealed. Indeed, the case of home-based workers demonstrates the need for improved informal sector statistics, as well as a better understanding of the impact of policies on the informal sector, and the contribution of the informal sector to national economies (Chen, Sebstad and Connell, 1999).

## Facets of inequity in rural women's access to resources

**A recent World Bank study highlighted** the double disadvantage poor women confront in accessing resources – they are poor and women (World Bank, 2001). Examples are not difficult to find in rural areas of the Asia-Pacific region, where inequality in access to resources is intensified by persistent neglect of available services and infrastructure. Traditional perceptions and attitudes perpetuate gender bias and discriminate against rural women's access to community and household resources.

At the same time, degradation of natural resources threatens women's access to subsistence livelihood resources in rural areas. Another growing concern is that the forces of globalization could further marginalize rural women and result in greater inequity in access to resources. New and emerging technologies in both the agriculture and information sectors may well bypass poorly educated rural women.

## Access to land

**Rural women's access to land** – as owners and users – presents a mixed picture of conflict between legal rights and customary laws, as well as inheritance of property directed by family priorities and personal practices (Agarwal, 1994; Bari, 2000; Tinker, 1999; Meinzen-Dick, Brown, Feldstein and Quisumbing, 1997). In Sumatra the inheritance system is evolving from strictly matrilineal to more egalitarian, in which sons and daughters inherit the type of land that is more relevant to their respective work.

Although a gender bias is non-existent or small in land inheritance, daughters tend to be disadvantaged with respect to schooling (Quisumbing and Otsuka, 2001). An egalitarian trade in resources may prevail in certain societies, though most often land laws, or implementation of land laws are biased against women. In the rural context, lack of ownership or direct lease rights to land may further prevent women from accessing resources such as irrigation and credit (Mehra, 1995; Agarwal, 1994).

Throughout the Pacific Islands, family members hold the majority of land in customary tenure under the protection of the family head. Rights to land may be passed on through patrilineal or matrilineal lines. For many reasons women have difficulty activating their rights. Specifically, the customary belief is that women do

not need land because agriculture is male work and women are protected by the family support systems. In addition, there is the fear that land given to women is lost when they marry.

Recently these and other social customs have been formalized into legal rights that discriminate against women. For example, the codification of customary laws into legal laws in Kiribati in the Lands Code (Native Lands Ordinance Cap. 61, Part IX: Section 11-ii) stipulates that in the distribution of an estate between sons and daughters, the share to the eldest son should exceed that of his brothers, and the share to sons should exceed that of daughters.

### Access to credit

**The provision of micro-credit** – usually collateral-free and group-guaranteed – has provided an important source of capital for rural men and women in the Asia-Pacific region. High economic rates of return have been attributed to the excellent repayment performance of rural women. The group-based micro-credit and micro-finance approach have served the short-term credit needs of rural households well, improving cash flows where petty trade opportunities have been available (Zeller, Sharma, Ahmed and Rashid, 2001).

However, clear differences prevail among the different kinds of micro-finance programmes pursued in terms of the approach, particularly the commitment to build the capacity of rural women to become self-reliant producers and confident credit-holders in their individual rights (United Nations DAW/UNIFEM, 2001). The repayment terms dictated by micro-credit (compulsory weekly repayments plus a contribution to savings) and interest rates are not suited to the needs of agriculture households, which do not normally have a weekly cash flow given their reliance on longer-term agriculture production and livestock-rearing cycles. It has happened that the women-centered credit model may have pressed rural women to pursue additional, alternative income-generating strategies to keep up with repayment schedules, thereby sometimes causing an increase in their workload.

Recent studies have further questioned the assumption that micro-credit is an effective instrument for women's empowerment by indicating that, in some cases, women serve as a front to access credit for men in the household, and thus lack direct



## Women in the agriculture sector

control over the credit obtained in their name. In short, it has been suggested that a preoccupation with performance – measured primarily in terms of high repayment rates – has impacted the incentives of those who grant and recover credit, resulting in less attention being paid to whether and how women can have meaningful control over their own investment activities (Goetz and Gupta, 1996).

In the Pacific Islands, women tend to experience difficulties obtaining credit through commercial banks given their lack of collateral and the small size of loans requested. The fact that banks are normally located in urban areas, coupled with a lack of knowledge about banking procedures, further impedes female access to capital. In this context, many women's groups have developed savings and loans schemes where members make regular deposits and have the option of borrowing at reasonable interest rates. However, major constraints associated with these schemes include management weaknesses as well as the high cost of running small schemes and making them available to rural areas (Fairbairn-Dunlop and Struthers, 1997).

A study of women and food production in Fiji, the Marshall Islands Samoa, the Solomon Islands and the Pacific Islands found the quality of home gardens depended on land availability, amount of land, soils, women's access to planting materials, training, labour availability and knowledge of pests and diseases. On some atolls, problems of poor soils and garden washout from rain and sea spray also presented difficulties. In each of the countries studied, women with the most successful gardens belonged to dual-income or high-status families, which suggest that training alone might be insufficient to achieve family food security (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1997).

## Environmental resources

**Natural resource degradation directly affects rural** women's productivity and access to livelihood alternatives. Most studies to date have focused on the impact of forest and coastal resource degradation on women's access to resources. There is limited information on the impact of soil and water resource degradation on female work patterns. One study illustrated how the livelihoods of indigenous communities in Northern Sarawak, Malaysia, traditionally based on hunting, gathering and shifting agriculture, are threatened by logging, deforestation and changes in government policies regarding indigenous lands. This has led to severe soil erosion, deterioration in the

quality of river water, reduction in biodiversity and a decline in fish and wildlife populations. As a result, the search for alternative livelihoods induced male migration, leaving women behind to cope with a declining resource base (Heyzer, 1996).

Gender inequalities in accessing environmental resources, command over labour, capacity to diversify livelihood strategies and decision-making processes cause significant differences in how men and women experience poverty and environmental changes (Masika and Joekes, 1997). Analysing regional variations and temporal shifts in rural India over a 30-year period, Agarwal concluded natural resource degradation, privatization and appropriation of natural resources by the state resulted in particularly adverse implications for female members of rural households (Agarwal, 1997).

In northern Pakistan forest cover was dramatically reduced in recent years at the same time as agricultural productivity rose significantly with an increase in livestock farming. At the same time, women's agricultural workload increased while men spent more time in income-generating activities, enabling them to monopolize the community's access to the monetary economy, while women were left powerless (Joekes, 1995).

In Nepal, a study examined rural women's workload in the context of available environmental goods collection over the past two decades. It found that while all household members spent less time collecting various local resources, such as water and wood, the amount of time women spent on collection fell most, while their share of total collection time also decreased. Given the large amount of time women in the region spend on collection, and the burden it entails, this finding suggests a positive trend that may be due to increased availability of local environmental resources. For instance each site studied had installed at least one water tap, while some noted an improvement in their community forest during the 14-year period in question (Cooke, 2000).

## Community organizations

**The development of women's groups** has been promoted as a means to expand women's access to information, increase their bargaining power and create opportunities for collective action to access economic inputs. In reality, however, persisting gender bias, deep-seated community dynamics and women's time constraints prevent them from actively participating in these groups, which were intended to bring about social capital benefits and female empowerment.



## Women in the agriculture sector

The widespread transfer of responsibility for irrigation management from the state to communities or local user groups has ignored the implications of intra-community power differences on the effectiveness and equity of water management. Gender is a recurrent source of such differences. Despite the rhetoric, regarding women's participation, a review of evidence from South Asia has shown that female participation is minimal in water users groups, in part because the formal and informal membership criteria excluded women (Meinzen-Dick and Zwartveen, 1998).

Many factors were identified as constraints to women's participation in formal institutions for environmental management. These included rules, norms, perceptions, entrenched territorial claims, the household and women's economic and social endowments (Agarwal, 2000). Women having the primary responsibility for both domestic and farm work have extremely full days and are unlikely to have time to attend meetings. Some women in rural areas may not have connections to male-dominated and government hierarchies. A food-for-work programme in Cambodia found women without husbands, and those who were poor, were isolated from other villagers because of the amount of time they spend working alone, foraging for food, hauling water and caring for the home (WFP, 2001).

## Access to education and skills development

**Gender differences in access to education are a key facet** of inequality affecting rural women's access to other resources. Many studies, carried out in different parts of the world, documented the importance of women's education for children's education and nutrition; education is critical to female empowerment. Women need at least a basic education if they are to develop the skills needed to participate in knowledge-intensive economic activities.

Women without access to basic education will likely be excluded from new opportunities and, where long-standing gender gaps in education persist, are at increased risk of falling behind men in their ability to participate in development (King and Alderman, 2001). Across Asia studies have documented women's unequal participation in education and training. A study carried out in 25 villages in Pakistan found that a number of serious supply-side constraints (inadequate primary schools for girls close to villages, lack of female teachers) deny girls access to primary education (Sawada and Lokshin, 2001).

Similarly, in southern India, research identified a number of factors that keep poor boys and girls out of the classroom – including poverty, the opportunity cost of children’s labour and entrenched social and cultural norms that give rise to inequality of caste, class and gender (Subrahmanian, 1997). A survey undertaken by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation found that the time allocated to unpaid work was the major barrier to women improving their skills and training (APEC North-South Institute, 1999).

Technology development and dissemination programmes in developing countries have not adequately addressed the household drudgery associated with different production activities. In particular, these programmes failed to recognize rural women’s demand for technology to improve their productivity. In Nepal, little effort was given to the need to develop and diffuse new and improved agricultural tools tailored to women farmers, even though national policies and programmes sought to promote women’s empowerment (Guatam, 1999).

In Bangladesh, a participatory assessment of the intrahousehold impact of modern agricultural technologies identified several reasons why poor women fail to utilize knowledge of new technologies including unfavourable land tenure, the gender division of workspace that is validated by *pardah* and limited size of household plots (Naved, 2000).

In the livestock sector, most technical solutions – including those directed at women – have ignored women’s needs, while improvements to the production system have generally increased their workloads. In the future, appropriate technologies should be designed to take into account women’s workload and the potential impact technology might have on their status and economic control over resources and property (Niamer-Fuller, 1994). As M.S. Swaminathan, a renowned Indian scientist emphasized ‘if women are empowered with technological information and skills, all the members of the family will benefit.’ (UNDP, 2001).

## New technologies

**One major finding of the recently** completed Asia-Pacific Gender Science and Technology Project in Kiribati, Fiji and Samoa, which focused on biotechnology, the environment, water, energy and information technology, was that women’s main access to technology is through women’s NGOs that rely on donor funding (Ecowomen Fiji, Wainimate and research institutes affiliated to the University of the South Pacific).





## Women in the agriculture sector

Agricultural research and extension services still direct their attention to export crops and men. Rural infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific should increase access to off-farm employment opportunities and facilitate the adoption by farmers of new technologies and information and support services (Nathan, *et al.*, 1999).

### Feminization of rural poverty

**An IFAD assessment recognized the feminization** of rural poverty in Asia and noted two key dimensions. Notably, women-headed households in the region are usually poorer than those headed by men, and poverty is more severe and binding for women, as it is more difficult for them and their children to escape (IFAD, 1999). According to this study, female-headed households represent a significant proportion of households in Cambodia (35 percent of household are female-headed), Bangladesh and Nepal, where female-headed households make up 16 percent of landless and marginal households.

In Cambodia, the migration of men and grown children has had positive and negative consequences. Some men and children who work away from the village may send money home, significantly improving the family's standard of living. On the other hand, wives whose husbands leave for long periods may suffer some of the same deprivations as poor women without husbands. For instance, a study by the World Food Programme showed that women in households where no men are present have inadequate access to decision-making networks, knowledge and assets such as rice and labour (WFP, 2001). Similarly, the Vietnam Living Standard Survey identified labour shortages in female-headed households as an important resource constraint in expanding economic assets and agriculture productivity. In the rural areas of Vietnam median profits of female-operated enterprises are 84 percent of those of men (Desai, 2001).

Specific hardships faced by women in the Pacific Islands include shortage of family labour because of migration and children at school, the reluctance of youth to perform agricultural work and trends in seasonal male labour. In Kiribati and Tuvalu, men are engaged in waged-employment on sea vessels for long periods. At the same time, family support systems, that have traditionally protected women from negative changes in the economy, are being eroded. An increasing number of marriages are breaking up, and the

number of unmarried pregnancies is increasing, all of which contribute to an increase in female-headed households. In short, such factors mean that throughout the Pacific Islands today women, as a group are most vulnerable to poverty.

### Resources and sustainable food security

**The various facets of resource-access** inequity faced by women are shown in Table 2.4. This matrix illustrates the nexus of inequity and its relationship to sustainable food security across a range of production segments. Major food security risks include limited incentives to improve land and productivity, inadequate opportunities and restricted capacity to diversify income sources. As women have no time to improve agriculture production, this also means poor nutritional gains for rural households and uncertain access to food at times of family crisis and crop loss. These factors have major implications for the availability of sufficient food to ensure national food security.

**Table 2.4**  
Rural women resource access inequity matrix

Production segment	Resource domain	Access problem	Inequity nexus	Risks to the achievement of sustainable food security
Farm production	Land	Lack of ownership and access to land Uncertain access to productive land	No legal land rights Customary laws and local practices Poor implementation of land law legislation granting equal access Women's reluctance to exert land law rights and ownership responsibilities Privatization of common property	Lack of incentives to improve land and productivity in the agriculture sector with implications for the availability of food and national food security
	Forest resources	No access to non-temperate forest resources Lack of access to pasture space and fodder for livestock	Forest preservation measures Change in community resource use due to privatization	Lack of means to diversify income and access to food
	Soil and water	Absence of good land with fertile soil No access to irrigation and water for production	Degraded soil quality on the limited land available for subsistence production and inability to negotiate access to fertile land Poor quality of water and lack of participation in water user groups Inability to articulate need and demands within water user groups	Lack of incentives to improve land and productivity in the agriculture sector with implications for the availability of food and national food security

## Women in the agriculture sector

Production segment	Resource domain	Access problem	Inequity nexus	Risks to the achievement of sustainable food security
Farm, home & off-farm production	Technology	<p>Lack of access to technology suited to production activities carried out by women</p> <p>No access to household technology</p> <p>Lack of technology to scale up production and improve quality</p> <p>No access to current technologies, production methods and technical information</p>	<p>Past and ongoing neglect of women's needs and roles in technology development</p> <p>Displacement of women by mechanization, given lower female skills and education and gender bias that favours men</p> <p>Assumption that technology for household tasks is synonymous with female domestication</p> <p>Neglect of women's home production technology needs</p> <p>Weak and insufficient technology training programmes for women</p> <p>Women's lack of time and education to take advantage of skills training and technology transfer programmes</p>	<p>Limited means to diversify income and access to food</p> <p>Lack of incentives to improve productivity in the agriculture sector with implications for the availability of food and national food security</p>
	Labour	<p>Absence of available labour for agriculture technologies</p> <p>No labour for domestic tasks</p>	<p>Increased number of female-headed households due to male migration</p> <p>Lack of male labour and small family size in female-headed households</p> <p>Change in family structure and kinship networks</p>	<p>Few available means to diversify incomes and access to food</p> <p>Lack of incentives to improve productivity in the agriculture sector with implications for the availability of food and national food security</p>
	Credit	<p>Lack of access to formal credit for agricultural production and for establishing and scaling up enterprises</p>	<p>Poorly-developed agriculture banking and rural credit systems</p> <p>Lack of traditional forms of collateral (e.g. land or house) mean women perceived as unreliable clients for sizeable credit</p> <p>Men considered head of household for official credit transactions</p>	<p>Few available means to diversify incomes and access to food</p> <p>Lack of incentives to improve productivity in the agriculture sector with implications for the availability of food and national food security</p>
	<p>Agriculture support services</p> <p>Institutional resources</p>	<p>Lack of access to inputs for agriculture production and off-farm production</p> <p>Lack of off-farm labour employment</p> <p>Lack of access to development organizations and government agencies</p>	<p>Poor agriculture support delivery system</p> <p>Lack of appropriate information and outreach to rural women</p> <p>Traditional bias ignores roles of women in agriculture and therefore the need for gender-sensitive farm sector extension programmes</p> <p>Limited education and lack of understanding about public sector and programmes among women</p> <p>Inadequate investment in rural employment programmes</p> <p>Women's lack of education and appropriate skills to take advantage of new economic opportunities</p>	<p>Few available means to diversify incomes and access to food</p> <p>Lack of incentives to improve productivity in the agriculture sector with implications for the availability of food and national food security</p>

# Asia and the Pacific

## chapter 2

Production segment	Resource domain	Access problem	Inequity nexus	Risks to the achievement of sustainable food security
			<p>Traditional marginalization of women by public sector institutions</p> <p>Women's inadequate knowledge of public sector agencies and services</p> <p>Women's lack of ability to deal with public sector development agencies</p>	
	Market and commercial linkages	Limited access to reliable markets Insufficient links with urban commercial centres	<p>Poor market infrastructure and limited market information services in rural areas</p> <p>Economic and social organizations that use the productive resources of rural producers, while ignoring female producers</p> <p>Global economic linkages</p>	<p>Lack of means to diversify income and access to food</p> <p>Lack of incentives to improve productivity in the agriculture sector with implications for the availability of food and national food security</p>
Home production	Drinking water, sanitation, health care and child care services	Lack of access to basic services to manage family care responsibilities	<p>Poor service infrastructure in rural areas</p> <p>Traditional assumptions that women need little and are used to managing difficult tasks</p> <p>Lack of roads and transportation routes linking rural communities to service centres</p>	<p>Women's inadequate time and efforts to improve agricultural production with implications for the availability of food and national food security</p> <p>Poor nutritional gains for rural households</p>
Community production	Formal safety nets	Lack of access to cash or supportive services at times of family crises Access to community organizations Access to family networks	<p>Past and current neglect of appropriate crop/livestock and personal/medical insurance or cash transfer for rural communities.</p> <p>Lack of expertise to deal with externally organized community organizations</p> <p>Men dominating the deliberations of community organizations assuming leadership positions</p> <p>Women following tradition not effectively articulating their need for resources</p> <p>Women's lack of time and expertise as barriers to active involvement</p> <p>Breakdown in extended family system and traditional kinship networks.</p>	<p>Uncertain access to food among rural families at times of family crisis and crop loss</p> <p>Lack of means to diversify income and access to food</p>



## Regional trends

**A number of recent developments in the social,** economic and technological arena – including economic integration, commercialization, urbanization and globalization, advances in agriculture and information technologies, political instability, civil war, HIV/AIDS, natural disasters – have significantly affected rural women across the Asia and the Pacific region, including family health, agricultural productivity and economic well-being. Few systematic studies have examined the impact of these trends on rural women. It seems reasonable to suggest that economic integration and advances in agriculture and information technologies present both opportunities and threats to rural women's livelihoods and work, while political instability, natural disasters and HIV/AIDS exert significant additional pressure on rural women.

### Economic crisis of the 1990s

**The economic crisis in Southeast Asia** brought about a substantial increase in poverty in urban areas. Although the effects on rural areas and agriculture were not as great as initially feared, they were extensive and given the significant variation between and within countries, some rural areas suffered seriously. In general, the rural poor were adversely affected by crisis-induced government cutbacks in rural expenditures, reduced remittances and the return of unemployed urban workers who increased demands on rural household incomes (Hooke, Warr, Shaw, Forde and Brassard, 1999).

However, no systematic study was undertaken to analyse the impact of the Asian economic crisis on rural women, largely because the crisis was seen as an urban phenomenon. At the global level, the failure to consider important aspects of gender relations (including women's unpaid reproductive work and intra-household allocation) was seen to lead to an inaccurate evaluation of the impact of economic liberalization on women both inside and outside the labour market (Fontana, Joeques and Masika, 1998). This begs the question of whether and how rural women's livelihood strategies might have cushioned the impact of the economic crisis in rural Asia.

### Globalization

**Economic integration can take place** within national borders as well as between countries and may or may not be linked to accelerated trends in economic globalization. Rural production can move from subsistence agriculture to the cash economy with or without access to global markets; however the demand for agricultural commodities in the global market acts as a force that can influence production and exert an impact on rural women. Differences depend on the scale and type of the farming enterprise (UN General Assembly, 1999).

Demand for cash can drive the commercialization of subsistence production as women take steps to sell their homegrown produce, small livestock and home-produced foodstuffs in local markets and urban centres. Such homegrown enterprises are likely to face competition from industrially processed food products.

It would be easy to trace the direct impact of global market demand for agricultural produce on land holdings of a certain size, including contract farming taken on by farm households or agriculture processing enterprises requiring a certain standard of education and skills. In these production systems, that aim to capture a share of the global agricultural market, women with basic skills and education are able to increase their economic opportunities.

However, an inadequate understanding of formal labour contract processes and rules, places women at risk of exploitation. At the same time, global consumer changes in taste and demand have increased the economic risks to rural women involved in these kinds of contract agriculture enterprises (United Nations DAW/UNIFEM, 2001).

In addition social programmes, with restrictions on micro-credit loans, set by global financing agencies, often pose problems for rural women. The impact on micro-credit programmes is unclear, as financial markets integrate at the global level and formal credit organizations are promoted as a means to improve agricultural productivity and rural enterprises.

### New technologies

**Biotechnology has emerged** as a significant new force in Asia and the Pacific. Marked by strong ideological differences between the non-governmental sector



## Regional trends

(mostly against) and the scientific community and private sector (in favour), the debate about the benefits and hazards of biotechnology continues unabated. The extent to which modern biotechnology will contribute to the achievement of food security for all is still an open question (Pinstrup-Andersen, Pandya-Lorch and Rosengrant, 1999).

In this context, most governments in the region appear to be following a 'watch, wait and see' approach. There is a general absence of information on the extent to which women farmers in the region know and understand the potential opportunities and risks of the new biotechnology-driven agricultural revolution. Given the low educational attainments of women throughout the region, and the highly sophisticated organization of production likely to be required in biotechnology-based agriculture, it seems reasonable to speculate that the majority of rural women would be further marginalized by such developments.

The potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve women's access to information and knowledge, enhance education and learning, and accelerate technology transfer has been recognized by many in the Asia-Pacific region. In several countries radio and television are used extensively to inform and educate rural women about health, nutrition and agriculture. Some success stories concerning the use of new ICTs to empower women – such as the Grameen communication network in Bangladesh, ICT programmes in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa, and telemarketing for rural employment generation in Malaysia – are cited as examples of the potential of new information technologies.

Despite the potential, the threat of an increased 'digital divide' that would increase knowledge and education gaps between urban and rural communities is real. Already internet access is variable, including the availability and quality of relevant language content both between and within countries. In the Pacific Islands, women's access to and use of information technology is largely confined to urban areas, and is generally limited, compared to most Asian countries (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001).

There are a number of barriers to the increased use of ICTs for the empowerment of rural women, including inadequate infrastructure, high costs and limited capacity; all are more acute in rural areas (Atkin, 1998). The extent to which ICTs can transcend the traditional male bias in extension delivery is as yet untested. Certainly,

opportunities exist to use ICTs to educate and empower a large number of rural women and men provided that user-friendly and gender-sensitive information materials are developed, and development staff are well trained and gender-sensitive.

### Political instability and conflict

**Rising levels of political instability** and increased conflict throughout Asia and the Pacific have intensified pressure on many rural producers. The impact of conflict on agriculture and food production in Afghanistan, East Timor and Sri Lanka is widely known. However, less has been written about the effects of civil war and ethnic tensions in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands in the Pacific. For women, political instability and conflict resulted in increased agricultural work as men were drawn into the conflict. Even in peaceful countries, landmines provide an enduring remainder of past conflicts and constitute a real danger for rural communities. In Cambodia and Lao PDR, the number of abandoned ordnances is so great that farmers are forced to abandon productive land.

### Demographic pressure

**Population pressures have a serious impact** on rural households in many parts of Asia and the Pacific, with particular implications for women's work, livelihood strategies and care-giving activities. The population of the Pacific Islands doubles every 30 years, placing considerable stress on natural resources and food security. Rapid urban drift – predominantly young men – results in an acute shortage of agricultural labour causing an increase in urban population densities. On the Marshall Islands, for example, more than 9 000 people live on Ebeye Island, which is less than 0.5 km<sup>2</sup>. Very high densities exist in the urban centres of South Tarawa (Kiribati), Majuro (Marshall Islands) and Funafuti (Tuvalu), intensifying pressures on the availability of land for home gardens, clean water supply, while resulting in very high unemployment levels and increased vulnerability to poverty.

### HIV/AIDS

**Similarly, the impact of HIV/AIDS** on rural populations and food security is a growing concern in many parts of the region, not least in the Mekong Basin





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countries. HIV/AIDS is highly prevalent throughout the Mekong countries, particularly in Myanmar and Thailand (Bain, 1998). The spread of HIV/AIDS is linked to an increasingly mobile population, moving in search of new work opportunities created by increased economic integration, unprecedented growth, and the move from a centrally-planned to a market economy. The uneven nature of economic development has resulted in imbalances between rural and urban areas and agricultural and industrial. In most places, the health and education systems are inadequate for the needs of these new urban residents. Anecdotal and observational information further indicates that the movement of urban immigrants infected with HIV/AIDS back to their rural villages, is likely to increase the demands on rural women as income-earners and caregivers.

## Natural disasters

**The Asia-Pacific region is known** for its vulnerability to natural disasters such as flooding, drought, typhoons and earthquakes. An increasing incidence of natural disasters resulted in a serious loss of property and agricultural assets, which has threatened agricultural production and intensified vulnerability leading to food shocks and food insecurity (Ninno, Dorosh, Smith and Roy, 2001; FAO-RAP, 2001; O'Brien, 2001).

Various case studies and stories suggest gender is a highly significant factor in the construction of social vulnerability to risk, as well as responses to hazards and disasters. Men and women clearly have different coping strategies during a disaster cycle. During the cyclone of 1991 in Bangladesh, a greater number of casualties were reported among women, who failed to receive warning signals largely because of socially imposed constraints on their mobility and their responsibility for the care of children and livestock.

Similarly, women suffered more during the post-disaster period, experiencing a sharp increase in workloads resulting from their multiple roles. At the same time, many of their traditional income-generating activities, home gardens and livestock, disappeared and women (unlike men) were unable to look for work outside the home (UN Economic and Social Council, 2002). In this context, gender-responsive institutional changes and collective action strategies are needed in disaster

management to balance women's vulnerability to disaster with their proven capabilities to cope under difficult conditions (D'Cuhana, 2001).

While some case studies and empirical findings show the impact of recent trends in globalization, technology advances, HIV/AIDS in the region, the overall impact of these developments on rural households, in particular women, has not been studied systematically. In the future it is essential that gender analysis in rural areas be anchored in the context of macro trends in order to develop efficient interventions that support rural women in the effective management of these forces for change.



## Conclusions

**Across the Asia-Pacific region,** rural women's contribution to the agriculture sector and rural production is marked by considerable diversity, and influenced by factors that are particular to the specific community and household in question. The general situation is characterized by patterns of change and continuity, flexibility and rigidity. Mounting economic pressure compelled many women to modify their roles and to perform a range of tasks not normally associated with them.

Despite these new responsibilities in the economic sphere, women largely continue to maintain their traditional gender roles in the domestic sphere; men's roles have not adapted in the same way. Women have taken on a greater share of traditionally male activities, but the rigid boundaries of social norms are maintained for men. This has given rise to an increasing workload for women and the responsibility for physically demanding activities with poor returns for their efforts.

In the context of the increased and onerous workloads for rural women, the effect of persisting gender inequities in access to productive resources is increasingly significant and has been associated with the rising risk of food insecurity. Lack of attention to women's work and drudgery, and inequitable access to resources, are embedded in gender bias and passed on through cultural conditioning and social norms at both the household and community level. Reflected in intra-household behaviour, bias spills over into the policy arena, contributing to unrelenting gender inequality.

Regional trends in economic integration, environmental degradation, migration, technology, and continuing vulnerability to natural disasters has a significant impact on the different contexts within which rural women operate. However, the nature of the opportunities and threats, to rural women – and by extension to agricultural production and food security – have not yet been systematically studied, analysed and quantified in a way that would support policy and programme formulation.

## Recommendations

**In reviewing the situation of rural women** across the Asia-Pacific region it is seen that the contribution of agriculture as a proportion of national economies has declined, but rural women's role in farm and family economies has increased significantly. Despite this, the enormous contribution of rural women to agriculture and rural economies is neither widely nor formally recognized at the local or national level.

Because of this lack of awareness, or appreciation of their contribution and roles, efforts to support agricultural development and food security tend to ignore women's resource needs and the constraints they face in fulfilling their productive roles. At the same time, new regional trends and external forces are fundamentally changing the circumstances in which rural women operate, and presenting opportunities and threats to their future livelihoods.

The following recommendations, therefore, seek to focus attention on rural women in agricultural development and food security, and the need to strengthen policy and programme interventions to improve their overall well-being.

### Improved information and data

**Sex-disaggregated data and gender-differentiated** information should be collected for all aspects of agriculture and rural development in the region. This should allow a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances and roles of rural women as compared with men and urban populations. A database such as this would facilitate development of gender-specific human resource and activity databases, which could be analysed and compared within and across countries.

It is essential to improve awareness among national governments of the importance of sex-disaggregated data, and build the capacity of national agencies to gather, manage and analyse the information. In countries, where national sample surveys or others already collect sex-disaggregated information, systematic analysis of this data should be made to provide an in-depth understanding of the situation of



## Recommendations

rural women. Advances in information technology, and sophisticated data management systems, should be exploited to compile relevant, needs-based and user-friendly information resources, which could then be made available to policy-makers, programme managers and advocacy groups.

### Integration of gender in agricultural and rural development planning

**In the Asia-Pacific region**, the benefits of using available sex-disaggregated data in agricultural and rural development planning are still not widely understood. Inadequate efforts to use available data in planning processes highlights the need for capacity building within agencies involved in formulation of agricultural and rural development policies and programmes. These efforts should focus on the integration of gender and gender-differentiated indicators throughout the various phases of the programme and project cycle.

### Valuation of unpaid work

**The importance of women's unpaid** work in the home and farm production systems should be clearly recognized by national governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations and academic institutions. This means that the accurate valuation of this work should be agreed upon. The household production model for farm family production offers one approach to quantify unpaid work inputs in terms of food security. Concerted efforts will be required to convince different stakeholders, including rural women, to recognize and reward unpaid work in agricultural and rural production.

### Enhanced access to education and information

**Increased resources and intensified** efforts are required at the national level to substantially improve formal education for girls, enhance female adult literacy and empower rural women with entitlement of knowledge and information. The potential of new information and communication technologies to reduce the educational disadvantage faced by older rural women, through development and dissemination of

needs-based information in appropriate formats and accessible mediums should be explored.

### Reduced household drudgery

**Persisting, traditional views** of the worthlessness of women's unpaid work must be challenged if drudgery is to be reduced. Basic services should be expanded in rural areas to support women's many roles in the home, within the community and on the farm. Appropriate technologies should be developed to reduce the amount of time women spend on daily household tasks.

### Technology development and training

**Given their local knowledge** and multiple roles, rural women should be fully involved in the development process of female-oriented technologies. In-depth assessments of the roles and constraints faced by rural women in different circumstances should be undertaken to guide development and application of such technologies. Training should build the capacity of rural women according to their multi-faceted production tasks, and new information and communication technologies should be harnessed to improve rural women's access to technical information and public sector support services.

### Gender and regional trends

**Systematic studies should be carried** out to identify and evaluate the impact of significant regional developments and trends – including economic integration, new technologies, HIV/AIDS, political and civil instability and natural disasters – on rural women's roles, work, access to resources and livelihoods. These studies should be considered by policy-makers in the development of sectoral policies and programmes so that new opportunities that become available to rural women can be leveraged, while potential negative effects are minimized.



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Europe



## Europe<sup>4</sup>

### Transition, trends and transformation

**Women in Europe undoubtedly contribute** to food security in a variety of ways. They may be directly involved in food production, engaged in the management of natural resources and/or occupied in off-farm income-generating activities to purchase food. In many cases, they are primarily responsible for the preparation of sufficient and nutritious family meals.



Italian chicken processing plant. (R. Faidutti, 1995)

In spite of their obvious contributions, during this period of agricultural and rural transition they seem more vulnerable, as relatively more women than men are poor, have low incomes and are unemployed, or employed below their level of education. Traditional gender roles continue to burden women as domestic work is still defined by many as women's work, so

they are discriminated against in the labour market.

At the same time, agricultural and rural transformations provide women new opportunities to improve their livelihoods, their places in the farm family and as agricultural professionals in their rural communities, allowing them to contribute

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<sup>4</sup>This chapter is based on the work of Ms Sabine de Rooij and Ms Bettina Bock, Wageningen University.

significantly to agricultural and rural innovation. To strengthen this trend and to secure present and future access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for all, women's empowerment needs to be achieved through the removal of the specific obstacles that hamper the deployment of their full potential. To this end, agricultural and rural development policies and strategies need to be developed to broaden women's resource base, then legislation and institutions could provide the civil and political mechanisms to guarantee equal access to resources and opportunities for both women and men.

The outline that follows covers the countries of Western Europe, the European Union (EU)–15 countries<sup>5</sup>; for Central and Eastern Europe<sup>6</sup>, the accession and applicant countries, Balkan states and CIS countries<sup>7</sup>, including the South Caucasus, which is followed by the Central Asian Republics. The outline includes an examination of recent socio-economic trends in agriculture and rural areas and an analysis is provided of the implications for rural and farming women. Special attention is given to issues related to employment and unemployment, as key to rural women's economic security and consequent food security. There are sections on the constraints limiting women's access to resources, a discussion of violence against women, their role at the decision-making level and, in conclusion, policy recommendations are given.



Elderly Turkish women in the village of Lapathos, which has a mixed community of Greek and Turkish Cypriot families in the district.  
(*J. Ciganovic, 1970*)

<sup>5</sup> An analysis of Western Europe is based on data from the European Union, therefore it focuses on the EU-15 countries: Austria; Belgium; Denmark; Finland; France; Greece; Germany; Spain; Ireland; Italy; Luxembourg; The Netherlands; Portugal; Sweden and the United Kingdom.

<sup>6</sup> The Central and Eastern European region is presently undergoing political transformation, as several countries are gradually integrating into the European Union. In this study, the term 'Central and Eastern Europe' will include the following sub-groups of countries: accession countries, integrating into the European Union in 2004: Cyprus; Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Malta; Poland; Slovakia and Slovenia.

Applicant countries: Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

Balkan States: Albania; Bosnia-Herzegovina; Croatia; Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Serbia and Montenegro.

<sup>7</sup> The CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) include Armenia; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Georgia; Kazakhstan; Kirgizstan; Ukraine; Moldova; Russia; Tajikistan; Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



# Western Europe

## Overview of the agricultural sector in EU–15 countries

**At the turn of this century**, European agriculture was undergoing rapid change and insecurity, resulting from the globalization of food production and ongoing trade liberalization. This increased competition between farmers and, while food prices fell, production costs escalated because of stringent environmental regulations. Many farmers saw their incomes fall, even though production subsidies may still function as a safety net, their continuation is very much under discussion. In the midst of the above-mentioned changes, many farm families are doubtful as to whether they can maintain their farm in the future.

## Recent evolution of the agricultural sector

### *Number of farms*

Variations exist in the number and size of farms and farm sectors among the different countries. Generally speaking one main trend in agriculture is the continuous decrease in the number of farms, which is especially true for smaller farms. On the other hand, the average size of the remaining farms is increasing.

A comparison of the number of farms in the six Member States of the EU–6 in 1967 and 1997 revealed that over a period of 30 years 42 percent of farms had closed down (Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, Theme 5, 1/2000); smaller farms appear to be more vulnerable than the larger. In the category of smallholdings (< 5 ha) more than a third of the farms (37 percent) vanished in this period, and in the medium group (5–20 ha) nearly two-thirds (63 percent). The contrast with larger farms (> 20 ha) is considerable as their number decreased by less than one-tenth (6 percent). These figures do not reveal the flow

between categories. Some small and medium farms moved to the category of medium and large farms, but this does not alter the main trend.

### *Farm income*

Another important development is the variability of farm income and its regular decrease in many EU-15 countries since 1995. This fall has been quite dramatic in some countries, such as the UK, whereas in others the average income level seems to be recovering, which may be linked to a drop in farm labour. Recent figures demonstrate that farm income varies from one year to the next making farm income insecure.

Farms are lost because of shortage and income insecurity. Farming families may decide to sell the farm and move, or fewer sons and daughters take over from their parents. This last is linked to the enormous costs involved in farm succession, because of government taxes on inheritance and the cost involved if one heir were to buy out the share of the others. For these and other reasons in general the future of the agricultural sector is insecure.

This is especially true in Southern and Eastern Europe because of the ageing of farm holders. Over the past decade the percentage of young farm managers fell from an average 8.9 to 7.8 percent, and there is significant variation among all countries and regions. In 1997, for example, 19 percent of German Bavarian farm managers were below the age of 35 against only 3 percent in Lazio, southern Italy (Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, theme 5, 7/2002). Usually, in comparison with elderly farmers, young farm holders tend to manage relatively larger farms and to specialize in more intensive, high value-added farm production (Van der Ploeg, 1999).

### *Farm strategies*

Several new trends indicate ongoing changes in farm production methods, production activities and farm household strategies. In recent years, organic agricultural production has grown steadily throughout Europe and may be expected to continue. The same may be assumed for high-quality production and the introduction of new economic activities



Women at work in a field on the Tirana plain.  
(P. del Piero, 1990)



## Western Europe

on the farm. The latter may well have been witnessed at the beginning of the nineties (Van der Ploeg, and Ettema, 1990; Bryden, *et al.*, 1992).

A considerable proportion of farm households are developing new income sources, on and off the farm. This is because income from primary production alone is either too small or too insecure to cover farm and household expenses and to guarantee farm survival. In both strategies women have an important role because in many countries such as Ireland, Scotland, Spain and Sweden, women are most often the ones looking for a job off the farm (Bock, 2001; 2002). Women take the lead in many new on-farm-activities such as agri-tourism, direct sales and transformation of farm products. In developing these initiatives they bring in income and play an important role in restructuring the agricultural sector (Bock, 2002).

### *Employment in agriculture*

Declining numbers of farms, and replacement of labour with machinery, means that the number of people employed in the agricultural sector has fallen considerably and

persistently. In fact, a total of 49 percent of the agricultural labour force was lost between 1975 and 1999, whereas it increased by more than half in the service sector. The effect of this decrease in agricultural labour varies between countries. A smaller proportion of the population is active in agriculture in northern European countries as compared with southern Europe, Central and Eastern European and the CIS countries. Only 1.5 percent of the economically active population in the United Kingdom worked in agriculture in 2000, compared to 17 percent in Greece.



Farmers discussing the problem of weeding maize.  
*(C. Grace, 1994)*

In most countries, the loss of agricultural labour is higher in the category of family labour than in non-family labour; more work is done by hired labour on a seasonal basis. Most farm work continues to be carried out by family members; figures vary between 65 percent in the United Kingdom and 94 percent in Finland.

Various factors have caused the higher rate of unemployment in rural areas. Many traditional rural employment sectors are threatened by changes in the global economy,

which is true for agriculture, fisheries and forestry; as a result many traditional rural jobs are lost. At the same time new sectors gain importance, especially services and information and communication technology (ICT), which provide new employment opportunities in rural areas. Many rural inhabitants are unable to meet the educational preconditions these jobs require; compared to urban areas the rural educational level tends to be lower. However, some rural regions, Ireland and Scotland, have prospered as a result of the changing rural economy, as they lean towards the new service and high-tech sectors. In Scotland, women especially are reported to be entering these new jobs, as their professional competencies are more in line with these new jobs than those of men (Rural Development Committee 2001).



Farmer selling her produce in the local market.

In some of the most remote rural regions, lost opportunities in the traditional rural sectors are not replaced by new opportunities. Therefore, it is increasingly difficult for people in these areas to make a living and they leave the area in search of employment elsewhere. This may result in a downward trend in the quality of life in the area as a whole; with a smaller and less affluent population various services and facilities are endangered, to the point that schools and shops are unable to continue.

An important factor is the tendency of most European governments to economize on public facilities. As a result, life in remote areas is more difficult and less attractive, especially for young people and young families. Although statistics are still lacking, research indicates that young peoples' emigration often begins with girls leaving the area (Ní Laoire, 2001; Gidarakou, 1999; Dahlström, 1996; Högbäck, 1999).

Another effect of the out-migration of the young is the ageing of the rural population, which is seen in various European countries. Gentrification of rural areas is another factor, as affluent elderly people acquire property in rural districts pushing up real estate prices. This may contribute to the ageing of rural areas and outflow of the younger generation, who are unable to afford living in these areas.

### *European common agricultural policy (CAP)*

Ideas concerning the future development of European agriculture have changed rapidly

over the past years. This is because of the negative effect of the sector's ongoing modernization. Besides overproduction, pollution of the environment and loss of biodiversity, various crises related to food production such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), dioxin in milk and the dramatic effect of wide-spread animal pathologies, such as foot-and-mouth disease, have demonstrated the risks and weaknesses of the modern agricultural production system, and further highlight the negative effects on the quality of life in rural societies.



Farming couple ploughing with two oxen, village of Guri i Bardhe, Albania. (C. Grace, 1994)

In the past 11 years, the European Union's common agricultural policy has undergone several reforms. The CAP-reforms in 1992 (MacSharry Reforms) resulted in a decline in price support and the introduction of direct payments; compensation for the setting aside of land; a premium for stocking densities below a threshold level; encouragement of environmentally-friendly farming, afforestation and early retirement of farmers. In the following GATT Uruguay Round, price support structures were changed again and export subsidies, import tariffs and internal support reduced.

The CAP reform of 1999, under Agenda 2000, included new policy guidelines for EU countries and paved the way for accession countries (CEC, 2002b; EC, 2000b). Reform sought to address issues of rural development through strengthening the economic and social structures of rural areas. The intention was to develop new sources of income and employment using the endogenous potential of these areas

to create sustainable rural livelihoods and secure a populated countryside.

Cornerstones of Agenda 2000 and the 1999 CAP were twofold: its multi-sectoral approach and the attempt to achieve multi-functional farming. The former implies expansion of the rural economy through creation of new employment and income opportunities. The latter refers to a broadening and diversification of farm activities. These would include nature and landscape conservation; production; preservation of cultural heritage; creation of added value: on-farm processing; production of regionally specific foodstuffs; farm-gate selling and the creation of new forms of cooperation and non-agricultural on-farm activities.

In June 2003, EU farm ministers adopted a fundamental reform of the CAP. The



new CAP, in force 2004–2005, aims to help EU farmers become more market-oriented, through decoupling agricultural subsidies from volumes of production and provision of incentives that would encourage a greater respect of the environment, food safety and promote animal welfare standards. Direct payments to large farms will be reduced, which should increase the availability of funds for the environment, or animal welfare programmes.

The reformed CAP is in line with the overall objectives of Agenda 2000, however, it may be predicted that subjecting the agricultural sector to unmediated market forces will at best accentuate income insecurity in rural households, and at worse profoundly modify the panorama of EU agricultural production.



Woman preparing traditional cheese.  
(C. Grace, 1994)

## Rural women and food security in the EU–15 countries

### *General characteristics of female employment and unemployment*

Statistics offer limited information on how and where women work as they focus on the formal labour market, i.e. on women with regular jobs or regular enterprises and on officially unemployed women. Women working in the black or grey labour market, as home workers, remain invisible to statistics (Armas, 1999). The same is true for women in unpaid work such as family workers or volunteers, and numerous women who would like to have a job or work more hours, but see no point in formally registering as unemployed.

The conclusion is that statistics undervalue rural women's work, while undervaluing the extent of unemployment and underemployment of women in rural areas (Braithwaite, 1994; European Commission, 2000). However, statistics may help provide a general view of disparities between men and women and the differences between countries and regions.

Since the beginning of the nineties the employment of women has improved and, in most EU–15 states, female employment levels have increased, while their unemployment level has decreased. The difference between EU–15 countries has remained the same; the Nordic countries have realized nearly equal employment of men and women, while the southern countries have lagged behind.

The disproportionate representation of women in part-time employment, in certain sectors and specific professions, remains unchanged. Part-time work is prominent in mid-Europe, especially in The Netherlands. In many countries, with the exception of southern Europe, part-time work has been the most important means of increasing the employment rates of women, most certainly among working mothers.

Women often prefer part-time employment as it helps them to reconcile work and the raising of small children. However, part-time employment does not necessarily ensure economic independency. The over-representation of women in part-time jobs is a significant factor explaining the huge and persisting income gap between men and women throughout Europe as well as women's over-representation among low-waged employees (Clarke, 2001; Eurostat, 2000a).

Job segregation is also an important reason for income-disparities, resulting in women being over represented in the service sector and lower paid occupations. Taking into account differences in education and jobs, an income gap of 15 percent between women and men remains unexplained, indicating that gender discrimination in the labour market still plays an important role (Benassi, 1999).

### *Characteristics of female rural employment*

When differentiating between urban and rural areas it becomes clear that, at least for the EU-15 countries, the rural dimension generally exacerbates women's employment situation. This is especially true in the most remote rural areas, where population density is low and the labour market is dominated by agriculture (Overbeek, *et al.*, 1998; Weise, *et al.*, 2001; Braithwaite, 1996). This is not surprising as it is in these areas that the employment situation is the most problematic (Terluin and Post, 2000).

Self-employed women tend to be concentrated in the service sector, which is probably true in urban and rural areas. However, as there is little statistical information on self-employment in rural areas this would be hard to prove. Business ventures have been started by a growing number of rural and farm women, mostly in the service sector or directly linked to it, for example agri-tourism (Bock, 1994; Sawicka, 1999). Specifically this sector has attracted women and seems to offer good opportunities



Albanian farm woman tilling the ground with a traditional hoe.  
(C. Grace, 1994)

(Overbeek, *et al.*, 1998). Recently, it has become the most important growth sector and it is expected that growth in employment will continue (Terluin and Post, 2000).

Although the number of farms has fallen, and agriculture has lost importance as an employment sector, a considerable number of rural women continue to work in agriculture and on farms. This situation differs considerably between countries. In Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden and the United Kingdom, only 1 percent of the female economically active population was employed in the agricultural sector in 2000, compared to 19 percent in Greece and 14 percent in Portugal. Figures for other EU-15 countries vary between 2 and 6 percent (Eurostat). The share of women in the total agricultural labour force has remained stable, constituting about a third of the total population who are economically active in agriculture, with a peak of 51 percent in Portugal, and low of 12 percent in Ireland. The percentage of women is higher when employment in agricultural holdings is taken into account. In this case, all workers employed on the agricultural holdings are accounted for, including those who work part-time, who are unpaid or in multiple jobs, among these are many women.



Farmer leading her cow  
past a stack of hay.  
(C. Grace, 1994)

The volume of work that women carry out on farms, as measured in annual work units (AWU), has remained stable. On average, about a third of the total amount of work on farms is still done by women (Eurostat). Farmwomen's on-farm circumstances have changed considerably and, although the majority of women working on farms are family members, recently the number of female paid farm workers has increased. This is also true for the number of women who are farm managers or co-entrepreneurs. In 1997, around 80 percent of spouses working on farms were women, compared to 19 percent farm managers, 32 percent of other family members and 23 percent of permanent employees (Fremont, 2001).

Co-entrepreneurship is an option for many women in a number of countries such as France, Ireland and The Netherlands, where in 1999 only 4 percent of farms were managed by a single female farm-head; however, 22 percent of farms had a female co-farm head. This important development began in the early nineties and was stimulated by tax-relief; note that not all these women participate in farm management on an equal basis to men.

Other incentives that have changed farm management structure are related to access to subsidies. To make use of these, a full-time working farm-head must be appointed, which may explain the high number of female farm-heads in southern Europe. Being farm-head considerably changes women's legal situation, they gain official access to and control over farm production resources such as land and machinery. Usually, most of these women share farm management with their husbands, particularly when important decisions are taken and, when their husband is working off the farm, they may be responsible for the day-to-day management (Bock,1994).



Woman in  
her home garden.  
(R. Faidutti, 1998)

Single female farm-heads are most often found on smaller farms, 82 percent of farms managed by women are less than 8 ESU, compared to 68 percent of farms managed by men, and farms specialized in oil-seeds (Fremont, 2001), which partly explains the relative concentration of (single) female farm-heads in southern Europe. On the other hand, female co-entrepreneurship is more common on larger farms (Bock and De Rooij, 2000).

Most women and men work part-time on farms. In 1997, a total of 88 percent of women worked on farms, family workers plus permanent employees worked part-time, of which 54 percent worked less than 0.25 AWU. Of all men working on farms 73 percent work part-time, of which 43 percent work less than 0.25 AWU (Fremont, 2001). Time spent working seems to be closely linked to work status. Generally male and female farm managers work full-time on the farm although, in comparison with women farm managers, male managers work more often on a full-time basis.

The volume of farm-work carried out by women seems to be related to farm size. Statistics from The Netherlands clearly reveal that the larger the farm the less women are involved in farm work (Bock and De Rooij, 2000). The tendency towards farm enlargement might imply masculinization of farming as a whole. At the same time other factors boost women's integration into agriculture, as there are an increasing number of female successors, female farm-heads and women's growing involvement in new on-farm activities such as agri-tourism, on-farm processing and direct sales (EC, 2000a).

These new activities enhance women's involvement on the farm with respect to the amount of on-farm labour, farm income and women's direct and indirect influence on

farm-management, even if there is a decrease in their participation in work related to primary production (Bock, 1994; De Rooij, *et al.*, 1995; O'Hara, 1998a). In The Netherlands research demonstrates that diversification implies improvement in the quality of work farm women are involved in.

### *Levels of training among farm women*

Research in a number of EU-15 states reveals a notable difference in the educational level of male and female farm-heads. On average, men have full agricultural training more often than female farm-heads; this situation seems to be improving in some countries (Fremont, 2001). This finding is hardly surprising, noting the types of professional education chosen by girls and boys, although it is true that gender-related differences in educational level have nearly disappeared.

Today girls tend to be better educated than boys and there are indications that this is especially the case in rural areas (O'Hara, 1998a). However, the gender gap in professional education related to agriculture is persistent and significant, especially in vocational programmes (Dunne, 2001). In the academic world, technical and production related agricultural sub-disciplines are dominated by male professors and male students (Bock and De Rooij, 2000).

From the statistical analysis it may be concluded that, in general, European rural women are less fortunate in realizing satisfying working conditions in comparison with rural men and urban women (Little, 1991; EC, 2000d). There is a higher probability that women will be unemployed or underemployed and work more often in part-time and poorly paid jobs. Their employment situation is precarious because they usually have temporary or no contract work as home workers or as unpaid family workers (Armas, 1999). Moreover, rural women are less successful at finding a job at their education level, even though in many regions, as noted above, young women are better educated than men (Dahlström, 1996; Ni Laoire, 2001; O'Hara, 1998a; Momsen, *et al.*, 1999; Rangelova, 1999).

Little seems to have changed since 1994, though there has been a change in the participation rate of rural women in the labour market, which increased, while



Flowers on sale outside the covered market of Fehérvári út, Hungary. (R. Faidutti, 1998)



## Western Europe

unemployment of rural women decreased in many regions. One reason is that the education level of women is rapidly rising, especially among young women (Eurostat). Although this is true both for urban and rural areas, the average educational level of rural women still seems to be lower, especially in southern Europe.

Among other reasons, increased participation of rural women in the formal labour market is caused by the fact that there is less call for farm labour, while the need for off-farm income has increased.

The precariousness of rural women's employment seriously affects their income, although not many statistics are available to explain the difference between urban and rural areas, or to demonstrate the specific significance this might have for rural women. Overall, women have a higher risk of poverty compared with men, because of differences in employment and wage levels. Other factors that increase the poverty risk of women are being a single mother or a pensioned widow living alone (Mejer and Sierman, 2000).

# Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

## Main issues in an agricultural sector in transition

### *Agriculture in transition economies*

Agriculture is relatively more important in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS than in Western Europe. In the 12 accession countries, plus Bulgaria and Romania, agricultural land occupies over half of the total area (54.2 percent), whereas in the EU-15 this is only 40.2 percent.

The difference is greater in the area of agricultural employment. In the accession countries plus Romania and Bulgaria, 22.1 percent of total employment is in agriculture, in the EU-15 it is 4.3 percent (EC, 2002). There is much variation between countries, as is true for the EU-15 zone, in Romania 45.2 percent of the economically active population (EAP) works in agriculture, in Malta only 1.6 percent. Further differences relate to the share of agriculture in the gross domestic product (GDP). In the EU-15 zone, agriculture contributed 2 percent in 2000, in the accession countries plus Romania and Bulgaria it was 5 percent.

Eastwards, this figure rose to 31 percent in the Caucasus (World Bank, 2000b). Again, between regions, there are considerable variations and in the EU-15, Greece and Luxembourg are at the extremes with a share of 0.7 and 7 percent respectively to the GDP, whereas Bulgarian and Romanian agriculture provides by far the highest share to the GDP (14.5 and 12.6 percent respectively) and Malta is at the bottom of the list with 2.3 percent.

### *Decreased food production*

One result of transition-related economic and political transformation was a substantial drop in agricultural output. Agricultural exports to the EU-15 fell, and



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food imports from the EU-5 increased because of changing food patterns. Since mid-1990, there has been an improvement in agricultural output mostly in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, although 1989 production levels have not been achieved, and remain far below EU-15 levels. Progress has been made in crop production, especially fruit and vegetables. Livestock production, specifically milk and beef, is still declining in many countries (World Bank, 2000b; Van Depoele, 2001). In most countries, with the exception of Hungary and Poland, modernization of the food industry needs to be undertaken. A lack of foreign investment is given as one of the main reasons for the postponement of modernization.



Seasonal farm worker gathering grapes for the wine harvest.  
(R. Faidutti, 1998)

### *Agriculture and the environment*

Groundwater pollution and soil contamination is a common problem in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS. Although not the main polluter, agriculture contributes substantially to environmental deterioration. In some areas agriculture is responsible for 80 percent of nitrogen and 40 percent of phosphorus loading in surface waters. In Hungary, agriculture uses some 13 percent of all water consumed and is the main source of water pollution (Karl, *et al.*, 2000). It is known that pesticides and fertilizers are the primary polluters of the Danube and, in the Russian Federation alone 50 to 100 000 tonnes of obsolete pesticides are being stored (Committee on the Status of Women, 2001).

In the nineties, agricultural pressure on the environment decreased because of a fall in production and reduction in fertilizer subsidies (Karl, *et al.*, 2000). The use of nitrate fertilizers fell even below the OECD average. Lately, fertilizer use is on the rise (World Bank, 2000b) and large-scale farm enterprises are the main polluters because subsistence farms, and small family farms, have little or no money to spend on fertilizers and other agrochemicals.

In Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, even though women's educational level is generally high, their knowledge of health issues is good and they form the majority in medical and health-related professions, they continue to be unaware of environmental issues (Committee on the Status of Women, 2001).



### *Heterogeneous farm structures*

In the initial stage of transition, it was assumed that – as in China – private family farming would become the dominant farming structure (Meurs, 2001). But after ten years of transition, diversity in farm structure typifies agriculture in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS. Large-scale, centrally managed and controlled farm enterprises operate beside family holdings of different sizes. This mainly depends on how privatization was undertaken, in some countries people received land, and in others their entitlement to land was turned into shares (Swain, 2000). Policies either favoured family farms or collective farms and cooperatives and pre-reform characteristics influenced these policy choices (World Bank, 2000b; Swinnen, *et al.*, 2001).

Large-scale farms are market-oriented, whereas the majority of family holdings are small-scale subsistence farms, with surpluses sold on local markets. In Hungary, more than 70 percent of the family holdings utilize less than 1 hectare, together they farm less than 8 percent of total productive land used by farm family holdings (Laczka, 2000). In Poland, in 1998, more than one million people farmed land of less than 1 hectare (Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 1998).

Fragmentation of land is common on family-operated farms and seriously impedes rural development. In Romania the average size of private individual farms is 2.3 hectares spread over six to ten parcels, and accounts for 62 percent of agricultural land (Riddell and Rembold, 2000). In Poland, 20 percent of private farms have six or more plots. On around 4 percent of farms the distance between individual plots is more than 10 km (Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 1998).

Uncertain property rights are another hindrance to farm development. Other major obstacles include a badly functioning land market because of the ongoing restitution process; lack of legislation to regulate the land market; shortage of credit; obsolete technology and under-mechanization.

Other constraints to rural development include difficult access to markets because of the absence of institutional support such as credit institutions, or reliable associations connecting farmers to suppliers; processors; distribution and marketing organizations (cooperatives, associations or market chain-organizations). The same can be said of training institutions for business and management. Additional



Four hundred seasonal workers arrive at a vineyard to gather grapes for the wine harvest. Fifty hectares of vineyards were privatized by the Henkel Company, a famous producer of Champagne (Henkel Troken) and Chardonnay wine.

problems cited are inferior product quality, low productivity and yields, poor farming skills and difficult access to services and inputs (Van Depoele, 2001, Swinnen, *et al.*, 2001; World Bank, 2000b).

It is interesting to note that small plots are used intensively and average yields may be much higher than on larger farms. The World Bank reports that in former Soviet countries a difference was found in family income, well-being and view of the future, between people who started to farm their own plot of land and rural residents who remained workers on a cooperative. The latter group had lower incomes, were less satisfied with their well-being and less optimistic about the future (World Bank, 2000b). Thus, diversity in farm structure goes together with new social divisions in rural areas.



This Bosnian widow was leased land from the municipalities free of charge and received seed from the Emergency Programme, which was implemented in cooperation with the local authorities at Canton level. The beneficiaries reimbursed 1 kg of produce to the municipalities for every kilo of seed received.  
(FAO, 1995.)

### *Pluri-activity*

Because of small farm size and the low farm incomes, the majority of farming households involve both men and women in generating additional income through other sources. A FAO pilot study in Bulgaria found that most farming households had two or more sources of income. Agricultural income was the main source for the majority and wages, pensions, leased land and social relief were vital and substantial (Fotev, *et al.*, 2001). It is predicted that this pattern will be a persistent feature of Bulgarian family farming (Meurs,

1999).

In Poland, an estimated 60 percent of the rural population is involved in farming, which is the main occupation for 20 percent and the only source of income for 10 percent (Sztanderska and Piotrowskis, 1999, cited in Swinnen, *et al.*, 2001). Other data on Poland revealed that the importance of pluri-activity decreases as farm size increases. Only 14 percent of subsistence farms, up to 5 hectares, generated their main income from farming, off-farm income and pensions contributed more (32 percent and 31 percent respectively). For the majority of market-oriented farms larger than 10 hectares, the situation was reversed and 83 percent derived their main income from agriculture (Wicki, 2001). In Romania the share of pluri-active rural households is considerable and rising.

### *Emerging opportunities*

Changing consumer demand in the region may present new opportunities for the agricultural sector. Certain consumer groups are able to buy up-market, high value-added food products, such as yoghurts and desserts, which may represent a market niche. In this regard, it is expected that organic food production will be a growth market on which producers can rely. To this end, some organic farmers' groups have been set up in Poland, Hungary and Romania (Laczó, 2001; Leonte and Alexandri, 2001).

Engagement in new cooperative activities may be another strategy to generate extra income. So far, many farmers are unwilling to do this, because of past negative experiences, as distrust of cooperatives is still widespread among farmers. This distrust is considered a barrier to agricultural and rural development (Karaczun, 2000). Nevertheless, this attitude may be changing. Recently new forms of cooperative agriculture have emerged and in several countries, for example the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary, farmers have initiated new cooperatives, producer groups and other associations (farmer circles, societies and village clubs). Members are mostly the formal proprietors, owners or farm users (Millns, 2001). Where cooperatives already existed and have been transformed (Slovenia) they now exhibit strong market positions, but new cooperatives are developing more slowly.

Broadening on-farm activities to include others, such as agri-tourism, may provide family farms with opportunities to generate income. Unfortunately, it is noted that local people do not benefit from new opportunities in rural tourism, as they often lack the specific knowledge, capital and attitudes, so it is mostly entrepreneurs from outside who profit from this niche at the expense of the locals (Kovács, 1998). Rural women are reported to be active running restaurants, shops, catering services and small-scale production, but in Poland these activities are considered typically female (Tryfan, 1993, in Bak, *et al.*, 2000). In Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and Poland women are active in rural tourism (Verbole, 1999). An obstacle to women's participation may be that they are not formally registered as farm (co-) owner or partner in the new activity (Giovarelli and Duncan 1999).

Perceptions of the roles of women and men are still stereotyped, and in Poland



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women are generally perceived to be less creative than men, neither motivated nor prepared to take risks to the same degree as men. The survey indicates Polish rural women are anxious to improve their families' living conditions, and economic need motivates women to undertake new activities (Strykowska, in Bak, *et al.*, 2000). Other barriers, faced by potential female entrepreneurs, include lack of capital, or access to inexpensive credit, complicated procedures for obtaining credit, organizational and marketing limitations. The study also noted psychological barriers such as poor self-image and low self-esteem prevent the taking up of new initiatives (Bak, *et al.*, 2000).

It is expected that accession to the EU of countries from Central and Eastern Europe will have far-reaching consequences for the agricultural sectors of both regions. Along with the risks involved, in the process of accession, new opportunities will emerge, including those involving gender and equality (O'Hara, 1998b; European Commission Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development,

### Box 3.1 SAPARD FUND

A special euro 520 million fund, Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) was created together with other pre-accession instruments such as PHARE and ISPA, to provide accession and applicant countries support in the process of adjustment and accession. SAPARD is related to the common agricultural policy, to structural adjustment in agricultural and rural areas and provides for a variety of activities and services. These include land improvement and re-parceling, setting-up producer groups, investment in agricultural holdings, promotion of production methods that protect the environment and conserve rural heritage, diversification of economic activities and development of alternative sources of income, farm relief services and farm management services, food quality and consumer protection, veterinary and plant health controls, vocational training, technical assistance, management of water resources for agriculture and improvement of rural infrastructure. The most important aims are improvement of market efficiency, quality, veterinary and health standards and creation of new jobs in rural areas (Van Depoele, 2001).

In accordance with the EU policies on gender equality, the SAPARD Programme ensures equal access to women and men. Their share in the programme is monitored regularly.

## Socio-economic evolution of rural areas

**Inequality between social groups** is one feature of transition, as gender; ethnicity; age; health; class; marital status and place of living may all be divisive. After transition, rising unemployment and wage disparities were factors that contributed to increasing income inequalities; the gap between poor and rich widened to varying degrees in the different countries. Income inequalities rose to a very high level in several countries of the former Soviet Union. In some countries the income gap is closing (Estonia, Lithuania, Russia); in others it continues to expand slowly (Czech Republic, Hungary). It has been observed that falling incomes and greater income disparity affect food consumption among the various groups (UNDP 1999).

Research in Hungary revealed class differences are also developing in rural areas. Where the *nouveau riches*, many former managers of cooperatives, live next to the unemployed or the elderly who live on social benefits, disability payments or low pensions (Kovács and Váradi, 1999; Momsen, 1999) and ethnic differences may seem more pronounced. The Roma-people are among the poorest in the region and, after transition in Hungary, Roma villages appeared in many rural regions (Kovách, 2002); most are employed in agriculture. It has been observed that the poor stratum of rural society disproportionately includes the elderly, single parents, the disabled and women; all of these categories may overlap.

### *Growing rural-urban disparities*

It is forecast that regional and rural-urban disparities, for income, employment and investment, will increase in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, together with inequalities between the various social groups (Bachtler, *et al.*, 2000). Some influencing factors are the presence and nature of endogenous development potentials; willingness to invest; quality of infrastructure; alternative employment opportunities; proximity to borders; population mobility; educational levels and skills; age; cultural habits and gender roles.

In general, rural social services, health, schooling and housing lag behind other areas; roads are bad and there is little access to information and communication. In a number of countries in the region, rural infrastructure has improved because of support from the

private sector and local municipalities. This is the case in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Baltic States<sup>8</sup>, with the exception of some remote, under-developed areas, and in the CIS countries, rural infrastructure remains problematic (World Bank, 2000b).

Poor infrastructure goes together with a rather specialized, limited local economy and labour market. Job opportunities are scarce and people have limited means to start farming. A serious constraint to involvement in better opportunities for people employed in agriculture is their low or specialized educational level linked to agriculture. On average, rural educational levels are observed to be below the national average and there are few training and re-training opportunities for rural people wanting to start or manage a business or farm (Swinnen, *et al.*, 2001; Bak, *et al.*, 2000; Karaczun, 2000). An additional barrier to rural development seems to be a lack of tradition in collective governance (Karaczun, 2000).

Further disparities are linked to deterioration in living conditions, and the problems rural people experience adapting to new conditions, together with feelings of helplessness; mental depression; cardiovascular disorders; higher death and suicide rates (Bak, *et al.*, 2000; UNICEF, 1999).

### *Increasing rural poverty*

One of the negative consequences of transition has been the dramatic rise in urban and rural poverty. According to estimates in 1998, a fifth of the population in accession, applicant and CIS countries had less than US\$2.15 per day to spend, ten years before this was true for about 4 percent of the people (World Bank, 2000a).

Initially, urban poverty seemed higher than rural and led to urban-rural migration, as the unemployed, and the elderly who had rural family connections, moved. After some years, this trend was reversed and rural poverty increased (Katsiaouni and Gorniak, 2001). According to the World Bank, rural poverty rates are generally high in the region (World Bank, 2000a). The incidence of rural poverty is as high as, or higher, than urban poverty in 15 of the 20 transition countries, for which such data are available. It is relatively high in Macedonia, Poland, Romania; in the Czech Republic and Slovenia it is very low. The

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<sup>8</sup> Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

incidence and degree of rural poverty tends to vary within countries, it is found that where private agriculture was largely maintained, poverty is concentrated in the former state-farm operated areas.

Particularly in agriculture, rural impoverishment is rooted in low incomes; high levels of long-term rural unemployment; lack of new employment opportunities; collapse of state-funded services; rising inflation, lack of capital for investment and to start new firms (Swinnen, *et al.*, 2001). Lack of capital is the result of foreign investors' preference for urban areas (Kulcsar and Brown, 2000). In the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, increasing rural poverty is seen to be related to the non-payment or delayed payment of wages, pensions and social benefits.

It is true that certain social groups run a greater risk of poverty than others. IFAD's paper on the strategic programme for the Central and Eastern European region and CIS countries, stated that rural poverty is found to be most severe and widespread among farmers in upland and mountainous areas; rural wage earners; the elderly and ethnic minorities; women are mentioned as a social group particularly at risk (IFAD, 2002).

Other publications add migrants and refugees, the disabled and children (UNDP, 1999) and those whose wages or pensions remain unpaid. People are more vulnerable to poverty when there is unemployment; there is only one income-earner in the household; more children than average; poor education and wage arrears (World Bank, 2000b).

In addition, it has been observed that the fall in the real value of pensions is relatively higher than the fall in real wages. In the Russian Federation, in 1997, the average pension was 34 percent of the average wage, and delays in payment were greater than for wage arrears (UNDP, 1999). Another cause of growing rural poverty is the decline in agricultural production and slow recovery.

### *Rising food costs, and deteriorating dietary and nutritional patterns*

Households in the region spend a large share of their budget on foodstuffs (44.8 percent), more than the average consumer in the EU-15 zone (17.4 percent). In Bulgaria and Romania consumers exceed this average achieving 53.5 percent and 58 percent respectively. Cyprus is the only country that spends about the same as the EU-15 on foodstuffs (18.6 percent). In Slovenia food expenditure is relatively low for the region (24 percent), whereas Portugal is an exception in the EU-15; consumers

spend more than a quarter of their budget on food (27 percent). A similar pattern is observed in Greece (21.3 percent) and households in The Netherlands rank lowest with 14.8 percent. (Van Depoele, 2001; Swinnen, *et al.*, 2001; European Commission, 2002).

In countries of the former Soviet Union, the share of the average income spent on food increased following transition, when household incomes fell and food prices rose. In Armenia, food prices rose nearly 24 000 percent between 1991 and 1997, and prices for non-food products increased by 7 800 percent (UNDP, 1999). Food consumption declined and malnutrition is an increasing problem in many countries and in Poland, 60 percent of children suffer from some form of under-nourishment. There has been a reduction in the consumption of milk, meat and vegetables, and lower quality, cheaper food is bought instead. Iron deficiency seems to be common in the region and iodine deficiencies are re-emerging (World Bank, 2000b).

### *Rural employment/unemployment*

In the 1990s differences in employment opportunities caused increasing differentiation and relative inequality between rural and urban populations. On average, rural unemployment is higher in regions where state ownership was common (Sawicka, 2000; Majerova, 1999; Frenkel, 2000) affecting rural social groups unevenly. In Hungary, for example, where rural unemployment is high, household incomes of manual workers in agriculture and the self-employed are among the lowest.

A rural underclass seems to have come into existence, to which many Roma-people belong, as they are unable to generate income through legal employment and the receipt of benefits. A quarter of the Roma population do not have access to land for household food production, and the illegal economy may present itself as a means of survival (Kovach, 2002).

In Poland, the highest unemployment rate in rural areas is to be found among non-farming rural people, the opposite is found among the farming population where unemployment seems relatively low and less than the average (9.9 percent vs 10.6 percent end 1998). Research showed however that hidden unemployment is an issue. According to Sawicka, four out of ten working on their own farm may be termed unemployed. The main cause is said to be inadequate education as there is a lack of vocational



qualifications; other influences are resistance to commuting or migration (Sawicka 1999). Women's specific employment and/or unemployment situation will be discussed below under 'Female employment and discrimination'.

### *The elderly in rural areas*

One result of limited options for developing a secure rural livelihood is that the most skilled and entrepreneurial residents leave the countryside. Therefore, unemployment is triggering the out migration of young rural adults, (Behrens, 2000; Eurostat, 2002; Karaczun, 2000; Majerova, 1999; Rangelova, 1999), which results in the ageing of rural and farming populations in many Central and Eastern Europe rural areas (Majerova, 1999; Kulcsar and Brown, 2000).

The ageing population comprises more women than men, reflecting an overall development in Europe, including Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS. This is because women have a higher life expectancy and, in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, women of this generation migrate less out of rural areas. In the Romanian countryside, women over 60 comprise one-quarter of the rural population (UNDP, 2000a). In Lithuania, research in 1998 showed that 33 percent of rural women were pensioners, while male pensioners made up 17 percent of the male rural population. Around 60 percent of farmers were more than 60 years old (UN, 2002). Another factor contributing to the ageing of the rural population in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS is the decreasing birth rate (Kulcsár and Brown, 2000), which is low when compared to Western Europe.

Finally, food security has become an issue for the elderly, as they may not be receiving the help they need to cover basic needs. This is because of the break up of traditional family patterns and safety nets, in conjunction with poor social services in rural areas, which aggravates insecurity, including food insecurity, for the elderly rural population.

### *Differences in quality of education*

Economic and political transformations influence education in a variety of ways. It is clear that reduction in public expenses, including education, had a negative effect on both quality and performance (UNDP, 1999), access and enrolment rates have changed, but

to a lesser degree and sometimes positively, as serious signs of a systematic gender gap are absent at the level of basic and lower secondary school. In some countries in Central Asia, the enrolment of girls in education seems lower than that of boys, especially in rural areas, although the higher share of girls in secondary school has been maintained (UNICEF, 1999). In some countries girls' net secondary enrolment ratio has declined, this tendency was seen in Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Romania and Russia.

In countries where women had a high share of enrolment in tertiary education, their share has grown since 1989; Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovenia are examples. Where their share was lower the trend has reversed, as in Azerbaijan (UNICEF, 1999). Overall, vocational and technical schooling have been negatively affected by the closing of enterprise-linked schools, higher drop-out rates and a reorientation towards schools that fit the new requirements of the market economy. This latter case has been observed in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia (Micklewright, 2000). Girls were affected less than boys, who predominate in this type of education (UNICEF, 1999).

In many countries, dropout rates seem to be higher in rural areas and school attendance is lower (Slovakia, Poland). Although the quality of schools generally deteriorated in the region after transition, disparities between rural and urban schools were accentuated. Overcrowding of classes is caused by the closure of other schools; insufficient supply of learning materials; schools in poor condition and insufficient teaching staff. The partial privatization of education implies that parents must now contribute more than before to the cost of schooling.

Lack of transport to schools, or its cost if available, hamper school attendance and encourage premature dropout (Bulgaria). Girls might be at a disadvantage as poor families, who cannot afford transport costs for all their children, might favour their sons because of traditional values. Daughters are kept at home to help in the household, or on the farm, as observed in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Involvement in family agriculture is another reason why rural children stop attending school (Bulgaria); this is sometimes, but not always, temporary (IHF, 2000). In Lithuania it was found that disparities in quality of education reduced work possibilities for graduates of secondary schools (IHF, 2000).

## Rural women and food security in Central and Eastern Europe, and the CIS

### *Female employment and discrimination*

Before transition, gender segregation in the region's labour market was more or less a non-issue. Attention was focused on the high rate of women in employment and on labour conditions geared to women's responsibilities in the home. These were highlighted as gains of socialism and proof of gender equality. However, despite gender-sensitive policies, there was a clear and asymmetric gender division of labour and a gender wage-gap. Moreover, traditional gender roles in the family were not discussed during the state-socialist era.

Today, the labour market still reflects this legacy, although changes are taking place, and on the whole fewer women than men are employed. Also, compared with men, women's employment is spread over fewer sectors and positions. Some sectors such as education, health and services are strongly feminized, while these sectors absorb a significant share of the total female labour-force, the average wage and status of these jobs is low. Women are more numerous in low skilled and low paid positions and men outnumber women in the higher paid, more influential supervisory and management positions. (UNICEF, 1999; UNDP, 2000b).

There is some evidence that the gender segregation of occupations has declined over the past decade. At the same time, new forms of segregation may be emerging (UNICEF, 1999), as men replace women in trade and other sectors. The share of women in agriculture and industry has declined in most, but not all, countries and women's share in the service sector has increased, where they are now a majority.

In the early years of transition, it seems that the majority of people did not change occupations and there was not much difference between women and men in this respect, although, more women than men tended to move down the career ladder. In other words, more men than women moved up; the tendency is clear, but the differences are relatively insignificant for a few countries (Bulgaria, Russia) (UNDP, 2000b).

So far the private sector has predominantly attracted men. This is because women currently lack the required qualifications and knowledge for these new jobs, and there are few opportunities for training and re-training. Where women are re-trained, as in Belarus, it is for specific skills such as book-keepers, secretaries, sewing

machine operators. Women re-enter jobs with lower professional and social status. It also appears that a specific group of women participates in retraining programmes. Research, showed that two-thirds of women entering such programmes in Belarus were former engineers, technical workers, scientists and professionals in the arts.

In Estonia, the group aged between 20 and 39 years with a higher education, and those working as specialists, who are well paid, are over-represented in further adult education programmes. It seems that the unemployed have a lower participation rate in these programmes and express less need to get involved (Vöörman, 1998). In Slovenia access to education and re-training seems especially difficult after maternity leave. In particular, education and training for intensive and skilled positions, such as those in the computer industry and electronics, seem difficult to enter. Reasons include loss of a contract after pregnancy and scarcity of new jobs (IHF, 2000), which seems widespread throughout the region. It is recorded that women are discriminated against in the private sector, where they are refused jobs because they are, or may become, mothers. It is known that during application procedures women are questioned on this subject, while men are not.

Certainly women face a gender bias in the labour market and in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia discrimination practices have been reported when applying for a job. In Poland it was found that marriage status – an indicator of children – was a serious obstacle to women finding work, which for men was not the case. Private employers seem to consider women expensive, high risk employees. This is because of the costs involved in maternity leave, during which, in many countries, women's jobs are protected by law. Therefore, employers often prefer male or young women above other female applicants, which may explain why women favour employment in the public sector.

### *Women in the agricultural sector*

With the exception of Romania, Slovenia and Poland, more men than women are employed in the agricultural sector, in the latter two countries their share is equal, and in Romania, women outnumber men. In some countries, women's agricultural employment has increased over the past decade, as in Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia; this trend is reversed in the other countries. Men's employment in agriculture

shows the same trend, except for Lithuania where there was a slight decrease.

A considerable number of women work in agriculture, either as employees or as farm-heads, co-farm-heads or unpaid family workers and research, shows that in farming households nearly two-thirds of women were involved in agriculture. Increasingly women are active outside agriculture, including participation in small and medium enterprises (Sawicka, 1999).

Comparable data on female farm-heads are lacking in the transition countries and only dispersed data could be traced. In a paper, submitted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office at a conference on European Statisticians in 2001, it was found that nearly 25 percent of family-farm holders were female (Agricultural Census, 2000). The average age of these women appeared to be 60 and was higher than that for men in this position (53 years) (Laczka, 2001). In Romania, 1998 data reveal that 34 percent of members in agricultural holdings and cooperatives are female (UNDP, 2000a). Data from the Czech Republic give the same picture and men outnumber women, both in agricultural self-employment and as having employees. It is well known that after privatization and restructuring many former managers of collective farms became the new owners of the farm enterprises. It is also known that the majority of former managers were men. Subsequently, the current farm heads of these large-scale farm enterprises – cooperatives, liability companies – are predominantly male.

Self-employment increased after transition but involves more men than women (Eurostat). In Bulgaria, women made up 27 percent of the self-employed in 2000 and in Kazakhstan, in 1997, an estimated 38 percent of the self-employed were women (UN, 2002) and more women became entrepreneurs, including rural women (Momsen, 1999; Sawicka, 2000; Majerova, 1999) and evidence suggests that about one-quarter of new businesses were set up by women (UNICEF, 1999), most are small and women work on their own.

It has been noted that women tend to start different types of businesses than men do. Research, carried out in Hungary, shows that women's businesses were less varied, as they mostly run food or flower shops, restaurants or cafes. Men run hardware or farm supply outlets, cyber-cafes or work as carpenters, electricians, etc. (Momsen, *et al.*, 1999). In Azerbaijan, only 7 percent of female respondents were registered as managers of small enterprises and an overwhelming majority of women (86 percent)

did not want their own business. The principal reasons given were lack of starting capital, they were unable to find an appropriate sphere of activity, difficulties related to registration, fear, no self-confidence and no knowledge of how to set up or run a private business.

Women are in the minority as employers, where in Latvia they comprised 30 percent in 1999 and in Romania 25 percent (UN, 2002; UNDP, 2000a). As stated above, on average, men are more often self-employed than women. It is found that the proportion of women is highest in countries where family farming is important, as in Romania, where 90 percent of self-employment is in agriculture and women outnumber men (45 percent vs 35 percent). In Slovakia, the degree of self-employment is low, but women's share is lowest (4 percent). Note that these statistics must be handled with care, as many enterprises run jointly by husband and wife are officially registered under the man's name. On the other hand, male-run businesses may formally have a female entrepreneur for taxation purposes.

Women's employment seems, on average, to be less stable, even in comparison with the past. More often they are engaged on seasonal or short-term contracts and more women than men work at part-time jobs. In some countries part-time jobs are slowly on the increase, in others they are stagnant or decreasing. Although such jobs may be advantageous to women, considering the increased time they need for their responsibilities in the home, they generate less income.

### *Double employment*

Driven by economic necessity increasing numbers of people work at more than one job, some combine full-time jobs with part-time, others have different part-time jobs. In Romania research shows that about three-fifths of all people with a second job are rural men aged 35 to 49 with a high school or vocational school education. Women with second jobs were of the same age and had finished high school. Both men and women are employees in their main job (UNDP, 2000a).

A Hungarian study described some rural women with second jobs; these women wageworkers compensate their low wages with illegal work in horticulture. After their night shift, or before their afternoon shift, they worked five to seven hours as day-

labourers. In particular divorced women and those with more children had second jobs (Kovács and Váradi, 1999).

### *Female unemployment*

After transition, unemployment and job insecurity were new phenomena for both women and men. Initially, women lost their jobs at a higher rate than men, but in some countries this was reversed, as in Hungary. Today, it is contested as to whether general unemployment levels throughout the region continue to be disproportionate between women and men. Most authors state that – as at the initial period of transition – women remain worse off, though regional differences may occur.

One problem is that statistics are not always reliable; they are incomplete or not comparable, because different definitions have been used. For instance, women on pregnancy or maternity leave may or may not be included as employed. On the other hand, many rural women working on family or subsistence farms are registered as unemployed, although they work all day. The same goes for the growing number of housewives that remain outside the formal labour market. They work in their kitchen gardens, plots or farms, or on their own and are not always accounted for in labour statistics. Yet, they contribute substantially to household income and food security.

UNICEF reports (1999) that in this region, since 1989, some 13 percent of jobs that were available before transition have been lost. Of these more than half were women's jobs, and more women than men have been registered as unemployed. UNICEF states that across the region female unemployment ranges from 5 to 15 percent, reaching 33 percent among younger women, notwithstanding the fact that women's education level is, on average, higher than that of men (UNICEF, 1999; IHF, 2000). Further studies report that women's unemployment is estimated at a higher rate than men's (UNDP, 1999).

In some countries the gender gap has increased, in others it has declined or rates are nearly equal. In Moldova, for example, the unemployment rate for women in 1998 was 17.8 percent and for men 10.2 percent. The rate for women increased disproportionately after 1994 when the unemployment rate was 8.9 percent. In



Rural woman in Van province, Turkey, receiving an allocation of sheep, which she will then fatten. This is her only source of income.  
*(A. Sipal, 1998)*

Romania, the number of unemployed women remained higher than that of men for the period 1991–1998. The biggest gap was recorded in 1993 (4.8 percent), thereafter diminishing to 0.3 percent in 1998. In Belarus there was a drop in disparity between unemployment levels for women and men over the past years. However, in 1998 there were twice as many unemployed women in the economically active population.

Young people were especially vulnerable to unemployment in Romania; young women were most affected 19.7 percent vs 17.3 percent for young men (UNDP, 2000a). Unemployment seems to have affected women unevenly, for example in Belarus, women with a higher education were affected by high unemployment, and in Estonia rural-urban differences developed and, during the mid-1990s, rural women's employment rates were lower (UNDP, 2000c) than for urban areas. It was found that younger and older women had difficulties accessing the formal labour market. However, reverse trends were noted:



This Bosnian widow was allocated land by the municipalities free of charge. She received seed from the FAO Emergency Programme, which was implemented in cooperation with the local authorities at Canton level. The beneficiaries reimbursed 1 kilo of produce to the municipalities for every kilo of seed received.

(FAO, 1995.)

the Labour Survey 2000 in Estonia revealed that for the first time in the past decade, the female unemployment rate (14.1 percent) was lower than for men (15.3 percent). Note that women make-up a higher proportion of the long-term unemployed and are more often employed on a temporary basis.

In Hungary, unemployment affected men more than women. Men worked in the economic sectors and were most severely affected by economic reforms. Some authors state that women were better prepared than men to accept low-wage or part-time jobs (Morell, 1999). Over the past years women's comparative advantage has declined, because men's unemployment is shrinking faster, falling from 13.2 percent in 1993 to 8.6 percent in 1998; for women this was 7.8 percent and 7 percent. (Figures pertain to potential economically active male and female populations) (IHF, 2000).

Overall, regardless of education level, women's long-term unemployment is rising, and is comparable with or higher than that of men (UNDP, 1999). It appears that more women than men belong to the long-term unemployed, which means they are excluded from official unemployment registers, and are not eligible for unemployment compensation.

Over the past decade increasing numbers of women have not registered themselves as officially seeking work. This is linked to a lack of employment opportunities, women's



increased work burden in the household and on family plots, and the greater burden placed on traditional roles (UNDP, 1999). One effect is that women may benefit less from pensions and, as in Western Europe, women tend to be over-represented in part-time employment (Olsson, 2000; Eurostat), the wage gender gap is observed in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS countries (UNECE, 2000).

It has been observed that rural women are often more vulnerable to unemployment than urban women and rural men. Polish women belong to the group of rural inhabitants having the highest unemployment rate, i.e. non-farming rural people, appeared more often to be unemployed than the average (20.1 percent vs 14.1 percent). The same can be said for the farming population in Poland, as women in this group are more often unemployed than men (11.6 percent vs 8.7 percent).

The high unemployment rates for women, including rural women, are caused by many interrelated factors. One is the closing down of state-owned enterprises; among these are state-farms, which used to employ many women. At the same time, alternative employment for women is scarce. In many rural areas this is an issue, as is the lack of re-training and re-education opportunities, especially for women (IFAD, 2002).

Because of the closing down of state-enterprises and farms, women have lost the child care support provided, which substantially alleviated their work at home. Because the newly private services are too expensive for most households, women are more restricted when they look for a job. Most household work continues to be seen as women's responsibility and men's contribution is minimal. Over the past decade, the pressure on women to become housewives and mothers was stronger than the influence of any discussion of traditional gender divisions of labour in the household. The result is that more women find it too difficult to combine a full-time job with work in the household.

A growing number of women decided to leave the formal labour market because part-time jobs were scarce. In Bulgaria, more rural women left the formal labour market after transition than men. As women lost their incomes they worked in their households and more intensively on their agricultural plots (Meurs, 1999). The importance of these plots has been observed in other countries, as in rural areas, women produce food on plots or on their farms for household food consumption or (partly) for sale or to generate income outside the formal labour market.



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In the Czech Republic, the position of rural women is weaker than that of urban women, they are more often unemployed and have more difficulty finding a new job. On average, rural women are older and have a lower educational level (Majerova, 1999). They are not mobile because they are tied to their household plots, which offer household security when other household members have lost jobs or the cost of living has increased.

### *Poverty*

Women make up a large proportion of the rural poor (IFAD, 2002). In Lithuania, where the average per capita income in rural areas is lower than in urban (US\$150 vs



A little girl at a fountain.  
(U. Piazzi, 1969)

US\$100), more than one-third of the rural employed earn between US\$50–US\$100, mostly rural women earn less than US\$50. Reasons rural women may not be employed include a low educational level, a heavy work load, traditional values and employers' bias against women.

Moreover, there is a higher probability that a woman will become the only adult in the household who is providing an income. This is because women tend to live longer and many marriages end in divorce. In the 15 countries in the region, men lived on average 8.4 years less than women in 1999 (UN, 2002). Reasons given are that men are more

often violent and commit suicide and frequently succumb to alcoholism and smoking. The high divorce rates, which are among the highest in the world, combined with the habit of allocating children to the mother after divorce, increase women's insecurity.

Generally, divorce rates varied in 1997 from 3.3 percent and 7.3 percent in Bosnia-Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia, to 53 percent in Hungary, 56 percent in the Czech Republic up to 63 percent in Latvia and 68 percent in Belarus (UNICEF, 1999). Moreover, many men do not support their former family financially and women remarry less than men. The result is a substantial number of female-headed households, ranging from 16 percent in Estonia, to 44 percent in Slovenia (UN, 2002).

Because of women's higher unemployment rates, fewer opportunities of finding a job, lower wages and their limited availability for full employment because of the high work load in the home, women (and their children) run a higher risk of poverty.

Elderly women are particular at risk because of their higher life expectancy and lower degree of mobility, and therefore make up the majority of the rural elderly. As has already been stated pensioners, especially women, have low incomes because on average they earned lower wages and their pension age is earlier.

### *Emerging differences*

An important trend is the growing difference between women. Age; ethnicity; dwelling place; number of children; educational level; marital status and employment status influence the standard of living and opportunities and constrain improvement. Emerging differences between rural women are described in a Hungarian study (Kovács and Váradi, 1999). The most vulnerable women are mothers with many children; single parents and widows; the elderly; disabled; women belonging to ethnic minorities and rural women.

Women waged workers appeared to be worse off than small-scale farmers or horticulturist entrepreneurs; the latter group is the most prosperous. Factors supporting the success of the horticulturists include the fact that property became available after agricultural restructuring and privatization. Other factors include their knowledge; skills; having an entrepreneurial mentality; their strong networks and access to markets. The same authors observed during research (1997) that class differences appear between well-to-do rural housewives, who do not need a job, and working class women (Kulcsár and Brown, 2000).

Another study carried out in Hungary, showed the rise of rural female entrepreneurs in two different border areas. Driven by economic necessity, they filled specific economic niches in the community. Their less successful neighbours envy them, thus creating, according to the authors, 'new divisions within the community' (Momsen, *et al.*, 1999).

### *Access to resources*

No systematic and comparable data are available on rural and farming women's access to resources. Scattered information indicates that women in the region are



Manually harvesting FAO-supplied wheat at Banovici.  
(C. Grace, 1995)



Woman producing  
local handicrafts.  
(R. Faidutti, 1998)

discriminated against and have less access than men to a whole range of resources, varying from house-ownership to land, credit and training or agricultural extension.

### *Land*

Sex-disaggregated data on land rights and land use in the region are scarce. Dispersed information stresses women's more difficult position with respect to land rights, access to the land market and control over land. In Bulgaria, research on 1 200 farming men and women showed that land was mostly registered as the property of the man. Twice as many men as women were landowners and more men than women

expected to become landowners after land reform is completed. It is noted that men own relatively more land than women (Fotev, *et al.*, 2001).

In Turkey, because of the inheritance patterns, it is unrealistic to expect women to be entitled to land ownership (Unaldi, 1999). The same is true for Uzbekistan, although women and men formally have equal rights, under customary law women may not inherit agricultural land. It is known that managers of collective farms in Uzbekistan allocated less land to families without sons. In Russia, the law encourages women's access to land through individually issued land share certificates. It fails, however, to protect these rights once individual shares are converted into peasant-farm enterprises. Russian law provides that peasant farms are held under joint ownership. It does not require that all members of a farm family list their names on the application to register the farm, as it is normally registered in the name of the head of household (Giovarelli and Duncan, 1999).

Albanian legislation does not discriminate against women in terms of ownership. However, during the privatization process, most land allotted was assigned to the (usually male) head of household. In Azerbaijan, despite equal rights for men and women to inherit or distribute property, research showed that in 90 percent of the privatization cases, men became the owners. In Kirgizstan women can own land and formal inheritance laws do not discriminate against women. However, the prevailing traditional law allocates land and other property to men.

Although women's right to land was improved in 1998, there are many obstacles.

These include cultural stereotypes; society's negative view of women inheriting property; women's poor knowledge of their rights; lack of motivation and experience in the market economy; the rule that economic partnerships are established only between men and a privatization process that favours men.

In a paper presented to a conference on women's rural development issues (1999) Giovarelli and Duncan list potential legal obstacles – laws or absence of legislation – concerning women's participation in the disposition of land and ownership use in Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries:

- In some countries, laws allocate land rights or land management rights only to the head of household. In such cases women have no independent legal access to land and land-use decisions.
- Women with legal rights to land may not have their names registered on the legal documents, making their legal rights uncertain.
- Although for land transactions (lease, sale, mortgage), both spouses must legally give their consent when land is held in common ownership, formal written consent is not always required, which weakens women's control of land transactions.
- In the event of divorce, farmwomen risk being worse off. This is the case when the marriage contract contains provisions whereby property used by one spouse for occupational needs is excluded from the common property. When the farm is considered the husband's business, the woman's labour input remains unpaid, and she may be left without capital assets when a ruling determines that members of a farm cannot leave the farm with land and property in-kind. When property is divided, according to use by spouses during their marriage, women may be left with the less valuable property, without machinery, since women predominantly do the manual farm labour.
- Although in most countries, women and men legally have the same right to inherit, others have no formal inheritance laws, and thus follow customary law. In countries where Islamic law is followed, daughters may only inherit half as much as sons. In other countries, farming women may find it difficult to continue



Harvesting maize cobs for human consumption. Family members participate in this small family enterprise. (R. Faidutti, 2000)

farming when their husband dies. Since the children are entitled to half the property – females and males get equal shares – the widow may be left with too small a plot to ensure her basic needs.

### *Credit*

Access to credit is a main obstacle for almost all rural and farming people in the region and high interest rates are a problem for all. Additional problems for farming people include the unfinished privatization process, insecurity of land titles and problematic land structure causing banks to be hesitant to accept land as collateral. In addition, both male and female farmers lack sufficient information and skills to submit an application for credit, although women seem to have even less chance of obtaining credit.

Bulgarian research, carried out on 1 200 farming households in 120 villages on people who had received credit, revealed that twice as many were men. Nearly one-third, 31 percent, worked with credit against only 17 percent of women (Fotev, *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, in Turkey, it is reported that women's membership to agricultural credit cooperatives is rare. The few female members appear to be widows without grownup sons, who do not participate in meetings and other activities. Their contact with the cooperative is established through a male relative or the *mubtar* (Unaldi, 1999).

The extra obstacles women face are manifold. One problem is that women often apply for small amounts of money, which banks are not keen to grant, and women's low management skills are to their disadvantage. Another obstacle is that their businesses are often unregistered or registered in someone else's name. Certainly one problem is the lack of access to land, and other property, to use as security for loans (UNDP, 1999). This is linked to the application of customary or religious law over formal rules, inadequacy of regulations and traditional stereotypes.

### *Extension services and technology*

Constraints faced by women accessing basic resources such as land and credit affect their access to extension services and technological development. Turkish research showed that women's access to agricultural extension appeared limited, as extension

has traditionally been provided to male heads of households, who failed to pass their new knowledge and skills to their wives and daughters. Many women, therefore, continued to use old methods and face a knowledge gap. As a consequence, their productivity level is lower than necessary and their work burden high (Unaldi, 1999).

## Violence against women

**Domestic violence against women**, rape, forced prostitution and trafficking of women is widespread in the region. Information from involved actors, such as women NGOs, police and surveys, indicate that violence against women has grown over the past decade in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS. Social and economic hardship after transition, wars and armed conflict in the region, contribute substantially to this trend.

### *Women and armed conflict*

It is estimated that during the 1992–1995 conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 20 000 to 50 000 women were raped as part of a deliberate pattern of abuse (UNICEF, 1999). Threats to women's security are linked to large population movements that occur in conflict-torn areas. Moreover, the interruption of agricultural production and destruction of infrastructure and equipment have directly resulted in widespread food insecurity.

### *Domestic violence*

Rural women may be more vulnerable to domestic violence than urban women. Research indicates that poverty and low incomes, unemployment and lack of alternative job opportunities; low education and patriarchal traditions are related to violence against women.

Research in Albania found one in five women reported they had been forced into sexual relationships. Rural women reported the incidence of physical violence in intimate relationships with men more often than urban women (46 percent vs 36 percent). The increase in sexual violence appeared to be higher in rural areas



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(28 percent vs 16 percent). It was reported that women's degree of economic dependence impacted the incidence of maltreatment as one-third of women employed outside the home reported abuse (35 percent), and more than half of women working at home (53 percent of unemployed, 56 percent of housewives). Female agricultural workers were abused to a higher degree (58 percent) and said they were unable to leave the violent relationship.

One result is that victims may accept violence as 'normal', be ashamed or afraid and therefore seek to conceal it, meaning domestic violence remains largely invisible and, after transition, domestic violence seems more widespread. Alcoholism among men, one of the triggers of domestic violence, has become a great social problem, along with deteriorating living conditions and lack of future prospects, which has made men insecure and more aggressive. At the same time, it is more difficult for

### Box 3.2 WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Women's protection in armed conflict and their central position to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace building are of increasing concern to the international community. The UN Security Council passed a resolution on Women, Peace and Security in 2000, however, the deliberate killing, rape, mutilation, forced displacement, abduction, trafficking and torture of women and girls continue unabated in contemporary armed conflicts.

As soldiers, refugees, survivors of landmine incidents and sexual violence, women experience conflict in a different way to men, and are often most affected by the violence and economic instability associated with armed conflict. Whether it is at home, in flight or in camps for displaced people, women are threatened by rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual humiliation and mutilation.

However, when peace is negotiated and societies are reconstructed after war, women are grossly underrepresented. For example, no Bosnian women were present at the Dayton Peace negotiations in 1995. And though the war in Tajikistan has left a population of 25 000 widows to head their families and lead the reconstruction of their communities, only one woman sits on the 26-person National Reconciliation Commission. It is crucial that women be active and respected participants in peace-building and reconstruction.

Source: UNIFEM ([www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org))



women to escape a violent home situation as the weakening economic situation makes them dependent on men, and the law does not deal correctly with domestic violence. It does not help that women are often ignorant of their human rights.

For example, several surveys, in Azerbaijan and Belarus, show that the largest threat of violence against women comes from husbands, fathers, friends or people close to them (UN, 2002). In Kirgizstan, recent research revealed that out of 1 000 female respondents, 89.2 percent had been abused by their husbands, partners, relatives or children. Among the abused women, 65 percent had special secondary and university education, only one-quarter sought formal help. Those who did not feared the publicity, increased violence and did not trust the police or other helpers. Another reason is the inability to report family abuse, as interference in family life is considered taboo, and formal helpers are not trained to handle domestic violence.

Bulgarian research carried out on 1 200 farming men and women revealed a significant incidence of domestic violence. However, both women and men said they were against state and public interference in such cases. According to Bulgarian legislature, interference is only necessary in very severe cases (Fotev, *et al.*, 2001). Lately, domestic violence is discussed more as women's awareness has increased, although this is more the case in urban than in rural areas.

### *Trafficking in women*

In the 1990s, trafficking in women, as domestic or sexual workers, increased in the region and is of great concern. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights reports increased trafficking of women in almost all countries in this region (IHF, 2000). Women are trafficked mainly to Western Europe, estimated at some 120 000 women and girls each year, other countries in Central and Eastern Europe also may be their destination. NGOs estimate that only in Albania some 30 000 women currently work abroad as prostitutes.

Traffickers usually choose girls and women from poor families, implying that girls and women from rural areas run a relative high risk of being trafficked. Reliable data are lacking, but the main causes seem to be poverty and a lack of future prospects for many unemployed women and their families. Trafficking is one of the causes of the growing number of women infected with HIV/AIDS.



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### The growing threat of HIV/AIDS

**HIV/AIDS is increasing at an alarming rate** in the region, particularly in the CIS, which has the fastest-growing epidemic in the world. Poverty is a major facilitating factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS, and women have been identified as a vulnerable group. Furthermore, fewer or no HIV testing facilities, inadequate HIV surveillance mechanisms, leads to under-reporting of HIV rates, poor overall health infrastructure and more restricted access to healthcare facilities contribute to increased vulnerability to the epidemic in rural areas (UNAIDS, 2002a).

**Box 3.3 HIV/AIDS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE,  
AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES**

Approximately one million people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia live with HIV/AIDS (more than double the 420 000 at the end of 1999). An estimated 250 000 new HIV infections occurred in 2001. Given the high level of other sexually transmitted infections, and the high rate of injected-drug use among young people, the epidemic seems set to grow considerably. As recently as 1994, no country in this region reported more than a few HIV infections. A year later, the first HIV outbreak occurred in Belarus and Ukraine. The epidemic then took off in other countries of the region.

The Russian Federation is at the forefront of this region's epidemic. New cases of HIV have almost doubled annually for several years. In Uzbekistan, more HIV cases were reported in 2002 alone, compared to all the previous decade. Ukraine remains the most affected country in this region – and for Europe – with an estimated adult HIV prevalence rate of 1 percent.

The vast majority of reported HIV infections are among young people – those who inject drugs. It is estimated that up to 1 percent of the population of countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States uses injected drugs, placing these people and their sexual partners at high risk of infection. Outbreaks of HIV-related to injected drug use have been reported in several Central Asian republics. In the Russian Federation, and in many Central Asian republics, the wave of injected drug use is closely correlated with socio-economic upheavals.

For example, the living standards of tens of millions of people have plummeted, amid rising unemployment and poverty. The rigid social controls of the past have been eroded, and new common norms and values have not been established. Unprecedented numbers of young people have not completed their secondary schooling; in some countries public health and other services have deteriorated badly. Another factor causing increased drug use is the four-fold increase in world production of heroin in the past decade, along with the opening of new trafficking routes across Central Asia.

The proportion of sexually transmitted HIV infections is increasing, and more people (mostly women), appear to be contracting HIV through sexual transmission, while more pregnant women are testing positive for HIV – suggesting the epidemic's transfer to the wider population. There is evidence that young people in several countries are sexually active at an earlier age and that premarital sex is increasing, yet, awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS remain dismal in many places. According to a 2001 survey in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, one-third of young women (aged 15-24) had never heard of AIDS; a mere 10 percent of teenage girls in Tajikistan had heard of HIV/AIDS; in Ukraine, which has the highest HIV prevalence rate in Europe, only 9 percent of adolescent girls were aware of HIV prevention methods. In the psychological and socio-economic aftermath of the Balkans conflicts, young people are now more vulnerable to HIV, as high-risk behaviours are on the rise. Although improving in some places, levels of condom use remain low.

Source: UNAIDS 2002b and 2003.



## Gender issues and agricultural policies

**Rural women in the EU-15 countries** in the accession, applicant and CIS countries and Balkan states, face different situations in relation to food security. In effect, the agricultural sector in each region faces its own set of challenges. The EU-15 countries are attempting to achieve a balance between agriculture and environmental quality, nature conservation, food safety, farm diversification and human development, whereas the accession, applicant, Balkan and CIS countries, are engaged in privatization and structural reform of agriculture and food systems (Verbole, 2002).

It has been demonstrated that rural women in both regions face similar difficulties in the cumulative burden of reproductive and productive work. This translates more or less directly onto the labour market as persistent wage gaps in relation to men, reduced opportunities for career advancement, training and re-training, over-representation of women in precarious labour conditions (part-time, temporary) and in the informal/illegal labour market. Women's labour in rural areas is consistently under-reported and official ownership and management of farms, usually male, hides the real contribution of women to these enterprises.



Farmer displays peppers on the wall, that are drying in the sun.

*(R. Faidutti, 1998)*

In some countries, specific discrimination against girls and women has been reported in education and land rights. Violence against women, whether through domestic violence, trafficking or armed conflict, also contributes towards further marginalization of women and of rural women in particular. Therefore, bringing gender issues to the forefront of the rural agenda will depend largely on the presence of women in decision-making positions.

## Women's participation in politics

**Research has demonstrated the low involvement** of women in public decision-making and formal politics in general. On average, women are less well represented in parliaments and governments, certainly at the ministerial and sub-ministerial level. Among civil servants, at the highest or second highest-level, women are a minority (Council of the European Union, 1999). For example, in Spain 4 percent of the highest level civil servants are women, as compared with 19 percent in Portugal; among the second highest level civil servants, 6 percent, are women in Finland and 32 percent in Sweden.

Women in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS are under-represented in public life, including politics. Currently their political participation and influence is low. Moreover, many women who are present in parliaments or governments are hardly visible or proactive as prejudices and stereotypes continue to undermine women's political influence.

After transition the number of women in politics rapidly fell. The quota-system existing in a few accession, applicant, Balkan and CIS countries, that ensured a minimum of female representatives, disappeared, although it must be noted, in Slovenia, female quotas in politics appeared after transition. Women's high and increased workload in the home, coupled with their labour activities, limits their opportunity of becoming active in the public sphere (IHF, 2000).

Over time the situation has generally improved. The presence of women in parliament has increased in the majority of EU-15 countries; however representation of women at the ministerial and sub-ministerial level increased only slightly (Inter-parliamentary Union, UN). Women's participation and influence in politics is on the rise in Central and Eastern Europe and CIS countries, where most countries register a higher participation of women at the parliamentary, ministerial and sub-ministerial level. This is the result of lobbying by women's NGOs and the establishment of new national organizations for the advancement of women (UNDP, 1999). In some countries quite the opposite occurred. Countries that were ahead of others in the representation of women, such as Albania, Hungary, Poland and Romania, have fallen

behind in terms of the percentage of parliamentary seats occupied by women.

In regional parliaments and governments women are somewhat better represented, compared to the national level, with an average participation of women around 24 percent (Eurostat). With the exception of Sweden, no country comes close to equal representation of men and women in these important political structures. The same picture arises in many Central and Eastern European Countries and the CIS; in Bosnia Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Poland and Turkey there are hardly any differences between the national and municipal level, whereas in Albania women's local representation is worse with 1 percent of women in the councils vs 11 percent in parliament (UNDP, 1999).

### Female representation in public committees

**Together with government and parliament**, expert groups and advisory committees are important loci of power. This is true for most public committees and advisory boards in the EU-15 member states (Council of the European Union, 1999). With comparable structures at the European level, the less committees deal with social issues, the more male dominated they are; the same is true for Romania. In the Chamber of Deputies, since 1996, the commissions on economic policy, reform and privatization, industry and services and public administration, land administration and environment count only a small proportion of women (3 percent, 5 percent and 7 percent respectively). It has been noted that women are under-represented in leadership positions in non-governmental organizations, where they account for a quarter of all decision-makers, and only 12 percent head such organizations (UNDP, 2000a).

### Non-governmental organizations

**An important development in accession**, applicant, Balkan and CIS countries is the increased activity of the NGO-sector, and especially of women's organizations, which contribute much to the improvement of women's situation in various fields. NGOs offer a range of services to women victims of domestic or sexual violence and trafficking; provide legal assistance to those who have been discriminated against; distribute information on family planning; HIV/AIDS and the risks of drugs and

other health-related issues; organize training and schooling for women; establish self-employment projects; fight gender specific stereotypes and promote women's engagement and participation in public life. (IHF, 2000; Bak, *et al.*, 2000). Women NGOs in the region obtain support from organizations abroad and from other international organizations (IHF, 2000). In rural areas, the rise of women's NGOs seems slower than in urban areas. In many cases they are not present meaning an important source of information and services to women is missing in rural areas.

## Gender mainstreaming of EU policy

**In recent years, women's representation** in decision-making has become an issue of concern for the European Union. In the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) the European Union defined equality as a central task of the European Community. This includes explicitly the issue of employment and pay as well as equality in power and decision-making (Council of the European Union, 1999). Member states are pressed to develop national plans of action to improve women's representation and participation in public life.

Statistics are unavailable on the representation of rural women. However, the EU places specific attention on the participation of women in rural development. Recently the Director-General of Agriculture published several documents concerning the gender mainstreaming of rural development policy. In these documents the European Union explicitly stressed, for the first time, the importance of women's participation in the development of (local) rural development plans and policies.

The EU considers women's participation important for various reasons. First, participation is important for women themselves and second to improve the quality of rural development policies (EC, 2000a; EU, 1999). One of the priority themes of the new LEADER+<sup>9</sup> programme concerns the participation of rural women in employment and decision-making (EC, 2000d). The European Union also publishes a guide concerning gender mainstreaming of structural funds. The integration of women

<sup>9</sup> Leader+ is one of four initiatives financed by EU structural funds and is designed to help rural actors consider the long-term potential of their region.

and their interest in projects is currently one criterion for evaluation (EC, 2000e).

This growing awareness and readiness of the European Union to promote gender equality in decision-making is promising, since it goes beyond 'awareness' and focuses on implementation of concrete mechanisms. Gender mainstreaming of structural funds make sanctions possible, where women are not integrated into projects, or women are not well represented in decision-making structures related to rural development. Much still depends on the readiness of European policymakers to enforce integration of gender issues in projects and promote the gender mainstreaming of national policy (Braithwaite, 2000).

## Women in agricultural organizations and rural development programmes

**Little data exists on the representation** of women on farm and in other agricultural organizations, a European wide comparison cannot be made and national data on the topic cannot be traced. On average, farmwomen in The Netherlands are better represented at the regional level of the farm union (13 percent) and at the level of commissions (30 percent), than they are at the national board level (7 percent). In Ireland about 5 percent of farm union board members are female (in 2000). In 1998 in The Netherlands 12 percent of farm union members were female and 15 percent of board members (Bock and De Rooij, 2000).

National research projects reveal that women participate less in rural development programmes than men. This is true for rural development subsidy schemes, integration in specific projects and their representation in (local) rural development committees and advisory boards (Bock, 1999, 2002; Bak, *et al.*, 2000; Oedl-Wieser, 1999; Houses of Oireachtas, 1994). Research in The Netherlands revealed that in 1997 only 6.7 percent of all members of land consolidation committees were women; moreover more than half of the committees (58 percent) have no female members at all.

In the four Dutch LEADER II<sup>10</sup>-areas, on average 17 percent of members of the

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<sup>10</sup> The Leader II Programme, which ended in 1999, was an EU funded initiative for rural development.



local action groups are female (Bock, 1998). The participation of women (in 1997/1998) ranged from 0 to 33 percent on the committee that judges project proposal quality and requests government subsidies. At the same time, women submitted only 9 percent of all proposals presented for a subsidy from the rural renewal fund. Of all the awarded projects (1997–1998) only 4 percent originated with women (Bock, 2002).

In Poland, an evaluation of assistance programmes for the development of rural areas showed that four out of 25 organizations participating in the survey had a programme directed towards rural women. Another 12 attempted to begin such programmes but indicated financial problems and women's disinterest (Bak, *et al.*, 2000). Research among rural women, who managed to gain access to these assistance programmes, revealed that more than two-thirds encountered difficulties. Barriers to access seem to have been insufficient information on the programmes and cost of participation. Nevertheless, participation seems to have been effective, because the majority of rural women involved, who were later surveyed, stated that their economic situation had improved.

Finally, research on rural development in West, Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS identified a broad range of problems and needs of rural women (listed below). The degree of incidence varies between the regions (Bock, 1998, 2002; Houses of the Oireachtas, 1994; Oedl-Wieser, 1999; Bak, *et al.*, 2000; UNDP, 1999).

- increasing burden on women because of the ageing of the population;
- lack of good quality social and medical services in rural areas;
- absence of child care;
- closing of schools and deterioration in the performance and quality of existing schools;
- lack of public transport or costly transport resulting in reduction of mobility and participation in public life;
- need to accept low paid, low quality and insecure employment;
- need to commute to nearby cities to find work;
- under-registration of women's work;
- under-registration of female unemployment;



## Gender issues and agricultural policies

- ineligibility for training and social employment schemes because lacking formal registration of female unemployment;
- lack of training and re-training courses as for example in starting and managing own business;
- lack of employment projects that are both attractive and accessible to rural women;
- lack of part-time employment;
- lack of access to loans and credit;
- lack of advisory services on civil law;
- lack of assistance from NGOs;
- physical and social isolation;
- feelings of loneliness and depression;
- poverty and burden of managing low incomes;
- problems with addictions (alcoholism) in the family;
- rise in violence against women as a result of poverty, stress and increasing mobility.

## Conclusions

**In the last five to ten years the situation** of rural women has not fundamentally changed. On average their circumstances have developed along the lines indicated in the 1997 FAO-publication *Rural Women and Food Security* (Howard-Borjas and De Rooij, 1997). For example, feminization of agriculture on the one hand and masculinization on the other continue today. Women leave farms to find employment elsewhere. They leave large industrialized farms, that no longer require female labour, and smaller farms that depend, to a growing degree, on off-farm earned extra income.

In addition, many women want an independent, professional career. This is an important factor driving them out of farming as they wish to use their professional education, which may have nothing to do with farming. This may seem paradoxical, but the same development pulls women into farming, either as new farm heads, to substitute their off-farm income-earning husbands, or as new rural entrepreneurs, who start new income-generating activities on the farm. The feminization of agriculture may be the result of the absence of appropriate alternative employment and training or re-training opportunities for women, traditional values and discrimination in the labour market. The latter pull factors are to be found particularly in Central and Eastern European countries and the CIS.

Women who leave may feel liberated from hard work and provided the opportunity to develop a new career, although their departure may be out of material necessity, or because their labour is no longer required. For those remaining on the farm, being a farming woman may be an expression of their freedom to choose an occupation. However, they may feel forced to place personal wishes aside to secure food or a living for the family.

The feminization of agriculture may be judged positively, for farmwomen as a group, as it improves their legal position. That is to say, it facilitates women's access to resources, such as land, capital and farm profits and enables them to take a seat on various boards, open to farm heads only. This may formally be the case, in practice being a farm-head may not necessarily change the division of labour or responsibilities indoors. This is clear in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS but,



## Conclusions

by women gaining formal power, at least one significant bottleneck is passed.

Agenda 2000 and the 1999 CAP reforms may be considered potential opportunities for women, especially when combined with the renewed effort of gender-mainstreaming of EU policy. First, it admits the importance of the quality of life in rural areas, in economic and in social terms. Second, it entails re-evaluation of investments in social capital, now considered the foundation of innovation and revitalization. Third, women's employment and political participation may increase through the creation of new rural enterprises and the creation of new bottom up governing structures and methods. Old structures and traditions, including gender-specific restrictions, are persistent and difficult to overcome (Bock, 2002) and the CAP reform of June 2003 entailed adjustments in the agricultural sector, which remain to be assessed.

At the same time life is more difficult in the more remote areas, especially in Central and Eastern European countries and the CIS and in some areas of Western Europe. As a result of the absence of employment opportunities and the ongoing crisis in the agricultural sector, many rural families must cope with low incomes and the erosion of the quality of life in these areas.

Accession and applicant countries face specific problems and insecurities, which affect both women and men; although, as wives and mothers, women may experience specific risks. They must deal with discrimination in the labour market, fewer possibilities of becoming active in another occupation; have greater difficulty accessing resources; higher workloads; lack of services; persistent traditional gender roles and unstable family situations.

One result is an increase in domestic violence against women and abuse of women. This is principally in isolated areas, where there is scarce means of communication and no women's organizations. Therefore, it may be difficult for women (and children) to stand up for themselves or seek help. Women's equal access to the SAPARD and other pre-accession funds, together with more gender sensitive authorities, would be advantageous to all rural women.

## Recommendations

**The following recommendations** are suggested to positively strengthen the situation of rural women across the region, so that they may better access credit, markets, education and services.

- Rural women's capacity building should be facilitated, such as increased access to schooling, training and re-training programmes, to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in farming and the private labour market;
- Gender specific amendments of laws and regulations and new legislation are required to improve women's legal position;
- Investment in rural areas is needed to improve quality and to arrest the erosion of public, social and medical services required to enhance life in rural areas for individuals and families. These include accessible and affordable child care facilities, delivery of basic health care, well-functioning quality schools, communication and information networks and other infrastructure;
- Raise awareness among the rural population of the rights of women and improve legal, social and health support to rural women who are victims of violence. Violence against women should be strictly defined in criminal law and pursued by justice systems;
- Provide support to rural women's NGOs, to enlarge their role and influence in civil society.

In addition, the following recommendations have been made in the context of the eleventh session of the working party on Women and the Family in Rural Development of the European Commission on Agriculture (Verbole, 2002):

- Continue to promote rural women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels;
- Promote equal access to ownership for rural men and women to land and other resources;
- Improve the knowledge-base on local initiatives for development in rural areas, especially those focusing on farm and rural women;



## Recommendations

- Promote the building of a solid quantitative and qualitative database on rural women to gain better knowledge of their specific contribution to the rural economy and assist the formulation of more accurate policies and strategies and measure improvements resulting from development programmes (programme monitoring and evaluation);
- Follow-up on existing international and national plans of action and support the formulation of plans in countries that do not yet have one;
- Monitor the evolution of such crucial processes as the ageing population, the ageing-related feminization of agricultural activities (in some countries) and out-migration of youth and its impacts on food security;
- Set up a gender-sensitive monitoring system on the influence of poor infrastructure and low spending power including new requirements and pressures on rural areas;
- Investigate the issue of decentralization and its impact on participation of men and women in decision-making;
- Monitor rural women's working position in formal and informal sectors (social security issues) and stimulate development of alternative activities for rural women (i.e. small-scale enterprises, organic agriculture; aquaculture, small-scale processing industries, agri-tourism);
- Investigate how existing and potential international rural women's and related networks can support national and local networks and how they can be reinforced throughout the region.



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# Latin America and the Caribbean



# Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>11</sup>

## An essential contribution

**The Special Rapporteur of the United Nations** refers to ‘discrimination against women and its impact on the realization of the right to food’<sup>12</sup>, as one of the most serious constraints to food security. For many reasons this statement can be considered true for Latin America and the Caribbean, where rural women play a fundamental role in ensuring food security in each country, but find themselves held back in many areas. They account for almost half the rural population and provide an essential contribution to food production, yet their work remains invisible.

Women are overwhelmingly responsible for reproductive activities and feed their families as best they can in the face of widespread poverty (see Table 4.1). They have been strongly affected by liberalization and globalization of trade; and by the accelerated growth and circulation of knowledge, from which they are largely marginalized. Finally, as citizens, women are unable to fully exercise their rights or develop their human potential. Moreover, the rural women of Latin America and the Caribbean live in a heterogeneous continent with varying levels of rural and economic development and a wide range of cultures and races. Agro-ecological conditions, territorial dimensions and distances to urban centres vary within and between countries.

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<sup>11</sup>This chapter is based on the work of Ms Soledad Parada, FAO consultant.

<sup>12</sup>United Nations. Commission on Human Rights, 57th Session, report by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, submitted by Mr Jean Seigler in accordance with the Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2000/10.

**Table 4.1**  
Poverty and undernourishment in Latin America and the Caribbean

	Food-deficit country (2000)	Proportion living below US\$1 a day (1990–2001)	Proportion of undernourished in total population		
			1979–1981	1990–1992	1998–2000
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN			13	13	11
NORTH AMERICA			4	5	5
Mexico[3]		8.0	4	5	5
CENTRAL AMERICA			20	17	20
Costa Rica[3]		6.9	8	6	5
El Salvador[3]			17	12	14
Guatemala[4]	Yes	16.0	18	14	25
Honduras[4]	Yes	23.8	31	23	21
Nicaragua[4]	Yes	82.3	26	30	29
Panama[3]		7.6	21	19	18
THE CARIBBEAN			20	26	25
Cuba[3]	Yes		4	5	13
Dominican Rep.[4]		<2	25	27	26
Haiti[5]	Yes		48	64	50
Jamaica[3]		<2	10	14	9
Trinidad and Tobago[3]		12.4	6	13	12
SOUTH AMERICA			14	14	10
Argentina[1]			-	-	-
Bolivia[4]	Yes	14.4	26	26	23
Brazil[3]		9.9	15	13	10
Chile[2]		<2	7	8	4
Colombia[3]		14.4	22	17	13
Ecuador[3]	Yes	20.2	11	8	5
Guyana[3]		<2	13	19	14
Paraguay[3]		19.5	13	18	14
Peru[3]		15.5	28	40	11
Suriname[3]			18	12	11
Uruguay[2]		<2	3	6	3
Venezuela[4]		15.0	4	11	21

NOTES: the population undernourished in 1998–2000:

[1] <2.5 percent undernourished

[2] 2.5–4 percent undernourished

[3] 5–19 percent undernourished

[4] 20–34 percent undernourished

[5] 35 percent undernourished

a. Poverty line is equivalent to US\$1.08 (1993 PPP US\$). b. Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified.

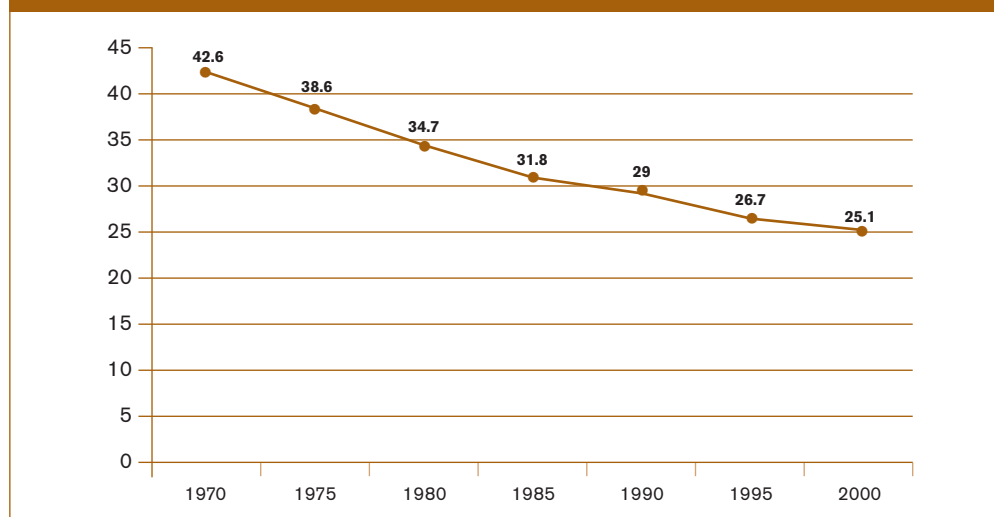
Source: FAO, The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2002.

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture

## Declining rural population

**The rural population in this region** has fallen in recent decades, and now accounts for about one-quarter of the total population. This proportion needs to be raised to include the urban population of municipal centres, in predominantly rural areas, whose activity is related to agriculture and who experience the same circumstances and problems as the rest of the rural population.

**Figure 4.1**  
Percentage of rural population in Latin America and the Caribbean 1970–2000



Source: CELADE. Demographic Bulletin No. 63, 1999.

The decrease in the rural population is strongly influenced by migration, which is driven by insecure living conditions in the rural sector, and involves men, women and the young. The scale of rural areas and of urbanization varies between countries; in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras more than 50 percent of the population live in rural areas, and in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela less than 20 percent.

### *Migration*

Migration continues in the region, and mainly involves women as a household coping strategy, and young women as a personal strategy. Rural-urban migration and

emigration to other countries are available family strategies to cope with rural poverty in Latin America. Migration is the result of better education for the rural young, of both sexes, who are unable to find openings for personal advancement.

### *The indigenous population*

The broad ethnic composition of the population is not always considered when policies are created to overcome poverty and foster food security. Some 400 ethnic groups live in the rural and urban areas of Latin America and the Caribbean, each with its own culture, language, social organization, world vision, economic system and production procedures adapted to its ecosystem. The indigenous population is particularly numerous in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. People of African descent and Afro-Latin American and Afro-Caribbean make up about one-third of the population of the region and live mainly in Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela and in the countries of the Caribbean.

### *Female-headed households*

Various studies reveal an increase in the number of rural female-headed households, particularly in Central America, where El Salvador, Honduras and Panama have shown the highest increase, although, the statistics underestimate the registration of female-headed households, as cultural patterns ascribe men as the head of household. This is confirmed by the fact that countries with this information show a consistently higher proportion of homes in which the woman is the main income provider, exceeding 38 percent in the rural households of El Salvador at the end of the last decade.

This is important as most rural programmes and policies are directed towards men, while there is evidence that women are often responsible for maintaining their families or are the main income providers.

## Rural poverty

Despite their broad diversity, all countries in the region have one common feature a vast proportion of their population, especially the rural, live in poverty. As noted in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, 'Poverty is a major cause of food insecurity and sustainable progress in poverty eradication is critical to improve access to food'.

## An essential Contribution

The statement by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) at the Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002 still holds true, 'without increased, targeted funding to fight world poverty and hunger, the most basic of obstacles to human and economic potential will remain.' (FAO/WFP/IFAD, 2002).

### *The continuation of rural poverty*

In late 2000, more than 60 percent of the region's rural population was living in poverty. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 'relative poverty rates continue to be far higher in the region's rural areas than in its urban centres (54 vs 30 percent of all households). In 1999, nearly 134 million poor people were living in urban areas vs 77 million in rural areas, since the proportion of the total population residing in urban areas is substantially larger. The situation with respect to indigence is quite different, as the size of the population living in extreme poverty is slightly smaller in urban areas (43 million) than in rural areas (46 million), (ECLAC, 2001), (see Table 4.2.)

According to ECLAC data, poverty and indigence have increased in relation to

1980 and remained high, in percentage and absolute terms, throughout the 1990s. The latest data for 2000 indicate a majority of the indigent population lives in rural areas, 52 percent as compared to 48 percent in urban areas (ECLAC, 2001).

**Table 4.2**  
Latin America: level of poverty in rural areas (a)

	Poverty (b)		Indigence (c)	
	Million	Percentage	Million	Percentage
1980	73.0	59.9	39.9	32.7
1990	78.5	65.4	48.4	40.4
1994	75.6	65.1	47.4	40.8
1997	78.2	63.0	46.6	37.6
1999	77.2	63.7	46.4	38.3

Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America 2000–2001. Santiago, 2001

a) Estimates for 19 countries in the region.

b) Percentage of persons in households with incomes below the poverty line. Includes households below the indigence line.

c) Percentage of persons in households with incomes below the indigence line.

**Box 4.1** METHOD USED TO MEASURE POVERTY

There is no universal definition or method to define poverty, its measurement comprises two stages: (i) identification of the poor and (ii) aggregation of poverty into a synthetic measurement. The first stage defines a threshold, referred to as the poverty line, which identifies the population whose per capita income is lower than the cost of a basket of goods to satisfy their basic needs. Aggregation, for its part, is effected by selecting an indicator based on people's income deficit relative to the poverty line.

Poverty estimates used by ECLAC are calculated using the cost-of-basic-needs, based on poverty line calculations. The poverty line is the minimum income required for members of a household to meet their basic needs. The poverty line for each country and geographical region is estimated on the cost of a basic food basket, considered sufficient to cover the nutritional needs of the population, bearing in mind consumption habits and the actual availability and relative prices of foodstuffs. An estimate of the resources needed for households to satisfy their basic non-food needs is then added to the value of the basic food basket.

The indigence line represents the cost of the food basket, people who are indigent (or extremely poor), are those living in households whose incomes are so low that even if they were to spend all their money on food, they are still unable to meet the nutritional needs of all their members. The value of the poverty line is calculated by multiplying the value of the indigence line by a constant factor that takes basic non-food expenditures into account.

Sources of information include data on family income arising from national household surveys. These data are adjusted for non-response to certain questions on income levels – wage-earners, independent workers and retired people – and for probable distortions from underreporting. This adjustment is made by contrasting the income items in the survey with the estimated household income and expenditure account of the System of National Accounts (SNA), prepared for this purpose on the basis of official information. The concept of income is understood to mean income from paid work (in cash and kind), from independent work (including self-supply and consumption value of products produced by the household), property rents, pensions and allowances, and other transfers received by households. In most countries, household income includes an amount for the imputed rental value of the home when this is owner-occupied.

The percentages of poor and indigent households and individuals are calculated by comparing the monthly per capita value of the poverty and indigence lines with total household income, also expressed in per capita terms. National poverty and indigence rates are estimated as a weighted average of the rates for each geographical area, and are therefore based on the incidence of poverty in each area and on the share of the country's total population that they represent.

SOURCE:  
ECLAC Social Panorama  
of Latin America  
2000–2001.  
Santiago, Chile. 2001.



## An essential Contribution

### *Differences between countries*

Levels of poverty and indigence differ *between* countries, but no country has managed to eliminate rural poverty and indigence. Although rural poverty and indigence have fallen in some countries, the levels are unacceptably high. Significant reductions in poverty and indigence were achieved in the 1990s in Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Panama. Although reductions were realized in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, more than three-quarters of the rural populations in these countries still live in poverty. Rural poverty remained stable but high in Colombia and El Salvador, where there was a rise in the proportion of the indigent population and in Bolivia, Mexico and Venezuela rural poverty and indigence increased.

### *Differences within countries*

Differences in poverty levels also exist *between* and *within* countries. A study by Larrea *The geography of poverty in Ecuador*, cited by Cuvi (2001), places the worst living conditions in the rural Amazon region, which lacks infrastructure, and has limited development and agricultural productivity. Similarly, poverty is more widespread in the rural highlands than in the rural coastal area, especially among the indigenous population, on account of land shortage and erosion, absence of irrigation, credit and technical assistance, and inadequate health and education facilities.

The highest levels of poverty in the region are suffered by women of indigenous Afro-Latin and Afro-Caribbean populations. After centuries of two-pronged exclusion and subordination, based on their ethnicity and gender, these women, at the beginning of this new millennium have the worst economic and social indicators, limited cultural recognition and restricted access to decision-making bodies (Hopenhayn Bello, 2001).

Poverty affects many rural households in Latin America because of insufficient income and inadequate access to basic sanitation, water and health services. The rural-urban divide is clarified by Table 4.3.



**Table 4.3**  
Access to health and sanitation in selected Latin American and Caribbean countries

Countries	Adequate sanitation (1990–1997)a/		Safe drinking water (1995)b/		Health services (1985–1995)c/	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Bolivia	74	37	88	43	77	52
Brazil	80	30	80	28	NA	NA
Chile	90	99	47	NA	NA	
Colombia	97	56	90	32	NA	NA
Costa Rica	95	70	100	99	100	63
Dominican Republic	76	83	88	55	84	67
Ecuador	95	49	81	10	70	20
Guatemala	95	74	97	48	47	25
Honduras	NA	57	91	66	80	56
Nicaragua	34	35	93	28	100	60
Panama	NA	NA	99	73	95	64
Paraguay	65	14	70	6	90	38
Peru	89	37	91	31	NA	NA
Trinidad and Tobago	99	98	100	88	100	99
Venezuela	64	30	79	79	NA	NA

a/UNICEF 1999. b/World Bank 1999b. c/UNICEF 1996.

NA: not applicable

Source: IFAD Rural Poverty Report 2001



## The status of women and food security

### The feminization of poverty and rural women's coping strategies

**There are no gender-disaggregated** statistical information on the income of men and women, given that household surveys take household income as a whole, although some sources indicate that poverty primarily affects women. A study by Köbrich and Dirven identifies lack of access to assets and disparity in control of these assets as critical factors associated with rural poverty in Latin America.



Peasant woman sowing seed in the Mantaro valley near Huancayo.  
(J. Van Acker, 1979)

The authors indicate this disparity in assets and control is based on studies that reveal poverty primarily impacts women, the young, the old and ethnic communities – all groups traditionally having limited access to and control of land and capital. Another factor is the quality, or productivity of these assets, as largely determining the benefits of their use. These assets are classified into natural capital (land, soil, climate, water, locality); physical capital (investment, infrastructure, technology); financial capital (own resources, credit, subsidies); human capital (education, health) and social capital (trust, cooperation, reciprocity).

Recognition of these assets implies that programmes must consider the characteristics of each, if they are to address poverty comprehensively (Köbrich, Dirven, 2001).

In the face of extreme poverty rural women have developed multiple coping strategies to feed their families. And, at the household micro-level, they have increasingly taken up wage labour. More women are engaged in off-farm rural employment than men, they cultivate home gardens, gather and process food and migrate to urban areas to send remittances home. One coping strategy has been the

**Box 4.2 PEASANT FARMER ORGANIZATIONS AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY**

Peasant farmer organizations act to assert their members' right to exercise full citizenship. In the late 1990s, new organizations were set up and those existing strengthened or restructured for greater independence. These organizations voiced their opinion on food security and emphasized the concept of 'food sovereignty', as reiterated by the Latin American Alliance of Peasant Farmer Organizations (CLOC) at the World Forum on Food Security, held in Havana, Cuba, in 2001.

The participants declared, 'We define food sovereignty as the peoples' right to define their own policies and strategies for the sustainable production, distribution and consumption of food to guarantee the right to food for the entire population, based on small and medium-sized production, respecting their own cultures and the diversity of peasant, fishing and indigenous forms of agricultural production, marketing and management of rural areas, in which women play a fundamental role.'

## The participation of rural women in productive activity

**International agencies report that women** assume much of the burden and social cost of major changes occurring in the wake of globalization of the economy. Impoverishment of various parts of the region, marginalized by fierce international economic competition and rigorous structural adjustment, may have been harsher if women had not increased their production efforts in agriculture and the informal economy.

Over the past 20 years, women's participation in the workforce has increased in all countries of the region. The change reveals feminization of the workforce and employment, although, as reported above, the quality of women's employment is poor. Various forms have evolved: part-time day-work, casual labour, subcontracted work or domestic work – all precarious employment; poorly paid and limited in training opportunities. Moreover, women's work is rarely covered by legal rights, collective labour agreements or social security.

In order to gain an insight into women's contribution to agriculture, we must look beyond official statistics and include the majority of women that employment statistics classify among the economically inactive population.

## Women the invisible producers

**All women of working age**, girls and old women, considered outside the economically active population (EAP), contribute to economic activity. This includes women working in the household, caring for vegetable gardens to feed the family and those whose work goes unacknowledged in the official statistics. These women are involved in some stages of the production cycle and carry out the invisible tasks of gathering food, rearing and feeding backyard animals, cooking for other workers employed in the fields, selling produce in front of their homes.

### *Statistical data on the female EAP in rural areas*

Data for 1999 indicate that there are some 37 million women of working age in rural Latin America; about 13 million are considered part of the EAP, the remaining 24 million feature as invisible workers. This underreporting of rural women's economically productive activity stems from the criteria used, and women's own perception of their work (FAO, based on ECLAC, 2001).

### *Qualitative data on women's labour in rural areas*

To understand women's real contribution to productive activity, FAO developed the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) Programme to promote socio-economic and gender criteria in development projects, programmes and policies and to enable development actions to address differing gender needs and priorities. SEAGA places a gender-sensitive focus on the sociocultural, economic, demographic, policy, institutional and environmental factors influencing the results of development initiatives and on the interplay of these factors. Programme analysis operates at three levels: macro (programmes and policies), intermediate (institutions) and field (communities, homes and individuals)<sup>13</sup>.

Participatory analysis activities were developed with senior officials from the ministries of agriculture, heads of FAO Technical Cooperation Projects and their field staff. These techniques were applied to identify the respective activities of men and

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<sup>13</sup> More information on the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) Programme of FAO is available on its site: [http://www.fao.org/sd/SEAGA/index\\_es.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/SEAGA/index_es.htm)

women in rural areas. Various FAO projects included studies to determine gender roles in productive activities, and confirmed that all women of working age contribute tangibly to food production.

For example, periodic activity studies, better known as seasonal calendar and daily routine gender analysis, conducted in different agro-ecological contexts in various countries have shown that, in the most diverse situations, women considered statistically to be 'inactive' are in fact involved in agricultural production.

Post-Harvest Project GCP/BOL/032/NET, implemented by FAO in Bolivia, focused specifically on the gender-differentiation of labour so that it can tailor its training activities to women. Project findings are explained in Box 4.3.

#### Box 4.3 DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN


In the Quechua community of Arroyito, land is owned by the male head of family; however, men are not responsible for all family plots. Women have their own plots, normally close to home, where they grow plants for household consumption: maize for corn-on-the-cob and chicken feed, bean, cassava and vegetables. Men grow cash crops: sugar cane, maize and cassava.

In the Guaraní community of Barrio Nuevo, men contribute money to the communal fund and have the right to a parcel of land assigned by the village leader. Women make no cash contribution and have no right to community land. In most families, men and the older sons work as day labourers in other communities. Agricultural activity is carried out mainly by woman and children, except for land clearing which is done by men. Plots are small, on average 0.2 hectares, and grow maize and cassava for home consumption.

In the Camba community of Tundy, women are engaged in domestic chores and do not work in the fields, which are the responsibility of men. Women with their daughters, from age six, weave straw (palm leaf) hats, their main source of income, used to cover everyday household needs.

Source: Post-Harvest Project GCP/BOL/032/NET. Bolivia, 2001.

Women's involvement in production activities was examined in three regions of Nicaragua where FAO projects are ongoing, and similar conclusions were arrived at as those for Bolivia (Box 4.3) (Dévé, 1997). Comprehensive gender-based analysis



## The status of women and food security

identified different gender roles in production. Household production units were examined, focusing on the division of labour and respective gender roles in production. These participatory studies indicated that in mixed households (male head of household and spouse), female involvement varied and generally rose in proportion to the level of poverty, sometimes accounting for more than 50 percent of the work. Another study in Nicaragua showed women are involved in all stages of production, except preparing land and applying agro-chemicals.

In Bolivia, the gender-division of labour in maize cultivation was studied in the Quechua community of Arroyito (Maijer, 1997). It was found that women and men worked together in the field, while household chores were mainly done by woman, supported by her family. Men helped with the more laborious activities, such as shedding grain. Most household post-harvest activities for subsistence and cash crops are carried out by women. This same situation applies to other communities of different ethnic groups.

It was noted that women generally undertake concurrent activities, adjusting their work schedules to the demands of the season. In this way they take care of most activities occurring in or near the home, requiring limited physical effort but considerable time, and that can be interspersed with other work.

### *Women's activities are considered domestic rather than productive work*

Although women make a real contribution to agriculture, many of their activities are considered domestic rather than economic. However, many studies have demonstrated that women play a major role in agriculture and food security, and are actively involved throughout the production cycle in sowing, harvesting, post-harvest and marketing activities and in tending vegetable gardens. They are extensively involved in livestock activities, working alongside men in the care of large and small animals, but holding greater responsibility for small animal production.

### *Women's remunerative employment and reduction of rural poverty*

As noted above, women's participation in economic activity, as defined by employment statistics, has increased in recent decades. Nevertheless, their

employment is precarious and income lower than that of men; resulting in less work security. A noticeable feature is the increasing participation of women in agricultural activity and in off-farm rural employment. The increasing integration of women in remunerated activity has significantly mitigated levels of poverty in the region. A FAO study in Chile shows differences in employment of women below and above the poverty line (Parada, 2001). It was revealed that, in 1998 in Chile's Region VI, 10 percent more women above the poverty line were employed than women below the poverty line.

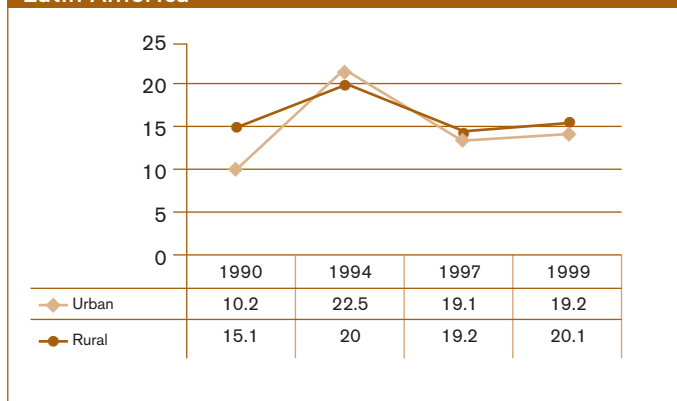
### *Women in agricultural rural employment*

Statistics, in Latin America, show a rise in the employment of rural women from 15.1 percent in 1990 to 20.1 percent in 1999, leading some observers to talk of the feminization of this sector. However, as mentioned earlier, women's work is seasonal and without labour rights.

The increased involvement of women in agricultural activity applies to both subsistence and commercial farming, where there has been a high intake of women in the export crop sector, notably fruit growing in Chile and Ecuador. Similarly, the higher output of vegetables, and other non-traditional crops in the central highlands of Guatemala, would not have been possible without women's labour. In this case, the agro-export or trading companies purchase the produce of smallholder farmers in the area. Similarly, the large coffee, sugar-cane and banana estates employ a large contingent of women (National Office for Women, UNICEF, 1998).

Women's conditions of employment are precarious. An FAO-sponsored study by Chile's National Office for Women (SERNAM) identified their work as hazardous to health because of the chemicals used, which applies to women working throughout the corporate agricultural sector in Latin America (SERNAM, FAO, 2001). This

**Figure 4.2**  
Participation of women in the agricultural workforce in Latin America



Source: FAO, from figures in Social Panorama of Latin America 2000–2001. ECLAC, 2001.



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same study in Chile confirmed women's lack of labour rights in the export fruit sector, one of the country's most dynamic and successful sectors. Almost three-quarters of women living below the poverty line have no social security and thus no safety net in the event of a work-related accident or pension rights when no longer able to work.

Gender differences in income level are found in virtually all sectors of several countries in the region, especially the agricultural sector. Women's income, as a proportion of men's, varies between countries from 12 percent in Peru to 92 percent in Costa Rica, with an average of around 50 percent for the region.

### *Women in off-farm rural employment*

A study conducted by FAO on women in Chile reveals the importance of off-farm rural



Woman technician recording audio track of a video production in the project at Tamuim.  
(L. Dematteis, 1993)

work as a means to overcoming poverty (Parada, 2001). The study examined their work, distinguishing between those living in households below and those above the poverty line, and noted that those living below the poverty line are overwhelmingly engaged in agricultural activities; those above are primarily engaged in services and trade, a large proportion of these women are engaged in domestic service. There are more women than men working in off-farm employment, which is better paid than agricultural work, thus providing higher income for the household. Information from

Colombia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development indicates a greater involvement of women in off-farm employment.

Reardon and Berdegúe, in their study on off-farm rural employment and income in Latin America, observed that women are relatively dependent on off-farm activities, where there is easy access but low earnings, such as petty trading (Reardon, Berdegúe, 1999). Many studies explore the relative incomes and types of female activity (Weller, 1994, for Central America; Berdegúe, *et al.*, 1999, for Chile; Lanjouw, 1999, for Ecuador, and others). The findings for Ecuador (Lanjouw, 1999) seem to be representative: (1) women earn lower incomes in off-farm employment; (2) women tend



to concentrate on the service sector and on small-scale low-income self-employment in manufacturing; (3) women are less likely to engage in multiple activities.

### Access to productive resources

A FAO study in Chile, using information from the Survey of Social and Economic Characteristics and the VIII National Agricultural Census, drew up a classification of agricultural holdings (Parada, 2001). The study revealed that holdings with insufficient output to overcome poverty had a higher proportion of women producers. The conclusion, from the gender perspective, was that women producers had systematically less access to the most productive assets, which significantly determined the output of their holdings. The figures showed that women's holdings were on average smaller, had less irrigation and used fewer agricultural machines. The study concluded that rural poverty would be much worse if rural households depended solely on agricultural production.

This lack of access to productive resources such as land, water, credit and training, exacerbates the condition of poverty in which live more than half the women of Latin America and the Caribbean. At the same time, their lack of access to these resources limits their independence and participation in decision-making in the home, communities and society as a whole. The overwhelming majority of women in the region do not have land, which restricts their access to all other productive resources.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, observed that women's poverty was directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy. Women lack access to economic resources, including credit, land ownership and inheritance, cannot access education and support services, and have minimal participation in the decision-making process (FWCW Platform for Action).

#### *Women's access to land*

Pioneering studies in the region by Magdalena León and Carmen G. Deere extensively examined the relationship between women's land ownership, their empowerment and autonomy (León and Deere, 2000). They revealed that neither land reform nor access to the land market have occurred in a context of gender equality. The studies widely document the obstacles faced by women seeking access to land ownership.



## The status of women and food security

Latin America has the highest concentration of land ownership and women tend to access land through inheritance, as beneficiaries of land reform programmes or through the land market. In the last decade, recently accessed land was promoted through the land titling programmes to activate land markets. Studies show how predominant cultural patterns constrain women's deployment of each of these mechanisms. Most women farmers have smallholdings of no more than 5 ha.

Agrarian law, civil legislation and customary law all condition women's access to land and the main beneficiaries of land reform have been men. Most land reform programmes or legislation, directly or indirectly relate to access to land and have explicitly or implicitly excluded women, or have made no effort to guarantee their access.

The FAO reviewed the legal framework of land access in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Nicaragua (Galán, 1998) as determined by their constitutions, civil codes, family codes and agrarian laws. FAO's study concluded that some agrarian laws and civil codes contained provisions that were discriminatory to women. For example, the Dominican Republic's Law on Land Reform identifies the man as the rightful beneficiary of land reform. The country's civil code restricts the empowerment of women by prescribing that the man is the head of household and administrator of all its assets.

Agrarian law in Honduras and Nicaragua recognizes the right of women to be direct beneficiaries of land reform, but there are still discriminatory provisions in their civil or family codes that condition women's access to land. Cuba's agrarian law and civil legislation recognize full gender equality of rights, however, far more men own land and are cooperative members and managers.

On civil status, agrarian law in Cuba, Honduras and Nicaragua recognizes the right of women in consensual union to be beneficiaries of land reform; this union needs to be recognized by a competent authority, a requirement that restricts women's access to land. The Dominican Republic does not recognize consensual union.

Cuban and Honduran legislation regulates the inheritance of land acquired through land reform, assigning it by right to the beneficiary's spouse. The laws of the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua have no provisions in this regard. The matter is dealt with under the civil code, which does not recognize the spouse as compulsory heir.

In Ecuador, couples living in consensual union have had the same rights as legally married couples since 1982, which hinge on three conditions: (i) two years of proven

cohabitation; (ii) evidence of no other matrimonial ties; and (iii) legal recognition by a judge. This last condition is even more costly than formal marriage (Deere, León, García and Trujillo, 1999).

In countries that guarantee a woman's right to succession, prevailing cultural patterns still make it difficult to exercise this right. In Brazil, rural women were granted equal rights to property under land reform in 1988, in practice they do not have equal access. A study by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and the Institute for Land Reform, under FAO's Technical Cooperation Project for the Integration of a Gender Perspective into Land Reform (TCP/BRA/8922) (Linhares, 2002), noted, despite legislation recognizing gender equality, cultural patterns in Brazil as in the rest of the continent, still constitute solid obstacles to rural women exercising their full rights of citizenship.

"Such barriers are present in the practices of the National Institute of Land Settlement and Reform (INCRA) and other government institutions involved in land reform, and in the trade unions, movements and associations of rural workers." The study states that as women's access to citizenship is relatively recent, they are still heavily affected by social discrimination and by their failure to understand their rights.

The situation is more difficult for women rural workers, as their role in reproductive activity and domestic care conceals their active contribution to the development process. Moreover, women have not achieved better access to land through the land market. A study in Colombia shows that women have only accessed 11 percent of agricultural holdings through the land market or through the allocation of land by the State. The Dominican Republic's Land Reform Act, issued in 1962, did not consider women as direct beneficiaries, but as heirs on the death of the spouse or abandonment. This limited their access to land because of the high proportion of consensual unions in rural areas. Currently, the wife's name is included with the husband's on the Certificate of Provisional Allocation assigning land on agricultural



These contour terraces, being built by women, yield 70 percent more potatoes per hectare than do the old sloping fields.

*(I. Velez, 1985)*



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settlements developed by the State. Law 55–77, amending the Land Reform Act removes all forms of restriction on women, giving them equal access to land tenure and to training and technical assistance provided by the Dominican Institute of Agriculture (AID) (Tejada de Walter, 2000).

In El Salvador, only 8.5 percent of women are engaged in agricultural activity. An amendment to the Land Code, with the following three provisions favouring women, is still pending:

- A contract for agricultural land applies to the whole family, regardless of the fact that it might only feature one name.
- When drawing up a contract for the adjudication of land, the title should include the names of both spouses or partners or of the person responsible for maintaining the family.
- In the event of abandonment or annulment of marital ties by the person



Masaya. Family members of beneficiary children attending the Gaspar Garcia Laviana day centre tend to the centre's garden where they raise produce to be used in the lunch programme. (L. Dematteis, 1997)

designated as titleholder in the contract, the rights granted to the remaining family members shall not be revoked (these provisions already exist in Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua).

The situation in Peru is paradoxical (Macassi León, 1998). The Land Reform Act stipulates that on the death of a beneficiary without completed payment of the allocated land, the land in question is transferred free of charge to his 'spouse or permanent companion', which is tantamount to a right of

cohabitation. However, if the land has been fully paid the companion is excluded and has no recognized right, which excludes most women from land entitlement, as most rural couples are in cohabitation. In Costa Rica the distribution of land to consensual unions must be in the name of both partners.

Mexico was the first country to establish gender equality rights to land ownership (1971). But, rural women suffered a setback in the 1990s when Article 27

of the Mexican Constitution was amended and no longer guarantees the woman inheritance of the family plot on the death of her spouse (Deere and León, 1997).

In Paraguay, the Agreement on the Land Statute (L854) explicitly identifies, as beneficiaries of land settlement programmes, all adults over the age of 18 who are engaged in, or formally propose to take up, agricultural work, without distinction of sex or nationality (Molinas, 1999).

In Guatemala, women's access to public and private land reform programmes has been limited by a combination of legal, institutional and socio-cultural constraints. The civil code qualifies the man as the head of household and manager of household goods. Nevertheless, programmes set up by the National Land Fund (FONATIERRA/1988-1999) have recorded an increase in the number of women gaining access to land through peasant-farmer groups (J.C. Fenix, 1999).

### *Land titling programmes*

In the past decade massive programmes have taken place in Latin America to regulate land ownership, granting property titles to people with limited resources. This was intended to alleviate poverty; a property title is a useful social tool for these sectors of the population as it provides access to state and private housing subsidies, credit, technology, agricultural advice and funding. Titling programmes were launched to reduce irregular ownership and facilitate proper functioning of the land market.

Studies were conducted on the recent regularization of property titles in countries of the region. In Chile, the Ministry of National Assets evaluated its programme of regularization for the period 1994–2000. After this evaluation in 1996, it was found that 75 percent of beneficiaries lived below the poverty line, of these 39 percent were women, and their irregular situation was caused by defective inheritance and purchase procedures (Ministry of National Assets, 1999).

The evaluation showed that women, more than men, tended to maintain and permanently occupy their property. It revealed that while title of ownership did not particularly facilitate access to life-enhancing resources, it mitigated inequality within households. Beneficiary women tend to make decisions on the welfare of their families. Having a property title in their name gives them more say in decisions relating to the holding and the family. It reduces out-migration,



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stimulates new sources of work and the children's education. At the same time, beneficiary women reported increased respect from their husbands or companions to whom they were prepared to grant fewer concessions. Furthermore, they enjoyed the assurance of a home for themselves and their children.

### *Women's access to water*

In most countries in the region, irrigation is an important means of increasing productivity, fostering diversity and intensifying cropping.



Woman throwing fish food into pond on a fish farm.

(G. Bizzarri, 1995)

Access to water and irrigation are linked to the presence of water and to technological development. However the key criterion is land tenure; therefore women find themselves disadvantaged when it comes to water and irrigation.

There are few studies in the region on surface or groundwater availability, or their use in different types of irrigation. Virtually no studies exist on the economic, social or

environmental considerations that would allow examination of this situation from a gender perspective.

Particularly, in Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador and Venezuela limited irrigation potential is related to total surface area. In Bolivia, the reasons are climatic conditions, rugged terrain and lack of water in much of the country. The main problem in Argentina, El Salvador and Venezuela is the lack of water in areas best suited to irrigation. The humid conditions of much of Costa Rica and Panama mean there is little need, and therefore potential, for irrigation.

In most countries, from the 1950s, irrigation developed considerably, surface irrigation being the most common technique. The only reference found for this publication concerns Chile and shows that female heads of household have less access to any type of irrigation, and 66.3 percent of female heads of agricultural household have no irrigation compared to 58.9 percent of male farmers. The region's irrigation

is derived mostly from surface water; the exceptions are Cuba and Nicaragua where water from aquifers accounts for 77 percent and 50 percent of irrigated area respectively. A gender-based differentiation of needs is required, and to establish whether irrigation is from off-take or direct diversion of surface water, from surface reservoirs, or from pumping of groundwater, as in Cuba, Mexico and Nicaragua. Consideration of gender and irrigation is important for the effective management of government irrigation schemes and to support private small-scale irrigation, whether in capital, equipment, training, extension or technical assistance.

Not enough attention has been given to the role women play managing the region's water resources. Few studies have been conducted in Latin America on this subject; as compared to Africa where studies show that failure to consider gender aspects can impact negatively on irrigation policy and projects. A study in the province of Carchi in northern Ecuador, close to the border with Colombia, examined women's access to two irrigation projects and showed that traditional societal roles prevented their active participation in the irrigation associations, subsequently limiting their rights to water (Bastidas, 2000).

#### Box 4.4 WATER RIGHTS IN ECUADOR

In Pungal, the province of Chimborazo, Ecuador, a 'block' (measuring about 0.7 ha) gives the right to 10 litres/second of water for 7.5 hours, once a week. Water rights are linked to participation in all communal canal digging and maintenance work, attendance at meetings and payment of annual charges. New members must make up for their absence from past communal work and meetings by paying an entrance fee that is adjusted each year. The members' list always features the head of family, generally a man. The only women who are direct members are widows and the occasional single woman – the others only have the right to water through a direct male member.

Source: Deere D, M., León, E., García and J.C. Trujillo. Género y derechos de la mujer a la tierra en Ecuador. CONAMU, Quito, Ecuador, 1999, in Guía conceptual y metodológica de género en poscosecha.

Of particular interest is Chile (see Box 4.5) where the National Irrigation Commission is promoting actions to mainstream gender into irrigation support programmes and projects.

**Box 4.5** PROGRAMME OF IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGY APPLIED  
TO AGRICULTURE IN SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA

Objectives to:

- Improve irrigation systems, solving problems of on-farm water storage, conveyance, distribution and technical infrastructure by formulating INTA and off-farm projects based on the Development Act and other sources.
- Improve production systems through technical training in agriculture.
- Build water-user associations' capacity to manage water resources.

This programme has identified a total of 1 315 women, and the focal point of the Ministry of Agriculture's Advisory Commission on Equal Opportunities has proposed actions to take women's needs into account; mainstreaming gender into the following programmes:

- ❖ irrigation development in districts with problems of employment and poverty;
- ❖ applied technology in the Laja-Diguillin irrigation and cropping system; and the
- ❖ project for the transfer of technology for irrigation and natural resource protection in the district of Ninhue and Portezuelo.

Total funds required: approximately US\$3 million.

Source: National Irrigation Commission. Committee on Rural Women of Chile. Santiago, 2002.

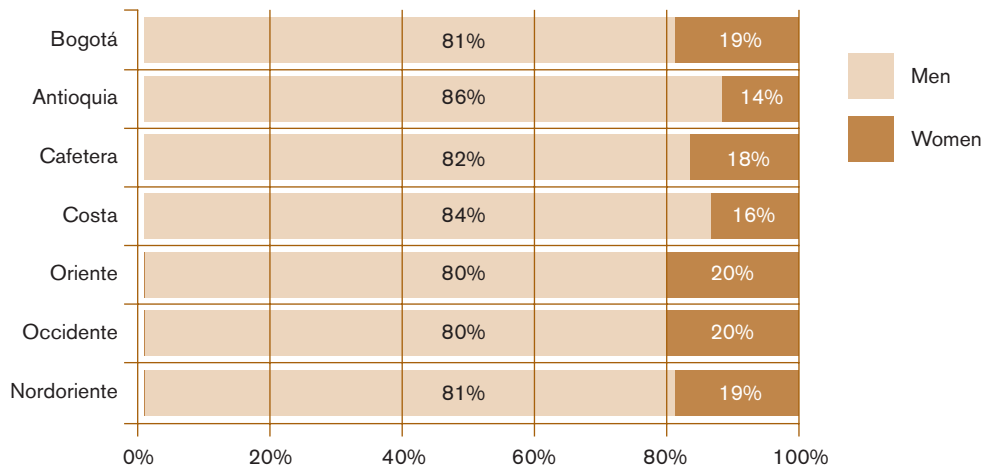
### *Women's access to credit*

Rural women are constrained when seeking credit, as they do not own land and cannot provide collateral. Many are unaware of the rules of the market and/or resort to unconventional forms of saving. Cash may be kept at home or saved in kind as grain and/or animals, the most common form being small livestock that are sold in times of need. Often women are easy prey to illegal credit at extortionate interest rates, its special appeal being availability and limited requisites. As important, women are afraid to take out loans; a study in Ecuador revealed that women did not request loans because 'they are afraid to ask a bank' (especially illiterate women). This is because they cannot meet the bank's collateral requirements or because of the inordinate time it takes for a loan to be granted. They are also afraid they will not be able to keep to the repayment schedule (Deere, León, García and Trujillo, 1999).

The figures for Colombia refer to the number of loans (see Figure 4.3). They depict a situation where the proportion of loans more or less reflects the proportion of



**Figure 4.3**  
Colombia, Loans to small farmers; June 1999–May 2000



Source: FAO from figures of the Agricultural Bank of Colombia, IICA.

only 16 percent of the value of disbursed credit was to women. In 1999–2000, most were used for livestock activities (54 percent) followed by 21 percent for subsistence crops. The figures are considered to be worse in other countries, as suggested by a study by Magdalena León and C. G. Deere in Ecuador (Deere, León, García and Trujillo, 1999). A total of 353 surveys in the provinces of Chimborazo, Manabí, Guayas, Cañar, Los Ríos and Pastaza indicated only 7.2 percent of women had applied for credit. The documentation usually required by lending agencies is an identity card, a property deed and/or a Land Registrar's certificate and farmer certification; the most expensive item is the registration of property.

Microfinance institutions play an increasing role in Latin America's financial sector, offering financial instruments to low-income rural and marginal urban population groups. It is significant that many of their customers are female. These institutions help women fulfill their responsibility for food security, helping them develop production beyond daily subsistence, and offer useful savings and, increasingly, micro-insurance facilities (see Table 4.4).

**TABLE 4.4**  
**ACTIVE PORTFOLIO AND WOMEN CLIENTS OF SELECTED MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS**

Country	Microfinance institution	Active portfolio (US\$)	Percentage of women clients
Mexico	FINCA	2 151 938	96
	Financiera Compartamos*	43 031 000	98
Guatemala	FINCA	500 947	88
	Génesis Empresarial*	17 336 000	59
Haiti	FINCA	212 559	98
	Sogesol*	2 667 000	62
Honduras	FINCA	3 155 203	92
	FinSol*	6 408 000	53
Nicaragua	FINCA	2 717 804	100
	FAMA*	8 775 000	72
Ecuador	FINCA	5 760 764	89
	Banco Solidario*	53 068 000	45
Peru	FINCA	794 532	95
	MiBanco*	92 294 000	57
Bolivia	Bancosol*	80 917 000	60

\*: ACCION Internacional partner programme.

FINCA information as at 05/2003; Accion financial information as at 31 December 2002, percent of women for 2001.

## Education

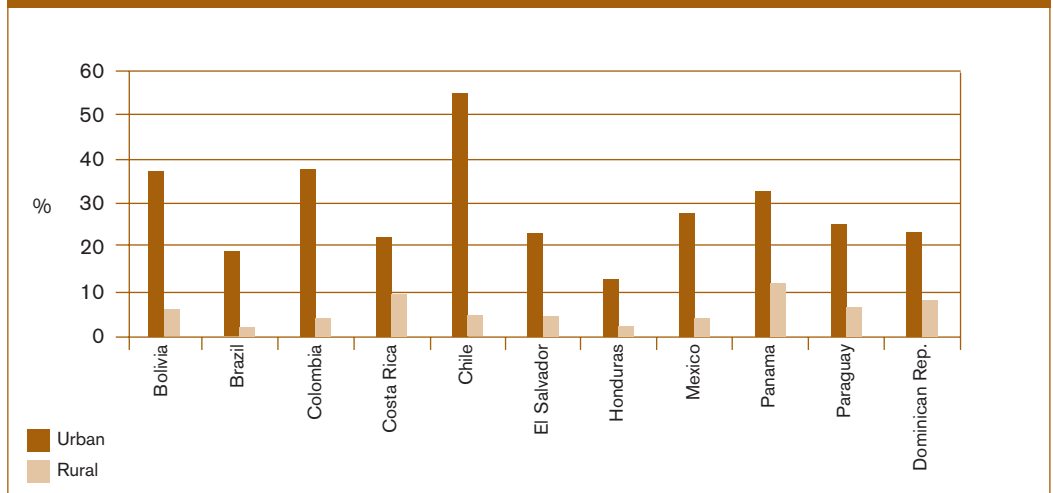
### *Inequalities and deficiencies*

The low education level in the region impedes poverty alleviation, the achievement of food security, and the exercise of citizenship and achievement of full human potential. Although, significant progress has been made in the last ten years in providing broader educational coverage, the impact of the 1980s crisis and its reduced public expenditure on education is keenly felt. Another important observation is that globalization requires larger pools of skilled workers, but rural areas continue to have low levels of education, sometimes with significant gender disparity.

Figure 4.4 shows the – still insufficient – advance in the education of men and women in the selected countries in the region and in the gender-equality of education. The average number of years men and women aged 15–24 study is significantly higher than for those aged 25–59, the graph reveals inadequacies. Country information indicates that young rural women from Chile and Panama score the highest (9.8 and 8.4 years of study, respectively) higher than for young rural men.

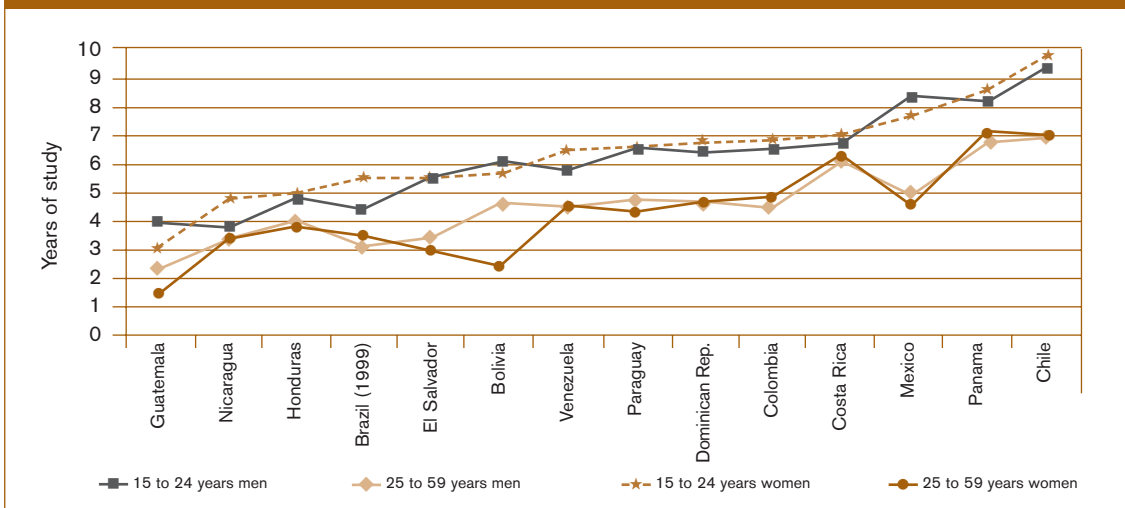
In Guatemala, the average time young rural women aged 15–24 study is only 3.1 years, below the average 4.1 years for young rural men. In 11 of the 14 countries, young rural women aged 15–24 have higher educational levels than young rural men, exceptions are Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico. Because of greater discrimination in the past, in 10 of the 14 countries, women aged 25–59 have lower levels of education than their male counterparts, who have a maximum of 7.1 years of study in Chile, but barely 1.4 years in Guatemala.

**Figure 4.4**  
Population aged 25–39 with 10+ years of education in selected Latin American countries



Source: PRIE from ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America 1999–2000, based on tabulations from household surveys.

**Figure 4.5**  
Latin America, 2000. Average years of study for the rural population



Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama L. A. 2000-2001, Santiago, 2001.

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture

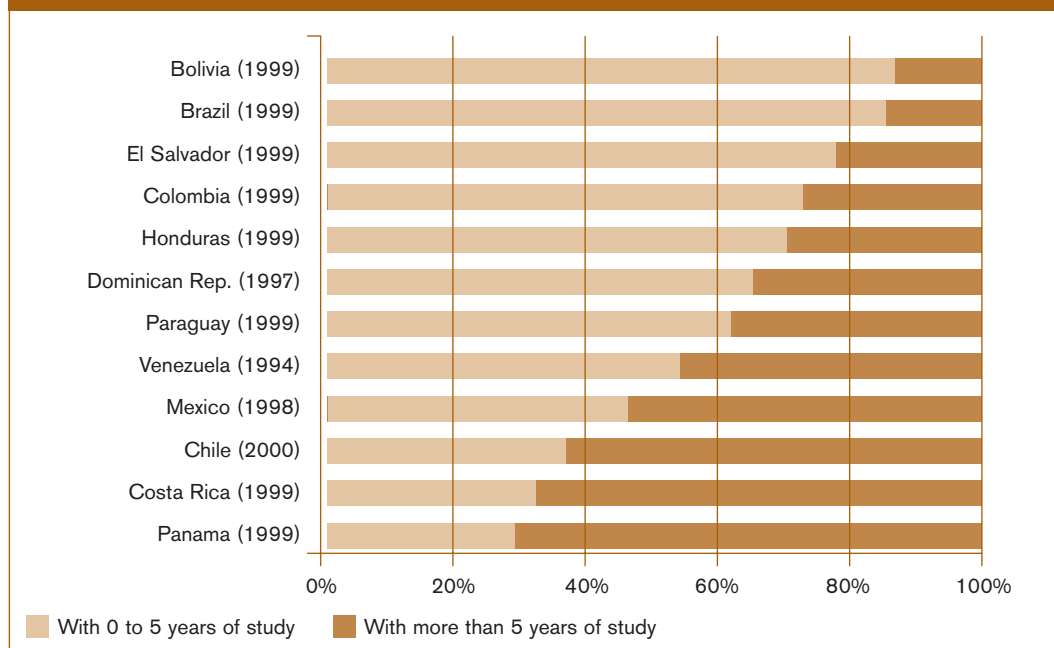
## The status of women and food security

### *Educational inadequacies and gender in rural areas*

The overall figures are averages that conceal differences in the region. Progress has not been uniform between or within countries; often there is a significant disparity between rural and urban areas and within rural areas. A study in rural Cajamarca, Peru, shows that while 84.5 percent of boys aged 6–15 attend school, the figure falls to 75.7 percent for girls aged 6–15. Whereas 34.1 percent of male adolescents of 16–20 are in school, against only 11.9 percent for female adolescents aged 16–20. In the 21–24 age group, 6.7 percent of men attend an educational institution compared to barely 2 percent of women.

The crisis in the 1980s, and its concomitant reduction in revenue in virtually all countries, is reflected in the fact that, in most countries, women aged 25–59 have very low levels of education. In Bolivia and Brazil, over 80 percent of rural women in this age group have 0–5 years of study, over 60 percent in Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Paraguay, and over 40 percent in Mexico and Venezuela. Only Chile, Costa Rica and Panama have a lower proportion of women aged 25–59 with 0–5 years of study.

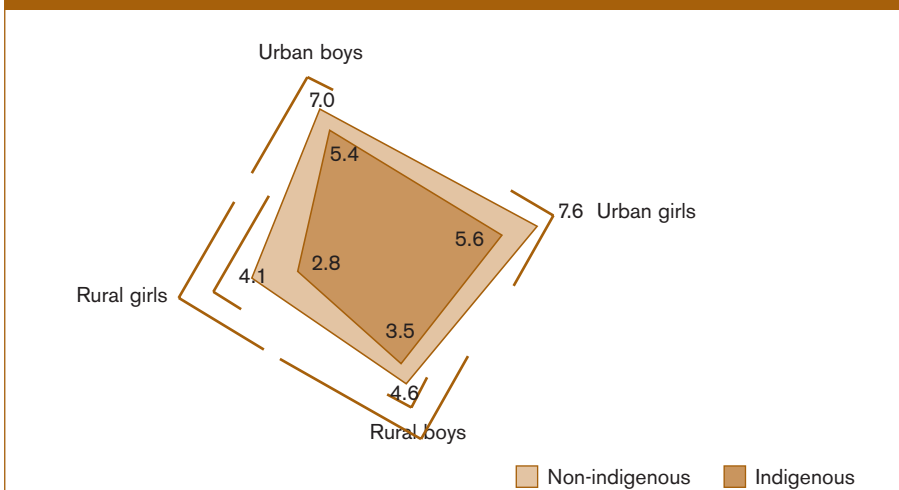
Figure 4.6  
percentage of Rural women aged 25 to 59 having 0 to 5 years of study



Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama 2000-2004, Santiago, Chile, 2001

At the same time, there is serious misalignment of school programmes and methodologies with rural reality, especially that of indigenous women's lives, which prevents their integration and continuation in formal and informal education. In Guatemala, for example, a major restriction to development is that indigenous women are monolingual and education programmes and curricula are inadequate, perpetuating existing inequalities (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, 2000). In rural Guatemala, girls aged 14–18 from non-indigenous rural families have studied for an average of 4.1 years, compared to the 2.8 years for girls aged 14–18 from indigenous rural families. The same situation prevails in other countries with significant indigenous rural populations, where the level of poverty can reach alarming proportions.

**Figure 4.7**  
Guatemala – Average years of study for boys and girls 14 to 18 years, 1999



Source: ENIGFAM 1998–1999, in Asturias, *et al.*, *Hogar, familia y exclusión en Guatemala*. Human Development Report. United Nations System, Guatemala 2001.

Although rural women have had few educational opportunities, they are great advocates of education for their children. A study in Peru revealed consensus among rural women that their children of both sexes should study and go to school. Interviews confirmed, however, that despite all the talk of equality a cultural bias still exists, the girls stay at home to help with household chores and subsequently marry, and the boys go to school. This bias is weakening among younger parents (mothers and fathers) who believe the situation needs to change (PROMUDEH, 2001). When



## The status of women and food security

interviewed, they expressed concern about the violence and long distances to schools and their lack of confidence in the quality of education provided. To quote the mothers 'the quality of education ends where the road finishes'.

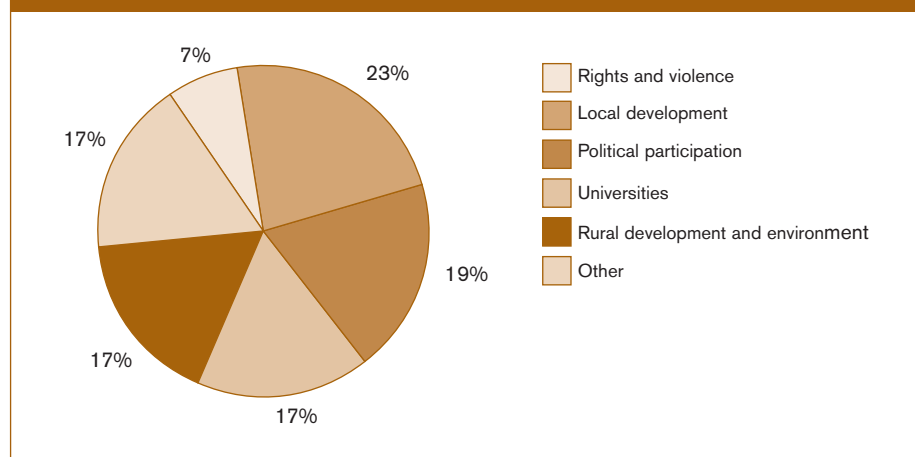
### *Training for rural women*

Often the gap in educational opportunity available to rural women is eased by agricultural extension, training and technology transfer, although these are partly limited by the failure to recognize women's role as producers. In most countries there have been significant training efforts, generally involving pilot activities to develop methodology and, because of the lack of resources and the policy of state withdrawal, these activities have not reached the majority of potential recipients.

### *Non-governmental organizations*

Non-governmental organizations and international cooperation have stepped in to make up for the scarcity of government training for women. However, NGO activities have failed to prioritize rural development. One study in Ecuador reported only 17 percent of NGO training was directed towards rural development and the environment (Ordóñez, 2001).

**Figure 4.8**  
Types of training in Ecuador, 2000



Source: Ordóñez, M. Sistematización sobre oferta y demanda de capacitación y formación en género en Ecuador. 2001

Funding is mainly provided for gender-based training by international cooperation and United Nations agencies. The largest share of funding is for training in rights, violence and local development, followed by involvement in policy-making.

NGOs have developed training activities in all countries and produced training manuals and other didactic materials, for example the Training Manual for Rural Women of the Andean Community *Gender Equality in Sustainable Agriculture* produced by the Flora Tristán Peruvian Women's Centre. Training activities have focused on thematic areas directly related to production and on leadership training, building self-esteem and other matters of vital importance to empower rural women.

### *Gender awareness and training in FAO projects*

As part of the Plan of Action for Gender and Development (2002–2007), FAO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean held awareness-raising and training workshops on the incorporation of gender into FAO programmes and projects, which now include gender in their training components<sup>14</sup>.

FAO's Technical Cooperation Projects helped integrate a gender-based approach into the transfer of technology, enabling women's access to training. For example, the *Conceptual and methodological guide on gender in post-harvest activities*, developed by FAO Post-Harvest Project GCO/ECU/069/NET in Ecuador, was a useful methodology tool for addressing gender in the post-harvest, marketing and credit components of technology transfer. It served to design and apply gender-based criteria and concepts in the expert-to-farmer delivery of training and technology transfer. Methodology tools are provided for the compilation, collation and analysis of information and for the appropriate use of this information in the planning process.

Training modules developed by FAO's Post-Harvest Project in Bolivia (GCP/BOL/032/NET) also contributed. These modules form part of the project's gender-based strategy and serve to help rural women handle routine problems related to post-harvest activities, for example threshing maize and using silos.

<sup>14</sup> Chile 2001, Bolivia 2002.

## Rural women and health

### *Maternal mortality*

A gap still exists between rural women's access to health services and that of urban women. Access to health centres is generally restricted, and rural areas continue to have high primary health indicators: maternal and infant mortality.

### *Reproductive rights*

Although considerable progress has been made in terms of reproductive rights, women are not assured the right to choose the number of children they want. There is a gap between awareness and employment of birth control in both rural and urban areas. A study in Ecuador in 1998 indicated that 64 percent of rural women aged 15–49 were aware of contraceptive methods, increasing to 88 percent in urban areas (CONAMU, INEC, 2000), only 23.4 percent of rural women and 35.6 percent of urban actually used them. Nevertheless, this increased awareness of contraception reduced the average number of children per rural woman.

In Colombia, a study in 1995 indicated a fertility rate of 4.4 children in rural areas and 2.6 in urban areas (ENDS, 1995, in IICA, 2000). In Argentina, the World Bank conducted a survey in three rural provinces of the northeast and northwest to examine the link between reproductive health and poverty and the impact of gender and associated roles on reproductive health (World Bank, 2001). A reproductive health profile was identified that was cause for concern particularly in rural areas, because of specific economic, social, cultural and institutional factors. This included women's low social status, division of labour and lower incomes, absence of reproductive health services and family planning and lack of health coverage for all.

The study concluded that 94 percent of homes with more than two children were in the two poorest quintiles. Homes with more than two children and a dependent woman were in the poorest quintile. The study revealed only 25 percent of the surveyed population had medical coverage. Two-thirds of those covered did not use it, because they were unable to pay their contributions, there was no transport service or because they could not afford the fare.



### *The health of rural women workers*

Rural women wage-earners work long hours, often without protection making them vulnerable to pesticide use. A study on Chile's fruit-growing sector reports:

#### Box 4.6 WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN THE FRUIT-GROWING INDUSTRY

The seasonal nature of women's work in the fruit-growing sector makes conditions particularly tough. Working days are long with unlimited hours in packing plants, few breaks and intense pace of work because the produce is perishable and piecework pervasive. Normally women work 10 to 14-hour days in a packing plant (for 53 percent of female workers) and as much as 16 hours, Saturdays and Sundays included.

Work in orchards is shorter, from 8 to 10 hours a day. There is a strong correlation between 'length of working day' in the packing plant and 'level of exhaustion' and manifestation of stress-related disorders: neurosis, ulcers and gastritis.

Source: Díaz, X and J. Medel. *Mujer, trabajo y salud. Los daños ocultos. In Mujeres en Riesgo. Trabajo y Salud.* Latin American and Caribbean Women and Health Network. Santiago, 1997.

### *Rural women and pesticides*

The monetary value of pesticide imports into Latin America and the Caribbean has tripled in the last ten years, with a corresponding increase in concern for human health, specifically associated with reproduction and food safety. A study in Chile drew attention to this danger, referring to the conditions of seasonal work in the fruit export sector where pesticide use has increased faster than orchard area (SERNAM, FAO, 2001).

**Table 4.5**  
Use of pesticides in Latin America and the Caribbean

	Year				
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2001
Pesticides (Trade) Imports – Value (US\$1 000)	405 736	666 740	1 238 316	1 630 423	1 707 524
Land use Agricultural area (1 000 ha)	716 842	749 542	772 651	781 137	784 205

Source: FAOSTAT



## The status of women and food security

Although men generally apply pesticides, the effect extends to the large number of women working in the orchards and packing plants. 'No-go' periods after pesticide application often are ignored and women have less social security cover than men. Equally worrying is the national regulatory structure, the scattering of inspection units and the number of government bodies establishing rules.

A study by SERNAM (2001) in Chile examined a selection of literature on exposure to pesticides and reproductive problems, which noted birth defects from genetic damage caused before conception or directly to the embryo or foetus. The study showed an increase in incidence of malformed babies, which reached 41.2 per 1 000 during the observation period. It also showed that the parents' agricultural activity and exposure of the home to pesticides were closely associated with the occurrence of malformation. A similar situation is found in Ecuador's flower export sector.

### Box 4.7 CONDITIONS OF WORK IN THE FLOWER INDUSTRY

Company X employs 140 workers, 46 percent are women. The work includes the use of pesticides of medium toxicity to the nervous and psychological system, the skin and the respiratory system – based on the permissive international scale. The fumigation staff always wear the same clothing and masks as the previous shift. This is a problem because of the lack of hygiene, failure to clean toxic substances and respiratory contamination.

Workers becoming pregnant are unilaterally dismissed on some trumped-up charge of low productivity or absence of social security. They do not have social security because they are often in the midst of the three-month trial period, after which many leave.

There is no sick leave except for extremely serious cases. Under these conditions, 30 percent of women workers have symptoms of health disorders, mainly neuropsychological, dermatological or respiratory. Women with an extended disorder tend to be dismissed.

Source: *Mujeres en la floricultura. Violación del derecho a la salud*. Jaime Breith. In: *Mujeres en Riesgo. Trabajo y Salud*. Latin American and Caribbean Women and Health Network, Santiago, Chile, 1997.

In Guatemala, the large coffee, sugar-cane and banana estates employ a large number of indigenous and mestizo women whose working conditions are precarious and whose health is endangered by the use of chemicals (National Office of Women, UNICEF, 1998).

*Rural women and HIV/AIDS*

Between its emergence in the early 1980s and 2000, a total of 36 million people were estimated to be HIV positive and 5.3 million infected with the virus. According to ILO estimates (1999), the epidemic mainly affects people of productive age (15–49 years) and has a direct impact on the world of work. Until recently, the epidemic was considered mainly an urban problem. However, FAO and the United Nations Programme on AIDS indicated the difference between HIV infection in urban and in rural areas is narrowing in some countries. There are many people in developing countries living in rural areas so that the absolute number of rural victims is very high<sup>15</sup>. In their publication *Sustainable agriculture/rural development and vulnerability to the AIDS epidemic*, FAO and UNAIDS urged governments to adopt the control of AIDS as one of their rural development objectives.

In late 2001, it was estimated that about 1 920 000 adults and children carry HIV/AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean, 210 000 contracted the virus in 2001 alone (UNAIDS, 2002). Significantly, each death from AIDS results in children becoming orphaned: there are some 580 000 AIDS orphans in Latin America and the Caribbean, including 130 000 in Brazil and 200 000 in Haiti<sup>16</sup>. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in rural areas of the Caribbean is a major problem.

World Health Organization (WHO) statistics rank the Caribbean as the world's second region in HIV/AIDS prevalence. Almost one half of HIV-positive adults are women, the group with the highest increase in infection together with poor segments of the population. Women whose husbands are migratory workers are especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and migration is prominent in rural areas.

As women are the principal caregivers in the home, the Government of Barbados was led to introduce a gender dimension into its health services<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> FAO UNAIDS/FAO HIV/AIDS epidemics is shifting from urban to rural areas. Agricultural policies need to be reconsidered. Press release Rome/Geneva, 22 June 2002.

<sup>16</sup> According to UNAIDS, estimated deaths from AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean are around 100 000.

<sup>17</sup> Intervention of the Minister of Social Development of Barbados at the XXIII Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace in the Twenty-First Century". New York, 2000.

## Violence and food security

**Violence inhibits equality of opportunity** and food security at the household micro-level and national level. Until recently, it was the cultural perception that women were affected only by the death of a son or husband. However, armed conflict seems to directly affect adult males, females and children, because women participate in protest groups and are victims of repression, slaughter and persecution by armed groups, many act as peasant leaders (Ministry of Agriculture and Social Development, IICA, 2000). Disruption to the production cycle, population displacement and loss of labour for agricultural work increasingly undermine production, food security and income.

Violence is a current feature of rural Colombia, but the effect of past armed conflict in Central America and Peru is still very much in evidence.

### Box 4.8 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN

Colombia's Equal Opportunity Plan for Rural Women states that one of the main structural obstacles to gender equality is social and political violence that translates into armed conflict, and affecting women who lose sons and husbands. Women are subject to deep traumas of death or enforced displacement, violence and maltreatment including kidnapping, disappearance or death leading to the dismantling and elimination of community organizations. Conflict leads to an increase in female heads of families, the impossibility of implementing government programmes in conflict areas, loss of rural women's property, uprooting, displacement and accelerated impoverishment.

Source: Equal Opportunity Plan for the Rural Women of Colombia. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. IICA. Bogota 2000.

## Impact of globalization

**There is no universal definition of globalization**, but its main characteristics shape the current world economic order. Expansion of foreign private investment in agriculture, food processing and marketing is largely, but not exclusively, in the hands of transnational corporations, and increasing international trade in food is facilitated by a reduction in trade barriers (FAO, 2003).

Globalization is reported to affect most rural inhabitants negatively. In particular women have been marginalized from the process, as they are overwhelmingly small

producers or landless rural inhabitants. A study by ECLAC confirms that the international trading system, globalization and liberalization are basic challenges facing all nations. Globalization's impact on smaller, more vulnerable countries less able to adapt, such as the small island developing states, is by no means satisfactory. Barbados and other developing nations face a series of challenges that risk permanently consigning their citizens and especially women and children to 'vulnerable group' status (Thorin, 2001).

The entry of the region's agricultural commodities into international markets is held back by restrictions imposed by developed countries. In almost all countries of Latin America and the Caribbean promotion of agricultural modernization policies have benefited the export sector in particular and production has been reoriented towards goods that can compete on international markets. Such policies seek to raise the production and productivity of export crops and to diversify the economy by promoting new crops with international market potential.

This re-gearing of the production sector has brought about changes in the work patterns of male and female small producers. It has displaced women's labour from subsistence farming to new export activities and accelerated migration to major urban centres. Productive resources have prioritized export activities, which receive credit facilities and greater institutional support than other agricultural activities.

Subsistence activities continue to exist, together with low productivity and low market value for products. Low productivity stems from small-scale production techniques, unskilled labour, and absence of basic production infrastructure, high cost of capital and lack of clear land ownership rights. All these features apply to the production conditions of many rural women.

These sectors need revitalizing through fostering mechanisms to integrate small producers, especially women, into the modernization process, thereby raising their productivity. This will facilitate their access to productive resources (land, machinery and equipment, credit, training, market information and technology) and will raise their involvement in decision-making affecting their sector.



# A gender approach to rural development policies

## Rural women, food security and policy-making

**It is increasingly recognized that the progress** towards food security and overcoming poverty and indigence, requires the implementation of proactive gender-sensitive social policies that fully recognize the potential and limitations of each gender, as determined by respective roles in society. Progress has been made in incorporating a gender approach into public policies affecting the everyday lives of rural women.

There has been a change from an assistance-oriented mentality to a gender equality approach. Gradually the process has advanced from ad hoc actions, or small projects targeting women, to the integration of gender into equal opportunity plans and national

agricultural and rural development policies (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, IICA, 2000).

In some countries, this progress has taken the form of Equal Opportunity Plans for rural women and proposals to mainstream gender into the policies of ministries of agriculture and rural development. Several ministries of agriculture have set up special mechanisms to monitor the process.

It is important to consider both advances and shortcomings in the broader context of national inadequacies. Shortcomings include the absence of integrated policies to address rural development beyond that of the sector, limitations placed on rural development policies by the macro-economic environment, limited progress in decentralization and formulating territorial policies and failure of policies to overcome poverty.

### Box 4.9 REAPPRAISING THE RURAL SECTOR

The rural sector has lost significance in the region, and rural development is excluded from government priorities, therefore, the main international, national and local barriers to sustainable local development continue to exist. A number of Equal Opportunity Plans for rural women emphasized the strategic need to revitalize the rural area and to retrieve agriculture as a key element in reviving the economy and reducing poverty. Some country plans refer to existing restrictions. Colombia's plan explicitly states that it will not be possible to relaunch the rural sector unless tariff barriers, subsidies and protective mechanisms are removed, unless there is greater productivity at lower cost, unless there is training and integration of both male and female rural workers.

Source: Equal Opportunity Plan for the Rural Women of Colombia. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. IICA. Bogota 2000.

## Equal opportunity plans for rural women

**Equal opportunity plans for rural women** have arisen from the failure of General Equal Opportunity Plans to reflect the conditions of women in rural development. As Table 4.10 indicates, Equal Opportunity Plans exist in most countries and facilitate the incorporation of gender into public policies, but not all refer explicitly to rural women. Selected examples of these Equal Opportunity Plans for Rural Women are described below.

### Box 4.10 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLANS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

<b>Argentina</b>	Equal Opportunity Plan 1995–1999
<b>Belize</b>	National Strategic Plan on Gender Equity and Equality. September 1998
<b>Bolivia</b>	National Plan of Follow-up to the Recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995
<b>Brazil</b>	Strategies for Equality: Platform of Action for Implementation of the Commitments Assumed by Brazil at the Fourth Conference on Women
<b>Chile</b>	Equal Opportunity Plan for Men and Women 2000–2006
<b>Colombia</b>	Revision following the Beijing Conference – Implementing the Contract with the Women of the World: from Words to Action. 1996
<b>Costa Rica</b>	Equal Opportunity Plan
<b>Cuba</b>	National Plan of Action of the Republic of Cuba in Follow-up to the Fourth UN Conference on Women. 1997
<b>Ecuador</b>	Equal Opportunity Plan 1996–2000. Annual Plan of Operations of the National Directorate for Women 1997
<b>El Salvador</b>	National Policy on Women. 1997
<b>Haiti</b>	Post-Beijing Plan of Action. 1997
<b>Jamaica</b>	National Plan of Action for Implementation of the Beijing Platform
<b>Panama</b>	National Plan on Women and Development: 1996–2001
<b>Paraguay</b>	National Equal Opportunity Plan for Women 1997–2001

## Chile

**Chile's Equal Opportunity Policy Proposals** for Rural Women is a complementary document to its Equal Opportunity Plan. It highlights the diversity and variety of cultural, social and economic situations in which rural women live and propose measures to help build their capacity and competence (SERNAM, 1999).

This Plan was drawn up in 1997 by the Working Panel on Rural Women, a platform of cooperation and dialogue for government, non-governmental and international agencies and peasant and indigenous associations.

The proposals include measures to tackle the poverty of rural women, improve their housing conditions, health and education and, in particular, remove discrimination in their productive activities with a special focus on agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Measures exist to remove existing discrimination in women's everyday domestic and reproductive work.

The main lines of action are to facilitate access and improve the status of women in the employment and commodity market; to promote educational opportunities to ease rural women's integration into society; to provide equitable and quality health care for rural women, improve the protection of women's occupational health; encourage the social and political participation of rural women and their access to decision-making bodies; and to strengthen public institutional structures for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of equal opportunity policies for rural women.

## Colombia

**Colombia was one of the first countries** to formulate policies for rural women. In 1984 it approved a Policy for Rural and Indigenous Women and in 1993 a new Policy for Rural Women was incorporated into the Policy of Equality and Participation for Women, and approved in 1994.

The strategic purpose of Colombia's Equal Opportunity Plan for Rural Women is to help reduce the political, socio-economic and cultural obstacles preventing rural women from enjoying equality of opportunity, and to engage them fully in economic growth, social development and in the exercise of their citizenship rights (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, IICA, 2000b).



The Plan has five strategic objectives:

- Eliminate obstacles to rural women's access to income-generating activities.
- Provide rural women with greater access to better quality social services in order to raise their and their families' quality of life.
- Consolidate rural women's citizenship and participation in decision-making.
- Promote recognition and respect of the diversity of cultural and gender characteristics of rural, indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, thus eliminating all forms of discrimination and enabling them to reaffirm or recover their identity.
- Facilitate the incorporation of a gender perspective into the institutional structure, policies and regulatory provisions of the rural sector and its support institutions.

The Plan identifies the main obstacle to equal opportunity as the prevailing macro-economic model and its ensuing economic crisis; measures that were supposedly neutral have in fact had a clearly discriminatory and unequal impact at the meso- and micro-economic level, especially the excessive workload and responsibilities placed on women in individual households.

The Plan emphasizes the need for government bodies to broaden the production of gender-sensitive statistics, indicators and instruments related to the rural sector.

Colombia's draft law aims to improve the lives of rural women, especially those with low incomes. It will apply special measures to accelerate equality between rural men and women. There are provisions on i) equal participation of women in rural funding opportunities; ii) social security benefits for rural women; iii) education, training and recreation of rural women; iv) participation of rural women in decision-making bodies, and v) land reform.

## Inadequacies

**A survey conducted in Ecuador shows** that agricultural and macro-economic policies failed to take the needs of rural women into account, and that the incorporation of gender into national programmes against poverty has been weak. Some basic programmes against poverty, such as the Emergency Social Investment Fund (FISE), the Solidarity Grant and the Emergency Grant, have not included criteria for recognizing gender inequalities and have not envisaged proactive measures benefiting women (Cuvi, 2001).



## A gender approach to rural development policies

One reported obstacle to the integration of gender into programmes is the shortage of female professionals (and male professionals) who understand gender-based rural development planning, and consequently the limited use of gender tools in programming. The survey mentions the problems programme beneficiaries have gaining access to credit and draws attention to ignorance of their rights.

## Gender mainstreaming in agricultural and rural development policies

**Efforts to mainstream gender** into public policies have advanced parallel to the creation of dedicated ministerial mechanisms. The joint action of international organizations and ministries of agriculture and rural development has been helpful in delivering gender training.

### Barbados

**The Minister for Social Development** in Barbados informed the twenty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on *Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century*, held in June 2000, that institutional mechanisms had been put in place to mainstream gender into all spheres of development and that focal points had been set up in all ministries and departments to ensure that gender was mainstreamed in all programmes.

### Brazil

**Brazil's Ministry of Agricultural Development (MAD)** introduced a series of initiatives to framework the correction of gender disparities. Decree No. 33 of 8 March 2001 formally established the Affirmative Action Programme for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity and Treatment for Men and Women, to be initiated by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and the National Institute of Land Settlement and Reform (INCRA) to benefit both sexes.

Measures were adopted including changes to rules of selection to facilitate women's access to land reform, replacing the term 'housewife' with 'rural worker' to ensure women's social security and labour rights; modification of rules on land titling, with the deed of ownership or contract of concession now issued to the couple, and covering

recognized consensual unions. There is a drive to have women occupy 30 percent of executive positions by providing gender-tailored management training and special tutoring for newer women recruits. There is a special credit line for women, with 30 percent of funds earmarked for rural women, and a similar percentage for training and technical assistance. Restructuring of INCRA was achieved with the appointment of male and female regional administrators of the Affirmative Action Programme, answerable to the Office of Agricultural Development.

This institutional framework set up by MAD, and studies and documents produced by Project INCRA/FAO/TCP/BRA/8922(A), led to the formulation of a Strategy Proposal for the Integration of a Gender, Race, Ethnic and Generational Perspective into Land Reform and Peasant Farming Programmes and Projects.

The proposal includes strategies for the macro- and institutional levels (which should reach the micro-level through institutional actions). The proposal aims to ensure that gender, race, ethnicity and generation are mainstreamed in land reform and peasant farming programmes and projects. Each strategy is equipped with a set of actions.

### Box 4.11 STRATEGY PROPOSALS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF A GENDER, RACE, ETHNIC AND GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE INTO LAND REFORM AND PEASANT FARMING PROGRAMMES IN BRAZIL

#### At the macro-level

- 1 Create a specific body in the organizational structure to consolidate the MAD/INCRA Affirmative Action Programme, attached to the Office of the Minister, the Office of the Executive Director of INCRA, and in the regional states to the Regional Authority with an appropriation of human, budgetary and financial resources to ensure the sustained mainstreaming of gender, race, ethnicity and generation in land reform and peasant farming programmes and projects.
- 2 Use the terms 'women and men' in the Statute on Land Ownership and associated legislation, instead of the generic masculine, thus eliminating all notions of the man as the appointed head of household.

#### At the institutional level

- 1 Bring the specific body (paragraph 1 above) into operation, with appropriation of human, budgetary and financial resources and general responsibilities for mobilizing, supervising and monitoring actions.
- 2 Develop indicators to measure the progress, results and impact of activities undertaken by the Affirmative Action Programme.
- 3 Promote awareness and training of male and female management and support staff at the MAD and INCRA and of men and women peasant farmers.
- 4 Revise rules and instruments so that these identify and highlight the contributions of women and girls to land reform and peasant farming, ensuring their greater integration into the processes of land registration, selection and titling.

- 5 Generate a process of broad democratic internal discussion involving all regional authorities and other MAD bodies to define procedures to enhance the proportion of women in executive positions, with a minimum target of 30 percent by 2003, in accordance with Decree No 120 of 22 May 2001.
- 6 Develop information activities for the land reform target population, democratizing access to information as a fundamental channel towards the consolidation of citizenship.
- 7 Include gender, race, ethnic and generational classifications in studies and research conducted under MAD and INCRA.
- 8 Develop activities to encourage the organization of women and to reinforce existing women's organizations, thus furthering their empowerment and their effective exercise of citizenship.

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture

## Chile

**In Chile, the Ministry of Agriculture's** Advisory Commission on Equality of Opportunity was established by Decree No. 180 of the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic in 1999. At the request of the Minister of Agriculture, the Commission examined the Equal Opportunity Plan for Men and Women 2000–2010 and identified linkages or areas of action relevant to National Agricultural Policy, determining areas where each ministerial service could specifically commit to equality of opportunity. Subsequently, on 8 March 2001, the Minister of Agriculture issued a ministerial commitment to gender equality.

## Costa Rica

**In Costa Rica, the National Centre for the Development** of Women and the Family, with the help of FAO, drafted the Agriculture and Environment Addendum of the Equal Opportunity Plan for Women and Men 1997–2001<sup>18</sup>. This addendum sets out guidelines for integrating a gender perspective into agriculture and the environment. It was the direct result of a critical assessment of the status and conditions of women's participation in the country's agricultural and agroforestry dynamic. Consultations held with sectoral institutions drew up a document with the participation of technical staff.

Consultations held with officials from the four institutions, lead to presentation of the final document by the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, the Minister of Environment and Energy, and the Executive Director of the National Centre for the Development of Women and the Family, the coordinating body for public policy on gender equality in Costa Rica.

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<sup>18</sup> FAO Project TCP/COS/4552 MAG/FAO/Gender, with the participation of the expert consultant on gender and policy, Patricia Bifani.

### Box 4.12A COSTA RICA: THE AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT ADDENDUM OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN FOR MEN AND WOMEN, (1997–2001)

The general objectives include a gender dimension in policy guidelines for agriculture and the environment and are to:

- 1 Improve institutional mechanisms to ensure equality of opportunity in access to services provided by the agricultural and environmental sectors and to strengthen mechanisms that ensure appropriation by rural women of the results of their productive work.
- 2 Recognize and value the role of rural women in agricultural production, in reproduction of the agricultural workforce and in the community.
- 3 Strengthen the competitiveness of small farmers of both sexes, by enhancing the productivity and efficiency of their work and increasing their participation and representation in decision-making.
- 4 Foster the inclusion of rural women in activities contributing towards ensuring food security and generating greater added value.
- 5 Contribute towards the empowerment of women as catalysts of development by creating opportunities for the control of production factors, including land, work, capital, income and markets.

### Box 4.12B [CONTINUATION] IN COSTA RICA: STRATEGIC THRUSTS OF THE RURAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN FOR MEN AND WOMEN: DEFINING CRITERIA

This strategic instrument of gender policy has six interconnected aims. The process of productive transformation is viewed as a multi-staged system extending from input supply to delivery of the final product to the consumer. A system-wide gender approach to reality has been used by SEAGA (Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis); it was proposed by FAO to address rural development. This approach realizes the objectives of change, explicit in the reorganization process, and aligns them with the aims of SEAGA. The gender dimension is therefore relevant to all stages and interlinkages that make up the system.

**Strategic thrusts** (viewing the productive process as a system requiring the strengthening of producers of both sexes):

- 1 Equality of opportunity in accessing and controlling land
- 2 Equality of access and control of natural resources and sustainability of their management
- 3 Equality of opportunity in access to rural financing
- 4 Equality of opportunity in access to and control of technology transfer and training services
- 5 Equality of access to labour markets and to farm and off-farm employment and higher visibility of both male and female producers
- 6 Equality of opportunity in business management (trade and agroindustry)

Three further elements underlie these strategic thrusts:

- ❖ evidence of ongoing participation in every decision-making process;
- ❖ information as a vital resource in globalization and the new production environment;
- ❖ organization as requisite to the restructuring of production in the sector.

Source: National Centre for the Development of Women and the Family. Agriculture and Environment Sector Addendum to the Equal Opportunity Plan 1997-2001. Document Series No. 17. San José, Costa Rica. 1997.

## Guatemala

Towards the end of 2000, Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food issued a decree setting up a special ministerial executive unit, the Unit for Gender, Women and Rural Youth (Ministerial Decree No. 1595).

In its Agricultural Policy 2000–2004, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food sets out the objective of incorporating a gender perspective into its strategies, policies and programmes to secure the equal participation of rural women.

The special executive unit is tasked with ensuring the incorporation of gender into the Ministry's policies, programmes and projects; formulating affirmative actions that will help eliminate inequalities of gender and age; fostering conditions of equality women and the young's access to land ownership and in the resolution of associated disputes; promoting the training, organization and consolidation of women's groups; ensuring the fulfillment of international commitments made by the Guatemalan Government and commitments in the Peace Agreements, insofar as these refer to gender, women and rural youth.

Guatemala approved a Policy for the Participation of Rural Women 2000–2004, the objective is to integrate rural women into the development of productive activities, enabling their access to land ownership and other productive resources and their ability to form associations and organizations, so that they might improve their economic and social conditions. One specific proposal is to check that rural policies on access to land, financial and other resources demonstrably include women. (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, 2000).

## Emerging issues

### Migration of rural women

#### *Continuing rural-urban migration*

The leveling of absolute numbers of the rural population indicates continuing rural-urban migration. The consequences of out-migration on the poverty of broad sectors of the rural population and on their food security are contradictory. According to Taylor, research shows that migration, and its resulting loss of household labour, have a negative impact on agricultural production, at least in the short term. He adds that remittances from migrants can help, directly or indirectly to reduce poverty, on condition that i) the resulting loss of labour does not significantly impact the production activities of poor households; ii) remittances are sent overwhelmingly to poor households; iii) the remittances are directed towards alleviating the production restrictions of poor households; and iv) the remittances and the production they trigger have a sizable multiplier effect on local income for the primary benefit of the poor (Taylor, 2001).

#### *Feminization or masculinization of the countryside?*

No recent information is available, but various studies indicate that women have migrated more than men. In Colombia a study revealed that rural-urban migration was predominantly female in the 60's and 70's (Villarreal, 1996), the same study states reasons differ for men and women. Agricultural employment and access to land are limited for both sexes, particularly for women; unskilled rural women have access to domestic employment in urban areas, which is the work most take up. Women are more likely to out-migrate for family reasons, either because of family displacement or as a coping strategy by sending remittances home. The study concludes that factors influencing internal migration relate to the failure of land reform to generate rural employment or to resolve the problems of lack of land, gender inequality and political violence.

Colombia's Equal Opportunity Plan for Rural Women noted a greater migration of young women to urban areas, where they enter the informal economy or domestic employment; they are also prey to prostitution and the sex slave trade (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, IICA, 2000b).

Migration is an extremely complex phenomenon having multiple facets in different socio-economic and agro-ecological contexts. The norm seems to be a higher proportion of women migrate, in other areas migrants are mostly male, especially seasonally. A study in Bolivia (Villanueva, 2002) based on data for selected communities of Potosí shows a greater proportion of women inhabitants (52.5 percent) than men (47.4 percent), and broader differences when men migrate seasonally. Thus from November to January and from April to October, it is common to see more women and school-age children in the rural communities.

In some countries rural women emigrate abroad, for instance the Dominican Republic, which is one of the countries in the region with the highest levels of emigration.

### *The need for further studies*

The complexity of the subject requires further studies into the general patterns of rural-urban migration and associated factors, and into the effect of migration on point of departure and destination. Studies, developed with a gender perspective, will shed light on many interesting aspects.

Rural-urban migration was studied extensively in the 1970s, focusing on the impact of migrants on receiving urban areas; there was an amply documented increase in poverty and marginalization around large cities. At the same time, Taylor indicates that studies on the rural impact focused on how rural employment markets adapted to the loss of labour and capital.

The 2000 population censuses, conducted in many countries, may provide a good basis and opportunity for further studies.

### *Ageing of the countryside*

The migration of young rural men and women to urban areas and the relative decline in fertility has caused progressive ageing of the rural population. This poses new challenges



in the search for mechanisms to retain young men and women in the countryside, especially as the present generation has a higher level of education than the past. A rural environment is needed that can meet the expectations of this generation and that can permit the transfer of property from the old to the young, while the old are still alive.

The elderly and especially older women, who usually outlive their husbands and thus come into land ownership, can play a key role in forming legal agreements with the young, to the benefit of both generations.

### Off-farm employment of rural women

**The upward trend of off-farm** rural employment is important from the gender perspective. There are few gender-sensitive studies on this type of employment, even though statistics indicate its importance to women.

Policy-makers need to take into consideration the contribution women make to food security through off-farm rural income. This reality needs to be addressed through education policies, so that women can learn the skills for today's occupational areas and break out of their almost exclusive reliance on domestic service and other subordinate sectors of the economy.

### State reform, new institutional structures and the gender approach

**State reform and modernization** in the region provides an opportunity to debate the role of national mechanisms to promote gender equality. Policies geared towards achieving gender equality in rural areas will be better formulated if institutions for women's affairs examine rural development and seek to mainstream gender into agencies responsible for rural development.

Gender can only be expressed holistically and system-wide, therefore it is important to move rapidly from the level of the sector towards national policies and embrace all public and private institutions dealing with rural development. Decentralization requires further study so as to enhance the gender perspective and to progress.

Finally, the debate has only just begun on gender in government mechanisms and the management of public finances and the allocation of resources; this is an area requiring further examination.

## Women and genetic resources

**Renewed importance is attached to the value** of genetic resources. The region is especially rich in biodiversity and is the original source of much of humanity's staple foods. The germplasm of these food crops and their genetic diversity are crucial for dealing with environmental change (climate, soil, vegetation, associated and predatory species) and social change (dietary habits, cropping techniques, type of farming) affecting agriculture.

The Green Revolution has made major advances, with improved varieties, biotechnology and transgenic plants; these gains carry within them the risk of loss of biodiversity unless appropriate safeguards are adopted. In this connection there is a need to highlight the role women have played in conserving genetic diversity. There has been little study of the role of human culture, of changes in the evolution of species, very little thought given to the role of society and even less to that of women.

FAO in Guatemala studied the role of women in the conservation of genetic resources of maize (FAO, IPGRI, 2001), documenting the decisive role of women, especially in post-harvest activities and in seed selection for both subsequent sowing and culinary quality. Women's activities have resulted in the conservation of indigenous varieties of maize, which is both the local staple food and at the heart of the Mayan world vision.

Similar studies are required in other countries to open new avenues to bolster women's contribution to the stewardship of biodiversity, especially plant genetic resources.

## Towards a new conception of the rural dimension

**A new perception of the rural dimension** is needed; men and women still live in gender inequality with major inadequacies in living conditions, when compared to advances in other parts of the world. Rural inhabitants are involved in agricultural activity, which continues to be central to their existence, and are increasingly engaged in a wider spectrum of economic activity. The various world visions existing in the rural dimension need to be accommodated if rural development is to benefit all.

## Lessons from the twentieth-century

**Integration of a gender perspective** into agricultural development policies, programmes and projects is gradually gaining ground. To this end, FAO is promoting the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) approach in an increasing number of projects, providing added insight into differing gender needs, potentialities and limitations existing in rural life. Projects include the Special Projects for Food Security, Post-Harvest Projects, Agroforestry Projects and Proposed Programmes of Development of Mountain Areas.

All these activities have provided feedback for the incorporation of gender into public policies and into the activities of non-governmental organizations.

A brief summary is given in Box 4.13 of experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean that illustrate mainstreaming actions and offer methodological input.

### Box 4.13 INCORPORATING A GENDER APPROACH INTO COMMUNITY AGROFORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN BOLIVIA

The project was initiated in 1991 by Community Forest Development in the Bolivian Highlands. The objective was to raise the standard of living of Bolivia's Altiplano peasant farmers by integrating self-sustaining forestry activities into their production system and enable them to satisfy their forest product needs, increase agricultural production and maintain their natural resources.

Project Q'omer Jallp'a FAO/Netherlands-Prefecture of Potosí targeted 98 rural communities in 13 municipal districts in nine provinces of the department of Potosí. Implemented in two phases, the Project first concentrated on community forest development from 1991 to 1996. In the second phase, with a change in focus to the integrated development of productive areas, it ran from 1997 to 2001.

The project is in an area where there has been little exploitation of natural resources, because of lacking technical expertise in agriculture and fruit production. This resulted in high vulnerability to climatic factors (low temperatures and irregular rainfall) in communities located in the Puna (High Andean Plateau). In recent years there have been significant changes in these communities' ecosystem, thanks to the preparation and recovery of land for cultivation, introduction of new forest, fruit and crop species, supported by the construction of a production infrastructure that facilitated the most profitable use of local resources.

Breaking ground:  
present and future perspectives for women in agriculture

### Box 4.13

The first phase of the project strengthened producers' organizations, identifying needs and demands at the household level, but without considering the differing gender needs within the household; this nevertheless improved household living conditions and those of women.

The second phase of the project adopted a gender equality approach to rural development, (Gormatz, 1994). The methodology, based on Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA), addressed the issue of gender in community development from a holistic perspective, with the aim of female participation and establishment of shared gender responsibility for community development. This conceptual basis of the agroforestry project's operational strategy, paved the way for sustainable human development where benefits target the entire population, drawing upon the abilities of all individuals, men and women, and using the resources, strategies and options developed by these rural communities.

This approach meant analysing the production systems of the target communities. The methodology and tools were adapted from SEAGA, where the main characteristic is to analyse and understand production and environmental processes holistically, in relation to the underlying economic factors and cultural dimension. Production systems are thus viewed as an entity geared towards one purpose, with different components receiving project intervention.

#### **Guidelines of the approach used**

The following guidelines complement the gender-based project approach, drawing upon Gender and Development and the operational orientation of SEAGA:

- ❖ Mainstreaming the gender component
- ❖ Promoting agroforestry, production and social development with a gender-based approach
- ❖ Helping overcome current relations of gender inequality
- ❖ Helping assert the economic value of reproductive work
- ❖ Supporting the integration of women in public life

The SEAGA methodology established three areas of analysis to organize the work at its different levels:

#### **DYNAMICS OF DEVELOPMENT**

- Facilitated understanding of the economic, social, demographic, cultural, environmental and policy factors and their respective interplay in the past, present and future.

#### **ANALYSIS OF THE DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOODS**

- Aided comprehension of the basic needs of both sexes and their respective opportunities and limitations for achieving their development objectives.

#### **PRIORITIES OF DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS**

This information helped plan development activities reflecting gender-based priorities of a community based on respective resources and market demand. The systematic processing of project experiences in integrating gender into development helped:

- ❖ match these experiences with the basic principles of situational analysis to determine relevant lines of action for the integration of gender into the project;
- ❖ understand different gender-based strategies employed in communities for the management of natural and economic resources;

### Box 4.13

- ❖ identify the productive roles of women and men in the production system and subsystems; and
- ❖ reach a consensus on gender-based development priorities and plans of action with all beneficiaries (men and women) and local authorities.

#### EVALUATION OF THE GENDER APPROACH IN THE SECOND PHASE:

There is relatively functional participation in most communities tending to concentrate on the realization of activities, without extending to other spheres:

- ❖ the areas of planning, management, decision-making and representation continue to be outside the reach of women in most communities.
- ❖ women have managed to progress in producer organizations and have gained access to the above-mentioned areas in organizations in which they are majority members, and
- ❖ certain communities were followed-up by women technical experts and were decisive in determining women's progress and participation in the second phase, i.e. the setting was ripe for further action.

Source: Villanueva, 2001

### Box 4.14 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF GENDER IN MOUNTAIN AREAS, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN MOUNTAIN AREAS

Projects implemented in the region adopt an integrated and participatory perspective drawing on many different experiences. They cover the technical aspects of forest, catchment, agriculture and socio-economic characteristics affecting households (health, housing, education). Several projects are being implemented in mountain areas and public activities are being developed in support of rural women, but there are significant discrepancies between policy objective and local reality.

The institutions and personnel involved in the projects consider the gender issue synonymous with women. The result is a tendency to pursue activities targeting women only, neglecting gender analysis and integration of a gender-based approach into all project activities. Another shortcoming is failure to integrate gender into the project cycle and to identify gender indicators. These failings are compounded by the limited funds earmarked for gender, so the issue is often little more than a well-intentioned appendage to documents and policies.

Given this situation, FAO-sponsored projects in mountain areas include a training component on socio-economic and gender analysis specifically targeting institutions, their field staff and project beneficiaries of both sexes. There is also a component for the organization and training of leadership in order to foster more equitable participation in project activities.

Based on the experiences of projects FAO/SEARPI, (Service for water channeling and regulation of the Pirai river – Bolivia [GCP/INT/542/ITA-Bolivia]; Community forest development in the Ecuadorian Andes [GCP/ECU/070/NET]; Project to support the management and coordination of the forest action plan for Guatemala [GCP/GUA/008/NET]; Women and trees in the Andean countries promoted by the Forest, Trees and People Programme (FAO-F TPP).

Source: Marcela Ballara, Socio-economic gender analysis in mountain areas. Santiago, Chile, 2001.



## Conclusions and recommendations

**FAO's framework for the advancement** of gender equality is the Plan of Action on Gender and Development (2002–2007), which is considered a requisite for the achievement of food security, and the continued implementation of the Platform for Action established at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995.

A priority of the Plan of Action 2002–2007 is to incorporate gender into the various plans and programmes promoted by FAO. The intention is to create an institutional framework to facilitate gender equality in sustainable agricultural development, in the Organization and in national institutions. The Gender and Development Unit of FAO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has already taken action in this regard<sup>19</sup>:

**Training in Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA)** for agricultural institutions' technical unit staff, field programmes and projects, and agricultural and rural development experts in member countries.

**Support for actions to incorporate a gender perspective** into public policy and development plans to improve women's access, use and control of productive resources; to foster equality of participation in decision-making; and to promote actions to enhance opportunities for remunerated work and generation of income. FAO is promoting technical assistance in the region for the incorporation of a gender-based approach into agricultural censuses. This will allow information to be collected on production unit activities disaggregated by gender, generation and ethnic group.

**Technical assistance and mainstreaming of gender in field projects** is accomplished through agricultural activities benefiting rural households or projects specifically targeting rural women and involving their organization and leadership, the transfer of

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<sup>19</sup> For more details see FAO Gender and Development Unit of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

technology, training in post-harvest methods, marketing or other areas useful to food security in rural households.

The following recommendations are being put into effect under FAO's four major priorities: achieving **food security** at the individual, household and national level; obtaining appropriate **international trade** in food and agriculture as a fundamental element for the achievement of food security, the economic growth of countries, a rational allocation of resources and a globally efficient economic system; ensuring the **sustainable management of natural resources** – appropriate management of forests, water and soil – bearing in mind the existing relationship between humanity and environment and promoting sustainable production practices to guarantee the quality and safety of foods and improve the conditions of health of populations; and **support to rural institutions** in the ongoing process of institutional reform so that they can promote development and reflect a new paradigm of agriculture that is geared towards the capabilities of stakeholders of agricultural development.

The following conclusions and recommendations have been identified to advance gender equality, as a condition for food security and to achieve the region's priority objectives:

**Gender-based policies.** The approach of ad hoc actions targeting women should shift towards the incorporation of a gender-based approach into all sectoral rural development policies and policies to overcome poverty in the region. Broadening awareness-raising and training in FAO's Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) will contribute effectively towards mainstreaming gender in accordance with the guiding principles of SEAGA, which serve as an instrument of change for sustainable human development, in which the rural sector is given greater value and in which gender equality features as a fundamental element.

**Macro-economic priorities.** Various Equal Opportunity Plans in the region confirm a gender-based approach needs to be incorporated into macro-economic policies. The most appropriate options for sustainable rural development should be considered. These should facilitate creation of enabling conditions for agriculture and the securing of financial resources required for integrated development of proactive social policies to overcome poverty and ensure gender equality.



## Conclusions and recommendations

### **Sustainable food production: access to land, irrigation, credit and markets.**

Promotion of food security requires removal of economic, cultural and other obstacles preventing gender-equitable access to productive resources; including land, irrigation, credit and markets. Gender-based public policies should identify these obstacles and determine appropriate actions for their removal. A gender-based analysis covering policies of access to productive resources would highlight their strengths and weaknesses, and facilitate the achievement of their objectives.

**Biodiversity.** Food security in Latin America and the Caribbean rests on the abundance of its genetic resources. Consideration should be given the important role played by women in the conservation of genetic resources through safeguarding traditional native crop varieties to feed the population, especially in poorer communities.

Women's traditional knowledge should enable their increased role in the *in situ* conservation of wild relatives of cultivated plants and wild food plants; in the conservation and sustainable use of local varieties or traditional crop varieties on household farms or gardens and in drawing up an inventory of these varieties.

In brief, a gender-based analysis of roles in rural areas of Latin America could effectively contribute to the achievement of sustainable agricultural, fisheries, forestry and rural development to guarantee food security.

**Natural resources and desertification.** A gender approach in public policies on natural resource protection will foster the achievement of the objectives of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development (Agenda 21) of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, 1992, of the Kyoto Declaration and Plan of Action on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security (Kyoto Declaration and Plan of Action) of 1995, and of the Leipzig Declaration and Global Plan of Action on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, (Leipzig Declaration and Global Plan of Action) of 1996. The gender-based approach will enable achievement of the objectives of the Convention to Combat Desertification.



**Promotion of productive employment.** Promotion of productive employment should begin with recognition of rural women's contribution to economic activity. Promotion of employment should consider all skills possessed and exhibited by rural women in the coping strategies deployed under conditions of extreme poverty. Adoption of special measures is required to promote agricultural and off-farm productive employment, with special attention placed on conditions of social security and labour protection.

**Education.** Specific consideration is required to broaden education coverage in rural areas and to narrow the gap with urban areas. Education should promote social and gender equality, build skills equal to the demands of globalization. At the same time, it is important to safeguard individual groups; respect cultural differences and highlight bilingualism. As an educational process agricultural extension should urgently incorporate these considerations and adjust its modalities to bring the learning process equally to women, men and the young.

**Health.** Achievement of social and gender equality in health is an objective for all mechanisms for equality of opportunity for rural men and women. Equality in access to health services should include recognition of women's knowledge of traditional medicine. Many Equal Opportunity Plans for Rural Women emphasize the need to monitor the occupational health of rural women workers, specifically in regard to their exposure to pesticides.

**Development of citizenship.** Achieving food security in the region, and other primary objectives for overcoming poverty and accomplishing gender equity require that rural women participate actively in decision-making on rural development policies. Strengthening their representative organizations will reinforce their ability to negotiate the region's desired future.



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# The Near East





# The Near East<sup>20</sup>

## Context of rural development

**This chapter examines the progress** made over the past five years in support of the role of rural women in food production and their contribution to food security in the Near East region. It explores measures that enhance the status of rural women, increasing their contribution to food production and food security. The type or extent of the contribution rural women can make depends on their access to and control over resources and benefits.



Harvesting a good crop of dwarf beans in a greenhouse.  
(F. Botts, 1979)

Although data on rural women and food security are only available for a few countries, this situation is improving and progress has been made in the recognition of rural women as active partners in development programmes and projects. In many countries, gender-mainstreaming plans of action and

poverty-alleviation programmes have been formulated; women's associations created and gender mechanisms institutionalized at the central and decentralized levels; including councils, committees and units. Progress has been made in access to resources, such as newly reclaimed lands granted to women and their access to credit for microenterprises. Different strategies target rural women as beneficiaries of loans and credit is linked to their specific situation.

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<sup>20</sup>This chapter is based on the work of Ms Nadia Ramses Farah, FAO Consultant.

Data and observations show that rural women in the Near East region contribute to food security at the household level, and participate in agricultural production, mostly as unpaid family workers. They perform all household responsibilities and child care services and are primarily responsible for maintaining household food security and making do with whatever resources they may have access to. In a few countries in the region the number of women engaged in agriculture is increasing, because of male migration within and outside the countries and wars.

In spite of the above-mentioned progress, gender gaps persist and rural women face similar constraints to women around the world, such as limited access to land, credit, appropriate technology, education and suitable health services.

## Main characteristics of the Near East Region

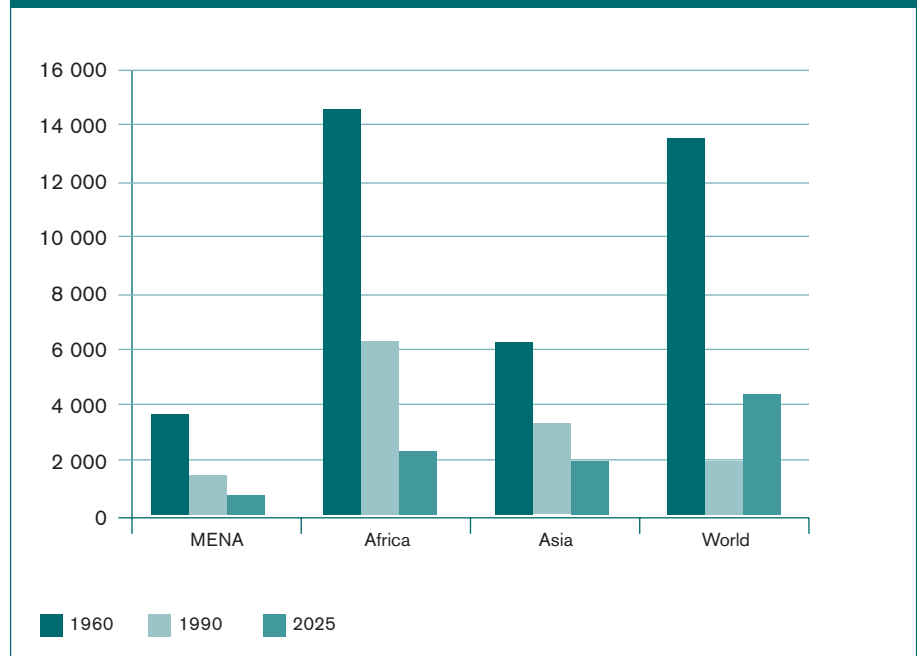
**While there are significant differences** in food security resources between countries in the region, they share a number of common issues: 1) About 70 percent of the total area is arid or semi-arid; only 38 million hectares of arable land (about 34 percent of the total arable land) is irrigated. 2) There is serious degradation of natural resources because of soil erosion, desertification, water logging and salinity (wind erosion affects about 35 percent of the total area, while water erosion affects about 17 percent). 3) Almost all countries in the region have entered a process of market-oriented economic reform, albeit with varying degrees of commitment and success. Considerable economic, political and social difficulties prevail. 4) Several countries in the region suffer greatly from under nutrition and appropriate food safety nets are needed to protect vulnerable groups in both urban and rural areas. 5) The region depends heavily on commercial imports and several countries depend on food aid to meet their food needs. Net cereal imports increased from 6.5 million tonnes 1969–1971 to 39.3 million tonnes by 1988–1990 and are projected to reach 75.5 million tonnes by the year 2010.



## Main Characteristics of the near east Region

Compared to other regions throughout the world water reserves are lowest in the Arab region. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is the driest in the world, and its water reserves are shrinking.

**Figure 5.1**  
Renewable water resources in cubic metres per capita by region

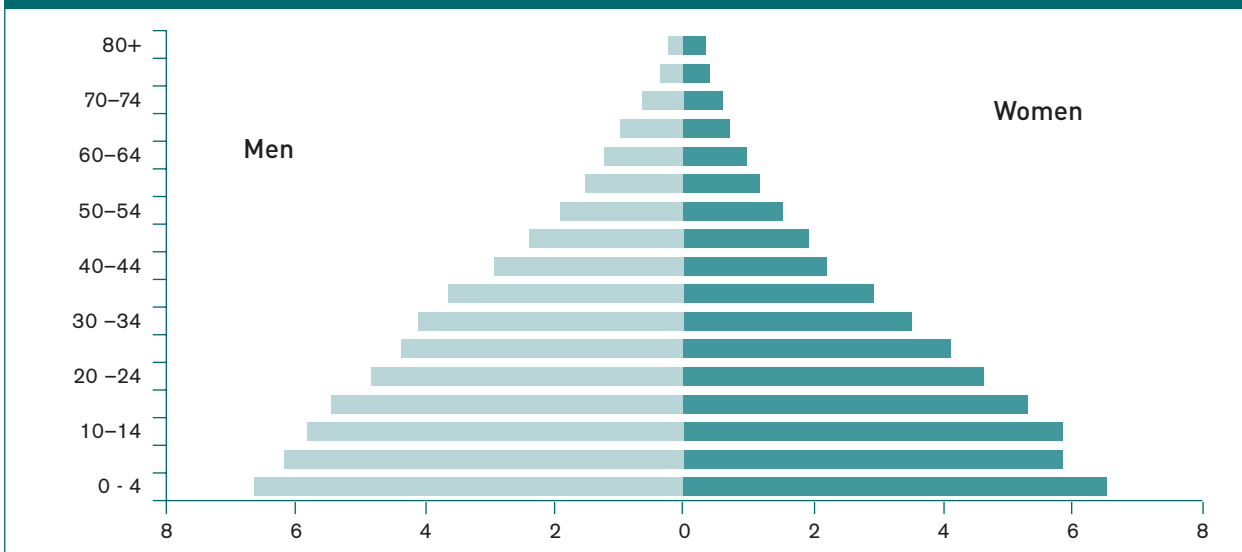


Source: Zafiris, 2000

### Population characteristics

**Certain characteristics of rural societies** in the Near East region might better explain the role of rural women in food security. Constraints prohibiting the participation of rural women in food security include the gender division of labour in agriculture; unpaid family work; the role of women in the decision-making process; in reproduction; social and other restrictions. All these elements may be analysed and characterize the situation of rural women in the Near East region.

**Figure 5.2**  
Population pyramid of the Arab region 2003



Source: ESCWA Social Statistics Datasets, 2003.

The total population in the Arab region is around 307 million, of which approximately 50 percent are women. However, in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Bahrain; Kuwait; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, men constitute little more than half the population. This is because there are a comparatively higher number of male migrant workers in these countries. The proportion of the working population aged 24–64 years make up 59 percent of the total population. Women make up the majority of the population

aged 60 years and older, because of their higher life expectancy at birth compared to men, averaging 68.5 years and 65.1 years respectively for the period 2000–2005.

At the regional level, the population is currently growing yearly at an estimated rate of 2.4 percent and is set to double in 29 years, while this rate is expected to drop to 2.1 percent for the period 2000–2015. This population growth rate is mainly linked to high fertility rates that prevail in a number of Arab countries (ESCWA, 2004). Overall, the region experiences a high population growth rate, which is estimated at 2.4 percent annually and is characterized by an unequal distribution of population and resources; about 38 percent of the population is under the age of 15. The largest populations, in 2000, were in Iran (70 million) and Egypt (68 million) followed by Morocco and Algeria (30 million, each) to only 565 thousand in Qatar. A higher rate is found in Palestine (3.7 percent); Oman (3.5 percent); Yemen (3.3 percent); Saudi Arabia (2.9 percent); Qatar and Iraq (2.7 percent, each).

**Table 5.1**  
Population structure by gender and age group, 2003 (%)

	Total population		Population aged 15		Population aged 15–24		Population aged 25–59		Population aged 59+	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bahrain	42.5	52.5	48.9	51.1	46.9	53.1	36.9	63.1	50.5	49.5
Egypt	50.1	49.9	49.0	51.0	49.2	50.8	50.9	49.1	53.8	46.2
Iraq	49.3	50.7	49.1	50.9	48.9	51.1	49.3	50.7	52.6	47.4
Jordan	47.9	52.1	48.8	51.2	48.7	51.3	46.6	53.4	48.7	51.3
Kuwait	39.8	60.2	49.0	51.0	46.3	53.7	33.7	66.3	41.6	58.4
Lebanon	51.0	49.0	49.0	51.0	49.4	50.6	52.3	47.7	54.8	45.2
Palestine	49.1	50.9	48.9	51.1	48.6	51.4	48.6	51.4	57.3	42.7
Oman	42.6	57.4	48.9	51.1	47.5	52.5	34.0	66.0	45.4	54.6
Qatar	36.6	63.4	48.9	51.1	48.4	51.6	28.2	71.8	33.5	66.5
Saudi Arabia	46.3	53.7	48.8	51.2	48.6	51.4	42.5	57.5	47.5	52.5
Syria	49.6	50.4	48.9	51.1	49.2	50.8	50.1	49.9	53.9	46.1
Emirates	35.0	65.0	49.0	51.0	45.3	54.7	26.1	73.9	36.2	63.8
Yemen	49.2	50.8	48.9	51.1	48.6	51.4	49.9	50.1	51.7	48.3

Source: ESCWA Gender Statistics, 2003.

# Women's Characteristics

## Education and training

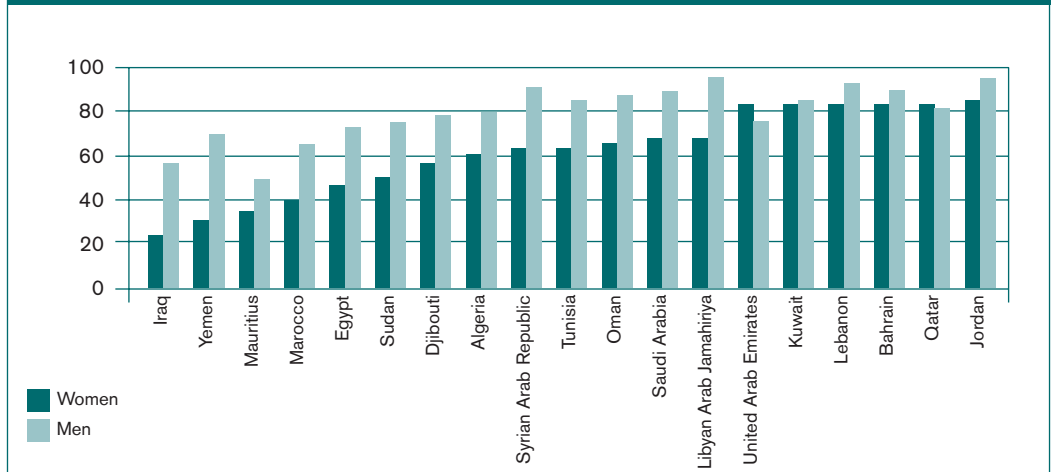
**There are gender disparities** at all educational levels, although net enrollment rates for primary education in Bahrain, Egypt and Tunisia in 2000/01 were almost 100 percent for girls. At the regional level, an estimated 7.4 million children were not in school in 2000, of which 4.4 million were girls. At the preparatory level, the net enrolment ratio for women in 2000/01 was 51.7 percent, compared to 56.4 percent for men. In the same academic year, 17.8 percent of women and 21.6 percent of men were enrolled in secondary education. At the university level in some countries, more women were enrolled in secondary schools than were their male counterparts. This is because daughters are usually kept in the country at home, while sons are sent abroad to pursue higher education outside the Arab region (UNESCO Institute for Statistics [UIS] database).

Women tend to have higher illiteracy rates than men. The highest female adult illiteracy rates are found in Iraq (76 percent); Yemen (71 percent); Mauritania (69 percent); Morocco (62 percent); Egypt (54 percent) and Sudan (51 percent) (World Bank, World Development Indicators Database, 2002).

Illiteracy rates for young women (15–24 years) are generally higher than for boys of the same age and women from urban areas. Women working in agriculture have much higher illiteracy rates in Yemen 94 percent, Egypt 79 percent and in Syria 53 percent (Farah, 2000).

Between 1990 and 2000, the adult literacy rate in the Arab region increased from 50 percent to 60 percent and is expected to exceed 70 percent by 2015. (ESCWA, 2004).

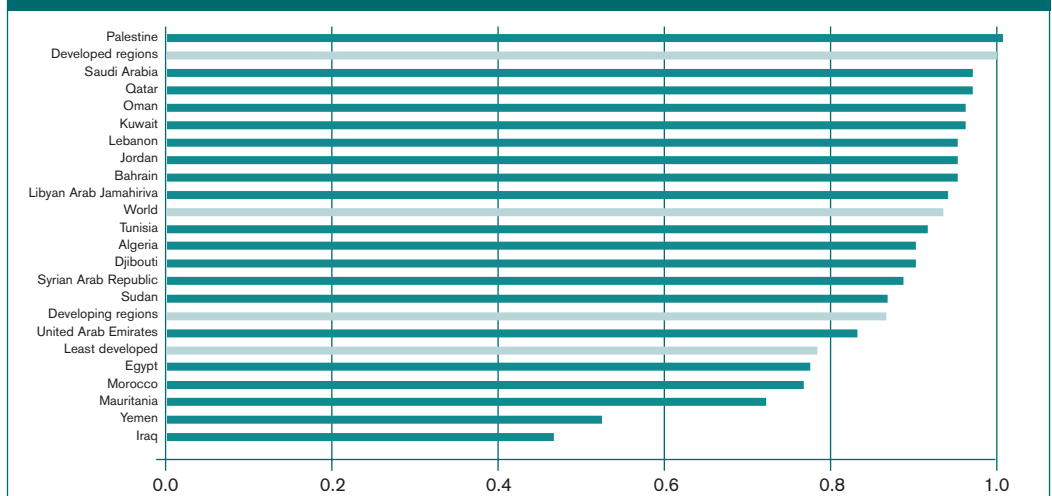
**Figure 5.3**  
Adult literacy rates of women and men in selected Arab countries in 2003 (%)



Source: UNESCO,  
Institute for Statistics (UIS)

**Gender gap in youth literacy:** In most Arab countries, the gender parity index (GPI) for the youth literacy rate in 2000 ranged between 0.86 and 1.0. In Palestine, GPI for the youth literacy rate was 1.01, indicating that young females were marginally more literate than their male counterparts. The widest gender gaps in favour of men in youth literacy rates were observed in Iraq and Yemen. Moreover, the GPI for youth literacy rates was lower than the average in five Arab countries namely: Egypt; Iraq; Mauritania; Morocco and Yemen (ESCWA, 2004).

**Figure 5.4**  
Gender parity index for youth literacy rates in selected Arab countries in 2000



Source: UNESCO  
Institute for Statistics (UIS)

### Reproductive health

It is more difficult for rural women to ensure food security for their households because of the larger family size. In rural families, children are considered an investment rather than a burden on expenditure, because of the labour they provide from an early age. Female children help in household chores, and may replace women with very young children in combining farm and family labour. Rural women in this region tend to have larger families.

Total fertility rates for women aged 15–49 are very high. However, there are pronounced discrepancies between countries. Those with the highest fertility rates in 2000 were Yemen (7.6); Afghanistan and Mauritania (6.8); followed by Palestine (5.6); Oman and Saudi Arabia (5.5 each); Sudan (4.5) and Jordan (4.3), which shows a total high fertility rate for the region as a whole. The lowest fertility rates are in Bahrain (2.3) and Tunisia (2.1); the rate of decline in total fertility rate was slow between 1990 and 2000.

Certain countries have not adopted family-planning programmes, which is true for most Gulf countries. Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia have efficient family-planning policies to curb population growth and are considered success stories in the region.

At the same time, there are differences between the region's rich and poor nations in women's access to reproductive health services. Oil-rich countries have achieved an almost universal rates for antenatal care and deliveries attended by health personnel. These countries offer free, high-quality health services to their citizens. Furthermore, they have achieved low maternal mortality rates for the same above-mentioned reasons.

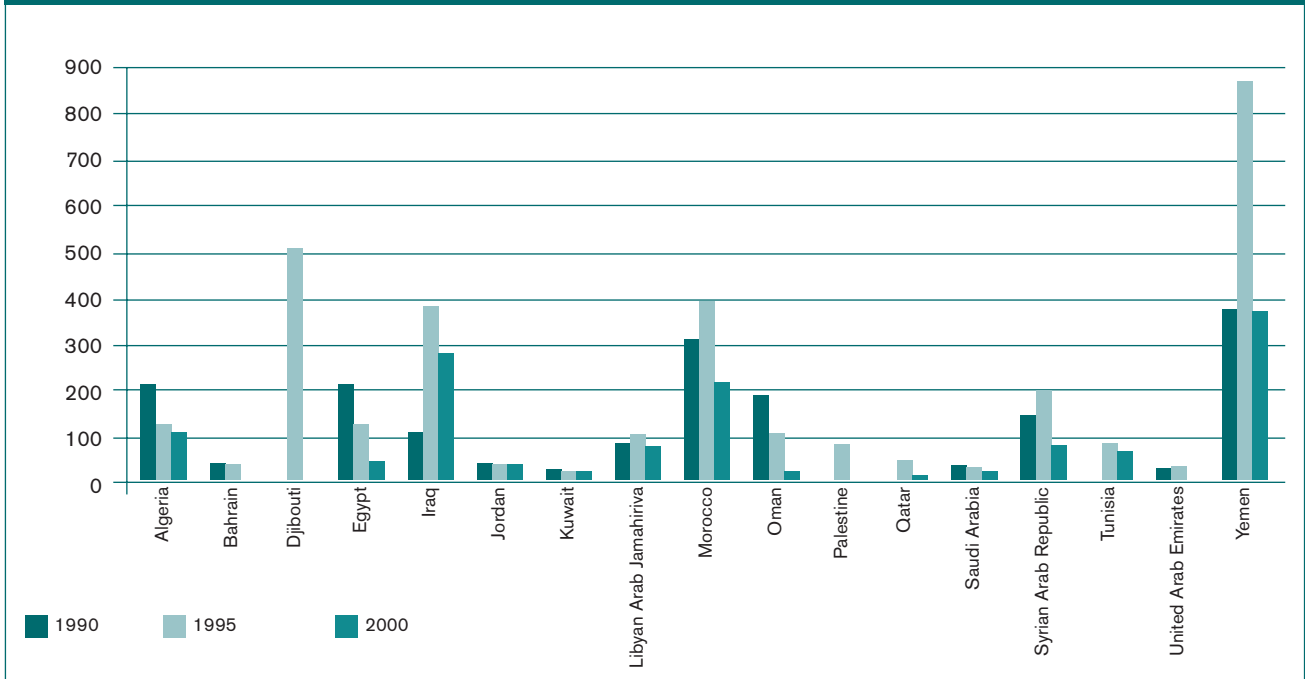
Conversely, poorer countries have sizeable agricultural sectors and a high proportion of their citizens live in rural areas, where there are fewer resources to devote to their citizens on a cost-free basis, especially women. Rural women have the worst rate for antenatal care and percentage of birth deliveries attended by health professionals, they also experience high maternal mortality rates.

The worst maternal mortality rates are for Mauritania and Sudan (550 per 100 000 live births) followed by Yemen (350) and Egypt (170). It may be concluded from the above that rural women with large families and poor access to reproductive health services are more prone to high reproductive and maternal mortality. They are also obliged to ensure food security for a large number of children in conditions of relative poverty.



Figure 5.5

Maternal mortality ratios in selected Arab countries for selected years between 1990 and 2000 (Per 100 000 live births)



Source: ESCWA Social Statistics Datasets, 2003.

Between 1990 and 2000, maternal mortality ratios (MMR) decreased dramatically in most countries. Notable decreases in MMR occurred in Lebanon (104 in 2000), with a drop to one-third of cases in 1990; Algeria (120 in 2000), with approximately half the number of cases in 1990; Egypt (44 in 2000), with a drop to almost one-fifth of cases in 1990 and Oman, which experienced the most dramatic decline from 190 to 14 deaths per 100 000. This is in contrast to Iraq where the ratio increased from 117 to 274 between 1990 and 2000. During this period, MMR remained comparatively high in Yemen, increasing from 351 in 1990 (ESCWA, 2004).

Some governments have adopted policies for managing population growth with significant success (World Bank, 1994). In Tunisia, the Family Planning Association was established in 1968 and, in addition to conventional measures, it promoted the importance of birth spacing for the health of the mother and child. Laws have been enacted to raise a woman's marriageable age to 17 and 20 for men. Family benefits

have been limited to the first three children of a household. Basic education is provided free of charge, and girls and boys have equal access to education and practically identical enrollment rates.

Egypt has had a formal population policy since 1966, when the national family planning programme was established. The first national population policy was introduced in 1973. Between 1980 and 1996, the fertility rate dropped from 5.1 children per woman to 3.3 children per woman and contraceptive prevalence rate rose from 21 to 50 percent. The population programme still remains a national priority for the government.

Usually populations in larger countries have fewer resources than the smaller, particularly those in the oil-rich Gulf countries. Moreover, the larger, poorer countries are more likely to generate a higher percentage of their income from agriculture.



## Economically active population in the rural sector

**Both women and men are income** earners and the number of men and women in the job market is increasing. Education is seen as a way to protect girls from an uncertain future. In addition, women are taking up studies and jobs that were previously occupied by men. In Syria, for example, approximately 50 percent of students in the faculty of agriculture are women and in the Sultanate of Oman 48 percent of students enrolled at the Agricultural University (1998) are women. Women assume added responsibilities as they fill the labour gap created by men who leave in search of better wages (IFAD, 2003).

### Women active in agriculture

**The economic activity rate of Arab** women remains lower than that for women in other regions in the world. In 2000, Arab women comprised around 29 percent of the regional labour force and were more often unemployed than men were. Moreover, in 2001, the unemployment rate of women was around 17.1 percent compared with men at 10.6 percent (ESCWA, 2004). The activity rate in rural areas in Syria stands at 83.7 percent for males and 33.4 percent for females. In Oman, women represent 24 percent of the active population. The rural female unemployment rate is highest (12.1 percent) versus (7.1%) for rural males with a gender gap of (+5). Over 70 percent of female workers receive incomes from US\$40 to US\$80, only 41 percent of that earned by men (FAO, TCP and Syria).

Most women work in agriculture as unpaid family labour. The percentage of unpaid female workers to total female agriculture workers is 79 percent in Yemen; 66 percent in Syria; 60 percent in Egypt and 45 percent in Palestine (Farah, 2000). These high rates of female unpaid family workers in agriculture are the main reason for the relatively high rate of unpaid family workers at the national level. While some males (usually boys) work as unpaid family workers, the gap between males and females is significant. Accordingly, women working as agricultural producers are

deprived of an income while they perform a very important task; namely ensuring household food security.

### Impact of structural adjustment policies

**Most Near East countries** have shifted from a centralized to a free-market economy and have adopted structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) to ease the integration of their countries into the international economic system. Major features of these structural adjustment policies are economic liberalization of market and privatization. SAPs insist on the reduction of government expenditure, lifting of subsidies (especially agricultural and food subsidies) and alignment to international prices.

These measures have led to increased income inequalities and higher poverty levels and have sometimes negatively affected small and poor farmers. Cuts in subsidies and subventions to the agricultural sector have negatively affected rural populations, particularly rural women, as agricultural smallholders who were neither equipped nor prepared to face the new challenges of national and international competitions.



Young woman carrying load of fuelwood.  
(R. Faidutti, 1987)

### Female-headed households

**The number of female-headed** households is also an indicator of female poverty throughout the region. This figure does not differ much from the national rate. It is suspected that the rate of female-headed households is much higher than revealed in the available statistics, especially for North Africa, because of extensive male migration to European countries.

Female-headed households are defined by the United Nations as women who head households and who are responsible for expenditure and management of household affairs in the absence of a male. The number of women-headed households is increasing because of, *inter alia*, male migration, disabled males, widowhood and divorce.

The percentage of female-headed households is highest in Pakistan and Sudan,



## Economically active population in the rural sector

25 percent and 23.8 percent respectively (FAO, 1995). The latest rate for both Egypt and Morocco is the same, 17 percent. Female-headed households in Egypt have their own specific socio-economic characteristics that are different to male-headed households in rural areas. In relation to this aspect, 62 percent of women who head families are widows. The illiteracy ratio for women-headed families (73%) is higher than the ratio for the entire population of rural women (63.3). A total of 42 percent of female-headed households have incomes of less than LE 1 200<sup>21</sup> per year, and 30 percent have incomes that range between LE 1 200–1 800 per year. About 80.5 percent of female-headed households in rural area have no land holding. In this respect, liberalization of the land rental relationship has pushed some female-headed tenants out of their agricultural land holdings (Ahmed, M. 2003).

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<sup>21</sup>US\$1 = 6.3 LE

# Gender Policies

**Since the mid-1990s international conventions** on Women and Population, the World Food Summit and others, have raised the awareness of policy-makers to integrate the gender approach into the formulation of policies, projects and programmes. The following three main trends are emerging: women and political participation, mainstreaming gender in agricultural policies and programmes, establishment of gender mechanisms.

## Women and political participation

**Women's political participation** in the region is minimal and the number of women ministers is still low. In some countries, especially the Gulf Countries, women do not yet have the right to vote or take part in parliament. In other countries, the number of women members of parliament is higher because seats are reserved for them, as in Syria (10.4 percent). Nevertheless, political participation is still minimal and measures should be adopted to increase women's political participation in the region. On the other hand, it is noted that women hold high-level positions in many other fields such as law, education, health and social security.

A total of 16 Arab countries have effective parliaments and have given women the right to vote and run for public office. However, on average, women's share of parliamentary seats does not exceed 4.1 percent. Sudan, Syria and Tunisia have the best record of female representation in parliament, listing 9.7, 10.4 and 11.5 percent respectively (ESCWA, 2000).

## Mainstreaming gender in agricultural policies and programmes

**The Ministries of Agriculture** in the region are mainstreaming gender into their policies, projects and programmes. To achieve this, many countries have benefited from support provided by FAO's Regional Office for the Near East through technical

projects that prepare methodologies for the development of strategies and the plan of action (POA). The aim is to integrate the gender dimension into rural and agricultural development policies and programmes. The strategies and POA started

with the assessment of the situation of men and women in the agricultural sector. Surveys were conducted in pilot areas and led to data collection and analysis. Gender roles were identified in agriculture, including constraints, potentialities (natural resources, human resources), priorities and needs. Solutions were proposed by the main actors and partners involved in agricultural development at the grass-roots level.

The objective of the strategies and the plan of action sought to improve the livelihoods of men and women, and promote equal opportunity in access to resources and services. This includes training, extension, credit, information and other issues identified as constraints to women's



Woman with her baby purchasing products in the local market.

advancement. Information, communication and networking were among the components of the plan of action. Its main principles included increasing agriculture productivity and developing income-generating activities in the context of sustainable use of natural resources. Support provided through technical support included training of trainers on a gender approach methodology and tools. The main goal of the pilot actions was the adaptation of the gender approach methodological tools to the sociocultural context of the countries. FAO projects were implemented in Algeria; Egypt; Jordan; Morocco; Syria and Tunisia.

## Establishment of gender mechanisms

**Almost all countries in the region have initiated actions**, within the Ministries of Agriculture, to translate the gender approach into institutionalized structures. The main established structures are WID/Gender Unit, Direction of Women, Policy and Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture, Division of Women. These structures are either independent or a part of the extension service. In some cases, the unit in charge of home economics has moved to a women/gender unit. In other cases, a special adviser on women and gender issues is located within the Cabinet of the

Minister. Those who head the women/gender structures have been trained in the gender approach, methodologies and tools.

FAO's Regional Office for the Near East has organized regional training sessions on the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA) in the languages spoken in the region. Trainees are facilitating the gender approach in rural development in the Near East networking process.

All countries in the region have established national committees/NGOs and other organizations for the advancement of women, which are being headed by the First Ladies. The creation of a special prize for the best action to promote the advancement of women was announced during the Conference of Arab Women organized by ESCWA in Beirut, in July 2004. Furthermore, ministries that are in charge of women and the family have been established in Algeria, Mauritania and Tunisia.





# Gender roles in agriculture

## Gender division of labour

**Women contribute to food security in many ways.** They produce food for household consumption; earn income as wageworkers or as producers of agricultural items sold on the market to supplement their household food requirements.

FAO estimates that women produce more than 50 percent of food grown worldwide and they are the majority of the world's agricultural producers (FAO, 1995). In the Near East, women's real participation in agricultural production is largely underestimated and their economic activity is narrowly defined in census and survey statistics throughout most of the region. Egypt, in the 1996 census survey, estimated that 9 percent of rural women are economically active. This is because female agricultural labour is mostly unpaid and family labour underestimated. However, use of FAO's more flexible definitions of economic participation in this region reveals high rates of female participation in agriculture and Djibouti; Iraq; Iran; Jordan; Libya; Turkey; Mauritania and Morocco show clear trends towards the feminization of agriculture (FAOSTAT).

All countries in the region experience similar urban-rural disparities. High rural poverty is placing new strains on households and changing well-established divisions of roles, responsibilities and resources between women and men.

Women in the region spend long hours every day in crop and livestock production. They are involved in almost all aspects of crop production, except for land preparation, water management and other mechanized and capital-intensive activities. Although, in some situations, women will be found engaged in all areas, generally, the tasks women perform are often non-mechanized and labour-intensive. Thus, women broadcast seeds and fertilizers by hand, pick fruit and vegetables and carry produce on their backs. Women spend many hours in post-harvest activities such as threshing, cleaning, sorting and grading.

Rural women spend much time every day on agricultural and domestic tasks, with little time to improve skills, rest or recreation. As paid and/or unpaid labour,

women may spend up to 19 hours/day performing essential chores such as sowing; weeding; harvesting; animal husbandry; cleaning; fetching water and firewood; baking; cooking; sewing and child rearing to ensure the livelihood of the household.

Data indicate that women are not usually remunerated for their work, and there are distinct disparities between wages earned by men and women. Often women are paid two-thirds or even half the wages earned by men for the same task (FAO, 1995).

For example, women in Egypt participate in all phases of production including irrigation; pest control; transporting; marketing; ploughing; leveling and furrowing. Yet these tasks are usually perceived as exclusively performed by males. Similar situations are found in most Near East countries such as Maghreb, Mashrek, Sudan and Mauritania.

Both males and females participate in farming activities from an early age and the level of female participation increases at the same rate as male participation. Women's participation increases significantly in the age group 30–34 years as most men seek job opportunities outside agriculture as a result of the limited size of the family house holding. (Abdel Aal, M. 2002).

In rural areas of the Near East, the traditional view is that men undertake all work requiring physical strength, transport and marketing, whereas women, although active in several phases of agricultural production undertake all domestic chores, gardening and animal care.

The current stereotype of traditional gender division of labour, especially for women in agriculture, can be described as follows:

*'The traditional family structure is an outcome of a corporate society, which curbs individuality and stresses the complementarities of roles. The family is hierarchical. Sex roles within the family are defined: males are the breadwinners; women are responsible for the children and the household. Women gain status through their traditional roles as wives and*

**Table 5.2**  
Gender division of labour by major crops in Egypt, % of women in 2000

Activities	Maize	Wheat	Rice
Planting	35.0	32.0	34.0
Fertilizing	45.0	39.0	37.0
Irrigating	22.0	41.0	38.0
Weeding	35.0	41.0	42.0
Pest control	28.0	29.0	23.0
Harvesting	40.0	35.0	40.0
Transporting	38.0	37.0	40.0
Replanting	41.0	–	–
Storage	76.0	73.0	64.0
Sacking	36.0	33.0	43.0
Marketing	58.0	63.0	50.0
Sloughing	37.0	36.0	39.0
Leveling	38.0	34.0	38.0
Furrowing	35.0	–	–

Source: Farah, N.R. 2000b



## Gender roles in agriculture

*mothers. Employment of women is not a measure of higher status; it might be a measure of economic need. The traditional division of labour provides some advantages derived from their traditional roles within the family. In fact, women control the organization of the domestic domain and financial dispersal a good part if not all the day. They are the main forces in communication between the households. They control those things most valued by men, i.e., sex, honour, children, and a well-organized household' (Rugh, 1988).*

In most Near East countries, rural women have almost complete authority over poultry, buying, selling or vaccination. For most rural women, raising and selling poultry provides an income for the family and for themselves. According to a study undertaken in Egypt, women have little say in almost all other aspects, except for agricultural investment (19 percent women) and vaccination of livestock (16.5 percent). Another major indicator of control of economic resources is the marketing of agricultural products. Here only 4 percent of women take part in this decision-making issue (Boutros, 1993).

Rural women in Egypt participate little in decision-making at the household level in irrigated areas. Men have almost exclusive authority on matters related to seeds, buying and selling of livestock and land. This also includes the use of herbicides and agricultural machinery, what to grow and where to sell products. Women make decisions related to poultry and contribute to decisions on agriculture projects and the vaccination of livestock.

## Access to resources

**Data on women's access to land** is minimal in the region. Some data indicate that women landholders form around 5 percent of total landholders in Egypt and Syria. Female land ownership is around 51 percent in Cyprus; 29 percent in Jordan; 24 percent in Egypt; 14 percent in Morocco and 4 percent in Syria. The areas of landholdings are almost the same in Egypt (2.4 *feddans* for males and 2 *feddans* for females); but is only 57 *dunum* for Syrian females compared to 80 *dunum* for males. Some countries have undertaken the implementation of programmes on newly reclaimed land. However, the share of women on the newly reclaimed land in Egypt does not exceed 7 percent (Farah, 2000).

There is a difference between landholding and land ownership. Landownership does not necessarily lead to landholding. Most middle-class women own land through inheritance, but they rent it to others, who are mostly men. It is the tradition in some countries not to leave girls land, as an inheritance, even if this is against the law. Families are apprehensive that the husband will take over and family landholdings will be dispersed. Instead of land, some families give a gift of money or jewellery to their daughters.

In spite of the significant participation of women in agricultural activities their access to and control of land is limited. Overall, female holders represent only 5.72 percent of the total number of landholders in Egypt. Women in Lower Egypt enjoy the highest share across regions constituting 7.28 percent of the total landholders of lower (Abdel Aal, M. 2002).

## Access to services

**Legislation provides equal access to resources** and services in most countries and progress has been noted in services such as education and health. However, disparities remain in rural areas when compared to urban areas.

Although women are active in the agricultural sector, they do not benefit from all the support and related services. The following gender gaps have been observed:

- Women do not benefit, as they should, from training and extension for improvement of their skills, working conditions and productivity.
- Compared with urban women, rural women suffer from high illiteracy rates and workload related to their domestic and agricultural tasks that limit their participation in training and extension sessions.
- Extension staff are predominantly male, which generally limits communication for cultural reasons. Many women have graduated in agriculture (50 percent); however, they do not hold decision-making and technical positions. Mostly, women work in agricultural research, education and administration. Female extension agents generally work in offices and often deal with traditional matters related to home economics.
- This tendency is being reversed; female graduates are present at the village level in Algeria; Morocco; Tunisia; Jordan; Syria and Egypt.



## Gender roles in agriculture

- Rural women's access to credit for investment in agricultural inputs is still limited. However, many small credit programmes have been created for rural women in the last five years. These have been developed through institutions in order to provide women with the financial support to improve their incomes or to increase household food security, though the earned income remains low. In Egypt the percentage of women obtaining (in the 1990s) short-term production loans did not exceed 12 percent, only 16 percent obtained investment loans. In Jordan, rural women received 19.6 percent of total agricultural loans, but the value of their loans did not exceed 12 percent of the total value of agricultural loans given in 2001. The share of women in the total value of loans ranged from 9.9 percent to 18.9 percent. The highest percentage of loans to women were mid-term loans, 21 percent of total loans in this category; 10 percent of long term; 2.4 percent of short term and 4 percent of seasonal loans (Qura'n, R. 2004). Schemes adapted to the local context including agricultural banks, cooperatives and social funds for development are still under experimentation.
- Access to information at the village level is limited. Surveys demonstrated that women did not benefit from support for agricultural inputs' investment provided by governments because the information related to the programme did not reach them.

Because of the traditional division of labour in agriculture in the region, rural women lack access to production inputs, transport and marketing services. Incomplete information, based upon indices estimated from experimental work and sample surveys, indicate a gender division in technology use. Women profit from improved cook stoves, food processing and food storage devices, while men benefit from irrigation, post-harvest threshing devices and improved transport (Mansour, 1994).

Agricultural research targets large-scale agricultural units, and therefore, technologies targeting small-scale units held by women have not been developed. Rural women have not yet been provided with simple and accessible technologies adapted to their needs (Bou-Salah, 2004).

### Representation of women in agricultural organizations

**Women's associations have been created in the region.** However, few are located at the village level. They mainly deal with natural resource management, medicinal plants, production and marketing. Most have obtained financial support from governments and donors to develop activities related to education, health and income-generation activities.

Women are seen to be under-represented on the board of cooperatives. In Palestine, women are intensely involved in agricultural labour, although they are almost absent from any system of decision-making. In the West Bank eight marketing agricultural cooperatives exist under the umbrella of the Agricultural Cooperative Union, the total number of members is 7,414 with only two women, at a rate of 0.03 percent of female membership. The data collected do not indicate why women do not appear in decision-making systems. In many cases, it is the choice of women themselves, for reasons that should be investigated through specific surveys.

### Constraints to rural women's participation in agricultural development

**A main constraint to rural women's** participation in agriculture and food security is the heavy workload within and outside the household, especially where there are a large number of children. The traditional division of labour dictates that rural women are responsible for all domestic chores, plus all their roles in agricultural production and care of livestock.

When accounting for all activities, carried out by women in rural areas, the number of work hours per week increases dramatically. Participatory rapid assessment (PRA) of rural women's work in different areas of the Near East demonstrates that women, on average, work from 10 to 16 hours per day, while men work an average of six to eight hours. The length of a woman's agricultural workday depends on many factors such as the gender-based division of labour, the husband/ brother or father's occupation, size of family and number of women in the extended family, area of land under cultivation and the use of technology in both agriculture and within the household.

Technology in agricultural production is essentially oriented towards large-scale agricultural units headed by men, which are mostly mechanized. Tractors are used to till,



## Gender roles in agriculture

irrigation is carried out with water pipes and trucks transport produce to market. When there are no paved roads or trucks women walk to the market carrying the produce on their heads, where they sell poultry, vegetables and fruits. When there are paved roads and trucks, women no longer take part in the marketing of produce. Normally the hours they devote to work do not allow them time to market their produce. These above-mentioned constraints lead to the loss of training opportunities and attendance at literacy classes; moreover, rural women are generally underpaid for their products, as they do not participate in the marketing process.

In some cases, the men in the household work outside the agricultural sector, but women perform all activities within and outside the household. If the household is an extended family, involving a large number of daughters and sister-in-laws, this workload might be alleviated. In this case, the work is divided among the women of the extended family. Those working in the field carry out all agricultural activities and some household chores, while the others stay in the home and do most household chores and care for the children. Typically, women spend 9 to 10 hours working in the field. The household workload is made easier for women with appliances: gas stove, washing machine, refrigerator and access to piped drinking water.

The situation is different for women in nuclear families who have large areas of rented or owned land. In this case, both men and women are involved solely in agricultural production. However, the small size of the family and the large area of land affect women's time use in different ways and they work for much longer hours, around 14 hours per day.

The third category of women is the poorest. They have no access to electricity and are therefore are unaided by home appliances. Everything is made by hand and cooking is performed on traditional wood or dung-fuelled stoves. The task is harsher for nuclear families and female-headed households, even those with a large number of children. The workday for these women may be 16 hours per day or more.

In Egypt and Syria, rural women substitute their daughters' work for theirs, both outside and inside the household, especially when there are young children in the family. In Egyptian and Syrian agriculture, girls aged 15 to 19 years form 20 percent of the female labour force. This substitution of the mother's labour, by the daughters', impacts girls' education and health. It is known that fathers, who depend on their daughters' agriculture labour, are more reluctant to permit them to marry at an early age, because of the expected loss of labour.

## Conclusions and lessons learned

**During the past decade, a dynamic process** has begun in Near East countries as progress has been made in mainstreaming gender into national policies. This has been accomplished through strategies and national plans of action and through the formulation of poverty alleviation programmes. In contrast, there has been a decline in agricultural and food production indices. In a few countries in the region, a high percentage of the population suffers from undernourishment, possibly the result of internal and external conflicts.

In addition, progress has been made in the recognition and participation of rural women as active partners in rural and agricultural development programmes. In spite of these efforts to improve the situation of rural women, there is a need to strengthen support to rural women in their role of ensuring food security. This includes facilitating women's access to agricultural productive resources (land; water; credit; production inputs and marketing) and social services including education and training; extension and reproductive health services.

Out of these efforts, certain patterns have emerged that may be qualified as lessons learned:

- The gender concept has been adopted in the region although, in some cases, the goals and content of the concept have not been fully understood. It is important that gender terminologies, methodological tools and training packages be adapted to the local sociocultural characteristics.
- The gender approach is largely implemented in certain fields such as education and health; however, the approach is still weakly implemented in technical fields.
- Research and academic institutions are not yet involved in gender issues. Although gender and participatory approaches are used in the formulation and implementation of projects funded by external donors and development agencies, the approaches are used less in governmental institutions.
- Gender-sensitive databases remain the prerequisite for gender mainstreaming in policies, legislation and development programmes. Training in the gender





## Conclusion and lessons learned

approach is mainly oriented towards personnel working in gender structures. Planners, statisticians and other decision-makers do not participate, as they should, in being trained to use a gender approach.

- The role and functions of gender structures within the ministries of agriculture is limited. The structure is insufficiently supported in terms of inputs, and they are thus unable to perform duties related to advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming within the agricultural policy, programmes and projects.
- Several development organizations have advanced small amounts of credit to poor rural women through multiple income-generating projects. Some women have been reluctant to accept this type of credit. This was because of the terms, or the organizations imposed projects that added to their work and gave no guarantee that the project would benefit them directly. A lesson learned is that rural women have their own needs and priorities. They will not accept financial support (grant or loan) if it is not appropriate to them.
- Increase in the number of female development and extension agents working at the grassroots level. Internal policies must correct the income imbalance caused by structural adjustment policies and globalization to avoid weakening national economies and increasing dependence on foreign sources of income.

## Recommendations

**It is important that people dealing with rural and agricultural** development policies and programmes have a proper understanding of gender concepts and goals. Gender terminology used should be adapted to the socio-cultural context of each country. Note that the gender approach targets the roles of both women and men in the family.

Starting with the lessons learned, during almost five years of implementation of the Gender and Development (GAD) approach in rural and agricultural programmes in Near East countries, and in accordance with FAO's Gender and Development Plan of Action 2002–2007, several recommendations were made by participants at the Regional Expert's Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in Rural Development in the Near East Countries, Cairo, Egypt, 26–29 May 2003. Furthermore, the following recommendations include those made for the 27<sup>th</sup> NERC conference at Doha, Qatar, in March, 2004 and take into account the priorities and the context of the Region.

### Capacity building in gender analysis approaches, methodologies and tools:

- Support for national capacity building in gender analysis approaches taking into consideration environmental aspects. Preparation of gender analysis tools and training material and documents.
- Training of policy-makers, planners and development agents at centralized and decentralized levels under FAO's global Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis programme (SEAGA).
- Training in Gender and Statistics in Agriculture.
- New approaches for training, extension and research programmes adapted to rural women's and men's situation and roles in agriculture.
- Agricultural policies and programmes, including research and extension, training and production services should develop schemes that respond to the



## Recommendations

situation, needs and priorities of both men and women, in order to maintain the populations in rural areas and avoid male and female migration.

- Improvement of women's access to resources, such as land, training, inputs and marketing of products. In addition, rural women should be consulted for agricultural policies, projects and programmes formulation. This will ensure they are integrated into agricultural programmes and projects that respond to rural women's specific needs and priorities.
- Efforts should continue to support national capacity building in gender analysis approaches and establish gender sensitive databases, required to guide the policy-making process.
- Gender-orientated research should be promoted, given the serious gaps in knowledge related to gender issues.

## Support to the institutionalization and promotion of the integration of a gender dimension in agriculture and rural development policies and programmes

- Inclusion of gender-sensitive mechanisms and tools for development planning, monitoring-evaluation to ensure that gender mainstreaming is implemented at the central as well as decentralized levels.
- Gender-disaggregated data to be integrated in studies, research papers, surveys and agricultural censuses.
- Institutionalization of a gender-sensitive approach in agricultural training and extension, as well as in the curricula for statistics and planning studies.
- Institutionalization of gender mainstreaming activity/function, with clearly defined mandates and tasks including advocacy, policy advice and monitoring and evaluation within the key divisions/departments of the ministries in charge of agriculture and rural development. For example: divisions/departments of studies, statistics, programme planning, personnel, reporting, coordination, and database development tasks as a cross cutting issue. This will ensure that a

gender dimension is taken into account when preparing development policies, programmes, and legislation.

- Organization of inter-departmental committees related to gender and development for coordination and prioritization of actions.
- Initiation of partnership between government institutions and civil society through the creation of rural men's and women's associations at the village level for development programmes that respond to the needs and priorities of men and women.
- Train researchers, planners and statisticians in the gender approach to improve skills related to gender disaggregated data collection and analysis.

### Information and communication

- Creation of a database on gender roles in agriculture and rural development.
- Preparation, collection and dissemination of information on gender roles and needs in rural and Bedouin areas.
- An integrated policy needs to be followed where agricultural production and food security is promoted and accompanied by extension, education and health.

### *Networking*

- Strengthening of networking at the national, regional and international levels and sharing of information on gender mainstreaming in the region, such as lessons learned, successful approaches and good practices.
- Contribution to the creation of websites and networks in the languages spoken in the Near East Region with information on good/best practices in gender and agriculture development programmes.

### *Valorization of rural men's and women's potential to improve their participation in rural development*

There is a need to help men and women farmers, particularly the young, remain in rural areas with attractive livelihoods strategies and diversification of activities. In



## Recommendations

this regard, cooperation and sharing of experiences between North-South and South-South countries should be promoted.

- Integrated programmes targeting rural populations to ensure coordination between the stakeholders concerned with rural development programmes.
- Development of efficient communication strategies to reach men and women living in rural remote areas.
- Encouragement of microenterprises and other rural activities.
- Promotion of adapted technologies and methodologies for the better management of natural resources and to improve Rural/Bedouin household income. Recognizing the value and potential of traditional knowledge and local best practices of rural men and women.
- Innovative approaches to help rural women and men find efficient strategies, enabling them to face the new challenges of globalization and the free market, e.g. development of income-generating activities based on local resources to improve income and family livelihoods.
- Improvement of access to land programmes such as those initiated in some countries. For example the newly reclaimed lands attributed to men and women in Egypt and Algeria.
- Facilitate access to credit and give priority to female-headed households for the mitigation of negative outcomes. An alternative might be the establishment of women's associations for transport and marketing to empower women to gain control of benefits. Investigation of conditions before extending credit to rural women, and being innovative when proposing income-generating activities.

In addition, the following themes might be developed through further research:

- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation of national gender mechanisms; integration of women into agricultural projects, including impact of extension services delivered by female technicians to rural women;
- ▶ Gender-appropriate technology in agriculture;
- ▶ Gender-related impacts of armed conflict on women's livelihoods, security and the agricultural sector;

- ▶ Consequences of the feminization of agriculture on agricultural production in terms of gender-related aspects of collective resource management, such as irrigation, etc.;
- ▶ Comparative analysis of women's political participation throughout the Near East.
- ▶ Gender relations analysis for household management.



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The background of the cover is a stylized illustration in shades of orange and red. It depicts several figures, likely women, in various agricultural or domestic settings. One figure is shown from the back, another is seated, and a smaller figure is visible in the background. The style is reminiscent of traditional African art or folk painting.

# Projection de nouvelles bases:

perspectives présentes et futures pour les femmes rurales dans le domaine agricole



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ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
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ROME, 2005

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## Avant-propos

Dans le monde en développement, les femmes sont parmi les groupes les plus pauvres et les plus désavantagés. Elles doivent faire face à la discrimination fondée sur la parité hommes- femmes qui se reflète dans l'inégalité des droits d'accès aux ressources – surtout à la terre, à la technologie et aux services sociaux y compris l'éducation et la santé. Dans la vie publique leurs voix sont rarement entendues dans la mesure où elles sont sous représentées à tous les niveaux de prises de décisions. La communauté internationale a reconnu que l'accélération du développement rural et l'égalité entre les sexes sont essentiels pour parvenir aux Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement. L'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture ainsi que les autres organismes travaillent pour l'égalité entre les sexes et la responsabilisation des femmes en tant qu'agents essentiels de la réduction de la pauvreté, liées aux problèmes des droits humains fondamentaux (Hartl, 2004).

La situation des femmes rurales a fait partie du programme des conférences internationales durant des décennies et elle a été mise en valeur dans la Déclaration et le Programme d'action de Beijing adoptés à la Quatrième conférence sur les femmes (1995) et le Plan d'action du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation (1996). La Convention sur l'élimination de toutes formes de discriminations à l'égard des femmes (CEDEF) adoptée en 1979 par l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies est considérée comme la Charte des droits internationaux des femmes. Elle couvre totalement les droits politiques et civiles aussi bien que les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels. C'est le seul traité sur les droits humains qui s'occupe expressément des femmes rurales. Dans son Article 14, la Convention soutient les droits des femmes à un accès égal aux ressources et aux services sociaux élémentaires. Il souligne également que les femmes devraient participer à l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de la planification du développement dans toutes les activités de la



## Avant-propos

communauté. Cela comprend une participation active en matière de développement politique et de prise de décisions concernant leurs vies (Hartl, 2004).

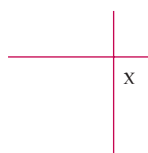
Ce recueil de documents offre une évaluation du rôle des femmes rurales qui assurent la sécurité alimentaire dans cinq régions géographiques: l'Afrique, l'Asie et le Pacifique, l'Europe, l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes et le Proche-Orient. Pour comprendre les relations entre parité hommes-femmes, pauvreté rurale et insécurité alimentaire, une analyse a été effectuée dans chaque région sur les rôles spécifiques et les responsabilités des femmes rurales par rapport à la sécurité alimentaire en tant que producteurs (de biens agricoles ou salariées) et que consommateurs responsables de l'achat de la nourriture pour le ménage par le biais de la production ou du commerce.

La Déclaration de Rome sur le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation de 1996 a reconnu que le droit au développement et la pleine et totale participation des hommes et des femmes sont fondamentaux pour parvenir à une sécurité alimentaire durable pour tous. De la même façon, le titre de cette publication, *Projection de nouvelles bases: perspectives présentes et futures pour les femmes rurales dans le domaine agricole*, laisse entendre que l'on reconnaît de plus en plus l'importance du lien entre les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire.

Des études récentes indiquent que les femmes rurales supportent la plupart du fardeau et du coût social de la mondialisation. Cela est dû au fait qu'au cours des dernières décennies, les changements économiques les plus importants ont pesé lourdement sur la vie traditionnelle de la campagne et les femmes rurales ont endossé différentes responsabilités de production et d'activités dans le contexte en évolution de la mondialisation. Cependant, l'objectif est toujours le même: changer le statut des femmes et passer du peu de reconnaissance de leur travail, production, affaires, famille, activités sociales et politiques à une reconnaissance dans laquelle elles sont à la fois participantes et source de revenus, cherchant l'égalité des opportunités avec les hommes.

Chez elles, les femmes rurales ont conçu de nombreuses stratégies d'affrontement pour nourrir leurs familles. Elles cultivent des légumes dans les potagers, récoltent et transforment la nourriture, migrent vers les villes pour gagner leur vie et envoyer des fonds chez elles. Comme ce recueil d'études l'indique, leur travail est précaire, mal rétribué et limité en matière de possibilités d'instruction et il est souvent passé sous silence dans les statistiques officielles.

La présente publication met en lumière le fait que les programmes de développement ruraux et agricoles ainsi que les politiques ont besoin de changer pour refléter la situation actuelle et pour l'améliorer. Il ne devrait plus y avoir de restrictions fondées sur la parité hommes-femmes telles que l'inégalité de l'accès aux services publics, l'assistance technique, la possession de la terre, le crédit et



les programmes de formation ou encore, cette contradiction écrasante qui accorde la terre aux hommes mais ce sont les femmes qui la travaillent.

Dans une tentative d'affronter les problèmes ci-dessus, la FAO, dans son Plan d'action pour la parité hommes- femmes et développement (2002-2007) tente d'intégrer la parité hommes – femmes dans ses programmes et projets politiques de développement ruraux et son agriculture. La FAO encourage également l'intégration du Programme d'analyse socioéconomique selon les questions de parité hommes – femmes (ASEG) dans un nombre croissant de projets, notamment ceux du Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire (PSSA). Parvenir à la sécurité alimentaire et aux objectifs prioritaires de la région, nécessite la participation active des femmes rurales dans les prises de décisions.

Dans ce but, cette publication illustre le fait que la pauvreté peut être réduite, d'abord par le biais de l'instruction des femmes rurales et ensuite par le biais d'un accès croissant à toutes les ressources productives (la terre, le crédit, la vulgarisation) y compris le savoir. Dans toutes les régions on trouve une vaste documentation du lien entre l'instruction des femmes rurales et l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire. En outre, les organisations représentatives des femmes rurales ont besoin d'être renforcées pour accroître leurs capacités de négociation et pour leur donner une voix afin qu'elles puissent s'engager dans la création d'un meilleur futur dans chaque région.

Il est clair que les femmes rurales jouent un rôle fondamental dans le domaine de l'agriculture et de la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde entier. Leur participation croissante à la fois dans l'agriculture commerciale et de subsistance est évidente et l'appauvrissement de différentes régions du monde, qui ont été marginalisées par une farouche compétition économique internationale et des ajustements structurels rigoureux auraient eu des conséquences plus graves si les femmes n'avaient pas intensifié leurs efforts de production dans les domaines de l'agriculture et de l'économie informelle.

Nous considérons cette publication comme faisant partie d'une importante contribution au débat sur l'un des défis clé auquel l'agriculture et le développement durables doivent faire face. Une partie de ce défi est d'assurer que les femmes, qui sont déterminantes dans l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde, peuvent être pleinement récompensées et que leurs efforts soient reconnus.

## Références

**Hartl, M. 2004.** *Rural Women's access to land and property in selected countries*, FAO.

# Introduction

Vingt-cinq ans après l'adoption de la Convention de la CEDEF, une décennie après la Déclaration et le Programme d'action de Beijing (1995) et la Déclaration de Rome sur le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation (1996) dans quelle mesure pouvons-nous dire que le statut des femmes rurales a progressé et que l'égalité des femmes et des hommes s'est améliorée? Cette publication tente d'éclaircir cet aspect.

L'égalité entre les sexes est un objectif universel qui chevauche de nombreux instruments internationaux tels que la Charte des Nations Unies, la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme (1948), la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes (CEDEF, 1979). La Quatrième conférence sur les femmes de 1995, a adopté la Déclaration et le Programme d'action de Beijing qui fournissent des stratégies objectives et des actions dans de nombreuses régions. La Déclaration du Millénaire adoptée par les Chefs d'états au Sommet du Millénaire en l'an 2 000 a réaffirmé la suprématie du soulagement de la pauvreté et de la parité entre les sexes comme objectifs pour le développement.

L'agriculture représente une composante essentielle de l'économie de nombreux pays en développement car elle contribue de façon significative à la production domestique et à l'emploi. C'est également un facteur important en raison de sa contribution à la garantie de la sécurité alimentaire qui reste l'une des préoccupations majeures dans de nombreux pays en développement et surtout dans les Pays les moins avancés (PMA). Les femmes et les hommes ne sont pas représentés de façon égale au sein des différents secteurs agricoles comme celui des animaux d'élevage ou de l'exportation de produits agricoles. Depuis que ces secteurs sont touchés de façon différente par la libéralisation du commerce, les conséquences pour les femmes et les hommes ne sont pas les mêmes. Les écarts existant dans la parité hommes- femmes peuvent d'une part augmenter ou diminuer. D'autre part, depuis que les hommes et les femmes ont souvent une instruction différente, un revenu différent, des circonstances de vie et des capacités différentes, leur aptitude à répondre aux changements politiques varie également. Il est donc important d'en analyser les conséquences potentielles (CNUCED, 2004).



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La pénurie de statistiques concernant la parité hommes- femmes dans le domaine agricole, continue de représenter l'un des obstacles principaux à la production en profondeur d'analyse de la dimension sexospécifique en agriculture. Au cours des dernières décennies, un organe de littérature croissant sur la parité hommes- femmes et les effets économiques des inégalités entre hommes et femmes dans le domaine agricole est apparu. Les chercheurs, les organismes des Nations Unies et les ONG ont entrepris différentes études pour examiner les implications de l'équité entre les sexes sur l'économie et surtout sur l'agriculture. Néanmoins, des informations empiriques limitées ont été élaborées à la fois sur l'implication des hommes et des femmes dans l'expansion du commerce et sur son impact sur la libéralisation du commerce agricole sur les performances des femmes dans le secteur rural et agricole de même que les effets sur le bien être des femmes et leur sécurité alimentaire (CNUCED, 2004); .(SOFA, 2002).

Une étude récente sur le commerce et les états de la parité hommes- femmes qui « en dépit des nombreuses initiatives entreprises au cours des 30 dernières années en ce qui concerne la responsabilisation des femmes dans les sphères économiques, politiques et sociales, la participation des femmes aux structures de prises de décisions publiques est toujours très faible. Dans le domaine agricole, la participation des femmes aux prises de décisions est même plus restreinte en raison du manque de reconnaissance de leurs droits personnels dans leur rôle d'agricultrices. Dans les organisations d'agriculteurs de même que dans les institutions de planification agricole, on trouve très peu de femmes occupant des positions de prises de décisions et souvent les politiques agricoles ne comprennent pas les problèmes du sexe féminin et des facteurs associés à l'agriculture et au développement rural. Le manque de considérations à l'égard de la parité hommes- femmes dans les politiques agricoles domestiques – qui laissent également de côté les facteurs associés à la reproduction sociale et à la contribution des femmes à l'économie rurale – se reflète également dans la formulation des politiques commerciales et les mesures domestiques apparentées. » (UNCTAD, 2004)

Les réseaux sociaux traditionnellement sûrs des régions rurales ont tendance, avec l'intégration de l'agriculture des pays en développement, à disparaître dans l'économie mondiale. Cela augmente la vulnérabilité des familles rurales et des femmes en particulier en leur attribuant un fardeau supplémentaire auquel elles doivent faire face avec l'émigration de leurs parents de sexe masculin à la suite de la mort lente de l'exploitation familiale et de l'incursion graduelle de l'agriculture orientée vers l'exportation.

De vastes similitudes ainsi que des différences dans les questions affrontées par les hommes et les femmes surtout, ont été observées entre et au sein des régions. Bien qu'il y ait des différences régionales,

certaines questions clé peuvent être identifiées comme étant significatives si l'on comprend pourquoi les problèmes de sécurité alimentaire devraient être affrontés dans un souci d'équité entre les sexes.

Une approche parité hommes – femmes nécessite que nous examinions l'accès différentiel des femmes rurales aux ressources productives comme la terre, l'eau, le crédit et le savoir. Cette analyse, comme nous l'avons mentionné ci-dessus, nous porte de façon inévitable à la conclusion que les femmes font face à une augmentation croissante de l'insécurité alimentaire et à une productivité agricole de plus en plus faible parallèlement au manque de moyens de participation dans les processus de prises de décisions qui touchent leur vie. Parce que les femmes par rapport aux hommes, font face et vivent dans des conditions socioéconomiques et politiques apparemment inégales, ce volume adopte une conception plus directe de la condition des femmes et de leur situation, dans le but de discerner leurs rôles dans le domaine agricole en jetant un coup d'oeil sur leurs perspectives présentes et futures.

Les défis les plus importants auxquels les femmes rurales doivent faire face aujourd'hui sont la réduction de la pauvreté, la réalisation de la sécurité alimentaire et l'augmentation de la productivité rurale. Pour parvenir à ces objectifs, l'amélioration de l'accès des femmes aux ressources et à la possession de celles-ci (matérielles, humaines, et à celles liées au savoir) est nécessaire.

Dans toutes les régions passées en revue, on a trouvé certains témoignages des résultats clé soulignés ci-dessous:

- ▶ Le travail des femmes rurales souffre d'invisibilité économique parce que leurs activités productives sont liées à leurs responsabilités domestiques. En outre, bien qu'elles soient engagées dans des activités agricoles axées sur le marché elles ont tendance à être principalement responsables de l'agriculture de subsistance. Les critères de définitions de la main d'œuvre, validés par les perceptions culturelles, catégorisent les « épouses » comme économiquement inactives, une étiquette supplémentaire confirmée par le fait que la production vise à la consommation des ménages et n'atteint pas l'économie de marché monétisé et qui débouche souvent sur des systèmes de comptes nationaux. La sous-évaluation du travail des femmes et de leur production dénature les informations concernant le secteur agricole et mine la qualité de la politique de formulation, la planification et le programme de développement pour la sécurité alimentaire.
- ▶ Dans toutes les régions, les femmes sont invariablement désavantagées dans leur accès aux avoirs productifs. Il y a également une disparité prononcée entre les sexes en ce qui concerne la propriété



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de la terre. La terre est le bien le plus important dans tout système agricole et les femmes possèdent formellement une partie des terres agricoles du monde entier. En outre, dans de nombreuses régions rurales les femmes représentent la majorité des travailleurs agricoles en tant que salariées et utilisatrices de la terre. Dans ce deuxième cas, le manque de possession formelle entrave les investissements et empêche les femmes d'utiliser la terre comme garanties pour accéder aux crédits des marchés.

- ▶ Les questions du capital social sont soulignées dans le cas des femmes rurales parce que leurs réseaux et organisations oublient souvent de lier les femmes producteurs aux marchés. Les ressources et les services offerts par les organisations comme les coopératives, les associations d'utilisateurs d'eau et les coopératives de crédits sont souvent accessibles grâce à une relation avec une personne de sexe masculin servant d'intermédiaire. Ainsi, les besoins spécifiques des femmes par rapport à leur rôle productif sont probablement négligés.
- ▶ Les activités agricoles des femmes sont caractérisées par de faibles niveaux de mécanisation et une faible utilisation de la technologie en raison de la limitation des capitaux financiers à leur disposition pour des investissements. Cela se traduit directement par une plus faible productivité, de plus faibles revenus et moins de moyens pour développer ces mêmes activités agricoles. Ces caractéristiques sont la raison pour laquelle les femmes agricultrices ne restent pas dans le groupe ciblé de nombreuses interventions de développement, qui ont tendance à aider les marchés orientés, économiquement rentables, des activités agricoles sur une grande échelle.
- ▶ Des écarts dans les niveaux d'instruction entre les femmes et les hommes ruraux et les femmes et les hommes urbains continuent à miner les capacités des femmes rurales et leurs perspectives. Ces écarts sont le résultat de la faible priorité donnée au capital humain des femmes dans le domaine de l'allocation de ressources, qui vont du ménage jusqu'aux politiques nationales. Cela continue en dépit de la démonstration répétée que l'instruction des filles se traduit effectivement et rapidement en un meilleur niveau de consommation de nourriture, un meilleur statut de santé et un meilleur statut nutritionnel pour les générations actuelles et futures. En outre, un meilleur niveau d'instruction renforce les capacités productives des femmes et a des conséquences directes à la fois sur le ménage et le niveau national de sécurité alimentaire.



► L'effet du VIH/SIDA sur les ménages ruraux illustre dramatiquement le rôle clé que les femmes rurales jouent en assurant la sécurité alimentaire tout comme le fardeau du VIH/SIDA repose de façon disproportionnée sur leurs épaules. La charge de travail des femmes de toutes les générations qui s'occupent d'un proche dépendant, est multipliée au fur et à mesure que les malades et les mourants sont soignés et que les orphelins arrivent dans la famille. Les ressources financières sont épuisées par les dépenses médicales et funéraires et le coût croissant de l'arrivée de nouveaux membres dans la famille. Le revenu du ménage chute comme la production baisse avec la maladie et la mort d'adultes dans la fleur de l'âge. A la mort du mari, les lois sur l'héritage et les coutumes peuvent mener les épouses survivantes à la misère. Des stratégies immédiates de survie impliquent un règlement négatif sur le plan du capital humain, qui est supporté par la génération suivante car les enfants sont compris dans la main d'œuvre à l'extérieur et au sein du ménage et cela aux dépens de leur éducation.

Toutes ces questions offrent certaines explications comme la raison pour laquelle les femmes rurales sont particulièrement vulnérables face à l'insécurité alimentaire. La contre-valeur des ressources maîtrisée par les femmes; leur temps, leur travail, leurs biens productifs, leurs réseaux sont considérablement plus faibles que ceux des hommes. Les femmes sont désavantagées par rapport aux hommes quand elles assurent la nourriture sur une base régulière et quand elles répliquent aux effets des chocs et des variations dans les réserves de nourriture, quand elles contrôlent des biens de valeur marchande inférieure sur lesquels compter comme sur une sécurité. Les travailleurs ruraux sans terre sont connus pour être la fraction la plus vulnérable et de la population rurale, dans cette catégorie on trouve surtout des femmes.

S'il y avait un accès égal aussi bien pour les hommes que pour les femmes à toutes les ressources nécessaires pour la production agricole, comment cela influencerait-il la sécurité alimentaire ? Aucune région n'illustre ce problème. Cependant, une analyse des questions relatives aux femmes rurales en tant que producteurs et consommateurs, indique que quand on leur donne les mêmes intrants qu'aux hommes, la productivité des femmes augmente de façon spectaculaire ainsi que la sécurité alimentaire. L'instruction des femmes a un effet direct sur la réduction de la malnutrition des enfants dans la mesure où, contrairement aux hommes, leur salaire a un impact plus direct sur l'économie du ménage.

Des hypothèses au sujet de l'homogénéité des intérêts au sein de la population rurale masquent des facteurs tels que l'ethnie, la caste, la catégorie, l'âge, et la façon dont ceux-ci créent une disparité dans l'accès aux avantages. Dans les ménages ruraux, les différences fondées sur la parité hommes- femmes



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dans l'accès aux ressources sont dissimulées. En outre, la parité hommes- femmes est liée à d'autres critères de situations de communication y compris l'âge, l'ethnie et la caste. Tant que ces différents intérêts, parfois conflictuels ne sont pas pris en compte, les politiques et les programmes échoueront dans leur manière d'affronter les relations spécifiques entre la pauvreté rurale et le développement agricole.

Des données sexospécifiques sur le travail rémunéré et non rémunéré des femmes représentent la base pour formuler des politiques de sécurité alimentaire appropriées au niveau des ménages. L'analyse de l'impact des politiques commerciales sur les femmes rurales est particulièrement significative parce que l'impact direct sur la sécurité alimentaire causé par les politiques économiques affecte les droits des femmes.

Les politiques agricoles et les allocations de budget correspondantes doivent être revues dans un souci d'équité entre les sexes. L'analyse des questions de structures légales nationales à la fois formelles et coutumières sont nécessaires pour établir une base légale pour que les femmes puissent réclamer légitimement des biens pour renforcer leur capacités en tant que producteurs et réduire leur vulnérabilité en tant que consommateurs.

L'importance des femmes en garantissant la sécurité alimentaire et les obstacles sexospécifiques qui doivent être supprimé ont été soulignés dans différentes conférences internationales et les mécanismes internationaux pour suivre la mise en œuvre de responsabilités ont été désignés en conséquent. Cependant, aussi longtemps que les questions d'intégration d'unités de production sur une petite échelle au sein de l'économie mondiale ne sont pas affrontées, les femmes rurales continueront à être marginalisées. La nécessité d'un développement politique participatif pour le secteur agricole a été identifié dans le contexte d'une approche fondée sur les droits. Cependant, son importance commerciale doit être démontrée afin que les exigences de marginaliser les agriculteurs puissent être incluses dans les politiques économiques dominantes.

Les organismes de développement doivent intégrer les questions liées aux sexospécificités dans leur programme et leurs objectifs de projet de même que la promotion de la sécurité alimentaire des ménages pour assurer que les perspectives des femmes rurales soient aussi bonnes que celles proposées aux hommes et pour tranquillité de la société où elles vivent, travaillent et collaborent.

## Références

**FAO. 2002.** *State of food and agriculture.*

**UNCTAD. 2004.** *Trade and gender, challenges and opportunities.* Chapitre sur l'agriculture.

# Abréviations et acronymes

ADB	Banque asiatique de développement
AID	Institut d'agriculture dominicain
APEC	Organisation de coopération économique Asie-Pacifique
ASEG	Programme d'analyse socioéconomique selon les questions de parité hommes- femmes
AWU	Unité annuelle de travail
BOL	Bolivie
BSF	Fonds belge de survie
CAP	Politique agricole commune
CCG	Conseil de coopération du Golfe
CEDEF	Convention pour l'élimination de toutes formes de discriminations à l'égard des femmes
CESAO	Commission économique et sociale des Nations Unies pour l'Asie occidentale
CIS	Communauté des États indépendants
CLOC	The Latin American Alliance of Peasant Farmer Organizations
CNUCED	Conférence des Nations Unies sur l'environnement et le développement
CONAMU	Conseil national des femmes (Équateur)
COS	Costa Rica
DPRK	République populaire démocratique de la Corée
EAP	Population économiquement active
ECE	Commission économique des Nations Unies pour l'Europe
ECLAC	Commission économique pour l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes
ECOSOC	Conseil économique et social des Nations Unies
ENDS	Service de données sur l'environnement
ENIGFAM	Encuesta de Ingresos y Gastos Familiares
ESB	Encéphalopathie spongiforme bovine
ESU	European standard Unit
FAMA	International media production and publishing company
FAO	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture
FAO-RAP	FAO- Bureau régional pour l'Asie et le Pacifique
FIDA	Fonds international de développement agricole
FINCA	Fondation pour l'aide internationale de la Communauté Européenne
FISE	Fonds d'investissements sociaux de secours (Équateur)
FLACSO	Faculté latino- américaine des sciences sociales (Chili)
FOWODE	Forum pour les femmes dans la démocratie
FTPP	Programme arbres, forêts et communauté rurale
FWCW	Quatrième conférence mondiale sur les femmes



## Abbreviations and acronyms

GAD	Parité hommes- femmes et développement
GATT	Accord général sur les tarifs douaniers et le commerce
GCP	Programme global de compétition
GDI	Index du genre connexe de développement
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (Programme de coopération technique allemand)
HDR	Rapport sur le développement allemand
IFD	Intégration des femmes dans le développement
IFPRI	Institut international de recherche sur les politiques alimentaires
IHF	Fédération internationale de Helsinki pour les droits de l'homme
ILCA	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (Argentine)
INCRA	National Institute of Land Settlement and Reform (Brésil)
INEC	Institut national des statistiques et du recensement (Équateur)
INTA	Instituto nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (Argentine)
IPGRI	Institut international des ressources phytogénétiques
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
Km	Kilomètre
LDC	Les pays les moins avancés
LEADER	L'une des 4 initiatives financées par la Communauté Européenne pour le développement rural
LIFDC	Pays à faible revenu et à déficit vivrier
M	Mètre
MALR	Ministère de l'agriculture et de la réhabilitation des terres (Égypte)
Mad	Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement
MENA	Moyen-Orient et Afrique du Nord
MMR	Taux de mortalité maternelle
NEPAD	Nouveau partenariat pour le développement de l'Afrique
NERC	National Environment Research Council
NU	Nations Unies
OCDE	Organisation de coopération et de développement économique
OIT	Organisation internationale du travail
OMS	Organisation mondiale de la santé
OMD	Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement
ONUSIDA	Programme commun des Nations Unies sur le VIH/SIDA
PAM	Programme alimentaire mondial
PCT	Programme de coopération technique
PHARE	Le programme PHARE est l'un des trois instruments de pré-accession financés par la Communauté Européenne pour assister les pays candidats

	du Centre et de l'est de l'Europe dans leur préparation pour se joindre à l'Union Européenne
PIB	Produit intérieur brut
PIN	Index de production par personne
PNUD	Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement
POA	Plan d'action
PPTE	Pays pauvres très endettés
PRA	Participatory rapid assessment
PRC	République populaire de Chine
PRIE	El Proyecto Regional de Indicadores Educativos (Projet régional d'indicateurs d'éducation)
PROMUDEH	Ministerio de Promoción de la Mujer y del Desarrollo Humano, Peru
PSSA	Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire
RNE	Bureau régional pour le Proche-Orient
RU	Royaume uni
SAP	Programme d'ajustement culturel
SAPARD	Programme spécial d'accession pour l'agriculture et le développement rural
SCN	Système de comptabilité national
SEARPI	Service for water channeling and regulation of the Pirai river- Bolivie
SERNAM	Chile's National Office for women
SICIAV	Système d'information de catastrophe sur l'insécurité alimentaire et la vulnérabilité sociales
SOFA	La situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (FAO)
TIC	Technologies de l'information et de la communication
UE	Union Européenne
UNESCO	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture
UNICEF	Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance
UNIFEM	Fonds de développement des Nations Unies pour la femme
WB	Banque Mondiale
WFS	Sommet mondial pour l'alimentation
Dunum	Equivalent de 1 000 m <sup>2</sup>
Feddan	0.42 hectares



# La région africaine



## La région africaine<sup>1</sup>

### La sécurité alimentaire, une préoccupation majeure



Femme marchande au marché de légumes. En raison des inondations, on trouve très peu de légumes à vendre. (A. Proto, 1998)

**L'économie africaine est essentiellement fondée sur l'agriculture, et environ 61 pour cent** de la population de l'Afrique sub-saharienne appartient à la population agricole. En dépit de l'importance de l'agriculture et des ressources naturelles abondantes, le produit intérieur brut (PIB) moyen par habitant en prix constants était plus bas à la fin des années 1990 qu'à la fin des années 1970 (Banque mondiale, 2000). L'inégalité des revenus est importante dans la région et environ 16 pour cent de la population vit dans des pays avec un PIB moyen par habitant de moins de 200 dollars EU par an, 36 pour cent, dans des pays avec un PIB par habitant de moins de 300 dollars EU et 75 pour cent vivent dans des pays avec un PIB par habitant de moins de 400 dollars EU (Dixon, Gulliver et Gibbon, 2001). L'Afrique est la seule région en développement où le rendement et la croissance des récoltes restent largement en arrière par rapport à la croissance de la population (Savadogo, Reardon et Pietola, 1994). La région importe un tiers de ses céréales vivrières et neuf de ses dix plus grands pays importent plus de nourriture qu'ils en exportent (Gladwin, Thomson, Peterson et Anderson, 2001).

L'insécurité alimentaire est une préoccupation majeure à la fois pour les communautés nationales et internationales. Le Plan d'action du Sommet mondial de

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<sup>1</sup> Ce chapitre est basé sur le travail du Dr Ivy Drafor, consultant FAO.

l'alimentation affirme : « ...si les gouvernements nationaux et la communauté internationale ne s'attaquent pas aux causes multiples qui sous-tendent l'insécurité alimentaire, le nombre des personnes souffrant de faim et de malnutrition restera très élevé dans les pays en développement, surtout en Afrique, au sud du Sahara et la sécurité alimentaire durable ne sera pas atteinte. » (SMA, 1997). Le Plan d'action fait partie d'un effort en cours pour éradiquer la faim dans tous les pays et pour réduire le nombre de personnes mal nourries de moitié d'ici 2015.

La Sécurité alimentaire est liée à une question de revenu aussi bien que de production dans la mesure où elle est liée à la pauvreté (Schuh, 1997). En Afrique sub-saharienne, en 1999 près de 300 millions de personnes vivaient dans une pauvreté absolue et le taux de pauvreté n'a pas baissé du tout dans les dix dernières années (ONU, 2002b). En Afrique sub-saharienne, 19 pour cent de la population totale vit en dessous du seuil de pauvreté. Ce pourcentage est destiné à augmenter de 40 pour cent, à ce stade l'Afrique comptera 27 pour cent de pauvres dans les pays en développement. Ce sont les pauvres des zones rurales qui constituent plus de 75 pour cent des pauvres dans bon nombre de pays d'Afrique sub-saharienne et

d'Asie du sud et des études sur la pauvreté rurale identifient les petits agriculteurs, les sans terre, les femmes, les pasteurs nomades, les pêcheurs artisanaux, les groupes ethniques indigènes et les populations déplacées comme représentant les groupes les plus vulnérables du secteur rural (SMA, 1997).

Le revenu est l'un des points fondamentaux de la consommation alimentaire des ménages (Brown *et al.*, 1995). C'est pourquoi la sécurité alimentaire est touchée par les revenus des ménages, les biens économiques, les prix, les facteurs démographiques tels que la taille des ménages, la parité hommes-femmes, l'âge et les facteurs socioculturels tels que la santé et le statut sanitaire, le niveau d'instruction, les normes culturelles et les habitudes de consommation alimentaires (Anarfi, 2000). Cependant, on ne peut parvenir à la sécurité alimentaire pour une population croissante sans affronter les problèmes de fond de la pauvreté rurale.

**Tableau 1.1**  
Population vivant avec moins de 1\$  
par jour dans certains pays africains

Country	%	Country	%
Afrique du sud	<2	Mauritanie	28.6
Botswana	23.5	Mozambique	37.9
Burkina Faso	61.2	Namibie	34.9
Burundi	58.4	Niger	61.4
Cameroun	33.4	Nigeria	70.2
Côte d'Ivoire	12.3	Ouganda	82.2
Ethiopie	81.9	République d'Afrique centrale	66.6
Gambie	59.3	Rwanda	35.7
Ghana	44.8	Sénégal	26.3
Kenya	23.0	Sierra Leone	57.0
Lesotho	43.1	Tanzanie	19.9
Madagascar	49.1	Zambie	63.7
Malawi	41.7	Zimbabwe	36.0
Mali	72.8		

Source UNDP 2003; tableaux: 1990-2001





## La sécurité alimentaire, une préoccupation majeure

En Afrique, tout indique que les hommes dépensent une plus grande part de leurs revenus supplémentaires dans des biens destinés à leur utilisation personnelle, tandis qu'en ce qui concerne les femmes, il est plus probable qu'elles achètent des biens pour leurs enfants et pour la consommation générale du ménage. Un meilleur résultat nutritionnel est associé au revenu croissant des femmes, en tant que ménagères, là où les femmes contrôlent une plus grande partie des revenus, il est plus probable de satisfaire les besoins caloriques. La pauvreté est par conséquent une menace majeure pour la sécurité alimentaire à la fois pour la famille et pour les particuliers qui vivent au sein de celle-ci (Brown *et al.*, 1995). Les inégalités entre les hommes et les femmes alimentent et perpétuent la pauvreté à la fois entre les générations et au sein de celles-ci. Pour combattre ces problèmes, il faut abolir les préjugés à tous les niveaux (PNUD, 1999).

Les hommes et les femmes ruraux sont des personnes actives en matière d'agriculture et de développement rural, bien que la plupart des programmes qui fournissent des systèmes agricoles de soutien aux agriculteurs pour la plupart ignorent les femmes. En outre, les politiques agricoles et de développement rural et de planification ne reflètent pas et n'affrontent pas de façon adéquate les différents rôles et besoins des femmes et des hommes ruraux. Des changements sont en cours, mais on ne peut parvenir à l'efficacité des politiques de développement qu'avec des statistiques précises et systématiques sur les femmes rurales et les producteurs. (FAO 2001a). Bien que les problèmes tels que les préjugés contre les femmes en matière de consommation de nourriture ou de soins de santé à domicile, semblent avoir été exagérés, l'instruction et le contrôle des biens de production restent un véritable problème (ONU, 1996a; Marcoux, 1997).

La plupart des pays africains ne s'occupe pas du secteur agricole et les interventions du gouvernement ont fait bien peu pour combattre la situation critique des femmes rurales. Peu de femmes participent aux prises de décisions nationales et régionales et elles sont ignorées dans les statistiques nationales. Leur faible participation aux services de vulgarisation signifie que les questions qui les préoccupent le plus dans le plan et la mise en œuvre de nombreux programmes de développement et de programmes politiques ne sont pas pris en compte (FAO, 1996). Les projets qui ont l'intention d'améliorer la productivité agricole doivent s'assurer que les différents besoins, les contraintes de travail, les connaissances et les rôles de prises de décisions des hommes et des femmes sont analysés et affrontés correctement (FIDA, 2000).

Ce chapitre prend en examen l'état des femmes rurales africaines et leur rôle pour garantir la sécurité alimentaire. Il prend en examen les femmes chefs de ménage et leur accès aux ressources productives et il examine les tendances régionales, la contribution des femmes à la production agricole ainsi que leur participation à d'autres domaines d'activités économiques. On discute des tendances générales telles que

l'effet de la dégradation des sols, le VIH/SIDA et ses effets sur le travail agricole pour les femmes rurales, les désastres naturels et ceux causés par l'homme et la féminisation de la pauvreté. Les changements dans l'environnement politique sont présentés par rapport aux femmes rurales, la nécessité de leur implication dans la planification et les prises de décisions à tous les niveaux et le soutien politique requis pour mettre en valeur la productivité agricole et la sécurité alimentaire. Enfin, des recommandations sont suggérées pour renforcer la situation des femmes rurales et leurs efforts pour garantir la sécurité alimentaire.

## Les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire – les circonstances actuelles

**On peut dire que l'on est parvenu à la sécurité alimentaire quand toutes les personnes** en même temps ont un accès physique et économique à une nourriture suffisante, saine et nutritive pour couvrir leurs besoins pour mener une vie active et en bonne santé (SMA, 1997). Indubitablement, s'il y a de la nourriture sur le marché mais que les gens n'ont pas d'argent pour l'acheter, celle-ci n'est pas accessible (Wide, 2000). L'Afrique continue de souffrir d'insécurité alimentaire à cause des guerres, des troubles, de la pauvreté et généralement d'une faible productivité agricole. Et, comme l'a affirmé Elbadawi (1999), l'Afrique sub-saharienne reste l'une des régions du monde la plus instable du point de vue politique.

Les femmes sont les premières à être préoccupées par la sécurité alimentaire en raison de leurs nombreux rôles en tant que productrices, consommatrices et parce que se sont elles qui transforment les aliments et s'occupent des malades. En Afrique, elles produisent environ 80 pour cent de la nourriture, 50 pour cent en Asie et 40 pour cent en Amérique latine et en général elle sont responsables de la sécurité alimentaire au sein du ménage (Wide, 2000).

Les femmes rurales ont recours à différentes stratégies pour garantir la sécurité alimentaire. Cela comprend la réduction de leur propre consommation durant les périodes difficiles, mais elles maintiennent celle de leurs enfants et se louent comme ouvrières occasionnelle dans les grandes exploitations (par exemple des exploitations possédées par d'autres). Elles se lancent également dans d'autres activités sources de revenus alors qu'elles poursuivent leurs activités agricoles et leurs tâches ménagères (FIDA, 2000; FAO, 1996).

## La nature de l'agriculture africaine

**Depuis l'indépendance de l'Afrique sub-saharienne** le développement agricole a été lent et le fossé s'est accru entre la population et la production agricole de façon significative. Les importations régionales de nourriture se sont développées, mais pas suffisamment pour parvenir à la consommation de calories journalières recommandée à la population. Tandis que les importations de nourriture ont augmenté, les exportations agricoles ont diminué, surtout à la fin des années 1980. L'aggravation de ces problèmes, l'accroissement de la population ont porté à une forte pression sur les terres agricoles qui a conduit à une plus grande utilisation des terres moins fertiles ayant comme conséquence une diminution dans la productivité et le revenu des ménages. Les hommes ont commencé à migrer vers les villes et les femmes à chercher des possibilités de revenus non agricoles (Banque mondiale, 1992).

Tableau 1.2  
Taux de croissance de la production nette en Afrique sub-saharienne\*

Année	Agriculture	Récoltes	Céréales	Racines et tubercules	Animaux d'élevage	Non-alimentaire
1992-96	3.9	4.4	5.8	2.4	2.6	3.7
1997	0.5	0.2	-4.2	2.0	1.4	0.3
1998	3.7	4.1	4.1	5.5	2.6	3.9
1999	1.9	1.8	-0.6	4.2	2.5	2.5
2000	-0.3	-1.0	-3.2	0.5	1.4	-0.3
2001**	0.8	0.9	2.4	0.7	0.5	0.6

\*A l'exclusion de l'Afrique du sud; \*\*Estimation. Source: FAO, 2002

En Afrique, les performances économiques varient d'une région à l'autre. Des pays tels que le Cameroun, le Ghana le Mozambique et l'Ouganda s'attendent à une croissance continue, en raison des réformes structurelles et macroéconomiques tandis que dans de nombreux autres pays, la croissance économique, surtout dans le secteur agricole, continue à être entravée par les conflits passés, en cours ou les nouveaux conflits. Le tableau 1.2 montre le taux effectif de croissance de la production en Afrique sub-saharienne de 1991 à 2001. Après 1998, la production des produits non alimentaires a connu une croissance négative qui est probablement le résultat des situations de conflit.

De nombreux pays sont dépendants de l'agriculture tandis que d'autres ont démontré une saine performance dans ce secteur durant ces dernières décennies. L'agriculture représente plus de la moitié du produit intérieur brut du Burundi, de l'Ethiopie, de la Tanzanie et de l'Ouganda ; le Botswana et le Lesotho ne représentant seulement que 10 pour cent ou un peu moins. En Afrique, l'agriculture est terriblement hétérogène, elle va de la culture sur brûlis dans la forêt tropicale humide

à l'agriculture irriguée en passant par le pastoralisme dans les parties sèches ; les femmes jouent un rôle fondamental dans tous ces systèmes (Maxwell, 1998).

En Afrique les sources d'eau renouvelables varient considérablement d'un pays à l'autre et la consommation d'eau des ménages est d'environ 47 litres par personne par jour. Dans de nombreuses communautés, les réserves d'eau sont limitées et les décisions concernant l'utilisation de l'eau impliquent des choix difficiles. Les différents utilisateurs et les différentes catégories ont des besoins différents, des priorités et des attentes différentes, en outre le monde de l'eau est presque totalement masculin (Rathgeber, 2003). Les régions rurales restent à la traîne et le fossé rural-urbain en terme d'accès à l'eau potable est plus important en Afrique sub-saharienne, où seulement 45 pour cent de la population rurale y a accès contre 83 pour cent dans les régions urbaines (Vandemoortele, 2002).

Le Burundi, le Kenya et le Rwanda sont particulièrement touchés par les faibles réserves d'eau de moins de 10 m<sup>3</sup>. Une production agricole efficace nécessite de l'eau disponible au bon endroit et au bon moment pour être utile à la communauté (Marcoux, 1998). Face à cette pénurie d'eau croissante, les économistes spécialisés dans les ressources ont suggéré d'augmenter le prix de l'eau pour tous les usages (y compris l'utilisation domestique) et cela afin d'encourager une utilisation de l'eau rationnelle. Cette augmentation peut avoir des conséquences négatives pour les pauvres, en les acculant à une plus grande pauvreté s'ils ne peuvent pas payer un prix plus élevé. Souvent, les programmes pour les réserves d'eau domestique ne prennent pas en compte l'utilisation productive de l'eau pour l'irrigation, le bétail et les autres initiatives des femmes rurales (Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick, 2001). Un examen de la participation des femmes dans l'utilisation et la gestion des ressources en eau dans le contexte plus vaste de la construction sociale des rôles assignés à chaque sexe dans différentes régions doit être entrepris, alors que les femmes sont sous représentées dans la gestion de l'eau à tous les niveaux. (Rathgeber, 2003).

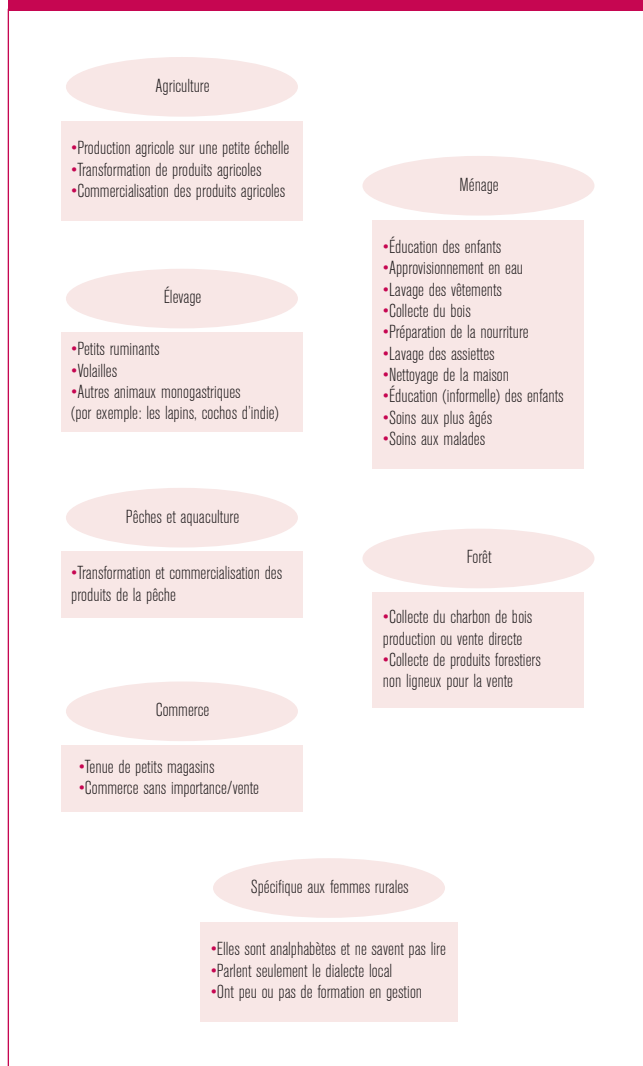
## La population économiquement active dans le domaine agricole et le rôle des hommes et des femmes

**Des statistiques sur la population économiquement active** ont une valeur relative quand on prend en examen le rôle économique des femmes dans le domaine agricole, la production de nourriture et la transformation de celle-ci parce que les définitions conventionnelles de la main d'oeuvre sous estiment le travail des femmes. Pour l'Afrique, certains chiffres indiquent que les femmes ne représentent que 42 pour cent de la population économiquement active impliquée dans l'agriculture, parce que l'on a tendance à enregistrer les femmes agricultrices comme des « ménagères » (FAO, 1996).

## Les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire – les circonstances actuelles

Des statistiques sur la population économiquement active ont une valeur relative quand on prend en examen le rôle économique des femmes dans le domaine agricole, la production de nourriture et la transformation de celle-ci parce que les définitions conventionnelles de la main d'oeuvre sous estiment le travail des femmes. Pour l'Afrique, certains chiffres indiquent que les femmes ne représentent que 42 pour cent de la population économiquement active impliquée dans l'agriculture, parce que l'on a tendance à enregistrer les femmes agricultrices comme des « ménagères » (FAO, 1996).

**Tableau 1.1 – Principales activités et tâches des femmes rurales en Afrique**



D'après: Guèye, 2001

En matière de production agricole, la répartition du travail varie considérablement entre les régions et les communautés. Habituellement, les hommes s'occupent des cultures commerciales à grande échelle, fortement mécanisées tandis que les femmes s'occupent de la production de la nourriture du ménage et des cultures commerciales sur une petite échelle, nécessitant un niveau technologique moins élevé (FAO, 2001a).

La plupart des femmes africaines sont surchargées en raison de leurs nombreuses activités et de leurs tâches agricoles : l'élevage, le ménage et parfois la pêche et l'aquaculture (Guèye, 2001); la majeure partie de ce travail n'est pas rémunérée et est caractérisée par une faible productivité, un accès limité aux crédits, à la terre, à la formation et à un accès limité aux technologies (FAO, 1996).

Les rôles et les responsabilités spécifiques assignés à chaque sexe sont conditionnés par la structure du ménage, l'accès aux ressources et les effets particuliers sur l'économie générale (FAO, 1997). Le tableau 1.1 fournit une vue d'ensemble des activités les plus importantes entreprises par les femmes en Afrique. Etant essentiellement responsables de la production alimentaire, elles vont chercher l'eau pour

l'utilisation domestique et l'irrigation de peu d'envergure, approvisionner le marché agricole, s'occuper des enfants, des personnes âgées et des malades et entreprendre de petits commerces pour avoir des revenus supplémentaires. Elles sont également impliquées dans la transformation et la commercialisation des produits dérivés du poisson et de la récolte du bois pour la production du charbon de bois ou sa vente directe.

Par le passé, les unités ménagères – les hommes, les femmes et les enfants tous ensemble – étaient responsables des denrées alimentaires nécessaires au maintien de leur famille. Il existait une répartition du travail, mais chacun travaillait directement pour la survie de la famille. Avec l'arrivée des cultures commerciales, les principales responsabilités des hommes ont changé avec leur production, souvent avec les contributions énormes du travail des femmes. La production de cultures commerciales était partiellement due au besoin croissant d'argent, nécessaire pour survivre dans des sociétés de plus en plus monétisées. L'introduction des cultures commerciales a affaibli la répartition traditionnelle fondée sur la discrimination entre les sexes, les droits et les obligations des ménages et les agricultrices ont entrepris de plus en plus de tâches préalablement effectuées par les hommes. (Saito *et al.*, 1994). Tout cela a augmenté un peu plus la responsabilité des femmes dans leur quête de nourriture pour leur famille.

Le rapport de synthèse sur les femmes, l'agriculture et le développement rural en Afrique, préparé par la FAO pour la Quatrième conférence mondiale sur les femmes et le rapport de la Banque mondiale affirme qu'en Afrique sub-saharienne les femmes contribuent entre 60 et 80 pour cent à l'agriculture agroalimentaire pour la consommation des ménages et pour la vente. La contribution des femmes aux cultures commerciales va de 30 pour cent au Soudan à 80 pour cent au Congo (Banque mondiale, 2001; FAO, 1995). Le tableau 1.3 fournit des informations sur la contribution des femmes à l'agriculture dans certains pays spécifiques.

**Tableau 1.3**  
La contribution du travail des femmes et leur rôle dans l'agriculture dans certains pays d'Afrique

Bénin	70 pour cent de la population féminine vit dans des zones rurales, où elle effectue 69 pour cent du travail agricole et jusqu'à 44 pour cent du travail nécessaire à la subsistance du ménage.
Burkina Faso	Les femmes constituent 80 pour cent des ouvriers du secteur agricole.
Mauritanie	Les hommes effectuent 65 pour cent et les femmes 79 pour cent du travail agricole.
Maroc	Approximativement 72 pour cent de la population féminine participe aux activités agricoles avec une plus grande contribution dans le domaine animal, celle-ci est inférieure en ce qui concerne la production de légumes.
Namibie	Les femmes représentent 59 pour cent des personnes engagées dans les travaux qualifiés et les travaux agricoles de subsistance et les femmes continuent à se charger des principales responsabilités de la production et de la préparation de nourriture.
Rép. Dém. du Congo	Les femmes représentent 84 pour cent des personnes actives dans le domaine agricole et produisent plus de 80 pour cent des cultures vivrières.
Soudan	Dans le secteur traditionnel, les femmes constituent 80 pour cent des agriculteurs. Les femmes agricultrices représentent approximativement 49 pour cent des agriculteurs du secteur irrigué. Les femmes produisent 30 pour cent de la nourriture.
Tanzanie	92 des femmes rurales, définies comme étant économiquement actives s'occupent de l'agriculture et produisent une part substantielle des cultures vivrières à la fois pour la consommation ménagère et pour l'exportation.
Zimbabwe	Les femmes représentent 61 pour cent des agriculteurs dans les zones communales et constituent au moins 70 pour cent de la main d'oeuvre.

Source: World Bank, 2001; FAO, 1995.

Les femmes rurales constituent un pourcentage important de la main d'oeuvre employée dans le secteur informel, qui représente une partie importante du PIB à travers toute l'Afrique sub-saharienne. Cependant, en Afrique rurale des lois coutumières influencent les droits au travail des femmes rurales travailleuses. Dans les systèmes coutumiers légaux, les femmes doivent effectuer des travaux non rémunérés et non protégés pour certaines tâches dans les champs de leurs époux et le travail requis au sein du ménage. Les femmes et les hommes jouent des rôles différents en matière d'agriculture rurale avec une répartition du travail entre hommes et femmes; les hommes s'occupent principalement des cultures commerciales tandis que les femmes s'occupent des cultures vivrières (Cotula, 2002).

L'inégalité dans la répartition des ressources qui comprend la nourriture consommée dans les ménages, fait que les femmes sont généralement plus pauvres que les hommes. Cependant, il est essentiel de comprendre la répartition des ressources au sein des ménages pour prévoir les résultats politiques. Le pouvoir de négociation d'une personne au sein d'une famille ne dépend pas seulement de la possession de biens mais également de l'accès à l'emploi, de l'accès aux ressources communales, des systèmes de soutien sociaux traditionnels, de l'aide des ONG et de l'état, des normes sociales, et des idées que l'on se fait (IFPRI, 1997).

### Les femmes rurales chefs de ménage

**De nos jours les femmes représentent la majorité des petits agriculteurs;** elles effectuent la plus grande partie du travail et la gestion quotidienne de leurs petites exploitations agricoles. En Afrique sub-saharienne, les femmes chefs de ménages ruraux représentent environ 30 pour cent et dans certaines régions le pourcentage est de l'ordre de 60 pour cent (Akello, 1999; FAO, 1997b). Les facteurs qui contribuent à l'augmentation du nombre de femmes chefs de ménage comprennent les guerres, la migration masculine pour trouver un emploi, l'évolution du mariage, la richesse de l'épouse, et les arrangements au sujet de la dot (FAO, 2001c).

Saito *et al.* classent les femmes chefs de ménage en trois groupes: i) les ménages autonomes reconnus et acceptés comme chef *de jure* par les femmes, principalement des veuves ou des femmes seules; ii) des ménages dirigés *de facto* par les épouses durant l'absence du chef de famille homme durant des périodes de différentes durées; le degré d'autonomie et d'indépendance d'action de ces femmes chefs de famille varie en fonction des moeurs ethniques et des circonstances personnelles et si elles perçoivent des fonds ou pas iii) les ménages polygames où les co-épouses dirigent les sous unités économiques (personnelles et leurs enfants) au sein du ménage (Saito *et al.*, 1994). Il est nécessaire d'effectuer des recherches supplémentaires sur les relations entre le statut économique du chef de famille féminin et son éventuelle perception de fonds. Dans certains pays comme au Cap-vert, on a remarqué que les envois de fonds améliorent la situation économique des femmes chef de ménage.

Dans certaines parties de l'Afrique sub-saharienne la migration masculine rurale-urbaine a été plus importante que celle des femmes, les femmes sont restées à l'arrière pour assumer les responsabilités des activités agricoles. La migration a contribué à l'augmentation du nombre de femmes chef de famille, mettant ainsi au défi les rôles fondés sur la discrimination entre les sexes puisque les femmes se chargent des activités traditionnellement masculines. Les autres facteurs qui contribuent à l'augmentation du nombre de femmes chef de famille sont la désagrégation de la famille, la migration internationale, la guerre et les déplacements à l'intérieur du pays (FAO, 2001a; Buvinic et Gupta, 1997).

En Guinée, la main d'oeuvre économiquement active âgée de 20 à 49 ans est essentiellement féminine (FAO, 1995a), cela pourrait être dû au fort taux de migration masculine vers les zones urbaines et aux décès par VIH/SIDA. L'augmentation de la migration masculine à l'extérieur des zones rurales signifie que les femmes sont de plus en plus responsables, non seulement des réserves de nourriture de la famille mais de la sécurité alimentaire nationale. Autrement, les femmes rurales, spécialement les femmes les plus jeunes, migrent vers les zones urbaines pour travailler et bénéficier de revenus



## Les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire – les circonstances actuelles



Agriculteurs réunis pour planifier la prochaine récolte.  
(A. Conti, 1994)

complémentaires avant de se marier et pour acquérir de nouvelles compétences y compris faire du batik, de la coiffure et de la couture. Certaines de ces jeunes femmes reviennent dans les zones rurales tandis que d'autres restent en ville.

Dans les campagnes sahéliennes les femmes chef de famille sont sous-estimées parce que les épouses d'immigrés restent sous l'autorité du chef de la famille élargie et les veuves épousent le frère de leur mari ou reconnaissent leur fils aîné comme chef de famille. Une étude de la Banque mondiale déclare qu'environ 26 pour cent des hommes chefs de famille étaient absents (Banque

mondiale, 1995); il en résulte *de facto* que les femmes chefs de famille sont privées des ressources et des revenus qui étaient destinés au chef de ménage.

Les ménages tenus par des femmes ont tendance à être plus petits que ceux tenus par des hommes et les membres de la famille sont moins disponibles à accomplir des travaux agricoles et d'autres activités sources de revenus. (Ellis, 2000). Pour s'en sortir, les femmes réduisent les zones de culture ou les transforment en cultures moins intensives dont certaines ont une valeur nutritionnelle plus faible comme le manioc. L'utilisation du travail des enfants est plus courante chez les femmes chefs de famille que chez les hommes, ce qui abaisse le niveau d'instruction des enfants et leurs possibilités d'étudier. Les femmes chefs de famille doivent faire face à de graves contraintes de temps en raison des responsabilités domestiques, des activités agricoles et non agricoles. Les femmes passent jusqu'à cinq heures par jour pour recueillir le bois de chauffe et l'eau et jusqu'à cinq heures pour préparer la nourriture, ce qui laisse peu de temps pour s'occuper des enfants ou effectuer d'autres tâches plus productives (FIDA, 2000a). Pour diminuer les contraintes au sein du ménage le travail est différé, les enfants peuvent être retirés de l'école quand le VIH/SIDA a porté à la perte d'un membre adulte de la famille. (ONUSIDA, 1999).

Le tableau 1.4 montre le taux de femmes chef de famille et le taux de fertilité des femmes dans certains pays d'Afrique. Dans certains pays le taux de naissances par femme diminue, ce qui pourrait être attribué à l'amélioration de leur niveau d'éducation. Le pourcentage de femmes chefs de famille au Botswana est assez élevé (47 pour cent), Namibie (39 pour cent), Cap-Vert (38 pour cent), Ghana (37 pour cent), et Kenya (33 pour cent).

**Tableau 1.4**  
**Taux de femmes chefs de ménage et le taux de fertilité dans certains pays d'Afrique**

Pays	Femmes chefs de ménage (%)		Taux de fertilité (naissances par femme)		Pays	Femmes chefs de ménage (%)		Taux de fertilité (naissances par femme)	
	1991/1997	1990-1995	1990-1995	2000-2005		1991/1997	1990-1995	2000-2005	
Afrique du sud	-	3.3	2.9		Mali	8	7.0	7.0	
Bénin	18	6.5	5.7		Maurice	18	2.3	1.9	
Botswana	47	4.9	3.9		Maroc	15	3.9	3.0	
Burkina Faso	7	7.1	6.8		Namibie	39	5.8	4.9	
Burundi	25	6.8	6.8		Niger	10	8.0	8.0	
Cameroun	18	5.7	4.7		Nigeria	14	6.4	5.4	
Cap-Vert	38	3.9	3.2		Ouganda	29	7.1	7.1	
Côte d'Ivoire	15	5.7	4.6		Rép. de centre Afrique	21	5.6	4.9	
Ghana	37	5.3	4.2		Rwanda	25	6.7	5.8	
Guinée	7	6.4	5.8		Sénégal	18	6.1	5.1	
Kenya	33	5.4	4.2		Sierra Leone	11	6.5	6.5	
Lesotho	23	5.0	4.5		Soudan	13	5.3	4.5	
Liberia	19	6.8	6.8		Tanzanie	22	5.9	5.0	
Madagascar	22	6.2	5.7		Zambie	17	6.3	5.7	
Malawi	26	7.2	6.3		Zimbabwe	33	5.5	4.5	

Source: UNDP, 2001

Souvent, les femmes chefs de famille doivent affronter plus d'obstacles pour faire face aux besoins du ménage que les chefs de ménage masculins parce qu'elles ont un statut économique et social inférieurs et moins d'opportunités (FAO 2001a). Les femmes chefs de famille ont un accès et un contrôle limité sur l'eau, les crédits et les services sociaux. Les pauvres femmes rurales, chefs de famille ne possèdent pas de terre ou de ressources pour gagner suffisamment pour elles-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. L'accès au crédit est limité dans la mesure où les prêts nécessitent la signature du partenaire ou la terre comme garantie (FAO, 2001c).

Dans les familles polygames, les épouses doivent faire attention à ce que leurs enfants reçoivent suffisamment de nourriture chaque jour. Au Burkina Faso où au moins la moitié des hommes dans la région prise en examen, ont plus d'une épouse, les femmes sont essentiellement responsables de la nourriture, de l'école de la santé et du bien-être de leurs enfants. Quand les hommes ont un faible revenu, la responsabilité de s'occuper des enfants, y compris les frais de scolarité et les vêtements sont presque totalement à charge des femmes (Tsikata, 2000).

## Accès aux ressources agricoles productives

**Les femmes sont souvent désavantagées** en ce qui concerne l'accès aux biens, à l'information et aux prises de décisions formelles (FIDA, 2000; FAO, 2001a). L'accès peu équitable des femmes aux ressources est enraciné dans la culture et les institutions sociales aussi bien que dans les processus économiques (Coelho et Coffey, 1996). En Afrique sub-saharienne, la plupart des femmes est beaucoup plus pauvre que les hommes pour acheter des intrants tels que les engrais. En outre, les institutions financières pensent que les femmes ne sont pas solvables (Rathgeber, 2003).

### *L'accès à la terre*

Les droits à la terre et au logement transmettent un statut et un certain pouvoir au sein de la communauté, cependant ces ressources sont inégalement réparties entre les hommes et les femmes (Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick, 2001). En Afrique sub-saharienne où les femmes sont essentiellement responsables de la production alimentaire, les droits à la terre sont généralement

#### **Boîte 1.1 LES DROITS DES FEMMES À LA TERRE AU BURKINA FASO ET AU KENYA**

Au Burkina Faso, la législation n'introduit pas formellement de discrimination à l'égard des femmes. Cependant, dans certaines zones rurales la loi coutumière est appliquée. Par exemple, sous la loi coutumière de Mossi, la propriété appartient aux ancêtres, le chef attribue la terre (*chef de terre*) et seuls les hommes peuvent être chefs. Les femmes n'ont pas de droits directs sur la terre, mais peuvent accéder à la terre par le biais de leur mari et de parents de sexe masculin. Une veuve doit épouser le plus jeune frère du défunt mari ou rester veuve dans sa belle-famille, dans ce cas, elle garde son accès à la terre de la famille de son mari. Les femmes peuvent emprunter la terre à des personnes extérieures à la famille mais elles n'ont pas de sécurité en ce qui concerne la terre et leurs droits d'utilisation sont limités surtout en ce qui concerne la culture de plantes vivaces.

Sous la Law of Succession Act 1972 du Kenya, les garçons et les filles ont les mêmes droits de succession et les veuves ont l'usufruit de la propriété, qu'elles perdent en cas de remariage. Cependant, l'héritage de terres agricoles, de récoltes et d'animaux d'élevage continue d'être régi par la loi coutumière (Section 33), selon laquelle les veuves et leurs filles ne peuvent pas hériter de la propriété familiale. Dans les zones rurales, la pratique pour les pères de laisser la terre à leurs filles est largement répandue et cela dans l'attente que le mari de la fille puisse s'en occuper pour elles. Dans l'ensemble, au Kenya, les droits des femmes à la terre sont sévèrement limités.

Source: Cotula, 2002

limités aux droits des usagers. Dans de nombreuses parties de la région, les femmes manquent toujours des droits de liberté de posséder ou de gérer la propriété. Dans la plupart des pays, la législation ne discrimine pas les femmes bien que les lois coutumières et les traditions soient très restrictives.

Dans de nombreux pays d'Afrique

sub-saharienne les femmes obtiennent principalement les droits à la terre par le biais de leur mari pour toute la durée du mariage. Souvent, elles perdent leurs droits si elles divorcent ou deviennent

veuves (Tsikata, 2000; Banque mondiale, 2000a; et Brown, *et al.*, 1995). Etant donné que les hommes possèdent et contrôlent essentiellement la terre, les femmes peuvent obtenir le droit à la terre par l'intermédiaire de leur père. Cependant la productivité féminine reste souvent faible parce qu'il arrive que les femmes n'aient pas le droit de prendre de décisions en ce qui concerne les pratiques agricoles ou ne soient pas capables d'obtenir des crédits si elles ne détiennent pas déjà des droits sur la terre (Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick, 2001), éliminant ainsi les encouragements pour investir dans les ressources productives qu'elles utilisent. Ces femmes rurales n'ont pas la garantie de pouvoir rembourser leurs investissements (par exemple la main d'oeuvre); la Boîte 1.1 montre les graves restrictions à l'accès à la propriété auxquelles sont confrontées les femmes du Burkina Faso et du Kenya.

La limitation des droits à la terre augmente la vulnérabilité des femmes, surtout en période de famine. Autrement, l'accès direct à la terre minimise le risque d'appauvrissement pour la femme et améliore le bien-être physique et les perspectives d'avenir de leurs enfants. L'accès direct à la terre est particulièrement pertinent pour les femmes chefs de famille dans la mesure où il facilite l'accès aux services de soutien agricoles et où de nombreux programmes spécialisés s'adressent seulement aux chefs de famille avec un régime foncier stable. Les femmes rurales affirment que la sécurité des droits à la terre améliore leur statut social et politique, leur amour propre, leur confiance, leur sécurité et leur dignité (Crowley, 2001).

Un accès efficace à l'utilisation d'intrants productifs, de revenus et de richesses sont essentiels pour que les femmes réalisent leur potentiel économique et les encouragent à investir leur main d'oeuvre et leurs ressources financières. Cependant, les systèmes de la terre et les actes d'enregistrement limitent le droit des femmes à posséder la terre. Au Kenya, par exemple, une fille a le droit d'utiliser la terre de son père mais ne peut pas entrer en possession de celle-ci. Au Cameroun, là où les lois ont changé pour donner aux femmes le droit de posséder la terre, des procédures administratives lourdes peuvent entraver leur accès à la propriété. (Banque mondiale, 1992a).

## Développement agricole et services apparentés

### *Recherche au niveau agricole et technologie appropriée*

L'amélioration de la technologie est considérée comme fondamentale pour améliorer la productivité agricole et accélérer la croissance économique rurale (Huvio, 1998). Le travail des femmes, surtout dans les zones rurales est exténuant et prend beaucoup de temps et la nécessité de technologies sources de revenus et de qui facilitent le travail est important. Des années de recherches et le développement



## Les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire – les circonstances actuelles

d'expériences montrent que la technologie n'est pas neutre en matière de parité hommes-femmes. La plupart des recherches et des programmes de développement, des années 1970 jusqu'au milieu des années 1990, reconnaît partiellement la contribution des femmes au processus de développement (Paris *et al.*, 2001).

Des technologies appropriées doivent être adoptées pour aider les communautés agricoles à maintenir les niveaux de production et répondre à la demande croissante. Par exemple, en Afrique subsaharienne la production de céréales est la plus faible du monde, la taille des exploitations diminue et les méthodes traditionnelles de restauration du sol sont les moins appropriées; cependant on s'attend à ce que le secteur agricole produise de la nourriture pour les populations rurales et urbaines croissantes et fournisse la matière première pour le secteur industriel. Le futur développement agricole devra compter de plus en plus sur des rendements beaucoup plus stables. (Saito *et al.*, 1994).

Les agricultrices doivent faire face à de multiples contraintes pour obtenir des semences améliorées, des variétés de nouvelles récoltes, des connaissances pour améliorer les systèmes de culture et d'autres formes de technologies. Le manque ou l'accès limité aux technologies appropriées est en rapport avec l'étendue de la pauvreté parmi les femmes rurales, étant donné que la plupart de leurs activités ne sont pas orientées vers le marché. L'absence de droits légaux à la terre limite l'accès des femmes au crédit et l'adhésion aux organisations d'agriculteurs, de même que l'accès aux intrants, aux services et aux crédits (Cotula, 2002; Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick, 2001; et Tsikata, 2000).

Bien qu'un changement technologique puisse engendrer des bénéfices sociaux et économiques plus importants il peut également faire croître les coûts; par exemple, en Asie, les ménages ruraux ont besoin de plus de liquidité pour couvrir les coûts des nouveaux intrants technologiques ce qui oblige les femmes à travailler comme des ouvriers agricoles. Dans le même temps, les possibilités de gagner plus pour les femmes sont réduites à cause de la mécanisation. (FAO, 1996b).

Par le passé, la recherche agricole, la formation technique, les programmes de vulgarisation étaient essentiellement destinés aux hommes (FAO, 1996b). C'est pour cette raison que les technologies et les instruments introduits dans les communautés pour améliorer la productivité étaient souvent basés sur les besoins et les perspectives des hommes ruraux, lesquels peuvent être considérablement différents de ceux des femmes. La FAO et d'autres organisations ont compris que des technologies plus équitables et plus durables devraient être développées afin de répondre aux besoins sensibles et à la problématique hommes-femmes et aux priorités pour améliorer la sécurité alimentaire pour tous à la fois au niveau des ménages et au niveau national.

Les femmes rurales sont bien informées en ce qui concerne les technologies traditionnelles même

si elles ont un accès réduit aux avantages des technologies modernes. Ceci est en partie dû au fait qu'elles sont exclues des processus d'établissement des priorités de recherche et des nouvelles générations de technologies et de leur propagation. Le développement technologique à lui seul, sans la participation et les suggestions des femmes et des agriculteurs ne peut assurer une amélioration durable de la production agricole. Des recherches sur les répercussions sur les hommes et les femmes en matière de changement technologique, dans tous les domaines de l'agriculture montrent que le développement de technologies nouvelles ou améliorées doivent prendre en considération la répartition du travail au sein du ménage, le salaire et l'accès à la terre afin d'en évaluer correctement les effets. L'implication des femmes dans la recherche, les décisions politiques et la planification est essentielle pour assurer qu'une meilleure utilisation des ressources réponde aux requêtes de sécurité alimentaire présentes et futures des ménages au niveau mondial. (Huvio, 1998).

Les femmes rurales ont déjà obtenu un accès significatif aux intrants améliorés. En général, les agricultrices africaines n'ont pas été capables de bénéficier de l'introduction des nouvelles technologies. Celles-ci étaient trop coûteuses, difficiles à entretenir, peu performantes à utiliser et inappropriées pour faire pousser les cultures par les agricultrices ou nuisibles à la santé et à la sécurité des femmes (Jazairy *et al.*, 1992). Les femmes rurales ont un immense besoin d'une main d'oeuvre économiquement accessible et de technologies économisant l'énergie, ce qui signifie le développement et la compréhension de leurs rôles spécifiques et de leurs contraintes agricoles (Banque mondiale, 1992).

### *Programmes éducatifs*

Au cours des 20 dernières années, l'espérance de vie a été de 20 pour cent plus rapide pour les femmes que pour les hommes. Les fossés dans l'acquisition de l'instruction se sont comblés ce qui augmente les capacités des femmes et accroît leurs possibilités d'effectuer des choix. Cela entraîne une amélioration de la nourriture et de la sécurité nutritionnelle pour les ménages, la société et la nation. (Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick, 2001). Il existe toujours des différences importantes entre le taux d'alphabétisation des hommes et des femmes adultes dans toute l'Afrique comme le montre le tableau 1.5. Le taux d'alphabétisation des femmes est inférieur de 20 pour cent au Burkina Faso, au Mali et au Niger; ce qui les met dans une situation désavantageuse pour obtenir des informations sur les nouvelles technologies agricoles, pour participer à la planification et aux forums de prises de décisions et pour créer de nouvelles possibilités de revenus. Cependant, le taux d'instruction parmi les femmes est considérablement plus élevé au Botswana, au Congo, au Lesotho, à l'île Maurice, en Afrique du sud et au Zimbabwe.

## Les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire – les circonstances actuelles

Tableau 1.5

Taux d'alphabétisation des adultes en fonction de la parité hommes-femmes dans les pays africains

Pays	Taux d'alphabétisation des adultes		Pays	Taux d'alphabétisation des adultes	
	Femmes	Hommes		Femmes	Hommes
Afrique du sud	85	86.3	Mauritanie	30.7	51.1
Bénin	24.6	53.5	Maurice	81.7	88.0
Botswana	80.6	75.3	Mozambique	30.0	61.2
Burkina Faso	14.9	34.9	Namibie	81.9	83.4
Burundi	42.0	56.9	Niger	8.9	24.4
Cameroun	65.1	79.9	Nigeria	57.7	73.3
Congo	75.9	88.2	Ouganda	58.0	78.1
Côte d'Ivoire	38.4	60.3	Rwanda	61.9	74.5
Ethiopie	32.4	48.1	Rép. centrale d'Afrique	36.6	60.8
Gambie	30.9	45.0	Rép. Dém. du Congo.	51.8	74.2
Ghana	64.5	81.1	Sénégal	28.7	48.1
Guinée-Bissau	24.7	55.2	Soudan	47.7	70.0
Kenya	77.3	89.5	Swaziland	79.4	81.3
Lesotho	93.9	73.3	Tanzanie	67.9	84.5
Madagascar	60.6	74.2	Togo	44.0	73.4
Malawi	47.6	75.0	Zambie	72.7	85.8
Mali	16.6	36.7	Zimbabwe	85.5	93.3

Source: UNDP, 2003

Presque toutes les régions ont accompli des progrès en dispensant un enseignement primaire universel mais on enregistre la proportion la plus basse d'inscriptions en l'Afrique sub-saharienne qui fait de lents progrès. Les inégalités entre les sexes à tous les niveaux d'instruction continuent à entraver le développement économique et la parité sociale. Cet écart est important parce que les pays qui reconnaissent le droit des femmes reconnaissent notre dignité humaine commune et augmentent leurs capacités, en tirant des bénéfices des énergies et des capacités de l'autre moitié de la population (ONU, 2002b). Le monde n'est pas sur la bonne voie pour parvenir au troisième Objectif du millénaire pour le développement pour éliminer les inégalités entre les sexes dans les écoles primaires et secondaires d'ici 2005<sup>2</sup>; à la vitesse actuelle ce but ne sera pas atteint avant 2025. La discrimination entre les sexes lors de l'inscription à l'école primaire est un problème surtout en Afrique sub-saharienne, en Asie du sud, au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord (Vandemoortele, 2002). Les données ventilées par sexe du système scolaire formel indiquent une augmentation du taux d'abandon à mesure que le niveau scolaire s'élève (GTZ, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> De rapides progrès ont été faits en ce qui concerne l'égalité entre les sexes dans l'enseignement secondaire et supérieur mais cela n'était pas suffisant pour combler le fossé de la parité sur ces données.

### *Vulgarisation et formation*

Aujourd'hui dans de nombreux pays en développement, la parité occupe une faible priorité dans la planification et la mise en oeuvre des politiques de vulgarisation et des programmes. Les programmes de vulgarisation arrivent rarement jusqu'aux agricultrices de même qu'elles reçoivent peu d'informations techniques pour améliorer la productivité de leurs activités agricoles. Une autre contrainte à l'accès de la vulgarisation agricole et aux animaux d'élevage c'est l'idée générale que les femmes sont avant tout des "ménagères" plutôt que des agriculteurs preneurs de décisions. Ainsi, les services de vulgarisation se concentrent sur les « agriculteurs » de sexe masculin qui doivent diriger les travaux des femmes, « les travaux familiaux » (Jazairy *et al.*, 1992).

Le rôle complet des femmes dans les activités de production doit être inclus dans le courant principal de l'intégration des services de vulgarisation et de la formation. Un certain nombre de changements ont été effectués dans le courant de ces cinq dernières années dans le système de vulgarisation. L'un d'entre eux est l'approche de l'école agricole sur le terrain qui a un taux élevé de participation au Kenya et en Ouganda. Dans le système des écoles agricoles, on encourage la création de groupes de femmes et parfois se sont les femmes seules qui constituent des écoles. Ces efforts doivent être élargis à toute l'Afrique sub-saharienne.

Les agents de vulgarisation agricoles représentent une source d'informations importante pour tous les agriculteurs et surtout pour les femmes, ils leur fournissent généralement un niveau minimum d'instruction. En dépit de la longue tradition agricole féminine en Afrique sub-saharienne, les hommes ont plus de contacts avec les services de vulgarisation. Peu de femmes remplissent les fonctions d'agents de vulgarisation et la recherche agricole et les institutions de vulgarisation recherchent rarement l'expérience des agricultrices locales. Le nombre de femmes agents de vulgarisation agricole doit augmenter surtout dans les sociétés où l'interaction de femmes agricultrices avec les agents de vulgarisation agricole de sexe masculin est culturellement inacceptable. Des agents de vulgarisation agricole auront besoin de formation ou de cours de recyclage afin de pouvoir les appliquer aux agricultrices (Brown, *et al.*, 1995). Selon Quisumbing *et al.* (1995), on pourrait améliorer les cultures sur les terres des femmes avec l'amélioration de l'éducation, l'expérience et les intrants (voir Boîte 1.2).

#### **Boîte 1.2 EFFETS D'UNE FORMATION ET D'UNE ÉDUCATION ÉGALITAIRES**

Les agricultrices kényanes pourraient augmenter leurs rendements de 9 à 24 pour cent si elles possédaient la même expérience et recevaient la même éducation et les mêmes intrants que les hommes. Au Kenya les rendements pourraient augmenter de 24 pour cent si toutes les agricultrices recevaient une éducation à l'école primaire.

Source: Quisumbing, *et al.*, 1995





## Les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire – les circonstances actuelles

L'effort de responsabiliser les femmes à la fois du point de vue social et économique est plus efficace quand celui-ci est soutenu par des compétences techniques, une formation en gestion et des capacités de leader en plus des programmes d'alphabétisation. La réponse des femmes aux possibilités de formation a souvent dépassé les attentes des projets financés par le FIDA. Une formation pour améliorer les revenus a attiré la plus grande participation et s'est démontrée plus efficace quand elle comprenait des activités choisies par les femmes et avec des débouchés adéquats vers les marchés (FIDA, 2000). Quand les femmes surmontent les difficultés et accèdent aux nouvelles technologies elles sont aussi plus capables ou plus innovatrices que les hommes. En Zambie, une étude a révélé que les ménages agricoles les plus riches dirigés par des femmes sont plus disponibles à adopter des variétés de maïs améliorées que ceux dirigés par des hommes (Brown *et al.*, 1995). Car les femmes ont un seuil inférieur de risque, parce qu'elles sont plus vulnérables en ce qui concerne leurs responsabilités de production et de reproduction, une recherche plus approfondie permettrait d'aider à comprendre les conditions particulières à partir desquelles les femmes rurales négocieront leur aversion pour le risque et accepteront l'innovation.

### *Le crédit*

Les réformes financières n'ont pas ciblé les femmes mais ont amélioré le marché financier rural pour les pauvres en général (Tsikata, 2000). Des contraintes socioculturelles et des stéréotypes de non solvabilité excluent les femmes des sources formelles de crédit: des banques, des coopératives, des sociétés de crédits mutuels. Une analyse des schémas de crédit au Kenya, au Malawi, en Sierra Leone, en Zambie et au Zimbabwe a démontré que les femmes ont reçu moins de 10 pour cent des crédits destinés aux petits agriculteurs et 1 pour cent du total des crédits destinés à l'agriculture (Du Guerny, 1996).

Souvent, pour obtenir un prêt agricole il faut posséder de la terre ou du bétail comme garantie, ce que de nombreux ménages agricoles n'ont pas (Du Guerny, 1996). Les contraintes auxquelles les femmes doivent faire face pour accéder à la terre ne leur permettent pas d'utiliser celle-ci comme moyen de garantie pour obtenir des crédits qui sont fondamentaux pour l'achat au moment opportun d'intrants tels que les variétés améliorées et l'engrais. Le manque de crédits limite l'adoption de nouvelles technologies pour les femmes de même que la possibilité de louer de la main d'œuvre quand celle-ci est nécessaire, par ailleurs, la croissance des récoltes nécessite d'importantes sommes d'argent liquide, réduisant ainsi la possibilité d'acheter leur propre terre quand ceci est légal ou encore d'acheter des biens d'équipement (Brown *et al.*, 1995). Tout ceci crée un cycle négatif car, sans terre elles ne peuvent pas obtenir de crédit et sans crédit elles ne peuvent pas obtenir de terre.

Certains programmes de crédit ont été orientés vers les femmes s'occupant d'orphelins tels que le Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO) qui a eu beaucoup de succès parmi les femmes en Ouganda (voir Boîte 1.3).

### *Les associations d'agriculteurs*

L'adhésion à des organisations rurales telles que les associations de paysans, le syndicat de la main d'oeuvre agricole, les coopératives et les comités bénéficiaires de projets, améliorent l'accès des femmes et des hommes ruraux aux ressources productives, à l'information, à la formation et aux réseaux commerciaux. L'adhésion à ces organisations permet aux personnes de témoigner de leurs intérêts aux autorités gouvernementales et au chef de projet. Bien qu'aucune loi n'interdise l'adhésion des femmes, l'accès des femmes à ces organisations est souvent très sévèrement limité parce que l'adhésion est basée sur des critères de propriété de la terre et/ou d'un statut tel que chef de famille (Jazairy *et al.*, 1992; FAO, 1990) ou bien on ne permet l'adhésion qu'à un seul membre de chaque ménage agricole.

Il est important de s'attaquer aux défis de consolidation des bases des organisations en tant que moyen pour offrir une voix aux femmes. La FAO signale:

*“Il est évident que les associations organisées à la base sont plus efficaces que celles créées pour un projet spécifique. Les groupes de femmes à la fois au niveau des fondements nationaux et locaux sont efficaces lorsqu'elles favorisent l'intégration des problèmes de la parité hommes-femmes dans l'intégration d'activités de développement et la participation des femmes aux prises de décisions. Cependant, les groupes de femmes doivent faire face aux problèmes de formation et de qualifications inadéquates et de ressources financières insuffisantes à tous les niveaux (FAO, 1990).”*

### Boîte 1.3 LES EFFORTS DES FEMMES OUGANDAISES POUR SAUVER LES ORPHELINS (UWESO)

Quand Selina Anyodo est devenue veuve, elle a assumé seule les responsabilités de s'occuper de ses sept enfants. Comme elle n'avait aucun moyen de gagner sa vie, Selina a commencé à travailler dans le jardin potager des autres ce qui lui a permis de nourrir ses enfant une seule fois par jour. Elle ne pouvait pas habiller ses enfants correctement ou les envoyer à l'école. Selina a été encouragée à devenir membre de l'association Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO) et à son plan d'économie et de crédit.

On lui a consenti un petit prêt pour commencer une activité et elle a vendu les légumes de ses voisins sur le marché local. Avec les bénéfices elle a acheté des graines et de l'engrais et a commencé à faire pousser ses propres produits et à diversifier ses activités en achetant une chèvre. Elle a maintenant un salaire régulier et un solide compte épargne dans la banque locale. Elle est capable de nourrir ses enfants avec trois solides repas par jour, elle a construit une zone pour se laver et un égouttoir pour ses assiettes. Elle a de nombreux projets et beaucoup d'espoir pour l'avenir.

Les Economies et plans de crédit de l' UWESO ont commencé en avril et ciblés des familles s'occupant d'orphelins. Les femmes sont le premier objectif car elles s'occupent en moyenne de six enfants. Des groupes de femmes sont formés pendant au moins huit semaines dans des groupes de solidarité, on leur donne des notions sur les qualités de leaders, la direction commerciale, la commercialisation, l'économie et la gestion de crédits. Quatre cent prêts ont été distribués à 1 875 personnes dont 87 pour cent sont des femmes. Le plan est soutenu par le Fonds belge de survie en relation avec le programme du FIDA.

Source: IFAD, 2000

### *L'information*

Dans ce domaine de grands progrès en matière d'informations et de technologies de communication ont été effectués, (ICT), les zones rurales restent à l'extérieur des principaux canaux d'informations et bon nombre de nouvelles technologies sont hors de la portée des femmes rurales. En outre, les données ventilées par sexe sont rares et les décideurs politiques et les agences de développement sont incapables de comprendre les conditions des femmes et de traduire leurs besoins dans des efforts de développement.

La FAO a activement participé à l'effort international de documenter, de développer et de propager l'information et les données sur les rôles et les responsabilités des femmes rurales dans la production agricole, la sécurité alimentaire et le développement rural (FAO 1999a). L'Organisation a favorisé le développement mondial de banques de données, de méthodologies et d'analyses dans FAOSTAT, qui est disponible sur l'Internet. Les informations FAOSTAT sont basées sur des données nationales fournies par les pays membres. Elles sont obtenues à partir du recensement agricole et d'études annuelles effectuées sur la production agricole. En outre, la FAO a établi un système de plans et d'informations sur l'insécurité alimentaire et la vulnérabilité (FIVIMS) pour faire prendre conscience des problèmes et intégrer des informations complémentaires au sujet des problèmes de sécurité alimentaire et pour améliorer la qualité des données et des analyses concernant la sécurité alimentaire.

L'un des objectifs affrontés par le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation était d'assurer l'égalité entre les sexes et la responsabilisation des femmes. Le Sommet a recommandé d'augmenter les efforts pour améliorer la récolte, la propagation et l'utilisation des données ventilées par sexe dans le domaine agricole, dans le secteur de la pêche, de la foresterie et du développement rural. Cela correspond à l'augmentation de la demande en matière de statistiques spécifiques ventilées par sexe aux niveaux national et régional, effectuée par des chercheurs, des universitaires, des groupes de femmes et des organisations non gouvernementales. Tous sont intéressés par la façon d'affronter différents problèmes socioéconomiques et comment participer de façon plus active à la prise de décisions sur de tels sujets.

La technologie de l'information peut également être utilisée pour organiser l'information et pour responsabiliser les femmes rurales en améliorant leur accès à l'information ainsi qu'en nivelant la parité hommes-femmes et les inégalités fondées sur la classe et engendrées par un accès différencié à l'information. Pour une intégration des considérations parité hommes-femmes valable, les hommes et les femmes ont besoin d'informations sur les droits des femmes en ce qui concerne les ressources naturelles et humaines. Les femmes pauvres ont besoin d'un accès à l'information sur les projets afin de réduire la possibilité des groupes les plus riches (d'hommes et de femmes) en relation avec l'élite locale, de prendre le contrôle des avantages d'un projet rural (FIDA 2000). Ces informations peuvent

être obtenues par le biais des services de vulgarisation, de l'éducation et de l'utilisation de la radio. La FAO a entrepris différentes initiatives pour responsabiliser les femmes par le biais de ICT, en particulier en utilisant la radio au Bénin, au Congo, au Mali et au Niger (FAO, 2000a).

## Les femmes rurales travaillent comme entrepreneurs et dans des activités aux revenus non agricoles

**En plus de leur rôle actif les femmes** jouent un rôle dans la production de la nourriture, la plupart des activités après les récoltes sont sous la responsabilité des femmes et des enfants. La transformation de la nourriture, l'emmagasinage et la sauvegarde du produit agricole sont presque entièrement effectués par les femmes. Elles transportent le produit agricole des champs à la ferme et au marché sur leur tête

car la plupart des fermes sont inaccessibles par véhicule.

En outre, les femmes jouent un rôle fondamental dans la commercialisation des produits agricoles (Anarfi, 2000) au sens le plus large du terme, comme le démontre le tableau 1.1. Certains programmes ont formés les femmes aux techniques d'entreprise et aux activités

pourvoyeuses de revenus, par exemple, un projet FAO a formé plusieurs femmes à la gestion de la fabrication du savon et à la maçonnerie (Boîte 1.4).

Bien que les productions commerciales comme le cacao, le café et les noix de karité aient longtemps été considérées comme faisant partie du domaine des hommes, les femmes jouent un rôle dans ces initiatives. Leur participation est significative et on estime que 30 pour cent des producteurs de cacao sont des agricultrices. En outre, la plupart des agriculteurs ont une épouse ou des épouses qui s'occupent de leurs besoins alimentaires et apportent d'autres contributions pour assurer le succès de l'entreprise (Anarfi, 2000).

Tandis que les micro entreprises peuvent ne pas être suffisamment rentables pour améliorer les niveaux des revenus de façon significative, elles diversifient les sources de revenu et réduisent la

### Boîte 1.4 FONDS RENOUEVABLES POUR LES GROUPES DE FEMMES AU MALI

Les revenus engendrés par la formation des groupes de femmes, se traduisent par l'amélioration des moyens d'existence des femmes rurales. A Kayes, une région semi-aride au nord du Mali, un projet FAO a aidé des femmes dans 50 villages. Ces femmes ne possédaient pas de terre et ne pouvaient pas obtenir de crédit sans fournir de garanties. Le projet a créé des fonds renouvelables pour leur permettre de s'acheter des semis, de l'engrais, des pompes pour l'irrigation et des moulins pour moudre le millet et le sorgho.

Plus de 900 villages ont reçu une formation en gestion, culture des arbres, reboisement, fabrication du savon et maçonnerie. Certaines femmes ont réalisé des potagers à la maison et des jardins maraîchers qui leur ont fournis des revenus supplémentaires pour acheter les ingrédients essentiels pour l'alimentation de leur famille, d'autres ont créé des pépinières pour les bananiers, les citronniers, les margousiers et les eucalyptus.

Source: FAO, 1997b



## Les femmes rurales et la sécurité alimentaire – les circonstances actuelles

vulnérabilité. Elles établissent la confiance pour commercer sur les marchés, soutenir les remboursements de crédits et contribuer à aplanir les difficultés de trésorerie des familles. Cependant, ces opérations exigent un niveau d'éducation sensiblement plus élevé, des compétences dans le domaine des affaires, la capacité d'organiser des groupes, de trouver du temps et une capacité de mobilité (FIDA, 2000). Certaines organisations comme le FIDA ont développé un programme intégré qui associe des services financiers et non financiers, des compétences s'exerçant dans le domaine de la gestion et du marketing, le crédit et une aide à l'organisation pour les femmes.

### *Activités comprenant les animaux d'élevages*

Les animaux d'élevage fournissent une part élevée du revenu du ménage parmi les familles les plus pauvres et sans terre, surtout chez les femmes. Les femmes préfèrent souvent utiliser leur crédit pour acheter des animaux d'élevage, à la fois comme source de revenu et comme sécurité, étant donné que les animaux d'élevage fournissent de la nourriture, de l'argent comptant, un semblant de pouvoir, de l'argent pour l'engrais et ils prennent de la valeur par le biais de la reproduction. En outre, le droit des femmes à posséder des animaux varie en fonction de la culture, de la classe et du type d'animal. Bien que les bénéfices soient généralement plus bas, il est plus facile pour les femmes rurales d'acheter et d'élever de petits animaux. Pour les femmes, posséder des animaux plus grands tels que du bétail et des ânes est limité en raison de l'investissement nécessaire à leur achat (Miller, 2001) et aux normes socioculturelles qui parfois empêchent les femmes de travailler avec des animaux de trait.

Les femmes consacrent une grande partie de leur temps, de leur travail et de leur expérience à l'agriculture et à la production d'animaux d'élevage. Dans presque toutes les régions les femmes ont des responsabilités significatives en ce qui concerne les soins et la gestion des animaux d'élevage et la transformation des produits provenant d'animaux d'élevage.

## Tendances mondiales et régionales

### Programme d'ajustement structurel et politiques relatives

**Des programmes d'ajustement structurel (SAP)** et les réformes économiques orientées vers le marché ont des conséquences particulières pour le secteur agricole et les populations rurales. Le vaste programme du SAP a pour but d'éliminer la polarisation urbaine et de favoriser de meilleurs prix aux producteurs agricoles, par le biais d'incitations à une production croissante surtout pour les récoltes intérieurement commercialisables et à vocation exportatrices. Ces changements des prix sont accompagnés par des prix plus élevés pour les intrants en raison de la suppression des subventions d'état et de l'imposition indirecte sur les intrants importés par l'intermédiaire de la dévaluation de la devise. La matrice des changements en matière de production, de consommation et d'encouragement est la cause de la redistribution des ressources entre les secteurs, les récoltes et les produits et au sein des ménages (Coelho et Coffey, 1996).



Marchande de poissons au marché de Akosombo.  
(Peyton Johnson, 1969)

Le SAP et les réformes du marché ne parviennent pas à la redistribution souhaitée parce qu'ils n'ont pas pris en compte les facteurs de parité hommes-femmes aussi bien au sein des ménages que dans l'économie plus vaste. Il conviendrait de reconnaître que les décisions de production des ménages agricoles sur le choix des cultures dérivent de prises de décisions au sein du ménage, déterminées par la nature des incitations offertes aux hommes et aux femmes et à l'attribution des ressources dans le ménage. (Coelho et Coffey, 1996).

Au Togo, par exemple, les femmes agricultrices se sentent marginalisées par les politiques de développement rural en vigueur sous le programme d'ajustement structurel et les politiques relatives. Ces politiques ne font aucune différence de facteurs de parité hommes-femmes en matière de production agricole et ne prennent pas en compte les contraintes liées aux coutumes et aux normes sociales qui limitent les activités des femmes (Kantchati, 2000).

Les impacts négatifs peuvent provenir du fait que le SAP et le marché et les politiques de réformes visent à allouer des ressources du secteur non commercial à celui commercial par le biais de l'encouragement des prix pour les produits commercialisables. Le succès de cette tentative dépend dans une certaine mesure de la mobilité du travail des femmes dans ce secteur.

D'autres composantes fondamentales du SAP affectent directement les moyens d'existence des femmes. Le changement de destination des subventions du SAP a été largement soutenu par les femmes, augmentant ainsi leur charge de travail non rémunérée (Tsikata, 2000).

## Mondialisation

**De nombreux pays africains sont plutôt** mal reliés à l'économie mondiale moderne. Bien que les marchés internationaux de marchandises continuent à se développer, sur ces marchés, les ventes africaines se réduisent. Il est surprenant que le volume total des exportations africaines de



Poissonnier retirant les arêtes et salant le poisson.  
FAO, 1998.

produits agricoles tels que le café, l'huile de palme et le sucre soient moins importantes aujourd'hui qu'il y a 30 ans (Paarlberg, 2002). La mondialisation ainsi que les politiques de libération commerciale ont favorisé l'agriculture commerciale sur une grande échelle et l'exportation de cultures commerciales pour la production de subsistance des ménages. La mondialisation présente des risques particuliers pour les petits exploitants agricoles qui représentent l'épine dorsale de l'agriculture dans de nombreux pays en développement. Des systèmes de production de petite envergure perdent leur stabilité en raison de la libéralisation commerciale, de la privatisation des ressources et des services et des politiques d'ajustement structurel, des nouvelles forces de commercialisation, de la modernisation de l'agriculture et d'autres facteurs socioéconomiques. En outre, les petits exploitants, doivent rivaliser avec les importations à bas prix, dont la plupart sont injustement subventionnées (IFPRI, 2001) et réalisées avec des méthodes plus rentables.

En raison des inégalités entre les sexes et de la discrimination, la mondialisation et les processus de libéralisation peuvent toucher plus profondément les femmes que les hommes, surtout dans les zones rurales. Selon le développement et le plan d'action parité hommes-femmes de la FAO 2002-2007, l'ouverture de marchés locaux à des importations moins chères et l'abolition

des subventions ont eu un effet défavorable surtout sur les agricultrices. Recueillir les fruits de la libéralisation a été extrêmement difficile en raison probablement de la difficulté d'accès aux intrants agricoles. (FAO, 2001a). Les femmes plus que les hommes manquent de formation, de possibilités d'investissement et d'accès à l'information ce qui les empêchent d'être compétitives sur le marché "mondial". La mondialisation a contribué à la féminisation de l'agriculture parce que les hommes abandonnent les régions rurales à la recherche d'un emploi mieux rémunéré contribuant ainsi à l'augmentation du nombre de femmes chefs de ménage. (FAO, 2000a).

La tendance du développement à long terme laisse sous entendre que l'industrialisation progressive de l'agriculture est associée à une diminution des populations travaillant dans la production alimentaire. La rapidité de la mondialisation accélère la monétisation des producteurs qui produisent le minimum vital; les agriculteurs doivent faire face à des demandes croissantes d'argent liquide et à la baisse dérivant des produits conventionnels qui accompagne la commercialisation agricole.

On s'attendait à ce que la redistribution des ressources durant le réajustement du secteur non commercialisable au secteur commercialisable fasse monter les revenus dans les secteurs à vocation exportatrice et pourtant les femmes qui étaient les principales responsables de la production de biens non commercialisables n'ont pas su tirer profit de la libéralisation du commerce. La libéralisation du marché a eu comme conséquence l'effondrement des coopératives locales que les femmes préféraient et il en est ainsi résulté un déclin sur les marchés de production à dominante féminine.

## VIH/SIDA

**Le VIH/SIDA a été considéré et traité** comme un problème urbain, mais un témoignage plus récent montre que l'incidence du VIH tend à augmenter plus rapidement dans les zones rurales de la plupart des pays en développement que dans les milieux urbains (Du Guerny, 1999). Les habitants des zones urbaines qui sont infectés par le VIH reviennent souvent dans leur village durant les dernières étapes de leur maladie, introduisant/augmentant ainsi le VIH/SIDA dans les zones rurales. Ce sont les ménages ruraux qui fournissent la plus grande partie des soins aux patients atteints du VIH/SIDA (FAO, 2001). Un document de l'ONUSIDA montre que la subsistance des ménages ruraux est plus touchée que celle des familles urbaines (ONUSIDA, 1999). LE VIH/SIDA est considéré comme une pandémie qui représente une gageure pour les fondements de la production agricole et la sécurité alimentaire dans certaines régions de l'Afrique sub-saharienne et qui s'ajoute aux problèmes de pauvreté, en particulier pour les femmes, qui ont des droits limités en matière de terre et un accès restreint aux ressources.





Le groupe national d'aide ougandais pour le SIDA, TASO, dont la devise est vivre positivement avec le SIDA, honore la mémoire des amis décédés en piquant leurs noms sur des drapeaux. Les drapeaux sont présentés durant les fêtes du TASO pour soutenir les esprits des personnes ayant le SIDA et leurs familles. De tels édredons ont été créés dans de nombreux pays pour commémorer les victimes du SIDA.

(K. Dunn, 1994)

où une prévention efficace est mise en œuvre, le taux d'infection se stabilise.

Selon les estimations de la FAO, dans un ménage touché par le SIDA on perd deux ans du travail d'une personne et pendant ce temps une personne décède des suites de la maladie. Au Kenya entre 48 et 78 pour cent des revenus du ménage sont perdus quand une personne décède du SIDA (Villarreal, 2001). Les groupes de populations plus à risque sont ceux qui se trouvent le long des itinéraires des camions dans les zones rurales et près des grandes infrastructures de projets. De façon générale, la plupart des personnes infectées par le VIH sont des habitants des zones rurales et les femmes sont relativement plus touchées. (FAO, 2001).

Des études effectuées en Afrique montrent que les jeunes adolescentes ont plus de probabilités d'être infectées par le virus du VIH que les garçons du même âge. Le taux d'infection parmi les femmes instruites a chuté de presque la moitié dans les années 1990, alors qu'il n'y avait aucune diminution significative parmi les femmes sans éducation formelle. (ONUSIDA, 2000). Dans la plupart des sociétés africaines rurales, les femmes, normalement, ne s'intéressent pas aux comportements sexuels de leur époux à l'extérieur du mariage et il y a peu de discussions sur le sexe entre les époux ou les générations (Anarfi, 2000).

Les femmes ont un accès limité aux ressources productives telles que la terre, le crédit, l'instruction, la formation et la technologie. Quand le conjoint décède, l'épouse peut perdre tout ce que celui-ci possédait et ses moyens d'existence ainsi que ceux de ses enfants peuvent être menacés (Villarreal, 2001; Du Guerny, 1998). Les ménages ruraux souffrent de perte de travail productif, de perte de revenu, de manque de stock de nourriture et de dénutrition. Les économies et les biens sont détournés pour affronter les soins de santé et le coût des funérailles réduit ainsi les possibilités d'instruction des enfants (Boîte 1.5) (ONUSIDA, 1999). Par ailleurs, la pénurie

de main d'œuvre est particulièrement sévère dans le domaine agricole car la production est saisonnière et la synchronisation est fondamentale (FAO, 2001; ILO, 2000).

La FAO estime que dans les 25 pays africains les plus touchés, sept millions d'agriculteurs sont décédés du SIDA depuis 1985 et 16 millions de plus pourraient mourir dans les 20 ans à venir. Selon les études de la FAO et d'ONUSIDA, dans certaines régions du Zimbabwe le rendement agricole des petits exploitants a chuté de 50 pour cent au cours des cinq dernières années, principalement à cause du SIDA (FAO, 2001; ONUSIDA, 1999). D'ici 2020, jusqu'à 26 pour cent de la main d'œuvre agricole pourrait être perdue dans les pays d'Afrique sub-saharienne en raison du SIDA. Etant donné que la maladie touche principalement les personnes âgées de 15 à 49 ans, qui sont les membres les plus productifs de la société du point de vue économique, le VIH/SIDA est un problème économique et social important (Villarreal, 2001).

Etant donné que la main d'œuvre agricole diminue à cause du SIDA, certaines terres sont en jachères et le rendement des ménages diminue. Moins de temps peut être consacré au sarclage, au paillage, à l'élagage et au défrichage. Pour s'en sortir les agriculteurs peuvent adopter une stratégie qui nécessite une main d'œuvre moins intensive pour les récoltes. En Namibie et en Ouganda les animaux d'élevage sont souvent vendus pour aider les malades et payer les dépenses des funérailles ce qui réduit les économies du ménage et augmente la vulnérabilité en cas de nouveaux problèmes. En outre, cela compromet l'industrie des animaux d'élevage et la sécurité alimentaire à long terme et les choix à effectuer pour survivre comme c'est déjà le cas en Namibie. La baisse du nombre d'animaux d'élevage a également des implications sur la fertilité du sol (FAO, 2001).

En conformité avec leurs rôles traditionnels, les agricultrices prennent soin des membres de la famille touchés par la maladie et le temps à consacrer aux activités agricoles est sensiblement réduit. (Du Guerny, 1999). Etant donné que les femmes jouent un rôle essentiel en assurant la sécurité alimentaire du ménage ainsi que de l'éducation des enfants, ils sont ainsi souvent retirés de l'école pour aider leur famille à s'en sortir (Du Guerny, 1999). Là où la propriété foncière et les traditions en matière de succession favorise les héritiers masculins, une femme qui survit à son époux peut voir ses activités agricoles sévèrement restreintes (Anarfi, 2000).

Dans de nombreux cas on a adopté d'habiles stratégies notamment pour faire face aux exigences économiques et alimentaires. En Zambie rurale certains ménages ont recouru à des activités sources



Région de Kibaha, retour de la traite des femmes Masai du village de Magindi.

de revenus telles que la vente de bois de chauffe et des animaux domestiques, la couture et le petit commerce. Certains membres de la famille émigrent vers les régions urbaines à la recherche d'un emploi afin d'envoyer des fonds à leur région rurale. Des enfants âgés de dix ans travaillent pour obtenir un revenu. Au Malawi les ménages travaillaient comme journaliers dans d'autres fermes et les jeunes filles recouraient au sexe pour faire face à leurs besoins d'un revenu à court terme (ONUSIDA, 1999).

D'autres effets du VIH/SIDA comprennent la 'tuberculisation' de la production agricole en raison d'une main d'oeuvre moins importante pour les récoltes d'une qualité nutritionnelle inférieure. Peu de cultures commerciales sont produites, réduisant ainsi un peu plus le revenu des ménages alors que les honoraires médicaux et le coût des funérailles sont extrêmement élevés. (Villarreal, 2001; ILO, 2000). La consommation de nourriture diminue alors que les dépenses de santé augmentent. On constate une diminution de la transmission des connaissances entre générations et les réseaux de sécurité sociale s'affaiblissent. Une étude effectuée au Kenya a révélé que seulement 7 pour cent des ménages dirigés par un orphelin ont une expérience adéquate de la production agricole. (Villarreal, 2001). La Boîte 1.5 fournit un résumé des effets du HIV/SIDA sur l'agriculture et la sécurité alimentaire.

### Boîte 1.5 RÉSUMÉ DES EFFETS DU VIH/SIDA SUR L'AGRICULTURE ET LA SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE

- ❖ La perte de la main d'oeuvre agricole représentant deux années de travail d'une personne est perdue quand dans un ménage une personne meurt, la productivité diminue surtout dans les systèmes agricoles où il y a un faible niveau de mécanisation
- ❖ Les ruraux sont à risque car:
  - les populations rurales ne savent pas comment se protéger en raison d'un accès limité aux services d'informations et de santé;
  - les habitants des centres urbains contaminés par le SIDA rentrent chez eux, à la campagne quand ils tombent malades;
  - le temps consacré au travail agricole est remplacé par les soins à donner aux patients atteints du SIDA;
- ❖ Changement de systèmes agricoles vers une main d'oeuvre moins importante et des récoltes sur pied avec une valeur nutritionnelle inférieure comme celle des tubercules; diminution de la consommation de nourriture;
- ❖ Les honoraires médicaux élevés et les coûts des funérailles appauvrissent les ménages qui sont touchés en réduisant leur capacité de produire et de vendre de la nourriture, et en plaçant de ce fait l'instruction des enfants dans une situation à risque;
- ❖ Perte de la transmission des connaissances agricoles autochtones entre générations;
- ❖ On constate une plus grande exposition au VIH/SIDA en raison de l'appauvrissement et des stratégies malsaines des femmes pour s'en sortir et du fait que plus d'enfants ont recours à la vie dans la rue.

Source: Villarreal, 2001; UNAIDS, 1999.

### *Catastrophes provoquées par l'homme et catastrophes naturelles*

Dans les années 2000 les conflits armés ont laissé 24 millions de personnes dans 28 pays et territoires en développement et en transition dans le besoin de nourriture et d'assistance humanitaire. Presque 80 pour

cent se trouvaient en Afrique sub-saharienne et les femmes et les enfants représentaient 70 à 80 pour cent des réfugiés et des populations déplacées à l'intérieur du pays, déracinés à cause de la violence. Les effets de la guerre sur la sécurité alimentaire sont profonds et en Afrique les conflits ont porté à la perte du rendement agricole pour un total de 22 milliards de dollars EU entre 1999 et 1997. Dans presque tous les pays touchés, la plus grande partie de la main d'oeuvre dépend de l'agriculture comme moyen d'existence. (Messer et Cohen, 2001).

La capacité des gouvernements nationaux à préserver la paix interne est fondamentale pour le développement agricole et rural. Récemment, 13 des 20 conflits les plus violents se sont produits dans des pays Africains. (Paarlberg, 2002). Les guerres civiles prolongées sont les conflits les plus dévastateurs pour le continent africain. Si l'on évite l'instabilité politique, surtout les guerres civiles, on améliore les possibilités d'un soutien national et international qui permettent des programmes de réformes nationaux. Eviter les conflits civils et ethniques, comprendre l'économie politique sont des aspects fondamentaux pour établir des stratégies de développement en Afrique sub-saharienne. (Elbadawi, 1999).

Les questions liées aux sexes sont à la base des interventions humanitaires tandis que les conflits armés ou les catastrophes naturelles sont résumés dans les politiques selon le genre du Programme alimentaire mondial (2002):

*La pauvreté et les crises humanitaires aiguës ou chroniques tendent à accentuer le fossé parité hommes-femmes parce que les moyens sont limités et que les femmes sont victimes de discriminations et qu'on s'attend à ce qu'elles fassent des sacrifices en mangeant moins. Dans les situations de conflit et de déplacement, les femmes sont souvent exposées à de nouveaux risques tels que les violences physiques et les abus sexuels. En outre, durant ces périodes de crise, une grande partie des ménages finissent par être dirigés par des femmes qui sont chargées de tâches supplémentaires en raison du recrutement de leurs maris et de leurs fils par l'armée, de leur disparition, de leur invalidité ou de leur mort. En cas de crise humanitaire, il y a un risque que la nourriture ne parviennent pas, dans sa totalité, aux ménages bénéficiaires si celle-ci est distribuée aux chefs de la communauté qui peuvent la distribuer en fonction de considérations politiques ou sociales. C'est le cas lorsque la nourriture est distribuée aux maris dans les familles polygames, bien qu'il y ait différentes catégories de ménages composés d'une femme et de ses parents mineurs ou plus âgés. Cependant, les situations de crise ont offerts des opportunités de changements qui se sont montrées plus avantageuses lors de la mise en œuvre de nouveaux moyens d'améliorer l'accès des femmes à la nourriture et son contrôle, tels que la carte de ration alimentaire au nom des femmes.*



Agriculteurs faisant la queue pour obtenir des semences gratuites à la suite d'une guerre civile. (G. Diana, 1994)

## Dégradation environnementale

**La dégradation environnementale est un phénomène mondial.** Cependant, ses effets sont plus ressentis parmi les catégories les plus pauvres de la population rurale. La pauvreté rurale et la dégradation de l'environnement sont mutuellement renforcés quand la survie des populations est en jeu; ils sont de plus en plus obligés de cultiver des terres marginales, de réduire la durée de mise en jachère, de couper les forêts qui sont vitales, de surcharger les prairies déjà fragilisées et de surexploiter les rivières, les lacs et les eaux côtières (Jazairy *et al.*, 1992).

En Afrique on observe les formes de dégradations environnementales suivantes:

- La dégradation des forêts, y compris la déforestation qui est le problème environnemental le plus répandu dans les régions africaines en raison de la collecte du bois de chauffe et du besoin de terre pour les cultures itinérantes. Dans certaines régions le surpâturage en est la cause principale.
- La dégradation des terres est directement provoquée par une utilisation impropre de la terre et des procédures de gestion de la terre inappropriées telles que la culture de pentes raides sans mesures de protection des sols. Ces pentes sont cultivées parce que les personnes pauvres et sans terre ont besoin de nourriture. Il arrive que les agriculteurs qui n'ont pas de sécurité foncière ne prennent pas de mesures de conservation des sols.
- La dégradation des sols à cause de la pollution et de la surexploitation se traduit par une perte de fertilité des sols. En Afrique, l'érosion des sols provoquée par les pluies, les ruisseaux ou les inondations est largement répandue et peut porter à la désertification dans les zones arides. L'érosion par les vents est répandue dans la plupart des régions sahéliennes telles que le Tchad.
- La dégradation chimique des ressources agricoles cause également des préoccupations croissantes et
- La pollution de l'eau est souvent causée par les systèmes industriels d'évacuation des déchets et des produits chimiques agricoles (Marcoux, 1998).

La croissance du secteur agricole ne peut pas être envisagée tant que des pratiques agricoles environnementales saines ne sont pas introduites sur une grande échelle. La dégradation environnementale a un impact direct sur la sécurité alimentaire des ménages. Là où la fertilité des sols a été réduite de façon radicale en raison d'une surexploitation, de la déforestation, du surpâturage et de l'érosion, ou là où il y a un manque de bois de chauffe et d'eau potable, les femmes sont contraintes de changer les pratiques et les critères alimentaires de leur famille. Cela peut quelquefois signifier la réduction du nombre de repas chauds par jour, ce qui abaisse sensiblement le niveau de nutrition de la famille dans la mesure où certains aliments ne peuvent pas être digérés sans une cuisson prolongée (Roca, 1994).

Le Tchad, le Rwanda et la Sierra Leone ont insisté sur la nécessité de reconnaître le rôle des femmes dans l'amélioration de l'environnement et la planification de la famille dans la mesure où ces deux aspects sont étroitement liés. Ils ont signalé que des mesures doivent être prises pour sensibiliser les femmes et encourager leur participation dans les activités liées à l'environnement et au développement. Les programmes répertoriés comprennent l'alphabétisation et des activités dans le secteur environnemental comme la sensibilisation des femmes à la gestion rationnelle de l'eau fraîche, des sources d'énergie, des pratiques hygiéniques et une installation sanitaire correcte (Marcoux, 1998).

Des relations complexes existent entre la pauvreté, la dégradation de la terre, un taux de naissances élevé et l'insécurité alimentaire. Les petits agriculteurs pauvres qui labourent la terre dans les régions les plus écologiquement fragiles, ont besoin de maintenir un taux de naissances élevé pour satisfaire la demande de main d'oeuvre pour la subsistance sur des terres aux rendements en diminution constante. Plus d'enfants se traduit par une plus forte demande en matière de nourriture, ce qui occasionne une pression supplémentaire sur les sols qui, à leur tour, nécessitent une main d'oeuvre croissante. Etant donné que les agricultrices n'ont pas accès aux techniques modernes ou à des techniques agricoles saines du point de vue de l'environnement, un travail de plus en plus intensif, et qui prend beaucoup de temps, est nécessaire sur leurs parcelles, qui sont souvent plus sensibles à l'érosion, à la désertification et aux autres formes de dégradation des terres (Roca, 1994).

Assurer le droit d'accès aux terres et aux pâturages est fondamental afin d'inciter des investissements pour la conservation. Les femmes n'ont pas un accès sûr à la propriété de la terre et le bail réduit les probabilités d'adopter des pratiques agricoles durables du point de vue de l'environnement si des financements ou un apport de travail supplémentaires sont requis. En outre, un droit au bail précaire restreint l'accès des femmes au crédit, qui pourrait être utilisé pour réhabiliter les sols érodés ou pour mettre en oeuvre des technologies facilitant le travail. D'un autre côté, l'augmentation de la productivité se traduit par une réduction des besoins en main d'oeuvre qui tient compte d'une baisse du taux des naissances, influencée de façon positive par une situation de sécurité alimentaire.

Le défi est l'intensification durable de la production agricole pour améliorer les moyens d'existence tout en sauvegardant les écosystèmes, les bassins versants et la biodiversité. C'est dans ce but que les technologies doivent être encouragées ce qui réduirait la dégradation environnementale liée à l'agriculture dans les ménages vulnérables et dont l'alimentation est à risque. En outre, il est nécessaire d'affronter les risques de la biodiversité liés aux échanges d'intrants et de marchandises afin de développer le commerce international. (FAO, 2001b). Il est clair que l'amélioration de la production des récoltes au vingt-et-unième siècle requiert une association de la conservation environnementale et une productivité accrue (Thomson, 2001).



## L'environnement politique et les obligations

**A moins que les gouvernements accordent partout une plus grande priorité** aux problèmes de nourriture et de sécurité alimentaire, la misère humaine et les pertes économiques incarnées par la sécurité alimentaire et la malnutrition se poursuivront à tous les niveaux. Le cycle de la complaisance des preneurs de décisions doit être brisé afin d'atteindre l'objectif de réduire le nombre des victimes de la sécurité alimentaire d'ici 2015, comme convenu entre 180 pays au Sommet mondial de l'alimentation en 1996.

Les occasions et les défis sont considérables pour l'Afrique. Des occasions peuvent être créées par le biais du développement et des ressources humaines et naturelles africaines, par la consolidation de la démocratie et de l'engagement vers l'indépendance qui se reflète dans un Nouveau partenariat pour le développement de l'Afrique (NEPAD) (ONU, 2002b). Une gestion améliorée au niveau



Femmes  
rurales allant  
au travail dans  
les champs.  
(G. Diana, 1997)

national a un impact significatif sur la réduction de la faim et elle représente la plus grande priorité dans les régions en développement où la faim n'est pas encore sous contrôle. En Afrique sub-saharienne le nombre de personnes souffrant de faim augmente chaque année. Bien que l'amélioration générale du gouvernement soit nécessaire, ce n'est pas une réponse efficace aux problèmes spécifiques de la malnutrition humaine. En raison des faibles liens que les pays africains ont avec l'économie mondiale, une gestion internationale des marchés mondiaux et des investissements est peu susceptible d'avoir un impact majeur sur la faim dans le pays (Paarlberg, 2002).

Entre 1971 et 1991, les dépenses publiques pour la recherche agricole et le développement en Afrique ont augmenté de façon infime par rapport à l'accroissement dans les autres régions du monde en voie de développement. En renforçant les investissements dans la recherche agricole publique par le biais d'aides des gouvernements nationaux en fournissant une technologie améliorée aux communautés agricoles rurales peut avoir des conséquences sur l'amélioration de la productivité du travail et des revenus agricoles comme en témoignent les histoires de réussite des pays asiatiques (Paarlberg, 2002).

Des questions politiques sur la parité hommes-femmes et des mesures de discrimination positives en ce qui concerne les femmes ont été affrontées dans les médias mondiaux et nationaux à la suite de leur approbation dans la Quatrième conférence mondiale sur les femmes, qui s'est tenue à Béijing en 1995. Des organisations telles que les Nations Unies, la FAO ont travaillé pour affronter les problèmes des femmes rurales et contribués à améliorer les politiques pour refléter les inégalités en matière de parité hommes-femmes. Ceci a été accompli par le biais de réunions telles que la Conférence mondiale sur la réforme agraire et le développement rural (1979), l'adoption en 1993 de la Déclaration de Vienne et du Programme for Action, la Conférence mondiale des droits de l'homme et la Conférence internationale sur la population et le développement (1992), et le World Summit for Social Development (1994), et le Summit for Economic Advancement of Rural Women du FIDA (1991).

L'exploitation des plans d'action provenant des politiques institutionnelles de même que le suivi des engagements en ce qui concerne les instruments internationaux assureront que ces politiques atteignent leur but.

## Changements dans l'environnement politique

**Des programmes ont été lancés pour réduire le nombre** de personnes souffrant de faim: le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire (SPFS) qui, au départ, ciblait les pays à faible revenus et déficitaires en nourriture (LIFDC), mais qui a été adopté par d'autres pays en développement. En septembre 2000 au Sommet du millénaire, les Nations Unies ont adopté une série de 8 objectifs du millénaire pour le développement (OMD); l'un des objectifs est de réduire de moitié le nombre des personnes souffrant de faim entre 1990 et 2015. Le SPFS a convaincu les pays donateurs et les gouvernements des pays en développement de l'importance de concentrer leurs efforts en faveur des petits agriculteurs. Ces organisations ont reconnu le rôle des petits agriculteurs dans la production agricole, la sécurité alimentaire, la réduction de la pauvreté et l'utilisation durable de ressources naturelles (FAO, 2003).

Par le passé, les programmes visant les femmes en tant que bénéficiaires se sont concentrés sur leur rôle de reproduction et sur l'économie du ménage. Il y a eu de petits projets dispersés ou des projets « spécifiques pour les femmes » ou des composantes de projets se concentrant sur le rôle de production des femmes en agriculture, mais celles-ci sont restées à l'écart de la planification agricole nationale et des politiques. Plus récemment, des organisations internationales et des gouvernements nationaux ont commencé à favoriser la prise de conscience des problèmes des femmes, y compris ceux des femmes rurales et à encourager la recherche sur leur rôle agricoles et leurs autres rôles. Ces organisations ont joué



le rôle de défenseurs pour les changements dans les politiques nationales et la législation qui a modifié les droits des femmes à la terre, l'héritage, les conditions de l'emploi et le taux des salaires (FAO, 1996).

Dans de nombreux pays, la constitution affirme l'égalité devant la loi comme l'un des fondements du système légal. Des conventions internationales telles que la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes (CEDEF), le Programme d'action pour la quatrième conférence sur les femmes à Beijing en 1995, le suivi de la Session spéciale de l'Assemblée générale de (Beijing + 5) Session extraordinaire de l'assemblée générale (Beijing +5), et les références spécifiques aux femmes dans les Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement, ont joué un rôle important en ce qui concerne la promotion des droits légaux des femmes et en aidant les groupes non gouvernementaux et les groupes de défense des pays à responsabiliser leurs gouvernements nationaux. Cependant si les femmes sont pauvres et sans instruction, elles risquent de méconnaître les dispositifs légaux (ONU, 2002c; Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick, 2001).

Les associations nationales de femmes représentent un moyen important pour assurer que les besoins et les contraintes des femmes sont inclus dans les agendas politiques nationaux (FAO, 1996). Dans de nombreux pays africains les ministères de la parité hommes-femmes, des droits des femmes, des questions relatives aux droits des femmes doivent être renforcés ou mis en valeur pour affronter directement et encourager à prendre en main les problèmes qui concernent les femmes en particulier. L'impact direct de ces programmes de développement sur les femmes rurales est souvent négligeable en raison des préjugés urbains, qui se nichent fréquemment au sein des ministères sociaux tels que les ministères de la santé et de l'éducation et de leur manque d'influence au sein des ministères techniques. En outre, elles sont souvent isolées des ministères de la planification ce qui a pour effet qu'on ne prête aucune attention adéquate à leurs besoins en matière de développement, de plans et de stratégies nationales (FAO, 1996). Le manque de coordination parmi les différentes associations porte à la répétition inutile d'efforts et à une efficacité réduite. Par ailleurs, les femmes manquent d'appui financiers ainsi que d'autres appuis que peuvent fournir le gouvernement et les principaux ministères.

Une recherche participative a été effectuée dans de nombreux pays africains afin de faire le diagnostique de l'état des femmes rurales, d'identifier leurs contraintes et d'évaluer leurs besoins. L'analyse des questions de parité hommes-femmes dans les programmes de formation a été entreprise par les gouvernements officiels et les agents de vulgarisation et des unités sur l'intégration des femmes dans le développement (WID) ont été créées par les ministères de l'agriculture. Des hommes et des femmes agents de vulgarisation ont été formés aux techniques de développement, au développement participatif, à l'analyse des questions de parité hommes-femmes et la sécurité alimentaire des ménages

de façon à ce qu'ils puissent fournir des services de soutien aux femmes rurales (FAO, 1996). Pour encourager le développement agricole durable, le développement rural et la sécurité alimentaire pour tous, la FAO a planifié d'aller plus loin dans sa mission afin de s'assurer que les femmes, aussi bien que les hommes, aient le soutien et l'accès aux ressources dont ils ont besoin pour parvenir à des moyens d'existence durables et puissent accéder à une meilleure qualité de vie (FAO, 1997).

La FAO, le FIDA ainsi que d'autres organisations ont adopté le Gender and Development approach en 1992, afin d'examiner les rôles assignés à chaque sexe et les rapports entre hommes et femmes plutôt que celui des femmes toutes seules. Pour le FIDA, l'intégration des considérations parité hommes-femmes au niveau du projet signifie que l'on s'assure que les rôles spécifiques, les besoins et les contraintes des femmes et des hommes sont pris en compte à tous les niveaux du plan et à sa mise en œuvre. Seize des dix-sept projets de l'IFAD concernant les femmes uniquement se trouvent dans des pays où les règles socioculturelles limitent l'interaction entre les hommes et les femmes et donc l'inconvénient d'élaborer des activités séparées était pleinement reconnu. (FIDA, 2000).

## Soutien politique approprié en faveur des femmes rurales

**Un environnement politique approprié est nécessaire pour améliorer** le niveau de vie des femmes rurales et accroître la sécurité alimentaire. Différentes organisations ont fait des efforts pour améliorer la politique environnementale et encourager le bien-être des femmes rurales lequel a besoin d'être renforcé et mis en application. Le Service hommes-femmes et développement de la FAO, par exemple, (puis les Femmes dans le service de développement) ont organisé un atelier en 1997 pour évaluer l'expérience dans le domaine de la participation rurale sensible aux sexospécificités. L'objectif était de donner une voix aux femmes dans les cultures où les hommes dominent les prises de décisions, la formation du personnel de vulgarisation pour travailler avec les ruraux et établir des mécanismes pour la planification des processus liés aux besoins élémentaires. Des projets pilotes ont été lancés en Namibie, au Népal et en Tanzanie avec l'aide du Gouvernement norvégien, pour améliorer les canaux de communication entre les agriculteurs hommes et femmes, le personnel de vulgarisation, les décideurs politiques en utilisant des approches participatives et des processus consultatifs (FAO, 1998). Néanmoins, il existe toujours différents aspects de discrimination et d'inégalités en ce qui concerne l'accès des femmes aux ressources agricoles productives et aux services et leur participation à la planification et aux prises de décisions.

Le fondateur du Forum pour les femmes dans la démocratie en Ouganda (FOWODE) a dit:

*“Quand les femmes possèdent et contrôlent la terre, il y a plus de nourriture dans chaque ménage et plus de récoltes pour l'exportation dans la mesure où elles effectuent la plus grande partie du travail agricole. Elles seront protégées de toutes formes d'expulsion quand elles seront veuves ou divorceront. Le système actuel introduit une discrimination contre les femmes, ce qui viole les dispositions d'égalité de notre constitution”* (Women's Action, 2000).

Selon Crowley (2001), l'amélioration des droits des femmes à la terre doit devenir une priorité politique et une possibilité légale de même qu'une viabilité administrative, une légitimité morale acceptable du point de vue social.

Reconnue pour la première fois en 1995 à Beijing, l'intégration des considérations parité hommes-femmes est désormais une stratégie mondialement acceptée pour encourager l'égalité entre les sexes. Pour cela il faut s'assurer que le souci d'équité entre les sexes et l'attention aux objectifs d'égalité entre les sexes jouent un rôle essentiel pour toutes les activités, à tous les niveaux (politique, développement, recherche, recommandation et dialogue, législation, attribution des ressources, planification, mise en œuvre et suivi des programmes). L'intégration des considérations parité hommes-femmes nécessite qu'un effort soit fait afin d'élargir la participation équitable des femmes à tous les niveaux de prise de décisions. L'intégration des considérations parité hommes-femmes soutient fermement la responsabilisation des femmes, y compris les efforts visant à faire prendre conscience, la mise en confiance, le développement de choix possibles et un accès accru et un contrôle sur les ressources et les actions (ONU, 2000).

La requête concernant les informations sur la parité hommes-femmes est en augmentation et cette demande provient de différents utilisateurs de banques de données y compris des analystes politiques, des chercheurs, des universitaires, des planificateurs ruraux et des hommes et femmes d'affaires (Akello, 1999). Les données ventilées par sexes sont essentielles si l'on veut donner des conseils politiques appropriés. (FAO, 2000a).

### *Planification et prise de décisions*

En matière de pouvoir politique, la parité comme elle se traduit dans sa représentation dans les parlements est toujours loin de la réalité. Aucun pays n'a atteint la parité et seulement 13 pays ont atteint ou dépassé les 30 pour cent réclamés par le Conseil économique et social en 1990 (ONU, 2002b; PNUD 2003). Dans les pays africains, seuls le Mozambique et l'Afrique du sud ont atteint les 30 pour

cent de sièges occupés par des femmes au parlement, suivi par les Seychelles (29 pour cent), la Namibie et le Rwanda (26 pour cent chacun) (PNUD 2003).

Une étude dans le district de Lira en Ouganda a révélé que bien qu'il existe des occasions pour les femmes de participer à la direction locale, elles n'étaient pas bien préparées pour ces rôles en raison des limitations culturelles et sociales. Les femmes disent qu'elles manquent du soutien et du consentement des hommes pour participer aux décisions locales aussi bien au niveau du ménage que de la communauté. En conséquence, un programme de sensibilisation a été introduit pour encourager les rôles de dirigeants, ce qui a porté à une augmentation de la participation des femmes dans le processus de préparation de la constitution. (FAO, 2000).

En dépit des améliorations dans le capital humain féminin en Afrique sub-saharienne, leur niveau d'instruction reste bas. Un investissement dans l'instruction des femmes rurales les aiderait à prendre des positions de dirigeants dans leurs communautés.

### *Le rôle des ONG*

L'institut international de recherche sur les politiques alimentaires (IFPRI), la conférence Vision 2020 a révélé l'importance d'affronter de nouvelles perspectives sur la question de la sécurité alimentaire en entraînant différentes parties prenantes dans des dialogues sur les injustices sociales et les occasions de créer une association. (IFPRI, 2001). Les ONG jouent un rôle important dans le dialogue et en épaulant les gouvernements nationaux: elles sont complémentaires. Paarlberg (2002) a affirmé que dans le domaine de la réduction de la pauvreté rurale et de la sécurité alimentaire, les ONG ont travaillé au mieux quand elles agissaient en partenariat avec les gouvernements plutôt qu'en essayant de les remplacer. La participation des ONG peut aider les gouvernements à cibler les investissements publics en faveur des pauvres de façon plus efficace.



## Conclusions et leçons apprises

**L'Afrique sub-saharienne doit faire face** à une pauvreté et une malnutrition très répandues, des déficits alimentaires nationaux considérables et une forte dépendance en hausse continue des importations de nourriture et une aide libérale. (Hazell, 2001). Faire face aux futurs besoins en nourriture dépendra de plus en plus de la capacité et des ressources des femmes. Dans de nombreux pays en développement, les femmes sont responsables de la production de nourriture pour leur famille surtout en Afrique sub-saharienne. Les femmes transforment, achètent, préparent la nourriture et jouent un rôle important en matière de production agricole nationale, produisant à la fois la nourriture et les cultures commerciales et utilisant différentes stratégies de survie pour assurer la sécurité alimentaire du ménage et soulager la pauvreté rurale. Les femmes fournissent la majeure partie de la main d'oeuvre agricole, elles assument la procréation et les soins des enfants, s'occupent de la maison et se lancent dans des activités source de revenus pour améliorer le bien-être du ménage. En tant que traditionnelles garde-malades elles fournissent des soins aux personnes infectées par le HIV/SIDA réduisant ainsi le temps à investir dans les activités de production et les loisirs. Le nombre de femmes chef de ménage est en augmentation en raison de l'effondrement de la famille et de l'augmentation de la migration masculine vers les villes à la recherche d'un revenu.

Les femmes rurales ont un accès limité sur le contrôle des ressources agricoles productives et manquent d'une politique de soutien appropriée. Les mécanismes établis pour améliorer la productivité des femmes rurales manquent souvent d'un appui financier et de coordination avec les autres institutions et ministères. En raison d'un taux d'analphabétisme de plus en plus élevé parmi les femmes africaines, elles continuent à être mal informées de leurs droits et de toutes les possibilités d'assistances à disposition. En outre, les lois coutumières et les traditions entravent la mise en application de certaines lois et politiques. Une attention aux différences parité hommes-femmes en ce qui concerne les droits de propriété peuvent améliorer les résultats des politiques de gestion des ressources naturelles et des projets sur le plan de l'efficacité, de la durabilité environnementale, de la parité et de la responsabilisation des utilisateurs des ressources (IFPRI, 1997). Une différenciation fondée sur la discrimination de la distribution du travail et des ressources

doit être prise en considération si l'on doit développer des technologies, les cibler et les transmettre de façon appropriée (FAO, 2000a).

Les statistiques agricoles ventilées par sexe sont une condition fondamentale pour effectuer tout changement dans une politique en cours, pour la planification et l'activité de recherche et pour améliorer les capacités de planification dans le contexte de l'intégration des considérations parité hommes-femmes. Bien que les données disponibles montrent de toute évidence que les femmes fournissent la majeure partie de la nourriture dans la plupart des pays d'Afrique, il y a un vide significatif dans les données sur le rôle des femmes rurales, leurs activités agricoles et non agricoles et leurs besoins en ce qui concerne la production alimentaire et sa transformation tandis que les analyses qualitatives sont abondantes on manque d'informations quantitatives.

Les femmes apportent la plus grande contribution à la production agricole et jouent un rôle fondamental en assurant la sécurité alimentaire et un niveau nutritionnel adéquat à tous les membres du ménage. Cependant, elles pourraient faire plus en matière de production alimentaire, approvisionnement et exploitation si les chercheurs agricoles, les spécialistes en équipements, le personnel spécialisé dans la vulgarisation et les décideurs politiques fournissaient un environnement permettant de remplir ces rôles efficacement. (Brown *et al.*, 1995).

Indépendamment du fait que les projets doivent concentrer toute leur attention sur le rôle des femmes rurales en matière de production agricole, des rapports montrent que les projets ciblant les femmes rurales ont plus de chance de réussir s'ils essaient d'affronter à la fois les rôles et les besoins en production et en reproduction (FAO, 1996). Alors qu'il existe une recherche sur la sécurité alimentaire et sur la santé reproductive en tant que questions séparées, les chercheurs ont dédié peu d'attention aux relations entre les deux. Le double rôle des femmes en tant que productrices et préparatrices de nourriture de même que la mise au monde des enfants et l'éducation des enfants, insiste sur la nécessité d'une meilleure compréhension des relations entre la santé reproductive et la sécurité alimentaire des ménages (ONU, 2000a).

Pour soutenir les femmes rurales qui travaillent en Afrique dans leur combat pour l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire, l'attention devrait se concentrer sur les femmes chefs de ménage et les politiques développées pour améliorer leur niveau de vie. Cela aurait le double effet bénéfique de réduire les inégalités entre les sexes sur le plan de l'amélioration des revenus et la réduction de la pauvreté de même que sur l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire (Ellis, 2000). L'élaboration de politiques pourrait assurer la promotion de la productivité agricole mais en même temps viser à protéger le bien-être des petits producteurs de nourriture.



## Recommandations

**En étudiant le rôle des femmes en matière de sécurité alimentaire** dans les pays africains, on a remarqué que les gouvernements nationaux et les autres organisations sont de plus en plus conscients de la situation critique des femmes rurales. Les recommandations suivantes servent cependant à encourager le bien-être des femmes, à augmenter la productivité agricole et le niveau des revenus, ce qui pourrait se traduire par une plus grande disponibilité de la nourriture à tous les niveaux.

### **Améliorer l'accès aux ressources agricoles productives naturelles et aux services**

- Les femmes rurales ont besoin d'un accès stable à la **terre**. Cela doit s'effectuer par delà les systèmes coutumiers qui règlent l'accès fondé sur les membres d'un même lignage, d'une communauté ou du ménage. Les mesures à prendre pour améliorer le contrôle de femmes sur la terre sont des stratégies importantes qui porteront à la responsabilisation des femmes rurales et amélioreront leur participation dans les processus de prises de décisions concernant la production alimentaire et leur accès au crédit. Dans ce but, des titres conjoints de propriété de la terre doivent être encouragés pour améliorer les droits des femmes rurales à revendiquer un juste partage de la terre obtenue par le biais de leur époux en cas de décès de celui-ci, de divorce ou de séparation. Des politiques couvrant les lois civiles et coutumières devraient être mises sur pied afin de protéger le droit de la femme à la terre quand les maris ont plusieurs épouses. Ces droits devraient être protégés en cas de décès, de divorce ou de séparation.
- Les efforts devraient être concentrés sur une meilleure **représentation** des femmes rurales dans les **programmes de gestion des ressources en eau et dans les forums de prises de décisions**. Comme l'a souligné Rathgeber (2003), des efforts ciblés devraient identifier les femmes leaders potentiels dans les communautés rurales. On pourrait leur dispenser une formation et des savoir-faire pour faciliter leur partenariat actif dans les associations d'usagers de l'eau.
- Les besoins des femmes rurales devraient être inclus dans des cours de **vulgarisation agricole**. Le personnel de la formation à la vulgarisation agricole devrait inclure dans la formation des techniques de communication avec les agricultrices. Pour cela, on a besoin de plus de personnel féminin pour la vulgarisation, spécialement dans les communautés où les normes culturelles ne permettent pas d'interaction entre les hommes et les femmes. De courts programmes de formation devraient être réalisés pour le personnel spécialisé dans le domaine de la vulgarisation en place afin de renforcer les capacités de travailler avec les agricultrices. Cette formation devrait

améliorer leurs connaissances en matière de méthodes de vulgarisation agricole et, les stagiaires devraient comprendre les activités des femmes en ce qui concerne la production et la reproduction pour parvenir à une approche plus holistique. En outre, les agricultrices peuvent être formées pour devenir des agents de vulgarisation en utilisant des méthodes telles que les champs de l'agricultrice comme école. Une telle approche peut être d'un bon rapport coût-performance et améliorer la confiance des autres agriculteurs dans la source et les informations reçues.

- Les goulets d'étranglement devraient être supprimés pour faciliter l'accès des femmes **au crédit**. Cela comprend des garanties secondaires sous des formes non accessibles aux femmes, par exemple, les terres ne devraient pas être utilisées comme garanties pour obtenir des crédits pour les agricultrices. L'exigence actuelle que le mari co-signe la demande de crédit de son épouse devrait être revue afin de permettre aux femmes un accès direct aux facilités de crédits. Les femmes seront alors capables de s'engager dans un achat convenable d'intrants agricoles, facilitant ainsi leur participation dans des activités sources de revenus.
- Pour les femmes rurales les **occasions d'instruction formelle et informelle** requièrent l'attention des gouvernements nationaux, des institutions internationales et des organisations non gouvernementales. Le niveau d'instruction des femmes rurales en Afrique est fondé sur des bases discriminatoires et limite leur participation à la planification et aux prises de décisions. Celui-ci a contribué à l'ignorance de leurs droits et aux dispositions de la loi. Des efforts devraient être faits pour améliorer l'inscription des filles à l'école et des systèmes d'instruction informelle devraient être mis en place afin d'accroître les connaissances des femmes et des hommes ruraux en ce qui concerne les dispositions de loi.
- Les hommes et les femmes ruraux doivent être impliqués dans le développement des technologies agricoles. En donnant un rôle aux femmes rurales dans la production de nourriture, leur exclusion de la répartition des priorités en ce qui concerne les nouvelles générations de technologies ont des répercussions sur la sécurité alimentaire au niveau du ménage et au niveau national. En outre, l'intégration des opinions des femmes et des hommes ruraux dans le développement des nouvelles technologies, favorisera l'adoption de celles-ci. En outre, les répercussions des nouvelles technologies différenciées par sexe devraient être analysées pour permettre d'éviter tout impact négatif sur les femmes rurales; souvent la direction du ménage est assurée par un homme et les besoins des femmes chefs de ménage ne sont pas pris en considération.
- Les technologies qui facilitent le travail sont fondamentales pour les femmes. La pénurie de main d'œuvre est en augmentation en raison de l'épidémie de VIH/SIDA, de l'augmentation de la





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migration masculine vers les zones urbaines et de la combinaison des ménages et des tâches agricoles et non agricoles. Les technologies qui facilitent le travail permettront aux femmes d'explorer des possibilités de sources de revenus leur permettant d'améliorer la nourriture du ménage et la sécurité nutritionnelle. Ces nouvelles technologies devraient être développées sur la base d'une bonne compréhension des revenus, des ressources et du temps de contrainte que les femmes rurales africaines doivent affronter. Elles devraient viser à améliorer l'accès des femmes rurales à l'eau et réduire le temps passé à aller chercher de l'eau. Le coût-efficacité des sources d'énergie doit être développé pour la transformation des produits agricoles et la cuisine ce qui réduira le temps passer à collecter du bois de chauffe et en même temps protégera l'environnement.

- Des technologies appropriées pour les femmes et les hommes ruraux pauvres devraient porter à des programmes associant les idées modernes et traditionnelles. Elles devraient être faciles à utiliser et mise à jour pour éviter d'emprisonner les ruraux pauvres dans un piège technologique à bas niveau (Jazairy *et al.*, 1992).
- Les femmes rurales dans les pays déchirés par la guerre tels que la Sierra Leone et le Liberia, ont besoin de **kits de base** sous forme d'outils agricoles, d'engrais et de semis. Avec leur rôle essentiel en matière de production alimentaire et les difficultés auxquelles ils doivent faire face en remplaçant les outils agricoles et les effets personnels, les gouvernements, les ONG et les organisations internationales ont besoin de relancer les mécanismes de survie et de les aider à reprendre là où ils se sont arrêtés.

## Des politiques appropriées et un soutien institutionnel

- Une bonne coordination est nécessaire entre les différents organismes et les institutions impliquées dans la promotion de l'amélioration de la productivité parmi les femmes rurales. L'amélioration de la coordination et le partage de l'information parmi les différentes organisation assurera une meilleure efficacité et réduira la répétition des efforts.
- Les décideurs politiques et les agences gouvernementales ont besoin d'avoir des informations sur les femmes rurales. Il est nécessaire de mieux connaître les agriculteurs (hommes et femmes) leurs besoins et leurs priorités pour tenir compte de l'élaboration d'interventions efficaces en matière de développement durable. Akello (1999) a déclaré que ces informations pourraient être obtenues à partir d'études sur l'environnement socioculturel des communautés rurales et des tendances nationales et mondiales fondamentales.

- En outre, des données sur les différentes activités agricoles telles que la population économiquement active et les possibilités de travail agricole doivent être utiles et sûres. Des variables pertinentes devraient être intégrées autant que possible dans des exercices sur les données existantes, elles devraient être soutenues par une formation sur la collecte, le traitement et la dissémination de données agricoles ventilées par sexe. Des enquêtes sur l'utilisation du temps peuvent fournir des éléments sur les activités et les contraintes de production des femmes. Les personnes chargées d'effectuer les collectes de données devraient s'adresser directement aux femmes quand elles cherchent des informations au sujet de leurs activités.
- Un meilleur accès des femmes à l'information et aux technologies de communication favorisera leurs capacités de prises de décision pour augmenter la productivité agricole et une commercialisation efficace des produits agricoles. Le soutien d'une radio rurale au moment où les femmes sont susceptibles de l'écouter sera bénéfique.
- La responsabilisation des femmes rurales leur permettra de tenir le rôle de dirigeants dans leurs communautés. Bien que les femmes jouent un rôle essentiel dans le développement économique de nombreux pays africains, leur représentation à des fonctions de leadership est limitée. On devrait les encourager à participer à la planification et aux programmes de prises de décisions du début jusqu'à la fin et elles devraient être correctement représentées lors des forums nationaux. La participation aux arènes politiques permet aux femmes d'être entendues aux plus hauts niveaux de l'élaboration politique. La mise en place de groupes de femmes rurales et le renforcement de ceux existants favoriseront ce processus.
- En Afrique, les planificateurs doivent s'assurer que les hommes et les femmes ont voix au chapitre des exercices de planification et que leurs besoins sont identifiés (FAO, 2000b). Les qualifications des femmes doivent être mises en valeur pour assurer leur participation active dans le processus de développement. Cela se fera par le biais d'approches différentes et en faisant prendre conscience aux hommes et aux femmes. (Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick, 2001). Des efforts devraient être entrepris pour inclure les femmes rurales dans les programmes de soutien et pour s'assurer qu'elles ont des droits dans les prises de décisions sur les capitaux, les ressources productives, et les services au sein de leurs communautés.
- Une prise de conscience générale progressive et une sensibilisation sont nécessaires pour la participation économique des hommes et des femmes dans le domaine agricole et le rôle fondamental que les femmes jouent en assurant la sécurité alimentaire du ménage et aux niveaux



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nationaux, pour renforcer l'identification des besoins d'une politique appropriée et d'un soutien institutionnel. Les institutions sociales et culturelles doivent créer un environnement dans lequel les femmes peuvent réaliser pleinement leur potentiel. Cela nécessitera une approche multisectorielle et pluridisciplinaire pour la responsabilisation des femmes.

### Le rôle du gouvernement

- Dans les pays africains les gouvernements devraient travailler pour assurer la paix et réduire les conflits ce qui est fondamental pour l'agriculture et le développement rural. Les conflits et les troubles politiques portent souvent à la destruction des infrastructures publiques, au déplacement des populations et à l'interruption des activités agricoles productives. Des bâtiments pour la paix ainsi que l'amélioration des infrastructures rurales mettront en valeur les capacités des femmes et des hommes ruraux à produire et à vendre leur production alimentaire.
- Les mécanismes des gouvernements sensibles aux sexes devraient être renforcés pour affronter les problèmes des femmes rurales. Les dispositions légales en ce qui concerne les droits des femmes doivent être appliquées. En outre, les femmes rurales doivent être informées de leurs droits et des mécanismes existants pour leur mise en application et leur assistance.
- Des réformes de la terre sont nécessaires pour améliorer l'accès des femmes rurales à la terre. Assurer des droits à la terre améliore les capacités d'emprunts, permettant aux femmes d'acheter des intrants agricoles et d'adopter des techniques agricoles améliorées pour augmenter la productivité agricole. Les réformes de la terre amélioreront la position sociale des femmes rurales et leur permettront de participer à la planification et à tous les forums sur la politique; les réformes de la terre sont fondamentales pour soulager la pauvreté.
- Des programmes d'infrastructures rurales sensibles aux sexes sont nécessaires : de bonnes routes, des moyens de transport et des systèmes de communication devraient être améliorés. Des infrastructures sociales sont également nécessaires, elles doivent comprendre un accès facilité aux soins, des centres d'affaires, d'informations et des centres culturels (sur les droits légaux, les informations sur les marchés). En outre, des centres d'assistance contribueraient à la responsabilisation des femmes en leur offrant un meilleur accès aux informations sur les marchés, les soins de santé, l'instruction et la gestion des réseaux comme l'ont indiqué Quisumbing et Meinzen-Dick (2001). La fourniture d'équipements de santé dans les zones rurales permettra de parvenir aux Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement en réduisant la mortalité infantile et en améliorant la santé maternelle.

### Activités à l'extérieur de l'exploitation et activités non agricoles

- Des activités à l'extérieur de l'exploitation et des activités non agricoles devraient être envisagées et encouragées en ce qui concerne les femmes rurales car leurs capacités de se procurer des revenus supplémentaires aura des effets positifs sur la consommation des ménages. Comme on l'a remarqué ci-dessus, les femmes dépensent souvent leurs revenus supplémentaires en faveur de leurs enfants et de la nourriture du ménage ainsi que de la sécurité alimentaire. On pourrait dispenser une formation technique et dans le domaine de la gestion et des petites indemnités, des schémas de crédit et des kits de base pourraient être disponibles pour les femmes qui démontrent des qualités d'entrepreneur afin de les aider à mettre sur pied leur propre affaire.

### Recommandations supplémentaires

- Etant donné les effets négatifs des programmes d'adaptation structurelle et les réformes politiques des marchés sur les femmes rurales en Afrique, une évaluation complète est nécessaire pour évaluer les effets de la parité hommes-femmes sur les initiatives actuelles PPTE, sur les stratégies de réduction de la pauvreté nationale et sur les autres politiques. Ces programmes nécessitent (i) une analyse complète, sensible à la problématique hommes-femmes des effets sur les producteurs agricoles ruraux programmes (ii) un ordre du jour pour assurer la sécurité alimentaire au niveau du ménage et au niveau national (iii) et une confirmation de leurs effets positifs sur les femmes rurales.
- On a fait beaucoup pour tenir l'épidémie de VIH/SIDA sous contrôle dans certains pays d'Afrique. Cependant les projections indiquent que la maladie continuera à faire planer une sérieuse menace sur la production agricole et la sécurité alimentaire jusqu'en 2010. Un ordre du jour politiquement solide est nécessaire pour limiter à la fois la diffusion de la maladie et d'augmenter les chances de survie des personnes atteintes par celle-ci. Les actions doivent être sensibles aux sexospécificités car les femmes sont les plus vulnérables et les plus touchées. L'approche politique doit être multisectoriel et sa mise en oeuvre devrait être fondée sur la communauté.
- Les femmes rurales devraient être encouragées à participer aux associations professionnelles et aux organisations de façon à dépasser l'isolement individuel, celles-ci devraient être articulées collectivement et exprimer clairement leurs besoins. Cela augmentera le capital social des femmes et améliorera leur statut social et leur permettra d'accéder aux ressources et augmentera leurs possibilités d'obtenir des crédits.



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The background of the cover is a stylized illustration in shades of orange and red. It depicts several figures in rural agricultural settings. In the foreground, a woman is shown from the back, wearing a headscarf and carrying a large basket on her back. To her right, another woman is seated, also wearing a headscarf. In the background, a smaller figure is visible, and there are abstract shapes representing agricultural structures or plants. The overall style is graphic and expressive.

# Abriendo brechas:

perspectivas actuales y futuras para las mujeres rurales en la agricultura



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**Abriendo brechas:**  
perspectivas actuales y futuras para  
las mujeres rurales en la agricultura

ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS  
PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACIÓN  
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## Reconocimientos

Son varios los autores que han contribuido en la preparación de este informe. Conforme al orden en que aparecen, ellos son: Dr. Ivy Drafor para el capítulo sobre África, elaborado en un trabajo anterior efectuado por la Sra. Diana Tempelman. Dr. Revathi Balakrishnan para Asia y el Pacífico, con contribuciones de la Dra. Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop para las Islas del Pacífico. La investigación y el apoyo editorial para este capítulo fueron proporcionados por la Sra. Marlynne Hopper y la Sra. Panpat Plungricharoensuk. La Sra. Sabine de Rooij y la Sra. Bettina Bock de la Universidad de Wageningen prepararon el capítulo sobre Europa. América Latina y el Caribe es un trabajo de la Sra. Soledad Parada, y el capítulo sobre la región del Cercano Oriente es de la Sra. Nadia Ramses Farah.

La Dra. Yianna Lambrou fue responsable de la coordinación total de esta publicación. La coordinación regional y el aporte sustancial fueron otorgados por la Dra. Fatiha Bou-Salah, Dra. Revathi Balakrishnan, Sra. Marcela Ballara, Sra. Diana Tempelman y Dra. Alenka Verbole.

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# Prólogo

En el mundo en desarrollo, las mujeres rurales se encuentran entre los grupos más pobres y en desventaja. Ellas enfrentan una discriminación basada en el género, que se refleja en las desigualdades de sus derechos y en su acceso a los recursos – especialmente a la tierra, la tecnología y los servicios sociales, como así también a los servicios sanitarios y la educación. En la vida pública sus voces son pocas veces escuchadas y como mujeres están escasamente representadas en la toma de decisiones en todos los niveles. La comunidad internacional ha reconocido que el desarrollo rural acelerado y la igualdad de género son esenciales para lograr los objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio. La Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación y otras agencias están trabajando para llegar a la igualdad de género y el fortalecimiento de la mujer como instrumento esencial para la reducción de la pobreza rural, y como tema fundamental para los derechos humanos. (Hartl, 2004)

Durante varias décadas, la situación de las mujeres rurales ha figurado en la agenda de conferencias internacionales y se ha destacado en la Declaración y Plataforma de Acción de Beijing, adoptada en la Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer (1995), y en el Plan de Acción de la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación (1996). La Convención sobre la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer (CEFD), adoptada en 1979 por la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas, está considerada como una declaración internacional de los derechos de las mujeres. Este documento cubre exhaustivamente los derechos políticos y civiles, como también los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales. Es el único acuerdo de derechos humanos que se refiere específicamente a las mujeres rurales. En su artículo 14, la Convención reafirma el derecho de las mujeres rurales al acceso a los recursos y servicios sociales básicos. También hace hincapié en el hecho de que las mujeres deben participar en la elaboración e implementación de los planes de desarrollo y en todas las actividades comunitarias. Esto



## Prólogo

incluye la participación activa de las mujeres en el desarrollo de políticas y toma de decisiones que las conciernen. (Hartl, 2004)

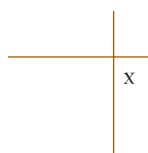
Esta recopilación de artículos pone en resalto la importancia de las mujeres para el logro de la seguridad alimentaria en cinco regiones: África, Asia y el Pacífico, Europa, América Latina y el Caribe y el Cercano Oriente. Para entender la relación entre género, pobreza rural e inseguridad alimentaria, se hizo un análisis en cada región sobre los roles específicos y las responsabilidades de las mujeres rurales con respecto a la seguridad alimentaria: como productoras (de productos agrícolas o asalariadas) y consumidoras responsables de adquirir alimentos para el hogar, a través de la producción o el comercio.

La Declaración de Roma de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación de 1996 reconoció como esencial el derecho al desarrollo y la participación total y equitativa de hombres y mujeres para alcanzar la seguridad alimentaria sostenible para todos. Igualmente, el título de esta publicación *Abriendo Brechas: Perspectivas Actuales y Futuras para las Mujeres Rurales en la Agricultura*, indica que se reconoce la importancia de la relación entre mujeres rurales y seguridad alimentaria.

Estudios recientes señalan que las mujeres rurales llevan la mayor parte de la carga y costo social de la globalización. Esto se debe a que en décadas recientes, los cambios económicos importantes han pesado enormemente en la vida tradicional del campo, y las mujeres rurales han asumido otras responsabilidades productivas y han realizado actividades diferentes en el contexto de cambio de la globalización. Sin embargo, el objetivo es el mismo: cambiar el status de las mujeres el cual hasta ahora no reconoce su trabajo en la producción, el comercio, la familia, y las actividades sociales y políticas y reconocer que la mujer desempeña un rol participativo que genera ingresos, que busca la igualdad de oportunidades con los varones.

Desde sus hogares, las mujeres rurales han ideado muchas estrategias para salir adelante y alimentar a sus familias. Cultivan huertas familiares, recolectan y procesan alimentos, migran a las ciudades para realizar trabajos asalariados y envían remesas a sus hogares. Esta recopilación de estudios indica que incluso sus empleos son precarios, mal pagados y con limitadas oportunidades de capacitación. Además, sus trabajos a menudo no son reconocidos en las estadísticas oficiales.

La presente publicación demuestra que la agricultura, las políticas y los programas de desarrollo agrícola y rural necesitan cambios que reflejen la actual situación y la mejoren. No debería haber restricciones basadas en género, tales como la desigualdad en el acceso a los servicios públicos, a la asistencia técnica, a la tenencia de la tierra, al crédito y a los programas de capacitación o la enorme contradicción al otorgar tierra - trabajada por mujeres- a los varones.



Tratando de afrontar los problemas mencionados anteriormente, la FAO, por medio del Plan de Acción sobre Género y Desarrollo (2002-2007), intenta incluir las cuestiones de género en las políticas de desarrollo rural, en los programas y proyectos de desarrollo rural y agrícola. La FAO también promueve la integración del Análisis Socio Económico y de Género (ASEG), aumentando el número de proyectos, especialmente de aquellos del Programa Especial para la Seguridad Alimentaria (PESA). La seguridad alimentaria y el logro de los objetivos prioritarios de la región requieren la participación activa de la mujer rural en la toma de decisiones.

La pobreza puede ser reducida, primero, a través de la educación de las mujeres rurales, y luego gracias a un mayor acceso a todos los recursos productivos (tierra, crédito, extensión) y al conocimiento. En todas las regiones existe un nexo entre la educación de las mujeres rurales y el mejoramiento de la seguridad alimentaria. A este respecto, las organizaciones que representan a las mujeres rurales necesitan fortalecerse para poder negociar mejor y para dar a las mujeres una voz que les permita dedicarse a trabajar para un futuro mejor en cada región.

Es obvio que las mujeres rurales juegan un rol fundamental en la agricultura y la seguridad alimentaria en el mundo. Es evidente el aumento de su participación tanto en la agricultura de subsistencia como en el comercio agrícola, y el empobrecimiento de varios lugares del mundo, que han sido marginalizados por la feroz competencia económica internacional y rigurosos ajustes estructurales, habrían producido consecuencias más severas si las mujeres no hubiesen contribuido con sus esfuerzos de producción en la agricultura y en la economía informal.

Consideramos esta publicación como una contribución importante para el debate sobre uno de los desafíos clave que enfrenta el desarrollo agrícola y rural. Parte de este desafío es asegurar que las mujeres, que juegan un papel decisivo en el aumento de la seguridad alimentaria en el mundo, puedan ser plenamente recompensadas y reconocidas por sus esfuerzos.

## Referencias

Hartl, M. 2004. *Rural Women's access to land and property in selected countries*, FAO.

# Prefacio

Después de veinte y cinco años de la adopción de la Convención de CEFDM, una década después de la Declaración y Plataforma de Acción de Beijing (1995) y del Plan de Acción de la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación (1996), ¿en qué medida podemos decir que se ha mejorado la condición de las mujeres rurales para alcanzar la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres? Esta publicación ofrece una comprensión más profunda sobre este tema.

La igualdad de género es una meta universal, presente en muchos instrumentos internacionales tales como la Carta de Naciones Unidas, la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos (1948), la Convención sobre la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer (CEFDM, 1979). La Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer en 1995 adoptó la Declaración de Beijing y la Plataforma de Acción, la cual fijó objetivos y acciones estratégicas en muchas áreas. La Declaración del Milenio adoptada por los Jefes de Estado en la Cumbre del Milenio 2000 reafirmó la necesidad de mitigar la pobreza y lograr la igualdad de género como metas de desarrollo.

La agricultura es un elemento importante en la economía de muchos países en desarrollo ya que contribuye en forma significativa a la producción doméstica y al empleo. También es un medio clave para asegurar la seguridad alimentaria, la preocupación principal en muchos países en desarrollo y especialmente en países menos desarrollados (LDCs). Los hombres y las mujeres no están igualmente representados en los distintos sectores agrícolas, tales como la ganadería y la exportación de granos. Dado que estos sectores están afectados de manera diferente por la liberalización del comercio, las consecuencias para las mujeres y los hombres no son las mismas. Las brechas existentes en materia de género pueden aumentar o disminuir. Por otro lado, dado que las mujeres y los hombres a menudo tienen diferente educación, ingresos, tipo de vida y habilidades, sus capacidades para responder a la política de cambios también varía. Por este motivo es importante analizar estos impactos potenciales (UNCTAD, 2004).

La escasez de estadísticas en la agricultura relativas a las cuestiones de género continúa siendo uno de los principales obstáculos para realizar un análisis minucioso sobre la dimensión de género





## Prefacio

en la agricultura. En las últimas décadas, se ha producido una abundante literatura sobre el género y los impactos económicos causados por la desigualdad entre hombres y mujeres en la agricultura. Investigadores, agencias de las Naciones Unidas y numerosas ONG han llevado a cabo diversos estudios sobre las implicaciones de la equidad de género en la economía y especialmente en la agricultura. Sin embargo, se ha generado solamente información empírica limitada, sobre la participación de las mujeres en la expansión del comercio y el impacto del libre comercio agrícola en la función de las mujeres en la agricultura y en el sector rural, y sobre la repercusión del bienestar de las mujeres y la seguridad alimentaria (UNCTAD, 2004); (SOFA, 2002).

Tal como lo establece un estudio reciente sobre comercio y género, el cual señala que: “a pesar de las múltiples iniciativas que se tomaron durante los últimos 30 años para el fortalecimiento de las mujeres en la esfera económica, social y política, la participación de las mismas es hasta hoy muy limitada. En la agricultura, la participación de las mujeres en la toma de decisiones es aún más restringida lo que se debe a la falta de reconocimiento de su papel como agricultora por derecho propio. Tanto la organización de agricultores como las instituciones de planificación agrícola tienen muy pocas mujeres en niveles de decisión y generalmente las políticas agrícolas no contemplan las inquietudes de las mujeres y los factores relativos a la mujer asociados con la agricultura y el desarrollo rural. La falta de consideraciones de género en las políticas agrícolas internas – las cuales también dejan de lado los factores asociados a la reproducción social y la contribución de las mujeres a la economía rural – también se refleja en la formulación de políticas de comercio y medidas relativas internas.” (UNCTAD, 2004)

Las redes tradicionales de seguridad social en las áreas rurales tienden a desaparecer con la integración de la agricultura de los países en desarrollo en la economía global. Esto aumenta la vulnerabilidad de las familias rurales y en particular la de las mujeres, debido a la carga adicional que ellas enfrentan como consecuencia de la migración de sus parientes varones que resulta del declino de las actividades rurales y la tendencia gradual hacia una agricultura orientada a la exportación.

Se han observado las similitudes y las diferencias de los problemas que enfrentan varones y mujeres entre las regiones y al interior de las mismas. A pesar de las diferencias regionales, existen ciertas cuestiones que ayudan a entender por qué los problemas de seguridad alimentaria deben ser analizados con una perspectiva de género.

Una perspectiva de género requiere que miremos el acceso diferencial de las mujeres rurales a los recursos productivos: la tierra, el agua, el crédito y el conocimiento. Este análisis, tal como se mencionó anteriormente, nos muestra que las mujeres enfrentan el aumento de la inseguridad alimentaria y una menor productividad agrícola simultáneamente a la falta de medios participativos

en los procesos decisorios que afectan sus vidas. Dado que las mujeres, en comparación con los varones, viven en condiciones políticas y socio-económicas desiguales, este volumen da un enfoque de las condiciones de las mujeres y su situación, con el propósito de distinguir el rol que ellas tienen en la agricultura con una perspectiva presente y futura.

Los desafíos más importantes que enfrentan las mujeres rurales hoy día son la reducción de la pobreza, el logro de la seguridad alimentaria y el aumento de la productividad rural. Para alcanzar estas metas es necesario mejorar el acceso de las mujeres a la propiedad y a los recursos materiales, humanos y aquellos relativos al conocimiento.

En todas las regiones analizadas, se ha llegado a la conclusión que:

- ▶ El trabajo de las mujeres rurales es económicamente invisible porque sus actividades productivas están ligadas a sus responsabilidades domésticas. Más aún, aunque ellas estén vinculadas a actividades agrícolas orientadas hacia el mercado, tienden a ser principalmente responsables de la agricultura de subsistencia. Las definiciones comunes de fuerza de trabajo, convalidada por percepciones o imágenes culturales, define a las “amas de casa” como económicamente inactivas, lo que más adelante estará confirmado por el hecho de que la producción pasa al consumo del hogar y no llega a la economía de mercado monetario, y generalmente no aparece en los sistemas de cuentas nacionales. La desvalorización del trabajo y de la producción femenina distorsiona la información relacionada con el sector agrícola y socava la calidad de la formulación de políticas y la planificación de programas de desarrollo para la seguridad alimentaria.
- ▶ En todas las regiones las mujeres rurales se encuentran sistemáticamente en desventaja en cuanto al acceso a los bienes productivos. Existe además una marcada brecha de género en la propiedad de la tierra. La tierra es el bien más importante en cualquier sistema agrícola y las mujeres poseen formalmente una fracción limitada de la tierra agrícola en el mundo. En muchas regiones inclusive las mujeres rurales son mayoría en el trabajo agrícola como trabajadoras asalariadas o usuarias de la tierra. En el último caso, la imposibilidad formal de ser propietarias dificulta la inversión, impidiendo que las mujeres puedan usar la tierra como garantía para acceder al crédito de mercado.
- ▶ En el caso de las mujeres rurales se destacan los temas de capital social, así como las redes y organizaciones afines que a menudo fracasan en vincular a las productoras con los mercados.



## Prefacio

Los recursos y servicios ofrecidos por las cooperativas, asociaciones para la utilización del agua y asociaciones de crédito, etc. frecuentemente pueden ser accesibles a través de un hombre que actúe como intermediario. De este modo, se podrían desestimar las necesidades específicas de las mujeres en relación con sus roles productivos.

- ▶ Las actividades agrícolas de las mujeres se caracterizan por el bajo nivel de mecanización y por el uso limitado de la tecnología debido al escaso capital financiero con que cuentan para invertir. Ésto se traduce en baja productividad, bajos ingresos, y menores medios para expandir estas mismas actividades agrícolas. Estas condiciones excluyen a las mujeres agrícolas de los grupos que discuten proyectos de desarrollo, los cuales tienden a apoyar actividades agrícolas orientadas hacia el mercado económicamente rentable y en gran escala.
- ▶ Las brechas en los niveles de educación entre mujeres y hombres rurales, mujeres y hombres urbanos, continúan debilitando las capacidades de las mujeres y sus oportunidades. Las diferencias se deben a la escasa prioridad que se le da al capital humano de las mujeres en la asignación de recursos, desde el nivel familiar hasta las políticas nacionales. Éste fenómeno continúa, a pesar de que se haya demostrado en varias oportunidades, que la educación de las niñas se traduce en forma efectiva y rápida en mejores niveles de consumo alimentario, en mejores condiciones de estado de salud y estado nutricional para las generaciones actuales y futuras. Más aún, el aumento de los niveles de educación aumenta la capacidad productiva de las mujeres, con repercusiones directas tanto en el hogar como en la seguridad alimentaria a nivel nacional.
- ▶ La repercusión del VIH/SIDA en los hogares rurales muestra de manera evidente el rol clave que juegan las mujeres para garantizar la seguridad alimentaria, dado que la carga del VIH/SIDA recae sobre ellas en forma desproporcionada. El trabajo sin remuneración de las mujeres de todas las edades se multiplica si éstas cuidan enfermos o moribundos o si llegan huérfanos a la familia. Los recursos financieros se agotan a causa de las prestaciones médicas y funerarias y aumentan los gastos al absorber miembros familiares adicionales. Los ingresos del hogar disminuyen notablemente, al igual que la producción, con la enfermedad y muerte de adultos a temprana edad. Con la muerte del esposo, las leyes de herencia y las costumbres pueden conducir a las esposas sobrevivientes a la miseria. Las estrategias inmediatas de supervivencia implican un saldo negativo en términos de capital humano, que se traspaasa a la generación siguiente, como también es el caso de los niños que trabajan dentro y fuera del hogar, en detrimento de su educación.

Estas cuestiones explican por qué las mujeres rurales son especialmente vulnerables a la inseguridad alimentaria. El valor de los recursos manejados por mujeres; su tiempo, su trabajo, los activos productivos, las redes, son significativamente menores a la de los hombres. En comparación con los hombres, las mujeres están en desventaja cuando proporcionan la alimentación cotidiana y cuando deben hacer frente a las carestías y a los cambios de alimentación para su familia, ya que ellas controlan los bienes que tienen un valor menor en el mercado, con los que cuentan como apoyo. Los trabajadores rurales sin tierras son reconocidos como pertenecientes al grupo más vulnerable de la población rural, y las mujeres en esta categoría lo son aún más.

Si existiera igualdad de acceso, para las mujeres y los hombres a todos los recursos necesarios para la producción agrícola, ¿qué repercusión tendría esto sobre la seguridad alimentaria? Ninguna región ilustra estas posibilidades. Sin embargo, el análisis de la situación de las mujeres rurales como productoras y consumidoras, en lo que respecta a la seguridad alimentaria, demuestra que, dadas las mismas condiciones que los hombres, las mujeres son capaces de lograr una mayor productividad. La educación de las mujeres tiene un efecto directo sobre la reducción de la malnutrición infantil, porque la contribución de las mujeres en los gastos del hogar es mayor que la de los hombres.

La homogeneidad de intereses en la población rural está relacionada con algunos factores tales como la etnia, casta, clase edad, y la forma en que éstos conducen a la disparidad en el acceso a los beneficios. En los hogares rurales, las diferencias de acceso a los recursos, debidas al género, permanecen ocultas. Mientras estos diferentes factores, algunas veces conflictivos, no sean tomados en cuenta, fracasarán las políticas y los programas relacionados con el nexo entre la pobreza rural y el desarrollo agrícola.

Los datos específicos de género sobre el trabajo remunerado y no remunerado de las mujeres es la base para formular políticas apropiadas de seguridad alimentaria a nivel familiar. El análisis de las repercusiones de las políticas de comercio sobre las mujeres rurales es importante debido al efecto directo sobre la seguridad alimentaria causado por las políticas económicas que afectan a los derechos de las mujeres.

Las políticas agrícolas y la asignación del presupuesto correspondiente deben ser revisadas desde una perspectiva de género. Es necesario tener en cuenta que el análisis de género de los marcos legales nacionales, tanto formal como consuetudinario, es esencial para establecer una base legal para que las mujeres legítimamente reclamen sus bienes, a fin de aumentar la capacidad de las mismas como productoras y reducir su vulnerabilidad como consumidoras.

Numerosas conferencias internacionales han tratado la importancia de las mujeres en la



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seguridad alimentaria y los obstáculos relacionados con el género que deben ser removidos. Así mismo, algunos mecanismos internacionales controlan la realización de los compromisos asumidos. Sin embargo, mientras no se encare el tema de la integración de las unidades de producción a pequeña escala en la economía globalizada, las mujeres rurales continuarán siendo marginadas. Es necesaria una política de desarrollo participativo para el sector agrícola que tome en cuenta los derechos básicos. Al mismo tiempo, debe demostrarse la importancia comercial de esto, para que las necesidades de los pequeños agricultores marginalizados sean incluidas en las políticas económicas.

Las agencias de desarrollo deben tener en cuenta las cuestiones de género en sus programas y proyectos y deben favorecer la promoción de la seguridad alimentaria del hogar para asegurar que el futuro de las mujeres rurales sea tan brillante como el de los hombres y el del resto de la sociedad donde ellos viven, trabajan y contribuyen.

## Referencias

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**UNCTAD. 2004.** *Trade and gender, challenges and opportunities.*

Chapter on Agriculture.

# Abreviaciones y acrónimos

ADB	Banco Asiático de Desarrollo
AID	Instituto de Agricultura Dominicano
APEC	Cooperación Económica en Asia y el Pacífico
AWU	Unidad de Trabajo Anual
BOL	Bolivia
EEB	Encefalopatía espongiforme bovina
BSF	Fondo de supervivencia belga
PAC	Política agrícola común
CEDAW	Comité para la Eliminación de la Discriminación contra la Mujer
CEI	Comunidad de Estados Independientes
CLOC	Alianza Latinoamericana de organizaciones agrícolas campesinas
CONAMU	Consejo Nacional de las Mujeres (Ecuador)
COS	Costa Rica
DPRK	República Democrática del Pueblo de Corea
EAP	Población económicamente activa
CEPE	Comisión Económica de las Naciones Unidas para Europa
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe
ECOSOC	Consejo Económico y Social de las Naciones Unidas
ENDS	Servicio de Datos sobre Medio Ambiente
ENIGFAM	Encuesta de Ingresos y Gastos Familiares
CESPAO	Comisión Económica y Social para el Asia Occidental
ESU	Unidad de Normas Europeas
UE	Unión Europea
FAMA	Compañía internacional de producción de medios y publicaciones
FAO	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación
FAO-RAP	Oficina Regional de la FAO para el Asia y el Pacífico
FINCA	Fundación de Ayuda para la Comunidad Internacional
FISE	Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia (Ecuador)
SICIAV	Sistemas de información y cartografía sobre la inseguridad alimentaria y la vulnerabilidad
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Chile)
FOWODE	Foro para las Mujeres en Democracia
FTPP	Programa bosques, árboles y comunidades rurales
FWCW	Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer
GAD	Género y Desarrollo
GATT	Acuerdo general sobre aranceles aduaneros y comercio



## Abreviaciones y acrónimos

GCC	Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo
GCP	Programa Global de Competitividad
GDI	Índice de Desarrollo Relativo a Género
PIB	Producto Interno Bruto
GPI	Índice de Igualdad de Género
GTZ	Sociedad Alemana de Cooperación Técnica
HDR	Informe de Desarrollo Humano
PPME	Países pobres muy endeudados
TIC	Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación
FIDA	Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola
IIPA	Instituto Internacional de Investigaciones sobre Políticas Alimentarias
IHF	Federación Internacional de Helsinki para los Derechos Humanos
IICA	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (Argentina)
OIT	Organización Internacional del Trabajo
INCRA	Instituto Nacional de Asentamientos de Tierra y Reforma (Brasil)
INEC	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (Ecuador)
INTA	Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (Argentina)
IPGRI	Instituto Internacional de Recursos Fitogenéticos
ISPA	Instrumento para Políticas Estructurales de Pre Acceso
Km	Kilómetro
PMA	Países menos adelantados
LEADER	Una de nuestras iniciativas financiadas por la Unión Europea para el desarrollo rural.
LIFDCs	Países de bajos ingresos con déficit de alimentos
m	Metro
MAD	Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo, Brasil
ODM	Objetivos de desarrollo del milenio
MENA	Medio Oriente y África del Norte
MMR	Tasa de mortalidad materna
MOALR	Ministerio de Agricultura y de reclamo de tierras
NEPAD	Nueva alianza para el desarrollo de África
NERC	Consejo de Investigación del Medio Ambiente Nacional
OECD	Organización para la Cooperación Económica y el Desarrollo
PHARE	El programa Phare es uno de los tres instrumentos de pre-acceso financiados por la Unión Europea para ayudar a los países solicitantes de Europa Central y del Este en sus preparativos para unirse a la Unión Europea.
PIN	Índice de producción per capita

POA	Plan de Acción
PRA	Evaluación de participación rápida (Participatory rapid assessment)
PRC	República Popular China
PRIE	El Proyecto Regional de Indicadores Educativos
PROMUDEH	Ministerio de Promoción de la Mujer y del Desarrollo Humano, Perú
RNE	Oficinal Regional para el Cercano Oriente
SAP	Programa de ajuste estructural
SAPARD	Programa especial de adhesión para la agricultura y el desarrollo local
SEAGA (ASEG)	Programa de análisis socioeconómico y de género
SEARPI	Programa de protección de montero contra las inundaciones del Río Pirai, Bolivia
SERNAM	Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, Chile
SNA	Sistema de contabilidad nacional
SOFA	El estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación
SPFS	Programa Especial para la Seguridad Alimentaria (FAO)
TCP (PCT)	Programa de cooperación técnica
UK	Reino Unido
UN	Naciones Unidas
UNAIDS (ONUSIDA)	Programa conjunto de las Naciones Unidas sobre el VIH/SIDA
UNCED (CNUMAD)	Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Medio Ambiente y el Desarrollo
UNDP (PNUD)	Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo
UNESCO	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura
WB	Banco Mundial
WFP (PMA)	Programa Mundial de Alimentos
WHO (OMS)	Organización Mundial de la Salud
WID (MED)	La mujer en el desarrollo
Dunum	Equivalente a 1000 m <sup>2</sup>
Feddan	0.42 hectárea





# América Latina y el Caribe



# América Latina y el Caribe<sup>11</sup>

## Una contribución esencial

**El Relator de Naciones Unidas** se refiere a la “discriminación contra la mujer y su impacto en la toma de conciencia del derecho a la alimentación”<sup>12</sup>, como una de las más serias limitaciones para la seguridad alimentaria. Por muchas razones este planteamiento puede considerarse factible para América Latina y el Caribe, donde las mujeres rurales juegan un rol fundamental en la seguridad alimentaria en cada país, a pesar de las dificultades que encuentran en muchas áreas. Aunque su trabajo permanece invisible, las mujeres constituyen casi la mitad de la población rural y proveen una contribución esencial a la producción de alimentos.

Tal como lo muestra la tabla 4.1., las mujeres pobres son las responsables de las actividades reproductivas y de alimentar a sus familias de la mejor forma posible. Ellas han sido afectadas por la liberalización y globalización del comercio; por el acelerado crecimiento y por la marginalización del conocimiento y como ciudadanas, las mujeres están incapacitadas para ejercer completamente sus derechos o desarrollar su potencial humano. Más aún, la mujer rural de América Latina y el Caribe vive en un continente heterogéneo con variados niveles de desarrollo económico y rural y en una diversidad de culturas y razas donde las condiciones agro-ecológicas, las dimensiones territoriales y las distancias a los centros urbanos varía dentro y entre los países.

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<sup>11</sup>Este capítulo está basado en el trabajo de Soledad Parada, Consultora de FAO.

<sup>12</sup>Vigésima Séptima Sesión de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, informe del Relator Especial sobre Derecho a la Alimentación, presentada por el Sr. Jean Seigler, de acuerdo con la Resolución 2000/10 de la Comisión sobre Derechos Humanos.

Tabla 4.1  
Pobreza y desnutrición en América Latina y el Caribe

	Déficit de alimentos por país (2000)	Proporción viviendo por debajo 1 \$ al día (1990-2001)	Proporción de desnutrición en la población total		
			1979-1981	1990-1992	1998-2000
AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE			13	13	11
NORTE AMÉRICA			4	5	5
México[3]		8.0	4	5	5
AMÉRICA CENTRAL			20	17	20
Costa Rica[3]		6.9	8	6	5
El Salvador[3]			17	12	14
Guatemala[4]	Si	16.0	18	14	25
Honduras[4]	Si	23.8	31	23	21
Nicaragua[4]	Si	82.3	26	30	29
Panamá[3]		7.6	21	19	18
EL CARIBE			20	26	25
Cuba[3]	Si		4	5	13
República Dominicana[4]		<2	25	27	26
Haití[5]	Si		48	64	50
Jamaica[3]		<2	10	14	9
Trinidad y Tobago[3]		12.4	6	13	12
SUDAMÉRICA			14	14	10
Argentina[1]			-	-	-
Bolivia[4]	Si	14.4	26	26	23
Brazil[3]		9.9	15	13	10
Chile[2]		<2	7	8	4
Colombia[3]		14.4	22	17	13
Ecuador[3]	Yes	20.2	11	8	5
Guyana[3]		<2	13	19	14
Paraguay[3]		19.5	13	18	14
Perú[3]		15.5	28	40	11
Suriname[3]			18	12	11
Uruguay[2]		<2	3	6	3
Venezuela[4]		15.0	4	11	21

NOTAS: la población desnutrida en 1998-2000:

[1] <2.5 por ciento de desnutridos

[2] 2.5-4 por ciento de desnutridos

[3] 5-19 por ciento de desnutridos

[4] 20-34 por ciento de desnutridos

[5] 35 por ciento de desnutridos

Una línea de pobreza es equivalente a:

a) US\$ 1.08 (1993 PPP US\$); b) Los datos se refieren a la información más reciente disponible durante el período especificado.

Fuente: FAO, El Estado Mundial de Inseguridad Alimentaria en el Mundo 2002.

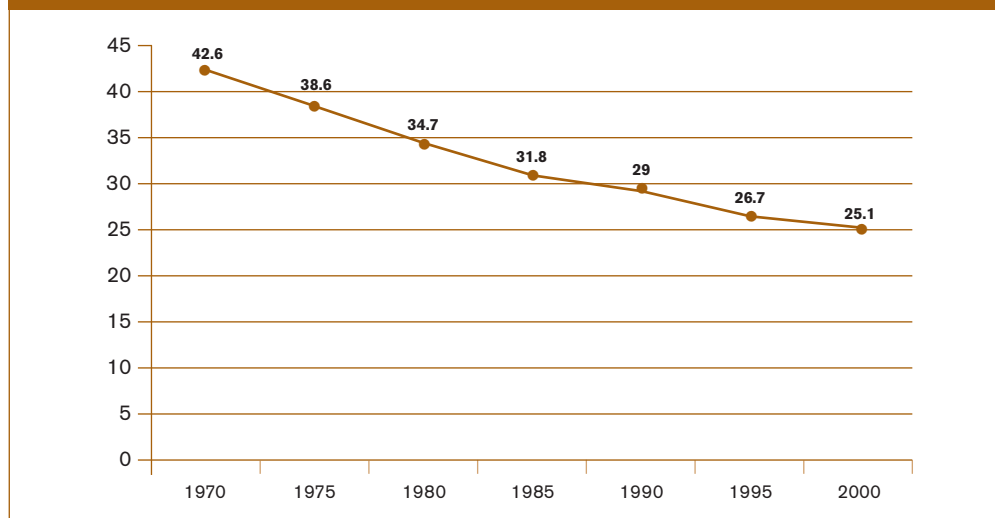
Abriendo brechas:

perspectivas actuales y futuras para las mujeres rurales en la agricultura

## Disminución de la población rural

La proporción de la población rural en esta región ha disminuído en las últimas décadas, y hoy cerca de un cuarto de la población total vive en el área rural. Esta proporción necesita incrementarse a fin de incluir a la población urbana de los centros municipales, en áreas predominantemente rurales, cuya actividad está relacionada a la agricultura y que están en las mismas condiciones y tienen los mismos problemas que el resto de la población rural.

Figura 4.1  
Porcentaje de la población rural en América Latina y el Caribe 1970–2000



Fuente: CELADE. Boletín demográfico No. 63, 1999.

La disminución en la población rural está fuertemente influenciada por la migración, debido a la inseguridad en las condiciones de vida en el sector rural y que afecta a hombres, mujeres y jóvenes. Existe variación entre países en Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haití y Honduras más de un 50 por ciento de la población vive en áreas rurales, y en Argentina, Chile, Uruguay y Venezuela, menos de un 20 por ciento.

### *Migración*

La migración continúa en la región y participan principalmente mujeres como parte de una estrategia de subsistencia familiar y mujeres jóvenes como una estrategia

personal. La migración rural-urbana y la emigración a otros países son estrategias familiares utilizadas para salir de la pobreza rural en América Latina. La migración es un medio para lograr una mejor educación para los jóvenes rurales de ambos sexos, quienes están imposibilitados para encontrar una apertura para su progreso personal.

### *La población indígena*

La amplia composición étnica de la población no siempre se considera cuando se planifican políticas para superar la pobreza y fomentar la seguridad alimentaria. Unos 400 grupos étnicos viven en las áreas rurales y urbanas de América Latina y el Caribe, cada uno con su propia cultura, lenguaje, organización social, visión mundial, sistema económico y procedimientos productivos adaptados para este ecosistema. La población indígena es particularmente numerosa en Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, México y Perú y personas de descendencia africana y afro-latinoamericana y afro-caribeña constituyen cerca de un tercio de la población de la región, viviendo principalmente en Brasil, Colombia y Venezuela y en los países del Caribe.

### *Mujeres como jefas de la Unidad Familiar*

Varios estudios revelan un aumento en el número de mujeres rurales jefas de hogar, particularmente en América Central. Por ejemplo El Salvador, Honduras y Panamá han mostrado el aumento más alto, aunque las estadísticas subestiman el registro de mujeres como jefas de hogar ya que patrones culturales atribuyen al hombre como jefe de hogar. Esto se confirma por el hecho de que en los países que cuentan con esta información, es sistemáticamente mayor la proporción de hogares en los cuales la mujer es la principal proveedora de ingresos. En El Salvador esta proporción alcanzó hacia fines de la última década a un 38 por ciento de los hogares rurales.

Este hecho es importante debido a que la mayoría de los programas rurales y las políticas están dirigidas hacia hombres, mientras por otro lado existe evidencia que las mujeres son a menudo responsables de mantener a sus familias o son las proveedoras del principal ingreso.

## Pobreza rural

Todos los países en la región tienen un rasgo común a pesar de su gran diversidad y es que una vasta proporción de su población, especialmente rural, vive en pobreza. Como se señala en la Declaración de Roma sobre la Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial, “la pobreza es una causa importante de la inseguridad alimentaria, y el progreso sostenible en su erradicación es fundamental para mejorar el acceso a los alimentos.”

La declaración de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación (FAO), el Fondo Internacional para el Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA) y el Programa Mundial de Alimentos en la Conferencia sobre el Financiamiento para el Desarrollo en Monterrey en el 2002 aún sostienen que la verdad, "si no se aumentan los fondos destinados a combatir el hambre y la pobreza en el mundo, seguirán en pie los obstáculos capitales para el desarrollo humano y económico." (FAO/WFP/IFAD 2002).

### *Continúa la pobreza rural*

Hacia fines del año 2000, más del 60 por ciento de la población rural en la región estaba viviendo en la pobreza. De acuerdo con la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPALC), “en la región, la incidencia relativa de la pobreza rural sigue superando ampliamente a la urbana (54% y 30% de los hogares, respectivamente), pese

a lo cual en 1999 los pobres urbanos ascendían a cerca de 134 millones y los rurales a 77 millones, debido a la proporción significativamente más alta de población residente en las áreas urbanas. Esta situación contrasta con la de la pobreza extrema, ya que la población que vive en esa situación es levemente menor en el área urbana (43 millones), que en la rural (46 millones) lo que denota de paso la mayor severidad de la pobreza que prevalece en esta última”(CEPAL, 2001).

**Tabla 4.2**  
América Latina: nivel de pobreza en áreas rurales (a)

	Pobreza (b)		Indigencia (c)	
	Millones	Porcentaje	Millones	Porcentaje
1980	73.0	59.9	39.9	32.7
1990	78.5	65.4	48.4	40.4
1994	75.6	65.1	47.4	40.8
1997	78.2	63.0	46.6	37.6
1999	77.2	63.7	46.4	38.3

Fuente: CEPALC, Panorama Social de América Latina, 2000-2001. Santiago, 2001

a) Estimaciones para 19 países en la región.

b) Porcentaje de personas en unidades familiares con ingresos bajo la línea de pobreza.

Incluye unidades familiares bajo la línea de indigencia.

c) Porcentaje de personas en unidades familiares con ingresos bajo la línea de indigencia.

**Recuadro 4.1 MÉTODO UTILIZADO PARA LA MEDICIÓN DE LA POBREZA**

FUENTE:  
CEPAL, Panorama Social  
de América Latina y el  
Caribe 2000-2001.  
Santiago-Chile, 2001.

No existe una definición universal o método para definir la pobreza, su medición comprende dos etapas: (i) identificación de los pobres y (ii) inclusión de la pobreza dentro de una medición sintética. La primera etapa define un umbral, que se refiere a la línea de pobreza, la cual identifica la población cuyo ingreso per cápita es menor que el costo de un canasto de bienes para satisfacer sus necesidades básicas. Por su parte, la agregación se lleva a cabo seleccionando un indicador que considere los déficit de ingreso de las personas con relación al valor de la línea de pobreza.

Las estimaciones de la magnitud de la pobreza utilizadas por la CEPAL se realizan por medio del método del costo de las necesidades básicas, basado en el cálculo de líneas de pobreza. Estas líneas dan cuenta del ingreso mínimo necesario para que los miembros de un hogar puedan satisfacer sus necesidades esenciales. La línea de pobreza de cada país y zona geográfica se estima a partir del costo de una canasta básica de alimentos que cubre las necesidades nutricionales de la población, tomando en consideración sus hábitos de consumo, la disponibilidad efectiva de alimentos y sus precios relativos. Al valor de esta canasta se suma luego una estimación de los recursos requeridos por los hogares para satisfacer el conjunto de las necesidades básicas no alimentarias.

La línea de indigencia corresponde al costo de la canasta alimentaria, entendiéndose por indigentes (o extremadamente pobres) las personas que residen en hogares cuyos ingresos son tan bajos que, aunque se destinaran íntegramente a la compra de alimentos, no permitirían satisfacer adecuadamente las necesidades nutricionales de todos sus miembros. El valor de la línea de pobreza se obtiene multiplicando el valor de la línea de indigencia por un factor constante que da cuenta de los gastos básicos no alimentarios.

Respecto de las fuentes de información, los datos sobre el ingreso de las familias provienen de las encuestas de hogares realizadas por los respectivos países. Estos datos son corregidos tanto por la falta de respuesta a algunas preguntas sobre el valor de los ingresos –en el caso de los asalariados, trabajadores independientes y jubilados– como los probables sesgos por sub-declaración. Esto último se efectúa contrastando las partidas de ingreso de la encuesta con las provenientes de una estimación de la cuenta de ingresos y gastos de los hogares del Sistema de Cuentas Nacionales (SCN), elaborada para estos propósitos a partir de información oficial. El concepto de ingreso utilizado es el constituido por los ingresos del trabajo asalariado (monetarios y en especie), del trabajo independiente (incluidos el auto-suministro y el valor del consumo de productos producidos por el hogar), las rentas de la propiedad, las jubilaciones y pensiones y otras transferencias recibidas por los hogares. En la mayoría de los países, el ingreso de los hogares incluye, además, un valor o imputación por concepto de arriendo de la vivienda cuando ésta es habitada por sus propietarios.

Los porcentajes de hogares y de población pobre e indigente se calculan comparando el valor mensual per cápita de las respectivas líneas con el ingreso total de cada hogar, expresado también en términos per cápita. A su vez, los índices nacionales de pobreza e indigencia se calculan como un promedio ponderado de los índices correspondientes a cada área geográfica, por lo que no sólo dependen de la incidencia de la pobreza en cada una de ellas, sino también del porcentaje que éstas representan en la población total de cada país.

### *Diferencias entre los países*

Los niveles de pobreza e indigencia son diferentes según los países, pero ninguno ha sido capaz de eliminar la pobreza y la indigencia rural. Aunque la pobreza y la indigencia rural se han reducido en algunos países, los niveles son inaceptablemente altos. En los años 90 se lograron reducciones significativas de pobreza e indigencia en Brasil, Chile, Costa Rica, y Panamá. Aunque también se efectuaron reducciones en Guatemala, Honduras y Nicaragua, donde más de las tres cuartas partes de la población rural en esos países aún viven en condiciones de pobreza. En Colombia y El Salvador los niveles de pobreza rural se mantuvieron estables (en niveles elevados), pero en este último país aumentó la proporción de personas que vive en la indigencia. En otros países como Bolivia, México y Venezuela, la pobreza y la indigencia rural aumentaron.

### *Diferencias dentro de los países*

Los niveles de pobreza e indigencia difieren dentro y entre los países. El estudio de Larrea, *La Geografía de la Pobreza en El Ecuador*, citado por Cuvi (2001), presenta las peores condiciones en la región Amazónica: la falta de infraestructura que ha limitado el desarrollo y la productividad agrícola. Asimismo, la pobreza ha afectado con mayor fuerza las zonas rurales altas que a las zonas rurales costeras, especialmente la población indígena, debido a la escasez y erosión de la tierra, ausencia de riego, crédito y asistencia técnica y a un inadecuado servicio de salud y educación.

Los niveles más altos de pobreza en la región lo sufren las mujeres indígenas y la población afro-latina y afro-caribeña. Estas mujeres pertenecientes a esta población después de siglos de soportar una doble exclusión y subordinación, en función de su etnia y género, a principios de este nuevo milenio han tenido los peores indicadores económicos y sociales, con un reconocimiento cultural limitado y un acceso restringido en las instancias decisorias. (Hopenhayn Bello, 2001).

La pobreza afecta a muchos hogares rurales en América Latina debido a un ingreso insuficiente, la falta de acceso al saneamiento básico de agua y salud. La división urbana y rural se clarifica en la Tabla 4.3.



**Tabla 4.3**  
**Acceso a la salud y medidas sanitarias en algunos países**  
**que han sido seleccionados en América Latina y el Caribe**

Países	Sanamiento adecuado (1990-1997)a/		Agua potable (1995)b/		Servicios de salud (1985-1995)c/	
	Urbano	Rural	Urbano	Rural	Urbano	Rural
Bolivia	74	37	88	43	77	52
Brazil	80	30	80	28	n.a.	n.a.
Chile	90	99	47	n.a.	n.a.	
Colombia	97	56	90	32	n.a.	n.a.
Costa Rica	95	70	100	99	100	63
Ecuador	95	49	81	10	70	20
Guatemala	95	74	97	48	47	25
Honduras	n.a.	57	91	66	80	56
Nicaragua	34	35	93	28	100	60
Panamá	n.a.	n.a.	99	73	95	64
Paraguay	65	14	70	6	90	38
Perú	89	37	91	31	n.a.	n.a.
República Dominicana	76	83	88	55	84	67
Trinidad y Tobago	99	98	100	88	100	99
Venezuela	64	30	79	79	n.a.	n.a.

a/ UNICEF 1999. b/ Banco Mundial 1999 b. c/ UNICEF 1996.

Fuente: FIDA, Informe de Pobreza Rural 2001

# La situación de las mujeres y la seguridad alimentaria

## La feminización de la pobreza y estrategia de sobrevivencia de las mujeres rurales

**No existe información estadística desagregada por género** para diferenciar el ingreso de hombres y mujeres, debido a que en las encuestas de hogares se toma en cuenta el ingreso familiar total. Sin embargo algunas fuentes indican que la pobreza afecta principalmente a las mujeres. Un estudio de Köbrich y Dirven identifica la falta de acceso a los activos y la disparidad en el control de los mismos como factores críticos asociados a la pobreza rural en América Latina.



Mujer campesina sembrando en el Valle Mantaro, cerca de Huancayo.

(J. Van Acker, 1979)

Los autores indican que la disparidad en los activos y el control se basa en estudios que revelan que la pobreza impacta principalmente a las mujeres, a los jóvenes, a los ancianos y a las comunidades étnicas - grupos que tienen por tradición un limitado acceso para el control de la tierra y el capital. Otro factor es la calidad o productividad de estos activos que determinan en gran parte los beneficios que se obtienen de su uso. Estos activos han sido clasificados como capital natural (tierra, suelo, clima, agua, localización, etc.); capital físico (inversiones, infraestructura, tecnología); capital financiero (recursos propios, créditos, subsidios); capital humano (educación, salud) y capital social (confianza, cooperación, reciprocidad). El reconocimiento de estos activos implica que los programas deben considerar las características de cada uno si desea atacar la pobreza con una perspectiva integral. (Köbrich y Sirven, 2001)

A la luz de la extrema pobreza las mujeres rurales han desarrollado múltiples estrategias de subsistencia para alimentar a sus familias. A nivel micro de sus hogares, las mujeres han ido adquiriendo cada día más empleos asalariados. Existe una mayor cantidad de mujeres que se incorporan al empleo rural no agrícola que hombres, cultivan huertos familiares, recolectan y procesan alimentos y migran a áreas urbanas enviando remesas a sus hogares. Una de las estrategias

**Recuadro 4.2 ORGANIZACIONES CAMPESINAS Y SOBERANÍA ALIMENTARIA**

Las organizaciones campesinas actúan para afirmar el derecho de sus miembros en el ejercicio de una ciudadanía plena. A fines de 1990, se establecieron nuevas organizaciones y aquellas existentes se fortalecieron o se reestructuraron para tener una mayor independencia. Estas organizaciones han expresado su opinión sobre la seguridad alimentaria poniendo énfasis en el concepto de “soberanía alimentaria”, como lo ha reiterado la Alianza Latinoamericana de Organizaciones Campesinas en el Foro Mundial de Seguridad Alimentaria, llevado a cabo en La Habana, Cuba, 2001.

Los participantes declararon, “Nosotros definimos la soberanía alimentaria como el derecho de los pueblos a definir sus propias políticas y estrategias para la producción sustentable, distribución y consumo de alimentos para garantizar el derecho a alimentación para toda la población, con base en la pequeña y mediana producción, respetando sus propias culturas y la diversidad de modos campesinos, pesqueros e indígenas de producción agropecuaria, comercialización y manejo de áreas rurales en las cuales la mujer juega un papel importante.

## La participación de las mujeres rurales en actividades productivas

**Las agencias internacionales informan que las mujeres** asumen el mayor peso y el costo social de los principales cambios que ocurren inmediatamente después de la globalización de la economía. El empobrecimiento de varios lugares de la región, marginados debido a la intensa competencia económica internacional y a un ajuste estructural riguroso habría sido más severo, si las mujeres no hubiesen aumentado sus esfuerzos productivos en el sector agrícola y en el sector económico informal.

Durante los últimos 20 años la participación de la mujer en la fuerza de trabajo ha aumentado en todos los países de la región. Los cambios revelan una feminización en la fuerza de trabajo y en el empleo, aunque, tal como se informó más arriba, la calidad del empleo de la mujer es pobre. Se han desarrollado varias formas de ocupación: jornada diaria de tiempo parcial, trabajo ocasional (temporeras), trabajo subcontratado o trabajo doméstico – todos empleos precarios; con remuneración deficiente y con limitadas oportunidades de formación. Más aún, el trabajo de las mujeres escasamente está cubierto por derechos legales, acuerdos laborales colectivos o seguridad social.

A fin de ver la contribución de la mujer en la agricultura, debemos mirar más allá de las estadísticas oficiales e incluir a la mayoría de las mujeres, que las estadísticas de empleo clasifica dentro de la población económicamente inactiva.

## Las mujeres – productoras invisibles

**Todas las mujeres en edad de trabajar**, incluyendo las niñas y las ancianas, contribuyen a la actividad económica pero no son consideradas como la población económicamente activa (PEA). Esto incluye y se refiere a las mujeres que trabajan en el hogar, cuidando los huertos familiares para alimentar a sus familias y a aquellas mujeres cuyo trabajo no es considerado en las estadísticas oficiales. Estas mujeres están involucradas en algunas etapas del ciclo productivo y llevan a cabo tareas invisibles como lo son la recolección de alimentos, la cría y alimentación de animales menores en su hogar, la preparación de alimentos para otros trabajadores empleados en sus campos, la venta de productos agrícolas frente a sus casas.

### *Datos estadísticos sobre el PEA (Población Económicamente Activa) femenino en áreas rurales*

Los datos de 1999 indicaron que existen alrededor de 37 millones de mujeres en edad de trabajar en el área rural de América Latina; cerca de 13 millones son consideradas como parte del PEA, los 24 millones restantes conforman el grupo de trabajadoras invisibles. El subregistro de las actividades económicamente productivas de las mujeres rurales se origina a partir del criterio utilizado en las encuestas y de la propia percepción que tienen las mujeres de su propio trabajo. (FAO, basado en CEPAL, 2001)

### *Datos cualitativos sobre la labor de las mujeres en las áreas rurales*

Para entender la real contribución de las mujeres a la actividad productiva, la FAO desarrolló el Programa de Análisis Socio Económico y de Género (ASEG) para promover un criterio socio económico y de género en los proyectos de desarrollo, en políticas y programas y para facilitar acciones de desarrollo a fin de orientar las prioridades y necesidades en las diferencias y disparidades entre los sexos. El ASEG centra el análisis de género en los factores socio culturales, económicos, demográficos, políticos y factores de medio ambiente, su interacción y la influencia de éstos en los resultados de las iniciativas de desarrollo. El Programa de análisis opera en tres niveles: macro (programas y políticas), intermedio (instituciones) y campo (comunidades, hogares e individuos).<sup>13</sup>

Con el programa ASEG se han desarrollado actividades de análisis participativo con altos funcionarios de los ministerios de agricultura, con responsables de Proyectos de Cooperación Técnica de la FAO y con personal de campo de estas entidades. La metodología ASEG se ha aplicado a fin de identificar las

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<sup>13</sup>Más información sobre el Programa de Análisis Socio Económico y de Género (ASEG) de la FAO disponible en nuestro sitio:  
[http://www.fao.org/sd/SEAGA/index\\_es.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/SEAGA/index_es.htm)

actividades correspondientes a hombres y mujeres en las áreas rurales. En varios proyectos de la FAO se han incluido estudios para determinar los roles de género en actividades productivas, y éstos han confirmado que todas las mujeres en edad de trabajar contribuyen efectivamente en la producción de alimentos.

Por ejemplo, estudios de actividades periódicas, más conocidos como calendarios estacionales y análisis de rutina diaria de género, conducidos en diferentes contextos agro ecológicos en varios países han mostrado que, en las situaciones más diversas, en que las mujeres estadísticamente son consideradas como “inactivas”, las mismas están de hecho involucradas con la producción agrícola.

En el recuadro 4.3 se da una información más detallada del Proyecto Post Cosecha GCP/BOL/032/NET, implementado por la FAO en Bolivia, enfocado específicamente en la diferenciación del trabajo de género con vistas a confeccionar actividades de capacitación dirigidas a mujeres.

#### Recuadro 4.3 LA DIVISIÓN DEL TRABAJO ENTRE HOMBRES Y MUJERES

“En Arroyito, una comunidad quechua, el propietario de la tierra es el hombre jefe de la familia. Pero no todos los chacos de la familia son responsabilidad del hombre. La mujer tiene sus propios chacos, normalmente cerca de la casa, donde siembra lo que se necesita para el autoconsumo: maíz y choclos para el hogar y sus gallinas, fréjol, yuca y hortalizas. El hombre siembra en sus chacos los cultivos comerciales: caña, maíz y yuca.”

“En Barrio Nuevo, una comunidad guaraní, los hombres aportan a la comunidad dinero para el fondo comunal, y tienen derecho a un terreno que les asigna el capitán. Las mujeres no pagan el aporte y no tienen derecho a un terreno de la comunidad. En la mayoría de las familias, el hombre y los hijos mayores trabajan como jornaleros en otras comunidades. Las actividades agrícolas son principalmente responsabilidad de la mujer y sus hijos, salvo la limpieza del terreno que es responsabilidad del hombre. Los terrenos que cultivan son pequeños, en promedio de 0,2 ha. En este terreno cultivan maíz y yuca para autoconsumo.”

“En Tundy, una comunidad camba, la mujer se dedica a las tareas domésticas y no trabaja en los chacos, que son responsabilidad de su esposo. Ella y sus hijas a partir de 6 años tejen sombreros de saó, que es su principal fuente de ingresos. Estos ingresos, la mujer los destina a cubrir las necesidades diarias de la familia.”

Fuente: Proyecto de Poscosecha GCP/BOL/032/NET. Bolivia, 2001.

En tres regiones de Nicaragua donde la FAO tiene proyectos en curso, se examinó el compromiso de las mujeres en las actividades productivas y conclusiones similares alcanzaron a aquellas de Bolivia (Recuadro 4.3) (Dévé, 1997). A través de análisis globales con enfoque de género se identificaron diferentes

roles de género en la producción. Se examinaron las unidades de producción familiar, enfocadas en la división del trabajo y los respectivos roles de género en la producción. Estos estudios participativos indicaron que en hogares mixtos (hombre jefe de hogar y esposa), la participación de la mujer es variable y aumenta generalmente dependiendo del grado de pobreza, hasta llegar a veces a más del 50 por ciento del trabajo. Otro estudio en Nicaragua mostró que las mujeres participan en todas las etapas de la producción, excepto en la preparación de la tierra y en la aplicación de agro-químicos.

En Bolivia, la división del trabajo de género en el cultivo de maíz fue estudiado en la comunidad quechua de Arroyito (Maijer, 1997). Se encontró que hombres y mujeres trabajaban juntos en el campo, pero las faenas del hogar las hacían principalmente las mujeres, ayudadas por su familia. Los hombres ayudan en las actividades más laboriosas, como el desgrane. La mayoría de las actividades de post-cosecha en el hogar para la subsistencia y los cultivos comerciales lo realizan las mujeres. La misma situación se aplica a otras comunidades de diferentes grupos étnicos.

Se observó que las mujeres generalmente realizan tareas simultáneas, ajustando sus horarios de trabajo conforme a la demandas de actividades de la estación. De esta forma ellas realizan la mayoría de las actividades dentro o cerca del hogar, requiriendo un limitado esfuerzo físico pero que toman mucho tiempo y que se pueden intercambiar con otro trabajo.

### *Actividades de las mujeres que son consideradas como trabajo doméstico y no productivo*

A pesar que las mujeres hacen una contribución real a la agricultura, muchas de sus actividades son consideradas domésticas y no como actividades económicas. Sin embargo muchos estudios han demostrado que las mujeres juegan un rol principal en la agricultura y en la seguridad alimentaria y su tienen una participación activa en todo el ciclo de la producción: en la siembra, cosecha, post cosecha y comercialización y en el cuidado de los huertos familiares. Ellas tienen gran participación en actividades ganaderas, trabajando a la par con el hombre en el cuidado de ganadería mayor y menor pero teniendo mayor responsabilidad en la producción de animales menores.

### *El empleo rural remunerado de las mujeres y la reducción de la pobreza rural*

Como se señaló al principio, la participación de las mujeres en las actividades económicas, como lo definen las estadísticas de empleo, han aumentado en las últimas décadas. Sin embargo el empleo de las mujeres es precario y el ingreso es menor que el de los hombres, resultando en una

menor seguridad laboral. Un rasgo notable es el aumento en la participación de las mujeres en las actividades agrícolas y en el empleo rural no agrícola. El aumento de la integración de las mujeres en las actividades remuneradas ha mitigado en forma significativa los niveles de pobreza en la región. Un estudio de la FAO en Chile muestra las diferencias en el empleo de las mujeres sobre y bajo la línea de pobreza. (Parada, 2001). Este estudio mostró que en 1998 en la VI Región de Chile, más del 10 por ciento de las mujeres que estaban sobre la línea de pobreza estaban empleadas, a lo contrario de aquellas mujeres que estaban bajo la línea de pobreza.

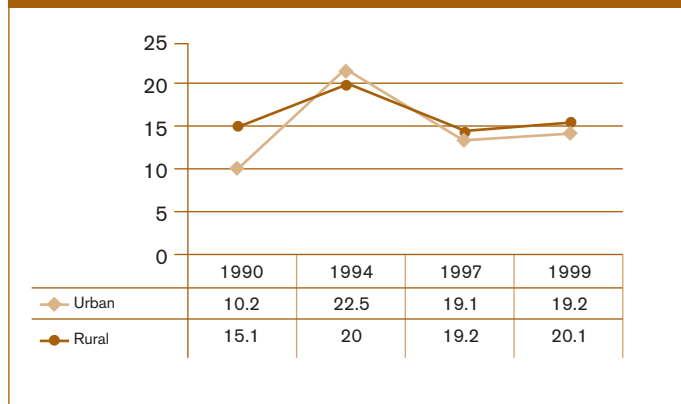
### *Las mujeres en el empleo rural agrícola*

Las estadísticas muestran un aumento en el empleo de las mujeres rurales en 1990 de un 15.1 por ciento a un 20.1 por ciento en 1999. Esto lleva a algunos observadores a hablar de la feminización de este sector. Sin embargo, como se mencionó anteriormente el trabajo de las mujeres es temporal y sin derechos laborales.

El aumento en la participación de las mujeres en las actividades agrícolas tanto en las de subsistencia como en aquellas de comercio agrícola, donde ha habido una alta inserción de mujeres en el sector de exportación de granos, notablemente arrojó un crecimiento frutícola en Chile y Ecuador. Igualmente, la producción más alta de hortalizas y otros cultivos no tradicionales en las tierras altas de Guatemala, no habrían sido posibles sin el trabajo de las mujeres. En este caso la agro-exportación o sociedades mercantiles compran los productos agrícolas a pequeños agricultores en el área. De la misma forma, las grandes fincas de café, caña de azúcar y banana emplean gran cantidad de mujeres (Oficina Nacional para las Mujeres, UNICEF, 1998).

Las condiciones de empleo de las mujeres son precarias. Un estudio patrocinado por la FAO por el Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM) señaló el trabajo de las mujeres como peligroso para la salud debido a los productos químicos que se utilizan, situación que incluye al resto de las mujeres de Latinoamérica que trabajan en la agro industria (SERNAM, FAO, 2001). Este estudio sobre Chile, confirmó la falta de derechos laborales para el trabajo que realizan las

**Figura 4.2**  
Participación de las mujeres en la fuerza de trabajo agrícola



Fuente: FAO, de cifras aparecidas en Panorama Social de América Latina, 2000-2001. ECLAC, 2001.

mujeres en la exportación frutícola, en uno de los países más dinámicos y en uno de los sectores más exitosos. Casi las tres cuartas partes de las mujeres viven bajo la línea de pobreza y no tienen seguridad social y por lo tanto no están protegidas en el caso de un accidente laboral o derechos a una pensión cuando ya no estén aptas para trabajar.

En varios países de la región han sido documentadas las diferencias salariales existentes entre hombres y mujeres en casi todos los sectores y en especial en el trabajo agrícola. Aunque el porcentaje del sueldo de la mujer sobre el del varón varíe entre los países, desde el 12 por ciento en el Perú hasta los 92 por ciento en Costa Rica, el promedio sigue siendo alrededor del 50% para la Región (FLACSO, 1994).



Locutora grabando la banda sonora de una producción video en el proyecto de Tamuim.  
(L. Dematteis, 1993)

### *Las mujeres en el empleo rural no agrícola*

Un estudio de la FAO sobre las mujeres en Chile, señala la importancia del trabajo rural no agrícola como medio de superación de la pobreza (Parada, 2001). El estudio examinó el trabajo de las mujeres haciendo distinción entre aquellas que viven en hogares bajo la línea de pobreza y aquellas que viven sobre la línea de pobreza, destacando que aquellas que viven bajo la línea de pobreza están empleadas en gran proporción en actividades agrícolas; que aquellas que están sobre la línea de pobreza están empleadas

principalmente en servicios y comercio, y que una gran proporción de estas mujeres están empleadas en servicios domésticos. Existe una mayor cantidad de mujeres que de hombres que trabajan en el empleo rural no agrícola, el cual es mejor pagado que el trabajo agrícola, y provee un mayor ingreso para el hogar. Información del Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural de Colombia indica que existe una mayor cantidad de mujeres en el empleo rural no agrícola.

En un estudio de Reardon y Berdegúe sobre empleo rural no agrícola e ingreso en América Latina, señala que las mujeres son relativamente dependientes de las actividades no agrícolas, actividades que son de fácil acceso pero bajas ganancias, como el comercio menor (Reardon, Berdegúe, 1999). Muchos estudios investigan los ingresos relativos y los tipos de actividades de las mujeres (ver Séller, 1994, para América Central; Berdegúe et al., 1999, para Chile; Lanjouw, 1999, para Ecuador y otros). Los resultados para Ecuador (Lanjow, 1999) parecen ser representativos: (1)



las mujeres ganan salarios más bajos en el empleo no agrícola; (2) las mujeres tienden a concentrarse en el sector de servicios y en un autoempleo pequeño con remuneraciones bajas en la manufactura; (3) las mujeres tienden en menor medida a las actividades múltiples.

## Acceso a los recursos productivos

Un estudio de la FAO en Chile utilizando información de la encuesta de Características Económicas y Sociales (CASEN) y del VIII Censo Agrícola Nacional, arrojó una clasificación de las explotaciones agrícolas (Parada 2001). El estudio reveló que esas explotaciones eran de insuficiente rendimiento para superar la pobreza contaban con una mayor proporción de mujeres productoras. La conclusión, desde la perspectiva de género, fue que las mujeres productoras tenían sistemáticamente menos acceso a la mayor parte de los activos, lo cual determinó en forma significativa la producción de sus explotaciones. Las cifras mostraron que las explotaciones de las mujeres eran menores en promedio, disponían de menor riego y usaban menos maquinaria agrícola. El estudio concluyó que la pobreza rural sería peor si los hogares rurales dependieran solamente de la producción agrícola.

Esta falta de acceso a los recursos productivos tales como la tierra, el agua, el crédito y la capacitación, agudizan la condición de pobreza en la que viven más de la mitad de las mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe. Al mismo tiempo, la falta de acceso de las mujeres a estos recursos limita su autonomía y participación en los poderes de decisión en el hogar, en las comunidades y en la sociedad. La mayoría de las mujeres de la región no poseen tierras lo que limita su acceso a todos los recursos productivos.

La Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer, que se llevó a cabo en Beijing en 1995, señaló que la pobreza de las mujeres está directamente relacionada con la ausencia de oportunidades económicas y de autonomía. Esto incluye la falta de acceso de las mujeres a los recursos económicos, incluyendo crédito, la propiedad de la tierra y el derecho de herencia, la falta de acceso a la educación y a los servicios de apoyo y con una mínima participación en los procesos decisorios. (Plataforma de Acción).

### *El acceso de las mujeres a la tierra*

Estudios pioneros en la región efectuados por Magdalena León y Carmen G. Deere, examinaron extensamente la relación entre la propiedad de la tierra de las mujeres, su empoderamiento y autonomía (León, Deere, 2000). Ellos revelaron que ni la reforma agraria ni el acceso al mercado

de la tierra se han realizado en un contexto de enfoque de género. Los estudios documentan ampliamente los obstáculos que enfrentan las mujeres en la búsqueda de acceso a la propiedad de la tierra.

América Latina tiene la mayor concentración de propiedad de tierra y las mujeres tienden al acceso a la tierra a través de la herencia, como beneficiarias de los programas de reforma agraria o a través del mercado de tierras. En la última década las mujeres accedieron a la tierra a través de programas de títulos de tierra como una forma de activar el mercado de tierras. Los estudios muestran las limitantes de los modelos culturales predominantes en la distribución de las mujeres en cada uno de estos mecanismos. La mayoría de las mujeres tienen pequeñas explotaciones agrícolas de no más de 5há.

La Ley agraria, la legislación civil y la ley consuetudinaria condicionan el acceso de las mujeres a la tierra y los principales beneficiarios de la reforma agraria han sido los varones. La mayoría de los programas de reforma agraria o legislación, directa o indirectamente relacionados al acceso a la tierra, han explícita o implícitamente excluido a las mujeres o no han hecho ningún esfuerzo para garantizar su acceso.

La FAO revisó el marco legal del acceso a la tierra en Cuba, República Dominicana, Honduras y Nicaragua (Galán, 1998) conforme a lo determinado en sus constituciones, códigos civiles, códigos familiares y leyes agrarias. El estudio de FAO concluyó que algunas leyes agrarias y códigos civiles contenían disposiciones que eran discriminatorias para las mujeres. Por ejemplo, la Ley de Reforma Agraria de la República Dominicana identifica al hombre como el beneficiario inmediato de la reforma agraria. El código civil del país restringe el empoderamiento de las mujeres indicando que es el hombre el jefe de hogar y el administrador de todos los fondos.

La Ley agraria en Honduras y Nicaragua reconoce el derecho de las mujeres como beneficiarias inmediatas de la reforma agraria pero aún existen medidas discriminatorias en sus códigos civiles o en sus códigos de la familia que condicionan el acceso de las mujeres a la tierra. En Cuba, la ley agraria y la legislación civil, reconoce la igualdad total de los derechos de ambos géneros, sin embargo, muchos más hombres son dueños de la tierra y miembros de cooperativas y administradores.

En el estado civil, la ley agraria en Cuba, Honduras y Nicaragua reconoce el derecho de las mujeres a una unión libre para ser beneficiarias de la reforma agraria; esta unión necesita ser reconocida por una autoridad competente, requerimiento que restringe el acceso de las mujeres a la tierra. La República Dominicana no reconoce la unión libre.

La legislación de Cuba y Honduras regula la herencia de la tierra adquirida a través de la reforma agraria asignándole el derecho a la esposa del beneficiario. En las leyes en República Dominicana y en Nicaragua no existen medidas en este respecto. El asunto lo trata el código civil y éste no reconoce a la esposa como un heredero obligatorio.

En Ecuador, desde el año 1982, las parejas que viven en una unión libre han tenido los mismos derechos legales que aquellas parejas casadas, lo cual depende de tres condiciones: (i) dos años de cohabitación probada; (ii) evidencia de no tener otros lazos matrimoniales; y (iii) reconocimiento legal de un juez. Esta última condición es incluso más costosa que un matrimonio formal (Deere, León, García, Trujillo, 1999)

En países que garantizan el derecho de herencia de la mujer, aún rigen patrones culturales que dificultan el ejercicio de este derecho. A las mujeres rurales en Brasil se les otorgó derechos de igualdad sobre los bienes desde la reforma agraria en 1988, en la práctica ellas no tienen los mismos accesos. Un estudio del Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo del Instituto de Reforma Agraria, bajo el Proyecto de Cooperación Técnica para la Integración de la Reforma Agraria con Perspectiva de Género, de la FAO, (TCP/BRA/8922) (Lindares, 2002), señaló que a pesar de que la legislación reconoce la igualdad de género, patrones culturales en Brasil como en el resto del continente, aún constituyen serios obstáculos para que las mujeres rurales puedan ejercer completamente sus derechos de ciudadanía.

“Tales barreras están presentes en las prácticas del Instituto Nacional de Colonización y de Reforma Agraria (INCRA) y en otras instituciones gubernamentales incluidas en el proceso de la reforma agraria, y con los sindicatos, movimientos y asociaciones de trabajadores rurales”. El estudio señala que como el acceso de las mujeres a la ciudadanía es relativamente reciente, ellas aún están fuertemente afectadas por la discriminación social y por el fracaso de ellas para que sus derechos sean reconocidos. La situación es aún más difícil para las mujeres trabajadoras rurales debido a su rol en la actividad reproductiva y cuidados domésticos ya que ello encubre su contribución activa al proceso de desarrollo. Más aún, las mujeres no han logrado un mejor acceso a la tierra a través del mercado de la tierra. Un estudio en Colombia muestra que las mujeres solo han accedido al 11 por ciento de las posesiones agrícolas a través del mercado de la tierra o a través de asignaciones de tierra por parte del Estado. En República Dominicana la Ley



Estas terrazas, construidas por mujeres, rinden un 70% más de papas por hectárea que los cultivos de terrenos en pendiente.

(I. Velez, 1985)

de Reforma Agraria promulgada en 1962, no considera a las mujeres como beneficiarias directas, sino como herederas de sus cónyuges en caso de muerte o abandono. Esto limita su acceso a la tierra debido a la alta proporción de uniones libres en las áreas rurales. Actualmente, el nombre de la esposa se incluye junto con el del esposo en el Certificado de Asignación Provisional, mediante el cual se les asigna la tierra dentro de los asentamientos agrarios que realiza el Estado. La Ley 555-77, reforma la Ley de Reforma Agraria y deja de lado todas las formas de restricción para las mujeres, otorgándoles igual acceso a la tenencia de la tierra, capacitación y asistencia técnica que propicia el Instituto Dominicano para la Agricultura (Tejada de Walter, 2000).

En El Salvador sólo el 8.5 por ciento de las mujeres están comprometidas con las actividades agrícolas. Aún está pendiente una enmienda al Código de Tierra, con las siguientes

tres medidas que favorecen a las mujeres:

- El contrato para la tierra agrícola se aplica a todo el grupo familiar, independientemente que en él pueda figurar un solo nombre.
- Cuando se celebre un contrato para la adjudicación de tierra, el título debería incluir los nombres de ambos cónyuges o compañeros o de la persona responsable del mantenimiento de la familia.
- En el caso de abandono o anulación de los vínculos maritales por la persona designada como titular del contrato, los derechos otorgados al resto de los miembros de la familia no serán revocados. (Estas medidas ya existen en Colombia, Costa Rica y Nicaragua).

La situación en Perú es paradójica (Cacassi León, 1998).

La Ley de Reforma Agraria estipula que en cuanto a la muerte de un beneficiario que no haya pagado la totalidad de la tierra asignada, la tierra en cuestión es transferida libre de cargo a su “cónyuge o compañero”, reconociendo el derecho del concubinato. Sin embargo si la tierra ha sido totalmente pagada, se excluye a la concubina y no tiene ningún derecho reconocido, esto excluye a la mayoría de las mujeres de la tenencia de tierra ya que la mayoría de las parejas viven en concubinato. En Costa Rica la distribución de la tierra en uniones libres debe estar a nombre de ambos compañeros.

México fue el primer país en establecer los derechos de igualdad de género para la tenencia de la tierra (1971). Pero, las mujeres rurales sufrieron un retroceso en el año 1990 cuando se



Masaya. Los familiares de los niños que asisten a la guardería diurna Gaspar García Laviana cultivan en el huerto del centro productos que luego son consumidos durante el almuerzo.

(L. Dematteis, 1997)

corrigió el Artículo 27 de la Constitución Mexicana. Esta reforma ya no garantiza más la sucesión de las mujeres en la tierra familiar en caso de muerte del esposo. (Deere, León, 1997).

En Paraguay, el Acuerdo sobre los Estatutos Agrarios (L854) identifica explícitamente como beneficiarios de los programas de tenencia de la tierra a todos los adultos sobre los 18 años que estén dedicados o que sean formalmente propuestos para dedicarse a los trabajos agrícolas sin distinción de sexo o nacionalidad. (Molinas, 1999)

En Guatemala, el acceso de las mujeres a los programas públicos o privados de reforma agraria han sido limitados por una combinación de restricciones legales, institucionales o socio culturales. El código civil califica al hombre como el jefe de familia y administrador de los bienes del grupo familiar. Sin embargo, los programas establecidos por el Fondo de Tierra Nacional (FONATIERRA 1988-1999) han registrado un aumento en el número de mujeres que han adquirido acceso a la tierra a través de los grupos agrícolas campesinos. (JC. Fénix, 1999)

### *Programas de titulación de tierras*

En la década pasada se llevaron a cabo en América Latina programas masivos para regular la tenencia de tierras, otorgando títulos de propiedad a la gente de escasos recursos. Esto se hizo con el fin de aliviar la pobreza; un título de dominio es una herramienta social útil para estos sectores de la población ya que otorga acceso a subsidios de casas estatales y privados, créditos, tecnología, asesoría y financiamiento agrícola. Los programas de otorgamiento de títulos de propiedad se crearon para reducir la tenencia irregular y facilitar el adecuado funcionamiento del mercado de la tierra.

Se realizaron estudios sobre la reciente regularización de títulos de propiedad en países de la región. En Chile, el Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales evaluó su programa de regularización para el período 1994-2000. Después de esta evaluación en 1996, se encontró que el 75 por ciento de los beneficiarios vivían bajo la línea de pobreza, de estos el 39 por ciento eran mujeres y su situación irregular se debió a irregularidades en los procedimientos de herencia y en las adquisiciones/compras. (Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales, 1999)

La evaluación mostró que las mujeres más que los hombres, tendían a mantener y ocupar permanentemente su propiedad. Reveló que el título de dominio no ha facilitado particularmente el acceso a incrementar los recursos para una mejor calidad de vida, sin embargo ha moderado la desigualdad en los grupos familiares. Las mujeres beneficiarias tienden a tomar decisiones para el bienestar de sus familias. Tener un título de dominio a su nombre, les ha permitido a las mujeres tener una mayor participación en las decisiones que se relacionan con la tenencia de la tierra y el

grupo familiar, reduce la migración al exterior, estimula nuevas fuentes de trabajo y la educación de los hijos. Al mismo tiempo, las mujeres beneficiarias informan que sus esposos o compañeros las respetan más y se prepararon para otorgarles menos concesiones. Más aún, disfrutaron de un hogar seguro para ellas y sus hijos.

### *Acceso de las mujeres al agua*

En la mayoría de los países de la región, el riego es un medio importante para aumentar la productividad, fomentar la diversidad y la intensidad de los cultivos.

El acceso al agua y al riego están ligados a la presencia de agua y al desarrollo tecnológico. Sin embargo la clave del criterio que se aplica para tener este acceso es la tenencia de la tierra; por lo tanto las mujeres se encuentran en desventaja en relación al acceso al agua y al riego.

Existen escasos estudios en la región sobre la disponibilidad de recursos de agua superficiales y subterráneos o para su uso en diferentes tipos de riego. Prácticamente no existen

estudios económicos, sociales o consideraciones de medio ambiente que permitan examinar esta situación desde una perspectiva de género.

Particularmente en Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador y Venezuela el limitado potencial de riego se debe al área de superficie total. En Bolivia, las razones son las condiciones climáticas, la topografía accidentada y la falta de agua en la mayor parte del país. El problema principal en Argentina, El Salvador y Venezuela es la falta de agua en las áreas más apropiadas para el riego. Las condiciones



Mujer dando de comer a los peces en una piscifactoría.  
(G. Bizzarri, 1995)

húmedas de la mayor parte de Costa Rica y Panamá significan que allí existen pocas necesidades y sin embargo alto potencial de riego.

A partir de 1950, la mayoría de los países desarrolló el riego en forma considerable, especialmente el de superficie que es la técnica más común. Chile es la única referencia que se encontró para esta publicación, y señala que las mujeres jefas de hogar tienen un menor acceso a cualquier tipo de riego, y un 66.3 por ciento de las mujeres jefas de unidades familiares agrícolas no tienen riego en comparación a un 58.9 por ciento para el caso de productores hombres. En la

región la principal fuente de suministro de agua de riego son los recursos hídricos superficiales. (Las únicas excepciones son Nicaragua y Cuba donde las aguas subterráneas abastecen el 77 y 50 por ciento de la superficie bajo riego, respectivamente).

Se requiere una diferenciación de las necesidades que incluya el enfoque de género a fin de establecer si la irrigación es de desviación directa de agua de superficie, de embalses de aguas superficiales, o de bombeo de una napa freática (aguas subterráneas), éste último es importante en Cuba, México y Nicaragua. La consideración de género y riego es importante para un manejo efectivo de los esquemas de riego desarrollado por los gobiernos y para apoyar el riego privado a pequeña escala ya sea en capital, equipo, capacitación, extensión o asistencia técnica.

No se ha prestado suficiente importancia al rol que juegan las mujeres en el manejo de los recursos de agua de la región. Existen pocos estudios que se refieren al tema en Latinoamérica comparado con Africa donde estudios muestran que la no consideración de los aspectos de género puede tener efectos adversos sobre las políticas y proyectos de riego. En el norte de Ecuador, en un estudio en la provincia de Carchi, cerca de la frontera con Colombia, analizó el acceso de las mujeres a dos proyectos de riego y demostró que los roles sociales tradicionales impidieron la participación activa de las mujeres en las asociaciones de riego, lo cual limita sus derechos al agua (Bastidas, 2000).

Magdalena León hace referencia a que los conflictos de agua se manifiestan por género, ya que el agua se adjudica a la persona y se fija por la tenencia de la tierra.

#### Recuadro 4.4 DERECHOS DE AGUA EN ECUADOR

“En Pungal, en la Provincia de Chimborazo, en Ecuador, una cuadra (más o menos 0.7 has) da derecho a un caudal de 10lts/segundo, durante 7.5 horas, una vez a la semana. Se obtienen los derechos de agua por haber participado en todas las mingas y en el mantenimiento del canal, en las reuniones y pagando las tarifas anuales. Los nuevos socios deben igualar las faltas en las mingas y reuniones, pagando una entrada que se revisa cada año. En la lista de socios aparece siempre el jefe de familia, que generalmente es el hombre. Solamente las viudas y algunas solteras figuran como socias directas, el resto sólo tiene derecho al agua a través del socio directo.”

Fuente: Deere D, M. León, E. García y JC Trujillo. Género y derechos de la mujer a la tierra en Ecuador. CONAMU, Quito, Ecuador, 1999. En Guía conceptual y metodológica de Género en poscosecha.

Chile reviste particular importancia (ver recuadro 4.5) ya que la Comisión Nacional de Riego está promoviendo acciones de transversalización con enfoque de género en los programas y proyectos de apoyo al riego.

**Recuadro 4.5 PROGRAMA DE TECNOLOGÍA DE RIEGO APLICADA  
A LA AGRICULTURA EN SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA**

Objetivos:

- Mejorar los sistemas de riego, solucionando problemas de acumulación, conducción, distribución y tecnificación predial, mediante la elaboración de proyectos INTA y extrapredial, vía Ley de Fomento u otras fuentes.
- Mejorar los sistemas productivos con capacitación tecnológica en el quehacer agropecuario.
- Fortalecimiento de las Organizaciones de Regantes en la administración de los recursos hídricos.

En este Programa se ha establecido que existe una población total de 1.315 mujeres y el Punto Focal de la Comisión Asesora de Igualdad de Oportunidades del Ministerio de Agricultura ha realizado las propuestas de acciones para que en el desarrollo del programa se consideren las necesidades de las mujeres. Asimismo se ha planteado la transversalización con el enfoque de género en los siguientes programas:

- ❖ Programa del desarrollo del riego en comunas con problemas de desempleo y pobreza.
- ❖ Programa de aplicación tecnológica en sistema de riego y cultivos en laja y Diguillin.
- ❖ Proyecto de transferencia de tecnologías de riego y protección de recursos naturales en la comuna de Ninhue y Portezuelo, Chile.

Fondos Totales involucrados: aproximadamente US\$ 3 millones

Fuente: Comisión de Irrigación Nacional. Comité de mujeres rurales en Chile. Santiago. 2002.

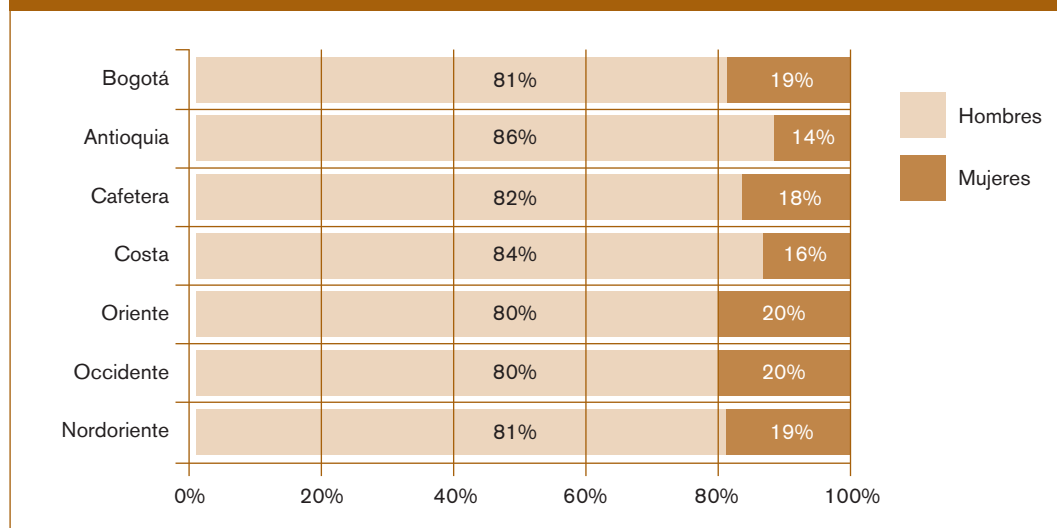
### *El acceso de las mujeres al crédito*

Las mujeres rurales están limitadas cuando solicitan un crédito debido a que ellas al no ser propietarias de la tierra carecen de garantías. Muchas de ellas desconocen las reglas del mercado y/o recurren a formas no tradicionales de ahorro, guardan en su propia casa el dinero en efectivo o ahorran en especies (en grano y/o animales). La forma más común de ahorro es tener animales menores que se venden en épocas de apremio. A menudo las mujeres son presa fácil de créditos ilegales de tasas altas de intereses pero acuden debido a la oportunidad y los requisitos limitados. También es importante considerar que a las mujeres les produce temor sacar un crédito; un estudio en Ecuador reveló que las mujeres no solicitan créditos debido a que “les atemoriza solicitarlo a un banco” (especialmente las mujeres iletradas). Esto se debe a que no pueden cumplir con los requisitos de garantía que les pide el banco o debido al exceso de tiempo que toma un préstamo para ser otorgado. También temen no ser capaces de cumplir con plan de pago. (Deere, Lerón, García, Rujillo, 1999).

Las cifras para Colombia se refieren al número de préstamos (Ver gráfico 4.3). Estas describen una situación en que la proporción de préstamos refleja aproximadamente la proporción de mujeres.



**Figura 4.3**  
Colombia, Prestamos a pequeños campesinos; junio 1999 – mayo 2000



Fuente: FAO, basada en cifras proporcionadas por el Banco Agrícola de Colombia, IICA.

Los datos sobre Colombia – que se refieren al número de préstamos – ilustran una situación en que los porcentajes de préstamos corresponden aproximadamente a la proporción de explotaciones en manos de mujeres. Según un estudio del Ministerio de Agricultura y el IICA, sólo el 16 por ciento del valor de los desembolsos de crédito fue para mujeres. En 1999-2000, la mayoría de los créditos se utilizaron para actividades de ganado (54 por ciento) y un 21 por ciento para cultivos de autoconsumo. En otros países las cifras pueden ser más desventajosas tal como lo muestra un estudio de Magdalena León y C.G. Deere en Ecuador (deere, León, García Trujillo, 1999). Un total de 353 encuestas en las provincias de Chimborazo, Manabí, Guayas, Cañar, Los Ríos y Pastaza indicaron que solamente el 7.2 por ciento de las mujeres habían solicitado crédito. La documentación que normalmente solicitan las agencias de préstamo es una cédula de identidad, una escritura de propiedad y/o certificado del Registro de Tierra y certificación de agricultor; el ítem más costoso corresponde al registro de propiedad.

Instituciones de micro fianza juegan un rol cada vez más importante en el sector financiero de América Latina, ofreciendo instrumentos financieros a grupos de la población con bajos ingresos en zonas rurales y urbano marginales. Es significativa la alta proporción de clientela femenina en estas instituciones. Estas ayudan a las mujeres a cumplir con su responsabilidad en la seguridad alimentaria, ayudándolas a desarrollar la producción más allá de un sustento diario ofreciéndoles servicios de ahorros útiles y aumentando las facilidades de micro seguros. (Ver tabla 4.4)

**TABLA 4.4 CARTERA ACTIVA DE CLIENTAS MUJERES  
EN INSTITUCIONES DE MICROFIANZA SELECCIONADAS.**

<b>País</b>	<b>Institución de microfinanza</b>	<b>Portafolio activo (US\$)</b>	<b>Porcentaje de clientas</b>
México	FINCA	2 151 938	96
	Financiera Compartamos*	43 031 000	98
Guatemala	FINCA	500 947	88
	Génesis Empresarial*	17 336 000	59
Haití	FINCA	212 559	98
	Sogesol*	2 667 000	62
Honduras	FINCA	3 155 203	92
	FinSol*	6 408 000	53
Nicaragua	FINCA	2 717 804	100
	FAMA*	8 775 000	72
Ecuador	FINCA	5 760 764	89
	Banco Solidario*	53 068 000	45
Perú	FINCA	794 532	95
	MiBanco*	92 294 000	57
Bolivia	Bancosol*	80 917 000	60

\*Programa asociado de ACCION Internacional.

Información de FINCA al 05/2003; Información financiera de Acción al 31 de diciembre de 2002, porcentaje de mujeres para el 2001

## Educación

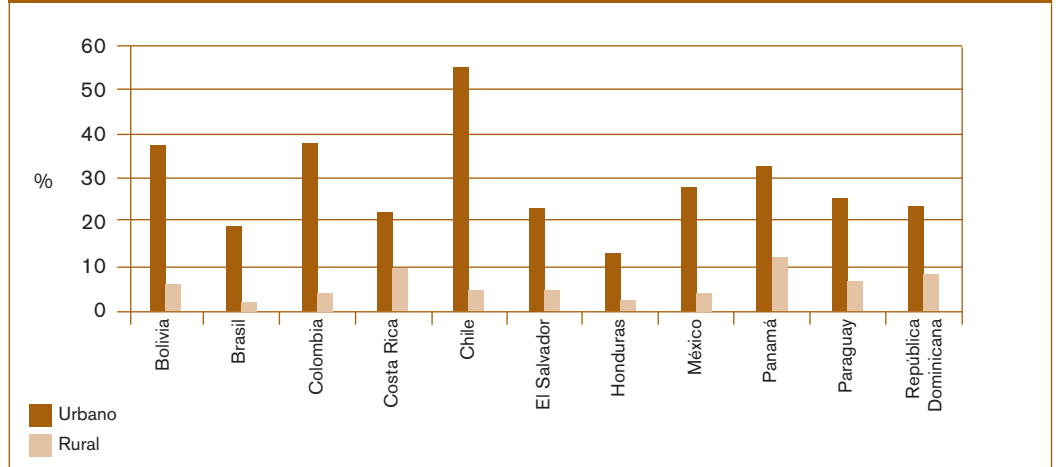
### *Desigualdades y deficiencias*

El bajo nivel de educación en la región impide la superación de la pobreza, la seguridad alimentaria, el ejercicio de la ciudadanía y el desarrollo pleno del potencial humano. Aunque en los últimos diez años se ha logrado un progreso importante en la ampliación de la cobertura en la educación, el impacto de la crisis de los años 80 hizo sentir sutilmente una reducción del gasto público en la educación. Otra observación importante es la globalización que requiere grandes agrupaciones de trabajadores especializados, mientras las áreas rurales continúan teniendo bajos niveles de educación, a veces con diferencias significativas entre hombres y mujeres.

Figura 4.4 muestra el avance en la educación – insuficiente aún– de hombres y mujeres en países seleccionados de la región y en la equidad de género en la educación. El promedio de años de estudio de hombres y mujeres entre los 15 – 24 es significativamente más alto que la población entre los 25 y 29 años de edad, el gráfico revela insuficiencias. La información de los países indica que mujeres rurales jóvenes de Chile y Panamá han alcanzado los mayores niveles de educación (9.8 años y 8.4 años de estudio respectivamente), y con niveles superiores a los de los jóvenes rurales.

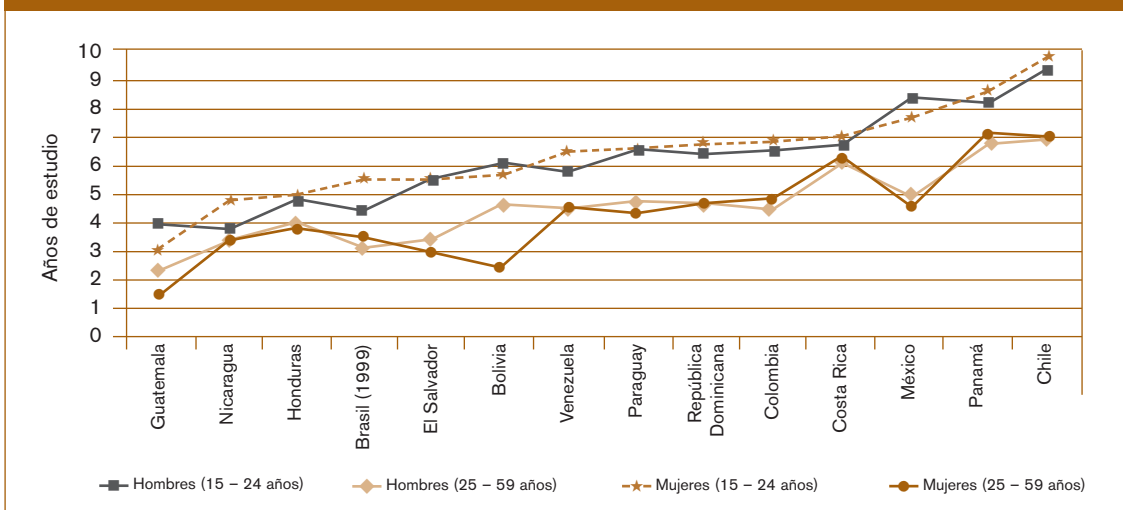
En Guatemala, el tiempo promedio de estudio de las mujeres rurales jóvenes entre los 15 y 24 años de edad es solamente de 3.1 años, por debajo del promedio de 4.1 años de los hombres rurales jóvenes. En 11 de los 14 países, las mujeres jóvenes entre los 15 y 24 años de edad han tenido niveles educativos más altos que los hombres rurales con excepción de Bolivia, Guatemala y México. Debido a una mayor discriminación en el pasado, en 10 de los 14 países, las mujeres entre los 25 y 59 años tienen niveles más bajos de educación que sus contrapartes hombres, quienes tienen un máximo de 7.1 años de estudio en Chile pero escasamente 1.4 años de estudio en Guatemala.

**Figura 4.4**  
Población entre los 25 y 39 años de edad con 10+ años de educación en países seleccionados de América Latina.



Fuente: PRIE de ECLAC, Panorama social de América Latina 1999–2000, basado en tabulados de encuestas en los hogares.

**Figura 4.5**  
América Latina, 2000. Promedio de años de estudio en la población rural.



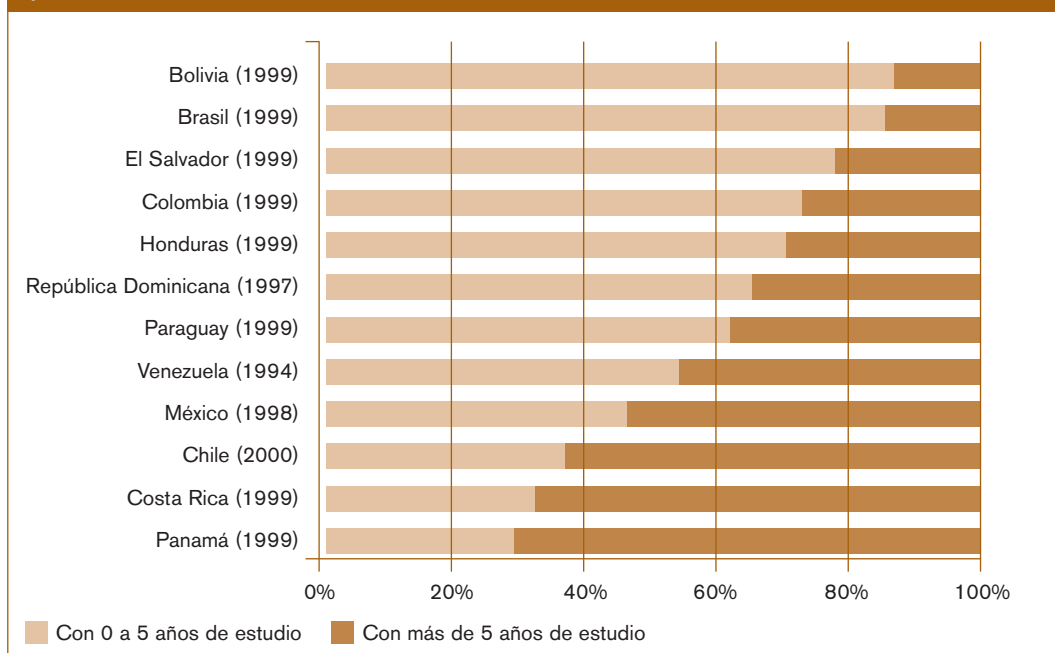
Fuente: ECLAC, Panorama social de América Latina 2000–2001, Santiago, 2001.

### *Insuficiencias educacionales y género en áreas rurales*

Las cifras totales son promedios que ocultan diferencias existentes en la región. El progreso no ha sido uniforme entre los países y al interior de los ellos; a menudo existe una disparidad significativa entre las áreas rurales y urbanas y dentro de las mismas áreas rurales. Un estudio efectuado en la zona rural de Cajamarca, en Perú, muestra que un 84.5 por ciento de los niños entre los 6 y 15 años asisten a la escuela, la cifra desciende a un 75.7 por ciento para las niñas entre los 6 y 15 años. Mientras el 34.1 por ciento de los jóvenes adolescentes entre los 16 y 20 años asisten a la escuela, sólo el 11.9 por ciento de las mujeres adolescentes entre los 16 y 20 años lo hacen. En grupos cuyas edades fluctúan entre los 21 y 24 años de edad, el 6.7 por ciento de los hombres asisten a instituciones educacionales comparado con un escaso 2 por ciento de mujeres.

La crisis de los años 80 y la reducción de los ingresos en prácticamente todos los países se refleja en el hecho de que en la mayoría de los países las mujeres entre los 25 y 59 años de edad tienen muy bajo nivel de educación. En Bolivia y Brasil, cerca del 80 por ciento de las mujeres rurales que están dentro de este grupo de edad, tienen de 0 a 5 años de estudio, por sobre un 60 por ciento en Colombia, República Dominicana, El Salvador, Honduras y Paraguay, y sobre un 40 por ciento en México y Venezuela. Sólo Chile, Costa Rica y Panamá tienen una menor proporción de mujeres entre 25 y 59 años de edad con 0 a 5 años de estudio.

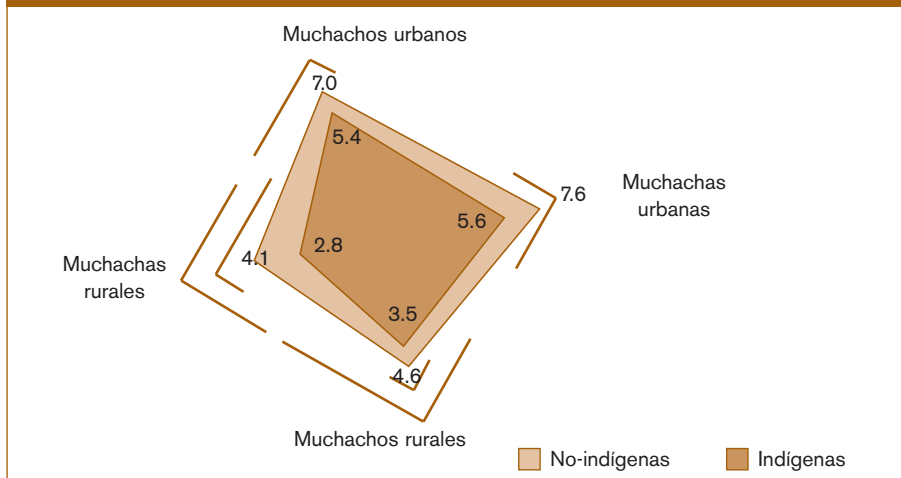
**Figura 4.6**  
Porcentaje de mujeres rurales entre los 25 y los 59 años  
que tienen entre 0 a 5 años de estudio



Fuente: ECLAC, Panorama social  
2000-2004. Santiago, Chile, 2001

Al mismo tiempo existe un serio desfase en los programas y metodologías escolares con una realidad rural, especialmente donde habitan mujeres indígenas, lo que impide la integración y su inserción y permanencia en los programas de educación formal e informal. En Guatemala por ejemplo, la principal restricción para el desarrollo de las mujeres indígenas es ser monolingües y los programas de educación y los currícula son inadecuados, persistiendo la existencia de desigualdades (Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación, 2000). En el área rural de Guatemala, las niñas entre los 14 y 18 años pertenecientes a familias rurales no indígenas han estudiado en un promedio de 4.1 años comparado con 2.8 años de estudio de las niñas entre los 14 y 18 años pertenecientes a familias rurales indígenas. La misma situación prevalece en otros países que tienen un alto porcentaje de población rural indígena donde el nivel de pobreza puede alcanzar proporciones alarmantes.

**Figura 4.7**  
Guatemala – promedio de años de estudios  
para jóvenes hombres y mujeres entre los 14 y los 18 años, 1999



Fuente: ENIGFAM, 1988–1999, en Austrias, et. al., Hogar, familia y exclusión en Guatemala. Sistema de las Naciones Unidas, Guatemala, 2001.

A pesar que las mujeres rurales han tenido pocas oportunidades para acceder a la educación, son ellas las grandes promotoras en la educación de sus hijos. Un estudio realizado en Perú revela que existe consenso entre las mujeres rurales; tanto las niñas como los niños deben estudiar y por eso mandan a ambos a la escuela. Las entrevistas realizadas confirman que no obstante existe un discurso de equidad, aún se advierte un sesgo cultural que persiste: las niñas permanecen en el hogar para ayudar con las tareas y luego se casan y los niños van a la escuela. Este sesgo se está debilitando entre los padres jóvenes (padres y madres) que creen que la situación necesita de un cambio (PROMUDEH, 2001).

Cuando las entrevistaron, expresaron preocupación acerca de la violencia y las grandes distancias en que se encuentran ubicadas las escuelas y su falta de confianza en la calidad de la educación. Para citar lo que dicen las madres: “la calidad de la educación se acaba donde termina el camino”.

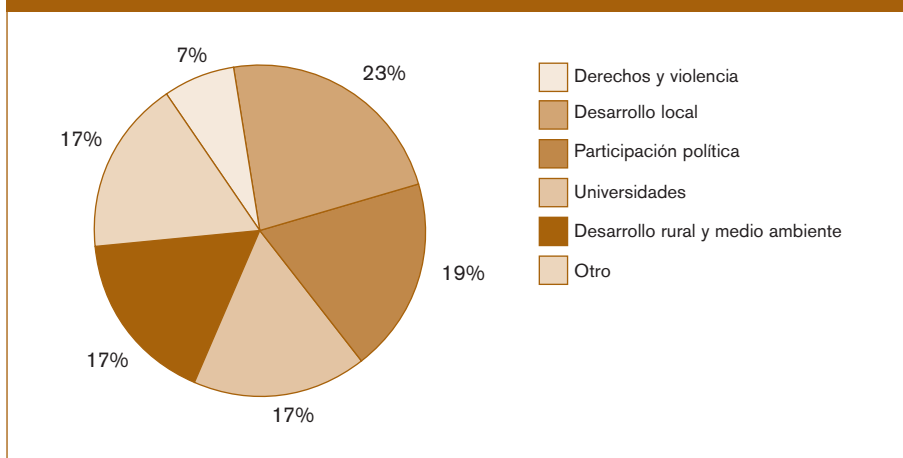
### *Capacitación para las mujeres rurales*

A menudo la brecha de oportunidad de acceso a la educación para las mujeres rurales se suple con la extensión agrícola, la transferencia tecnológica y la capacitación, aunque estas estén parcialmente limitadas debido al fracaso para ser reconocidas en su rol de productoras. En la mayoría de los países ha habido esfuerzos importantes para la capacitación, generalmente en actividades piloto para desarrollar metodologías pero debido a la falta de recursos y a la renovación de la política de estado, estas actividades no han llegado a la mayoría de los beneficiarios potenciales.

### *Organizaciones no gubernamentales*

Las organizaciones no gubernamentales y la cooperación internacional han ofrecido cooperación para compensar la falta de programas de capacitación de los gobiernos para las mujeres. Sin embargo, las actividades de las ONG han fracasado en priorizar el desarrollo rural. Un estudio en Ecuador informó que sólo el 17 por ciento de la capacitación de las ONG estaba dirigido al desarrollo rural y al medio ambiente (Ordóñez, 2001).

Figura 4.8  
Tipos de capacitación en Ecuador, 2000.



Fuente: Ordóñez, M. Sistematización sobre oferta y demanda de capacitación y formación en género en Ecuador. 2001

El financiamiento para la capacitación en género proviene principalmente de la cooperación internacional y de las agencias de Naciones Unidas. El mayor apoyo financiero está dirigido a la capacitación en derechos, violencia y desarrollo local, seguido por la participación en la determinación de políticas.

Las ONGs han desarrollado actividades en todos los países y han producido manuales de capacitación y otros materiales didácticos, por ejemplo Manual de Capacitación para las mujeres Rurales de la Comunidad Andina *Equidad de Género en la Agricultura Sustentable*, producido por el Centro de Mujeres Peruanas Flora Tristán. Las actividades de capacitación se han enfocado hacia áreas temáticas directamente relacionadas con la producción y la capacitación de liderazgo, construcción de autoestima y otras materias de vital importancia para el empoderamiento de las mujeres rurales.

### *La sensibilización sobre el enfoque de género y la capacitación en los proyectos de la FAO*

Como parte del Plan de Acción sobre Género y Desarrollo (2002-2007), la Oficina Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe, ha realizado cursos de capacitación sobre sensibilización y talleres sobre la incorporación de género en los programas y proyectos de la FAO, los cuales ahora incluyen género en sus componentes de capacitación<sup>14</sup>.

Los Proyectos de Cooperación Técnica de la FAO ayudaron a integrar el enfoque de género en la transferencia de tecnología, permitiendo así el acceso de las mujeres a la capacitación. Por ejemplo, la *Guía Conceptual y Metodológica sobre género en las actividades de post-cosecha*, desarrollada por el Proyecto Post-Cosecha de la FAO en Ecuador GCO/ECU/069/NET, constituyó una herramienta metodológica útil con enfoque de género en la post cosecha, comercialización y crédito con transferencia tecnológica. Sirvió para diseñar y aplicar criterios y conceptos con enfoque de género en la entrega de capacitación y transferencia tecnológica en el marco experto/a- productor/a agrícola. Las herramientas metodológicas se entregan tanto para la recolección, resguardo y análisis de información y para el uso apropiado de esta información en los procesos de planificación.

También contribuyeron los módulos de capacitación desarrollados por el Proyecto de Post-Cosecha de la FAO en Bolivia (GCP/BOL/032/NET). Estos módulos forman parte de la estrategia de género de dicho proyecto y sirve para ayudar a las mujeres rurales a manejar problemas de rutina relacionados a actividades de post-cosecha, por ejemplo la trilla de grano y el uso de silos.

<sup>14</sup> Chile 2001, Bolivia 2002.

## Las mujeres rurales y la salud

### *Mortalidad materna*

Aún existe una brecha entre el acceso de las mujeres rurales a los servicios de salud y aquel de las mujeres urbanas. El acceso a los centros de salud está generalmente restringido y las áreas rurales continúan teniendo altos los principales indicadores de salud: maternidad y mortalidad infantil.

### *Derechos reproductivos*

Aunque ha habido un considerable progreso en términos de derechos reproductivos, las mujeres rurales no tienen el derecho de escoger el número de hijos que ellas desean tener. Existe una brecha entre la sensibilización y el empleo del control de natalidad tanto en áreas rurales como en las urbanas. Un estudio en Ecuador de 1998, indicó que el 64 por ciento de las mujeres rurales entre 15 y 49 años de edad estaban conscientes de los métodos anticonceptivos, aumentando a un 88 por ciento en las áreas urbanas (CONAMU, INEC, 2000), efectivamente sólo utilizan los métodos anticonceptivos el 23.4 por ciento de las mujeres rurales y el 35.6 por ciento de las urbanas. Sin embargo, este aumento en la sensibilización de métodos anticonceptivos redujo el número promedio de niños por mujer rural.

En Colombia, un estudio en 1995 indicó una tasa de fertilidad de 4.4 niños en áreas rurales y 2.6 en áreas urbanas (ENDS, 1995, en IICA, 2000). En Argentina el Banco Mundial condujo un estudio en tres provincias rurales del noreste y noroeste para examinar el vínculo entre salud reproductiva y pobreza y el impacto de género y roles asociados a la salud reproductiva (Banco Mundial, 2001). El perfil de la salud reproductiva se identificó como una de las causas que ameritan preocupación, especialmente en las áreas rurales, debido a factores económicos, sociales, culturales e institucionales específicos. Entre ellos se menciona especialmente el bajo status social de las mujeres; la división social del trabajo y los menores salarios de las mujeres; la falta de servicios de salud reproductiva, incluyendo planificación familiar y la falta de cobertura de salud entre otros.”

El estudio concluye que el 94 por ciento de los hogares con más de dos hijos/as se encontraban dentro de los dos quintiles más pobres. El estudio reveló que sólo el 25 por ciento de la población encuestada tenía cobertura médica. Los dos tercios de estas personas que estaban bajo cobertura médica no la utilizaban debido a que no podían pagar las contribuciones o donaciones por el servicio médico, la falta de transporte o porque no podían pagar la tarifa.



*La salud de las mujeres trabajadoras rurales*

Las mujeres asalariadas trabajan largas jornadas y a menudo desarrollan trabajos sin ninguna protección lo que las hace vulnerables al uso de pesticida. Un estudio sobre el sector frutícola de Chile señala:

**Recuadro 4.6 CONDICIONES DE TRABAJO DE LAS MUJERES EN LA FRUTICULTURA**

“El rasgo de temporalidad del trabajo de las mujeres en la fruticultura crea condiciones que lo convierten en una pesada carga: largas jornadas diarias de trabajo que puede no tener límite de horario en las plantas embaladoras, intensos ritmos dados por la perecibilidad del producto y por el predominio del pago a trato, y escaso tiempo de descanso durante la jornada. El horario habitual de las mujeres que trabajan en el “packing” se concentra entre 10 y 14 horas diarias (horario del 53% de las trabajadoras) e incluso puede llegar hasta 16 horas diarias e implicar trabajo los sábados y domingos. En el huerto las jornadas son algo más reducidas, concentrándose entre las 8 y 10 horas diarias. Los datos revelan una relación muy significativa entre “extensión de la jornada de trabajo” en el “packing” y el “nivel de agotamiento” y la manifestación de algunas de las enfermedades de stress: neurosis, úlcera o gastritis”.

Fuente: Díaz, X y J. Medel. Mujer, trabajo y salud. Los daños ocultos. En Mujeres en Riesgo. Trabajo y Salud. Red de Salud de las mujeres latinoamericanas y del Caribe. Santiago, 1997.

*Las mujeres rurales y los plaguicidas*

El valor monetario de las importaciones de plaguicidas hacia América Latina y el Caribe se ha triplicado en los últimos diez años, con el correspondiente aumento en lo que concierne a la salud humana específicamente asociada con la reproducción y a la inocuidad de los alimentos. Un estudio en Chile llamó la atención sobre este peligro, refiriéndose a las condiciones en que se realiza el trabajo de temporada en la fruticultura de exportación, donde el uso de plaguicidas ha aumentado más rápidamente que la expansión de la superficie con frutales (SERNAM, FAO, 2001).

**Tabla 4.5**  
Utilización de pesticidas en América Latina y el Caribe

	Año				
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2001
Plaguicidas (comercio) Importación – Valor (US\$1 000)	405 736	666 740	1 238 316	1 630 423	1 707 524
Uso de la tierra Área agrícola (1 000 ha)	716 842	749 542	772 651	781 137	784 205

Fuente: FAOSTAT

Aunque generalmente son los hombres los que aplican los plaguicidas, el efecto se extiende al gran número de mujeres que trabajan en los huertos y plantas empacadoras. En los períodos de “abstención” después de la aplicación de los plaguicidas, éstos son a menudo ignorados y las mujeres tienen menos cobertura social que los hombres. Igualmente preocupante es la estructura reguladora nacional, la dispersión de las unidades de inspección, y las diversas entidades de gobierno que establecen normas respecto de este tema.

Un estudio de SERNAM (2001) en Chile examinó una selección de literatura sobre la exposición a plaguicidas y problemas reproductivos que mostraron que producen defectos de nacimiento desde daños genéticos causados antes de la concepción o directamente al embrión o feto. El estudio mostró un aumento en la incidencia de bebés con malformaciones que alcanzó el 41.2 /1000 durante el período de observación. También mostró que la actividad agrícola de los padres y la exposición del hogar a los plaguicidas estaban fuertemente asociadas a las malformaciones. Una situación similar ocurrió en el sector de flores de exportación en Ecuador.

### Recuadro 4.7 CONDICIONES DE TRABAJO EN LA FLORICULTURA

“En la empresa “X” laboran 140 personas, de las cuales el 46% corresponde a mujeres. El trabajo se realiza empleando plaguicidas de mediana toxicidad para el sistema nervioso, psicológico, piel y sistema respiratorio – según la permisiva escala internacional. El personal de fumigación siempre usa la misma ropa y mascarilla del turno anterior, lo que constituye un problema por falta de higiene, limpieza de los tóxicos y contaminación respiratoria.

Las trabajadoras que se embarazan son despedidas unilateralmente aduciendo cualquier excusa como bajo rendimiento o apoyándose en que no están afiliadas a seguridad social. No disfrutan de seguridad social porque se establece un período de prueba de 3 meses, luego del cual muchas salen.

No se conceden permisos de salud, salvo en casos de gravedad extrema. En estas condiciones un 30% de las trabajadoras tiene manifiestos trastornos de salud de tipo neuropsicológico, dérmico y respiratorios, principalmente. Las trabajadoras que tienen un padecimiento prolongado tienden a ser cesadas”.

Fuente: Mujeres en la floricultura. Violación del derecho a la salud. Jaime Breith. En: Mujeres en Riesgo. Trabajo y Salud. Red de Salud de las mujeres latinoamericanas y del Caribe. Santiago-Chile, 1997.

En Guatemala, las grandes haciendas productoras de café, azúcar de caña y banano emplean gran cantidad de mujeres indígenas y ladinas, cuyas condiciones de trabajo son precarias peligrando su salud por el uso de los químicos. (Oficina Nacional de Mujeres, UNICEF, 1998).

*Mujeres rurales y el VIH/SIDA*

Desde la aparición de esta enfermedad a comienzo de la década de los ochenta y entre el año 2000, 36 millones de personas fueron diagnosticadas con VIH positivo y 5.3 millones infestados con el virus. Conforme a la OIT, se estima (1999) que la epidemia afecta principalmente a personas en edad productiva (15-49 años) y que tiene un impacto directo en el mundo del trabajo. Hasta hace poco la epidemia era considerada principalmente un problema urbano. Sin embargo la FAO y el Programa de Naciones Unidas para el SIDA indicó que en algunos países, la diferencia entre las cifras de infección VIH en las áreas urbanas y en las rurales se está acortando. Existen muchas personas en los países en desarrollo que viven en áreas rurales por lo tanto el número absoluto de víctimas es muy alto<sup>15</sup>. En la publicación *Agricultura Sostenible/desarrollo rural y vulnerabilidad de la epidemia de VIH/SIDA*, FAO y ONUSIDA pidieron a los gobiernos adoptar el control de SIDA como uno de los objetivos de su desarrollo rural.

A fines del 2001, se estimó que alrededor de 1 920 000 adultos y niños eran portadores del virus VIH/Sida en América Latina y el Caribe. De ellas 210 mil contrajeron el virus sólo en el 2002 (UNAIDS , 2002).

Es de considerar que por cada defunción provocada por el SIDA, queda un número de niños huérfanos por causa de la epidemia. En América Latina y el Caribe viven unos 580.000 huérfanos por causa del SIDA, de los cuales 130 mil viven en Brasil y 200 mil en Haití<sup>16</sup>. En las zonas rurales del Caribe la prevalencia del VIH/SIDA constituye un problema mayor.

Estadísticas de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) clasifica al Caribe como la segunda región del mundo donde prevalece el SIDA. Un tercio de los VIH positivos adultas/os son mujeres, el grupo con la tasa de infección más alta junto con los segmentos pobres de la población. Las mujeres cuyos esposos son trabajadores migrantes son especialmente vulnerables al VIH/SIDA y la migración es importante en áreas rurales.

Como las mujeres son las principales responsables de la salud de las familias, el gobierno de Barbados ha introducido una dimensión de género en sus servicios de salud.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> FAO/ONUSIDA/FAO: La epidemia del virus VIH y del SIDA se desplaza de las ciudades a las zonas rurales. es necesario un replanteamiento de la política agrícola. Comunicado de Prensa. Roma/Ginebra, 22 de junio de 2002.

<sup>16</sup> La estimación de defunciones por causa de SIDA en América Latina y el Caribe corresponde a 100 mil personas, según ONUSIDA.

<sup>17</sup> Intervención del Ministro de Desarrollo Social de Barbados a la XXIII Sesión en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas "Mujeres 2000: Equidad de género, desarrollo y paz para el Siglo XXI". Nueva York, 2000.

## Violencia y seguridad alimentaria

**La violencia inhibe la igualdad de oportunidades** y la seguridad alimentaria tanto a nivel micro en el hogar como a nivel nacional. Hasta hace poco existía la percepción cultural de que la mujer era afectada solamente por la muerte de su hijo o esposo. Sin embargo el conflicto armado parece afectar directamente a los hombres adultos, mujeres y niños/as, debido a que las mujeres participan en grupos de protesta y son víctimas de la represión, masacre y persecución por parte de grupos armados, muchas actúan como líderes campesinas (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Social, IICA. 2000). La interrupción en el ciclo productivo, el desplazamiento de la población y pérdida de la mano de obra para aumentar el trabajo agrícola, socavan la producción, la seguridad alimentaria y el ingreso.

La violencia está presente en el área rural de Colombia, pero los efectos de un pasado de conflicto armado en América Central y en Perú es aún mucho más evidente.

### Recuadro 4.8 VIOLENCIA SOCIAL Y POLÍTICA E IMPACTO SOBRE LAS MUJERES

El Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para la Mujer Rural de Colombia señala: “entre los principales obstáculos estructurales para la equidad de género se puede mencionar la violencia social y política, hoy traducida en conflicto armado que afecta a las mujeres no sólo por la pérdida de sus hijos y maridos, y los profundos traumas que esta tragedia implica (por muerte o desplazamiento forzado), sino por las violaciones y maltratos que sufren, hasta su propio secuestro, desaparición o muerte. Además implica el desmembramiento y desaparición de las organizaciones comunitarias, el aumento de la jefatura femenina, la imposibilidad de la ejecución de programas estatales en las zonas de conflicto, pérdida de sus propiedades, desarraigo, desplazamiento y el acelerado proceso de empobrecimiento.”

Fuente: Plan Para la Igualdad de Oportunidades de las Mujeres Rurales de Colombia. Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural. IICA. Bogotá 2000

## El impacto de la globalización

**No existe una definición universal de globalización** pero su principal característica modela el presente orden económico mundial. La expansión de la inversión agrícola privada en el extranjero, el procesamiento y mercado de alimentos es amplio pero no está exclusivamente en manos de las corporaciones transnacionales y el aumento en el comercio internacional de alimentos se facilita por una reducción en las barreras arancelarias. (FAO 2003).

Se ha señalado que la globalización afecta negativamente a la mayoría de los habitantes rurales. En particular las mujeres han sido marginadas del proceso en la medida que ellas constituyen un

grupo abrumador de pequeñas productoras o habitantes rurales sin tierra. Un estudio de CEPAL confirma que el sistema de comercio internacional, globalización y liberalización son desafíos básicos que enfrentan todas las naciones. La globalización impacta a los países más pequeños, más vulnerables y con menos capacidad de adaptación como es el caso de una isla pequeña en desarrollo, lo que en ningún caso es satisfactorio. Barbados y otras naciones en desarrollo enfrentan una serie de desafíos y están permanentemente en riesgo, colocando a sus ciudadanos y en especial a mujeres y niños en un status de “grupo vulnerable”. (Thorin, 2001).

La entrada de los productos agrícolas de la región a los mercados internacionales detuvo las restricciones impuestas por los países desarrollados. En la mayoría de los países de América Latina y el Caribe la promoción de las políticas de modernización agrícola beneficiaron al sector exportador. Estas políticas buscan levantar la producción y la productividad de los cultivos de exportación y diversificar la economía promoviendo nuevos cultivos para el mercado internacional.

Esta re-orientación del sector productivo ha causado cambios en los patrones laborales de los/as pequeños/as productores/as. Esto ha desplazado el trabajo de las mujeres de la agricultura de subsistencia hacia nuevas actividades de empleo en la exportación y ha acelerado la migración a centros urbanos más importantes. Desde el punto de vista de los recursos productivos, ha dado prioridad a actividades de exportación dando facilidades de crédito y un mayor apoyo institucional que lo que pueden dar el resto de las actividades agrícolas.

Las actividades de subsistencia continúan con baja productividad y un bajo valor de estos productos en el mercado. La baja productividad se estanca en técnicas de producción de pequeña escala, baja calificación de la mano de obra y falta de infraestructura de producción básica, alto costo de capital y falta de claridad en los derechos de propiedad de la tierra. Todos estos rasgos indican las condiciones de producción de muchas mujeres rurales.

Estos sectores necesitan revitalizarse a través de mecanismos que fomenten la integración de los pequeños productores, especialmente las mujeres a fin de guiarlos hacia un proceso de modernización, de tal modo que levanten su productividad. Esto facilitaría su acceso a los recursos productivos (tierra, maquinaria y equipo, crédito, capacitación, información de mercado y tecnología) y elevaría su compromiso en la toma de decisiones que afectan a su sector.

# El enfoque de género en las políticas de desarrollo rural

## Mujeres rurales, seguridad alimentaria y formulación de políticas

**Es ampliamente reconocido que el progreso** hacia seguridad alimentaria para superar la pobreza y la indigencia, requieren de la implementación de políticas sociales sensibles a género que reconozcan en su totalidad el potencial y las limitaciones de cada género tal como lo determinan los respectivos roles en la sociedad. El progreso se ha hecho incorporando el enfoque de género en las políticas públicas que afectan el diario vivir de las mujeres rurales.

Es allí donde se ha producido un cambio de mentalidad, pasando desde una mentalidad orientada hacia la “ayuda benevolente” hacia un enfoque de equidad de género. Gradualmente el proceso ha avanzado desde acciones ad-hoc o pequeños proyectos orientados hacia las mujeres, a la integración de género con planes de equidad de

oportunidades y políticas de desarrollo rural (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, IICA, 2000).

En algunos países, este progreso ha tomado la forma de Planes con Igualdad de Oportunidades para las mujeres rurales y propuestas de transversalización de género en las políticas de los ministerios de agricultura y desarrollo rural. Varios ministerios de agricultura han establecido mecanismos especiales para vigilar el proceso.

Es importante considerar tanto

los avances como los defectos en el más amplio contexto de las deficiencias nacionales. En los puntos débiles se incluye: la ausencia de políticas integradas para dirigir el desarrollo rural más allá de los aspectos sectoriales, limitaciones que la macroeconomía impone a las políticas de desarrollo rural, escaso progreso en la descentralización y formulación de políticas territoriales, y el fracaso de las políticas para superar la pobreza.

### Recuadro 4.9 REVALORIZACIÓN DEL ESPACIO RURAL

El espacio rural ha perdido importancia en la región. El desarrollo rural no se encuentra entre las prioridades de los gobiernos, y siguen prevaleciendo los principales obstáculos en el nivel internacional, nacional y local para el desarrollo rural sostenible. Varios Planes de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las mujeres rurales han destacado la necesidad estratégica de reactivar el campo, como espacio territorial y recuperar el agro como elemento clave para la reactivación económica de los países y la disminución de la pobreza. Además se refieren a las restricciones existentes actualmente, así por ejemplo en Colombia, se señala explícitamente que esa tarea será imposible de lograr “sin la eliminación de barreras arancelarias, subsidios y demás instrumentos de protección a la producción y con una mayor productividad a menores costos y la calificación e integración de la mano de obra tanto masculina como femenina en el campo.”

Fuente: Plan Para la Igualdad de Oportunidades de las Mujeres Rurales de Colombia. Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural. IICA. Bogotá 2000

## Planes de igualdad de oportunidades para las mujeres rurales

Los planes de igualdad de oportunidades para las mujeres rurales han resultado del fracaso de los Planes Generales de Igualdad de Oportunidades para reflejar las condiciones de la mujer rural en el desarrollo. Tal como lo indica el Cuadro 4.10, los Planes de Igualdad de Oportunidades existen en la mayoría de los países y facilitan la incorporación de género en las políticas públicas pero no todos ellos se refieren explícitamente a las mujeres rurales.

Ejemplos seleccionados de estos Planes de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres Rurales se describen a continuación:

**Recuadro 4.10 PLAN DE IGUALDAD DE OPORTUNIDADES EN AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE**

Argentina	Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades 1995-1999
Belice	Plan Estratégico de Equidad e Igualdad: Facilitando la implementación de un sistema nacional de género. Septiembre 1998
Bolivia	Plan Nacional de Seguimiento a las Recomendaciones de la Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer, Beijing, 1995
Brasil	Estrategias para la Igualdad: Plataforma de Acción para la implementación de los compromisos asumidos por Brasil en la IV Conferencia de la Mujer
Chile	Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para Hombres y Mujeres 2000-2006
Colombia	Revisión Después de la Conferencia de Beijing – Implementando el Contrato con las Mujeres del Mundo: De las Palabras a la Acción. 1996
Costa Rica	Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades
Cuba	Plan de Acción Nacional de la República de Cuba de Seguimiento a la IV Conferencia de la ONU sobre la Mujer. 1997
Ecuador	Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades 1996-2000 Plan Operativo Anual de la Dirección Nacional de la Mujer 1997
El Salvador	Política Nacional de la Mujer. 1997
Haití	Plan de Acción Post-Beijing .1997
Jamaica	Plan Nacional de Acción para la Implementación de la Plataforma de Beijing. s/f
Panamá	Plan Nacional Mujer y Desarrollo: 1996-2001
Paraguay	Plan Nacional de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres 1997-2001

## Chile

**Las Propuestas de Políticas de Igualdad de Oportunidades** para la Mujer Rural en Chile, es un documento complementario al Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades. El documento destaca la diversidad y variedad cultural, las situaciones sociales y económicas en las cuales las mujeres rurales viven y proponen medidas para ayudar a construir sus capacidades y habilidades. (SERNAM,1999).

Este Plan fue elaborado en 1997 por la Mesa de Trabajo de la Mujer Rural, una plataforma de cooperación y diálogo para las agencias gubernamentales, no gubernamentales e internacionales y para asociaciones campesinas e indígenas.

Las propuestas incluyen medidas para abordar la pobreza de las mujeres rurales, mejorar sus condiciones de vivienda, salud y educación y en particular apartar la discriminación en sus actividades productivas con un enfoque especial hacia la agricultura, pesca y silvicultura. Estas medidas existen para apartar la discriminación de las mujeres en su diario vivir en cuanto a sus labores domésticas y reproductivas.

Las principales líneas de acción para facilitar el acceso y mejorar el status de las mujeres en el empleo y mercados de productos básicos; promover las oportunidades de educación que faciliten la integración de la mujer rural en la sociedad; proveer una atención de salud para las mujeres rurales que mejore la protección de la salud laboral de las mujeres; fortalecer la participación política y social de las mujeres rurales y su acceso a las instancias decisorias; fortalecer las estructuras institucionales públicas para la implementación, monitoreo y evaluación de las políticas de igualdad de oportunidades de las mujeres rurales.

## Colombia

**Colombia fue uno de los primeros países** que formuló políticas para la mujer rural. En 1984 aprobó una Política para las Mujeres Rurales e Indígenas y en 1993 se incorporó una nueva Política para la Mujer Rural en la Política de Igualdad y Participación para las Mujeres Rurales, aprobada en 1994.

El propósito estratégico del Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para la Mujer Rural en Colombia es para ayudar a reducir los obstáculos políticos, socio-económicos y culturales que impiden que las mujeres rurales disfruten de la igualdad de oportunidades y para que se dediquen de lleno al crecimiento económico, al desarrollo social y al ejercicio de sus derechos como ciudadanas. (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, IICA, 2006).



El Plan tiene cinco objetivos estratégicos:

- Eliminar obstáculos para el acceso de las mujeres rurales a actividades que generen ingresos.
- Otorgar a las mujeres rurales un mayor acceso a servicios sociales de mejor calidad a fin de elevar la calidad de vida de ellas y de sus familias.
- Consolidar la ciudadanía de las mujeres rurales y participación en la toma de decisiones.
- Promover el reconocimiento y respeto a la diversidad en las características culturales y de género del área rural, y de mujeres indígenas y afro-colombianas, eliminando así todas las formas de discriminación permitiéndoles que se reafirmen o recuperen su identidad.
- Facilitar la incorporación de la perspectiva de género en la institucionalidad, políticas y medidas que regulen el sector rural y su apoyo a las instituciones.

El Plan identifica como uno de los principales obstáculos para la igualdad de oportunidades al modelo macro-económico existente y a la crisis económica que lo acompaña; medidas que supuestamente eran neutrales han tenido una clara muestra de discriminación e inequidad a nivel meso y micro económico, especialmente la excesiva sobre carga de trabajo y responsabilidades que tienen las mujeres en sus hogares.

El Plan enfatiza la necesidad de que las entidades gubernamentales amplíen la producción de estadísticas con indicadores de género e instrumentos en relación al sector rural.

En Colombia existe un proyecto de ley con miras hacia el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de las mujeres rurales especialmente aquellas con bajos ingresos. Se aplicarán medidas especiales para acelerar la equidad entre las mujeres y los hombres del sector rural. Dicha ley contiene disposiciones relativas a: i) la participación equitativa de las mujeres rurales en los fondos de financiamiento del sector rural; ii) el régimen de seguridad social de las mujeres rurales; iii) normas relacionadas con la educación, capacitación y recreación de las mujeres rurales; iv) con la participación de las mujeres rurales en los órganos de decisión; v) con la reforma agraria; otras suposiciones varias.

## Carencias

**Una investigación realizada en Ecuador muestra** el fracaso de las políticas agrícolas y macro económicas para tomar en cuenta las necesidades de las mujeres rurales y la incorporación de género en los programas nacionales para superar la pobreza ha sido débil. Algunos programas básicos para superar la pobreza tales como el Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia (FISE), el Bono Solidario y el Bono de Emergencia, no han incluido el criterio para reconocer la equidad de género y no han visualizado las medidas preactivas que beneficien a las mujeres (Cuvi, 2001).

Un obstáculo que se señaló para la integración de género en los programas es la falta de mujeres profesionales (y profesionales hombres) que conozcan los planes de desarrollo rural con enfoque de género y el uso limitado de herramientas de género en la programación. El estudio menciona los problemas que tienen las beneficiarias de programas para el acceso al crédito y señala el desconocimiento de sus derechos.

## Transversalización de género en las políticas agropecuarias y de desarrollo rural

**Los esfuerzos para la transversalización de género** en las políticas públicas ha avanzado paralelamente con la creación de mecanismos ministeriales dedicados al logro de la misma. La acción conjunta de organizaciones internacionales y ministerios de agricultura y desarrollo rural han sido útiles en cuanto a la entrega de una capacitación de género.

### Barbados

**En la sesión vigésimo tercera** de la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas sobre las *Mujeres 2000: Equidad de género, desarrollo y paz para el siglo XXI*, que se llevó a cabo en junio del año 2000, el Ministerio de Desarrollo Social en Barbados informó sobre el establecimiento de mecanismos institucionales para la transversalización con enfoque de género en todas las esferas de desarrollo y se han creado puntos focales en todos los ministerios y departamentos para asegurar la transversalización de género en todos los programas.

### Brasil

**El Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo del Brasil** introdujo una serie de iniciativas para estructurar la forma de corregir las desigualdades de género. A través del Decreto N° 33 del 8 de marzo del 2001 se estableció formalmente el Programa de Acciones Afirmativas para la Promoción de la Igualdad de Oportunidades y Trato para Hombres y Mujeres, para que fuese iniciado por el Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo y el Instituto de dicho Ministerio y el Instituto Nacional de Colonización y Reforma Agraria (INCRA) y para los beneficiarios y beneficiarias.

Se adoptaron medidas que incluían cambios en las reglas de selección para facilitar el acceso de las mujeres a la reforma agraria, reemplazando el término “ama de casa” por el de “trabajadora rural” a fin de asegurar la seguridad social de las mujeres y los derechos laborales; la modificación de las normas de titulación de la tierra con el acto de propiedad o contrato de concesión ahora

extendido a la pareja, cubre uniones libres reconocidas. Existe una campaña para que las mujeres ocupen el 30 por ciento de los cargos directivos entregando capacitación gerencial diferenciada y procesos especiales de tutoría para las nuevas mujeres reclutas. Hay una línea de crédito específico para mujeres, con un 30 por ciento de fondos asignados para mujeres rurales y un porcentaje similar para capacitación y asistencia técnica. La re-estructuración del Instituto Nacional de Colonización y reforma Agraria, INCRA, se logró con la designación de hombres y mujeres para el cargo de administrador regional del Programa de Acción Afirmativa, supervisada por la Superintendencia de Desarrollo Agrario.

A partir de este marco institucional fijado por el Ministerio de Agricultura más los estudios y documentos producidos por el Proyecto INCRA/FAO/TCP/BRA/8922(a), se llegó a la formulación de una Propuesta Estratégica para la Integración de Género, Raza, Etnia y Perspectiva Generacional en los Programas y Proyectos de Agricultura Campesina y Reforma Agraria.

La propuesta incluye estrategias a nivel institucional y macro (que debería alcanzar el nivel micro a través de acciones institucionales). La propuesta aspira asegurar que los proyectos y programas de agricultura campesina y reforma agraria sean transversalizados por género. Cada una de las Estrategias tiene asociada un conjunto de acciones.

#### Recuadro 4.11 PROPUESTAS ESTRATÉGICAS PARA LA INTEGRACIÓN DE GÉNERO, RAZA, ETNIA Y PERSPECTIVA DE GENERACIÓN EN LA REFORMA AGRARIA Y EN LOS PROGRAMAS DE AGRICULTURA CAMPESINA EN BRASIL

##### En el nivel Macro

- 1 Crear un órgano específico en la estructura organizacional como forma de consolidar el Programa de Acciones Afirmativas del MDA/INCRA, vinculado al Gabinete, a la Presidencia del INCRA y, en los Estados al Gabinete de la Superintendencia Regional, con asignación de recursos humanos, presupuestarios y financieros propios, garantizando la sustentabilidad y la transversalidad del enfoque de género, raza, etnia y generación en los programas y proyectos de Reforma Agraria y de Agricultura Familiar.
- 2 Incluir en el Estatuto de la Tierra y en las leyes posteriores los vocablos mujeres y hombres, en lugar del genérico masculino, lo que significa la eliminación de las concepciones que consideran sólo al hombre como jefe de familia.

##### En el nivel institucional

- 1 Hacer efectivo el funcionamiento del órgano específico, de acuerdo al punto 1. del nivel macro con asignación de recursos humanos, presupuestarios y financieros propios, con atribuciones generales para movilizar, supervisar y monitorear las acciones a ser desarrolladas.
- 2 Desarrollar indicadores para medir los avances, resultados e impactos de las actividades desarrolladas por el Programa de Acciones Afirmativas.
- 3 Promover la sensibilización y capacitación para dirigentes, servidores y servidoras del MDA/INCRA y agricultores y agricultoras familiares.
- 4 Reformular normas e instrumentos de manera que permitan identificar y visualizar los aportes de las mujeres y jóvenes a la Reforma Agraria y a la Agricultura Familiar, garantizando su mayor inclusión en los procesos de ejecución de catastros, selección y titulación.
- 5 Generar un proceso de discusión interna amplia y democrática incorporando a

todas las Superintendencias Regionales y demás órganos del Ministerio de Desarrollo Agrario, con vistas a definir los procedimientos para ampliar el acceso de mujeres a los cargos de dirección, buscando alcanzar la meta de un mínimo de 30% de cargos ocupados por mujeres hasta el año 2003, de acuerdo con el Decreto N° 120 del 22 de mayo del 2001.

- 6 Desarrollar acciones de carácter informativo para el público objetivo de la Reforma Agraria, democratizando el acceso a la información, como un paso fundamental para la construcción de la ciudadanía.
- 7 Incluir las categorías de género, raza, etnia y generación en los estudios e investigaciones a ser desarrollados en el ámbito del MDA y del INCRA.
- 8 Desarrollar actividades para estimular la organización de las mujeres y fortalecer las ya existentes, contribuyendo para su empoderamiento y para el ejercicio efectivo de la ciudadanía.

Abriendo brechas:

perspectivas actuales y futuras para las mujeres rurales en la agricultura

## Chile

**En Chile, la Comisión Consultiva** sobre Igualdad de Oportunidades del Ministerio de Agricultura fue establecido por Decreto N° 180 de la Oficina de la Contraloría General de la República en 1999. A solicitud del Ministro de Agricultura, la Comisión examinó el Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para Hombres y Mujeres 2000-2010 e identificó vinculaciones o áreas de acción importantes para la Política Agrícola Nacional, determinando áreas donde cada servicio ministerial podría específicamente presentar un proyecto de igualdad de oportunidades. Posteriormente, el 8 de marzo del 2001, el Ministro de Agricultura emitió un compromiso ministerial para la equidad de género.

## Costa Rica

**En Costa Rica, el Centro Nacional para el Desarrollo** de las Mujeres y la Familia, con la ayuda de FAO, confeccionó un borrador de proyecto sobre el Addendum del Sector Agropecuario y del Medio Ambiente del Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para Mujeres y Hombres 1997-2001<sup>18</sup>. Este addendum comprende los lineamientos para integrar una perspectiva de género en la agricultura y el medio ambiente. El mismo fue el resultado de una evaluación crítica del status y condiciones de la participación de las mujeres en la agricultura y la agroforestería dinámica del país. Se hicieron consultas con instituciones del sector y se redactó un documento con la participación de personal técnico.

Luego se consultó con autoridades de cuatro instituciones, lo que dio origen a un documento final que fue presentado por el Ministro de Agricultura y Ganadería, el Ministro de Medio Ambiente y Energía, y el Director Ejecutivo del Centro Nacional para el Desarrollo de las Mujeres y la Familia, órgano coordinador de las políticas públicas para la equidad de género en Costa Rica.

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<sup>18</sup> Proyecto FAO TCP/COS/4552 MAG/FAO/Género, con la participación de la consultora experta en Género y Políticas Públicas Patricia Bifani.

**Recuadro 4.12A COSTA RICA EL ADDENDUM DE LA AGRICULTURA Y DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE DEL PLAN DE IGUALDAD DE OPORTUNIDADES PARA HOMBRES Y MUJERES, (1997-2001)**

La consideración de la dimensión de género en los lineamientos políticos del sector agropecuario y del ambiente, tiene como objetivos globales:

- 1 Mejorar los mecanismos institucionales para garantizar la igualdad de oportunidades en el acceso a los servicios que ofrecen los sectores agropecuario y del ambiente y fortalecer los mecanismos que permiten la apropiación de los frutos de su trabajo productivo.
- 2 Reconocer y valorar el papel de las mujeres campesinas en la producción agropecuaria, en la reproducción de la fuerza de trabajo en el agro y en su rol comunitario.
- 3 Fortalecer la competitividad de la actividad de pequeñas productoras y productores, mediante el mejoramiento de su productividad y eficiencia en el trabajo agrícola, el incremento de su participación y representatividad en la toma de decisiones.
- 4 Favorecer la inserción de las mujeres campesinas en aquellas actividades que contribuyan a garantizar la seguridad alimentaria y a generar un mayor valor agregado.
- 5 Coadyuvar al empoderamiento de las mujeres como agentes dinamizadoras del desarrollo, mediante la apertura de espacios para el control de los factores de producción como tierra, trabajo, capital, ingresos, mercados y otros.

**Recuadro 4.12B [CONTINUACIÓN]: EJES ESTRATÉGICOS DEL PLAN DE IGUALDAD DE OPORTUNIDADES PARA MUJERES Y HOMBRES: CRITERIO DE DEFINICIÓN**

Este instrumento estratégico de políticas de género se estructura en torno a seis ejes interrelacionados, y se entiende el proceso de transformación productiva como un sistema compuesto de diversas etapas que van desde el suministro de insumos hasta que el producto final llega a manos del consumidor.

La visión sistémica de la realidad desde la perspectiva de género ha sido ya utilizada por el enfoque ASEG (Análisis Socioeconómico de Género), propuesto por la FAO para abordar el desarrollo rural. Esta orientación materializa los objetivos de cambios explícitos en la reconversión articulándolos con los propósitos del ASEG. Es por esto que la dimensión de género es relevante en cada una de las etapas e interrelaciones que componen este sistema."

**Ejes Estratégicos** (considerando el proceso productivo como un sistema que enfatiza el fortalecimiento de productoras y productores, se establecen los siguientes ejes estratégicos):

- 1 Igualdad de oportunidades en el acceso y control de la tierra.
- 2 Igualdad de acceso y control de los recursos naturales y sostenibilidad de su gestión.
- 3 Igualdad de oportunidades en el acceso al financiamiento rural.
- 4 Igualdad de oportunidades en el acceso y control a los servicios de transferencia tecnológica y capacitación.
- 5 Acceso equitativo a los mercados laborales y al empleo agrícola y no agrícola y visibilización de productoras y productores.

6 Igualdad de oportunidades en la gestión empresarial (mercadeo y agroindustrial).

Interrelacionados con estos ejes se proponen tres componentes:

- ❖ La participación como actividad permanente y presente en cada proceso decisorio.
- ❖ La información como recurso esencial dentro de la globalización mundial y del nuevo escenario productivo.
- ❖ La organización, requisito esencial dentro de la reconversión productiva del sector.

Fuente: Centro Nacional para el Desarrollo de la Mujer y la Familia. Addendum de los sectores agropecuario y del ambiente al Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades 1997-2001. Colección Documentos N° 17. San José, Costa Rica. 1997.

## Guatemala

Hacia fines del año 2000, el Ministro de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación de Guatemala, emitió un decreto que establece una unidad ejecutiva ministerial especial, la Unidad de Género, Mujeres y Juventud Rural (Decreto Ministerial N° 1595).

Esta unidad ejecutiva especial está encargada de: asegurar la incorporación de género en las políticas, programas y proyectos del Ministerio; formular acciones afirmativas que ayudarán a eliminar las desigualdades de género y edad; fomentar las condiciones de igualdad para el acceso de mujeres y jóvenes a la propiedad de la tierra y resolver discusiones de socios; promover la capacitación, organización y consolidación de las agrupaciones de mujeres; asegurar el cumplimiento de compromisos internacionales que hace el gobierno de Guatemala y los compromisos de Acuerdos de Paz en lo que respecta a género, mujer y juventud rural.

Guatemala aprobó una Política para la Participación de las Mujeres Rurales 2000-2004 que tiene como objetivo integrar a las mujeres rurales al desarrollo de actividades productivas, habilitando su acceso a la propiedad de la tierra y otros recursos productivos y su capacidad para formar asociaciones y organizaciones, de tal manera que puedan mejorar su economía y condición social. Una propuesta específica es la de verificar que las políticas rurales sobre el acceso a la tierra, asuntos financieros y otros recursos, demuestren la inclusión de la mujer. (Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación, 2000).

# Temas emergentes

## Migración de las mujeres rurales

### *Continúa la migración rural-urbana*

La nivelación de cifras absolutas de la población rural indica una continua migración rural-urbana. Las consecuencias de esta migración en los grandes sectores de pobreza de la población rural y su seguridad alimentaria son contradictorias. De acuerdo a Taylor, las investigaciones muestran que la migración y como resultado su pérdida de las actividades domésticas, tiene un impacto negativo en la producción agrícola, al menos a corto plazo. Agrega que las remesas de los migrantes pueden ayudar directa o indirectamente a reducir la pobreza siempre que: i) la pérdida de la mano de obra familiar como resultado de la migración, no impacte significativamente las actividades de producción en los hogares pobres; ii) las remesas sean enviadas masivamente a los hogares pobres; iii) las remesas sean dirigidas para aliviar las restricciones de producción de los hogares pobres; y iv) las remesas y la producción provoquen un efecto multiplicador considerable en los ingresos locales para los beneficios primordiales de los pobres. (Taylor, 2001).

### *¿Feminización o masculinización del campo?*

No existe información pero varios estudios indican que las mujeres emigran más que los hombres. Un estudio en Colombia evidencia que la migración rural-urbana es predominantemente femenina. El empleo agrícola y el acceso a la tierra son escasos para ambos sexos, en especial para las mujeres; las mujeres rurales sin oficio tienen acceso al servicio doméstico en las áreas urbanas que es trabajo que más emprenden. Las mujeres son más proclives a emigrar debido a razones familiares, ya sea debido a desalojamiento familiar o como una estrategia para salir adelante a través del envío de remesas a la familia. El estudio concluye que los factores que influyen en la migración interna se relacionan a la deficiencia de la reforma agraria para generar empleo rural o para resolver los problemas de carencia de tierra, la desigualdad de género y la violencia política.

El Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres Rurales en Colombia señaló una gran migración de las mujeres jóvenes a las áreas urbanas donde ingresan a la economía informal o al empleo doméstico; también son víctimas de la prostitución y al comercio forzado de sexo. (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, IICA, 2000b).

La migración es un fenómeno extremadamente complejo que tiene múltiples facetas en los diferentes contextos socio-económicos y agro-ecológicos. La norma parece tener una proporción más alta de mujeres migrantes mientras en otras áreas los migrantes son en su mayoría hombres, especialmente temporeros. Un estudio en Bolivia (Villanueva, 2002) basado en datos de comunidades seleccionadas de Potosí, muestran una mayor proporción de mujeres (52.5 por ciento) que de hombres (47.4 por ciento), y las diferencias son mayores con la emigración temporal de los hombres. De esta forma desde noviembre a enero y desde abril a octubre, es común ver más mujeres y niños en edad escolar en las comunidades rurales.

En algunos países las mujeres rurales emigran al extranjero, por ejemplo en la República Dominicana, que es uno de los países de la región con mayores niveles de emigración.

### *La necesidad de mayores estudios*

La complejidad del tema requiere hacer nuevos estudios en los patrones generales de la migración rural-urbana y los factores asociados, y de sus consecuencias en los puntos de partida y destino. Los estudios realizados con perspectiva de género iluminarán muchos aspectos interesantes.

La migración rural-urbana se estudió en forma extensa en la década de los setenta y se enfocó en el impacto de los migrantes en las áreas urbanas receptoras; se produjo un amplio aumento documentado en la pobreza y la marginalización alrededor de las grandes ciudades. Al mismo tiempo, Taylor indica que los estudios sobre el impacto rural enfocado hacia la forma en que los mercados de empleo rural se adaptan a la pérdida de mano de obra y capital.

El censo de población que se efectuó en muchos países el año 2000, es una buena base y oportunidad para estudios posteriores.

### *El envejecimiento del campo*

La migración de los hombres rurales jóvenes y las mujeres hacia las áreas urbanas y la declinación relativa de la fertilidad ha causado un envejecimiento progresivo de la población rural. Esto coloca nuevos desafíos en la búsqueda de mecanismos para retener a los hombres jóvenes y mujeres en el campo, especialmente ya que la generación actual tiene un mayor nivel de educación que en el pasado. Se necesita un medio rural que pueda encontrar las expectativas de esta generación y que pueda permitir la transferencia en vida de la propiedad de los ancianos a los jóvenes.



La población de más edad, especialmente las mujeres ancianas, quienes normalmente sobreviven a sus esposos accediendo de esta forma a la propiedad de la tierra, pueden jugar un papel importante en la formación de acuerdos legales con los jóvenes para el beneficio de ambas generaciones.

## Empleo rural no agrícola de las mujeres rurales

**Desde la perspectiva de género** cobra importancia la tendencia ascendente del empleo rural no agrícola. Existen escasos estudios con indicadores de género para este tipo de empleo, aún cuando existen estadísticas que señalan su importancia para las mujeres.

Los formuladores de políticas necesitan tomar en consideración la contribución que hacen las mujeres a la seguridad alimentaria a través del ingreso rural no agrícola. Esta realidad necesita ser dirigida a través de políticas de educación, de tal forma que las mujeres puedan aprender habilidades en las áreas ocupacionales actuales y escaparse de depender exclusivamente del servicio doméstico y otros sectores subordinados de la economía.

## La reforma del Estado, la nueva institucionalidad y el enfoque de género

**La reforma del Estado y la modernización** de la región da una oportunidad para discutir el rol de los mecanismos nacionales para promover la equidad de género. Las políticas adaptadas para lograr la equidad de género en las áreas rurales serán mejor formuladas si las instituciones para los asuntos de la mujer examinan el desarrollo rural y buscan la transversalización de género en las agencias responsables del desarrollo rural.

El género sólo puede ser expresado integralmente y en todo el sistema, por lo tanto es importante pasar rápidamente del nivel sectorial hacia las políticas nacionales e integrar todas las instituciones públicas y privadas que estén relacionadas con el desarrollo rural. La descentralización requiere de un mayor estudio de tal forma de intensificar la perspectiva de género y progresar.

Finalmente, el debate sobre género recién ha comenzado en los mecanismos de gobierno y en el manejo de finanzas públicas y en la asignación de recursos; esta es un área que requiere un examen más amplio.

## Las mujeres y los recursos genéticos

**Renovada importancia se agrega al valor** de los recursos genéticos. La región es especialmente rica en biodiversidad y es la fuente de origen de muchos alimentos básicos de la humanidad. El germoplasma de estos cultivos alimentarios y su diversidad genética son cruciales para abordar el tema del cambio medioambiental (clima, suelo, vegetación, especies asociadas y predatoras) y cambios sociales (hábitos alimenticios, técnicas de cultivo, tipos de agricultura) que afectan la agricultura.

La Revolución Verde ha hecho avances importantes con variedades mejoradas, biotecnología y plantas transgénicas; estos beneficios llevan consigo el riesgo de perder la biodiversidad a menos que se adopte una adecuada protección. En este sentido existe una necesidad para destacar el rol que han jugado las mujeres en la conservación de la diversidad genética. Existen escasos estudios del rol de la cultura humana, de los cambios en la evolución de especies, muy poco se ha considerado el rol de la sociedad y menos aún al de las mujeres.

La FAO en Guatemala estudió el rol de las mujeres en la conservación de recursos genéticos del maíz (FAO, IPGRI, 2001) documentando el rol decisivo de las mujeres, especialmente en actividades de post cosecha y en selección de semillas tanto para la siembra como por sus cualidades culinarias. Las actividades de las mujeres han resultado en la conservación de variedades indígenas de maíz, que es tanto el alimento básico local y está presente en el corazón de la visión mundial de la cultura Maya.

Estudios similares se requieren en otros países a fin de abrir nuevas avenidas para apoyar la contribución de las mujeres a la administración de la biodiversidad, especialmente recursos fito-genéticos.

## Hacia una nueva concepción del espacio rural

**Es necesaria una nueva percepción** del espacio rural; hombres y mujeres aún viven en desigualdad de género con grandes carencias en sus condiciones de vida si se compara con los avances en otros lugares del mundo. Los habitantes rurales están comprometidos con la actividad agrícola la que continúa siendo principal para su existencia pero también lo están comprometidos en un espectro cada vez más amplio de la actividad económica. Las diversas visiones mundiales existentes en la dimensión rural necesitan acomodarse para que el desarrollo rural beneficie a todos.

# Lecciones del Siglo XXI

**La integración con perspectiva de género** en las políticas de desarrollo agrícola, programas y proyectos está gradualmente ganando terreno. En este punto, FAO está promoviendo un acercamiento al Análisis Socio Económico y de Género (ASEG) en un gran número de proyectos, permitiendo un conocimiento más profundo de las necesidades de género, potencialidades y limitaciones existentes en la vida rural.

Los proyectos incluyen Proyectos Especiales para la Seguridad Alimentaria, Proyectos de Post-Cosecha, Proyectos Agroforestales y los Proyectos y Programas Propuestos para el Desarrollo en Zonas de Montañas entre otros.

Todas estas actividades han permitido una retroalimentación para la incorporación de género en las políticas públicas y en las actividades de las organizaciones no gubernamentales.

A continuación en el Recuadro 4.13 se da un breve resumen de experiencias en América Latina y el Caribe, el cual ilustra la transversalización de género y ofrece un aporte metodológico.

## Recuadro 4.13 INCORPORANDO EL ENFOQUE DE GÉNERO EN EL DESARROLLO AGROFORESTAL COMUNAL EN BOLIVIA

El proyecto "Desarrollo Forestal Comunal en el Altiplano Boliviano" inició sus acciones a partir de 1991, con la finalidad de "contribuir a elevar el nivel de vida de los campesinos del altiplano boliviano, mediante la integración, dentro de su sistema productivo, de actividades forestales autosostenidas que les permitan satisfacer sus necesidades de productos forestales, aumentar su producción agropecuaria y conservar sus recursos naturales".

Actualmente el Proyecto Q'omer Jallp'a FAO/ Holanda-Prefectura de Potosí tiene como área de cobertura un total de 98 comunidades ubicadas en 13 Secciones Municipales de 9 Provincias del departamento de Potosí. El proyecto se ha desarrollado en dos fases: la primera, en que prevalece el enfoque de Desarrollo Forestal Comunal, que comprende las actividades realizadas entre 1991 y 1996, y la segunda fase en que se da un viraje hacia el enfoque de Desarrollo Integral de Espacios Productivos, que se aplica entre 1997 y 2001.

El proyecto se desarrolla en una zona en que los recursos naturales eran escasamente aprovechados debido al desconocimiento del manejo tecnológico en la producción agrícola y frutícola; así mismo había una alta exposición a los factores climáticos (bajas temperaturas y lluvias irregulares) principalmente en comunidades ubicadas en puna. En los últimos años se observa una modificación significativa del ecosistema en estas comunidades, gracias a la habilitación y recuperación de tierras para el cultivo, la introducción de nuevas especies forestales, frutícolas y agrícolas, acompañado de la construcción de infraestructura productiva, lo que posibilitó un mejor aprovechamiento de los recursos existentes.

#### Recuadro 4.13

Durante la primera fase del proyecto, se brindó apoyo al fortalecimiento de las organizaciones productivas, identificando necesidades y demandas solamente a nivel familiar, sin considerar las demandas diferenciadas de hombres y mujeres al interior de la misma; lo cual de alguna manera mejoró las condiciones de vida familiar y de las mujeres.

En la segunda etapa se consideró el enfoque de desarrollo rural con equidad de género, (Gormatz, 1994), basado metodológicamente en el "Análisis Socioeconómico de Género" (ASEG), que aborda la problemática de género en el desarrollo comunitario desde una perspectiva integral; no se busca únicamente la necesidad de hacer participar a las mujeres, sino establecer una relación de responsabilidad compartida entre hombres y mujeres en el desarrollo de la comunidad. Sobre esta base se sostiene la propuesta estratégica de acción dentro del proyecto agroforestal, aplicando el enfoque planteado. De esta manera nos permite pensar en un desarrollo humano sostenible, donde haya beneficios dirigidos a toda la población, aprovechando las capacidades de los individuos, hombres y mujeres; sobre la base de los recursos, estrategias y alternativas que desarrollan estas comunidades rurales.

Este enfoque actualiza el enfoque de género bajo las crecientes transformaciones que se dan en la sociedad, basados principalmente en los aspectos socioeconómicos. Esta es la razón para cambiar el anterior planteamiento asistencialista de Mujeres en Desarrollo (MED) que se aplicaba en el proyecto, el cual sólo enfatizaba el desarrollo de la población femenina, por el de Desarrollo Rural con Equidad de Género.

#### Lineamientos del enfoque utilizado

Sobre la base del enfoque de Desarrollo Rural con Equidad de Género y la propuesta operativa enmarcada en el Análisis Socioeconómico de Género (ASEG), se plantean los siguientes lineamientos que complementan el enfoque de género propuesto para el proyecto:

- ❖ Transversalidad del componente género.
- ❖ Promover el desarrollo agroforestal, productivo y social con enfoque de género.
- ❖ Contribuir a superar las relaciones actuales de desigualdad de género entre hombres y mujeres.
- ❖ Contribuir a valorar el carácter económico del trabajo reproductivo.
- ❖ Apoyar la inserción de las mujeres en ámbitos de la vida pública.

De acuerdo con la metodología ASEG se plantearon 3 ámbitos de análisis que ordenaron el trabajo en sus distintos niveles:

#### DINAMICA DEL CONTEXTO DE DESARROLLO

- Permitted comprender los factores económicos, sociales, demográficos, culturales, ambientales y políticos, así como las distintas interrelaciones de los mismos, tanto en el pasado como en el presente y futuro.

#### ANALISIS DE LA DINAMICA DE LAS FUENTES DE SUBSISTENCIA FAMILIAR

- Posibilitó entender las necesidades básicas que tienen ambos géneros, las oportunidades y limitaciones que poseen respecto al alcance de sus objetivos de desarrollo.

#### PRIORIDADES DE LOS AGENTES INTERESADOS EN LAS ACCIONES DE DESARROLLO

La información de este ámbito permitió planificar el desarrollo basado en las prioridades de las mujeres y los hombres de una comunidad en base a sus recursos y demanda de mercado.

La sistematización de las experiencias en la incorporación de la temática de género en los procesos de desarrollo apoyados por el proyecto permitió:

- ❖ Cotejar estas experiencias con las pautas esenciales del diagnóstico situacional para plantear líneas de acción más pertinentes en la incorporación del enfoque de género en el proyecto
- ❖ Conocer las distintas estrategias de manejo de recursos naturales y económicos que utilizan los pobladores, hombres y mujeres, de las comunidades.
- ❖ Identificar los roles productivos de hombres y mujeres dentro el sistema y los subsistemas de producción

## Recuadro 4.13

- ❖ Obtener un consenso de prioridades y planes de acción de desarrollo con enfoque de género, con beneficiarios/as y autoridades locales.

**EVALUACIÓN DEL ENFOQUE GÉNERO EN LA SEGUNDA FASE:**

- ❖ En la mayoría de las comunidades se tiene una participación hasta cierto punto funcional, pero también concentrada en la realización de actividades, sin acceder a otros espacios.
- ❖ Prácticamente los ámbitos de planificación, dirección, toma de decisiones, representación, quedan aún fuera del alcance de las mujeres, en la mayoría de las comunidades.
- ❖ En las organizaciones productivas, las mujeres han logrado alcanzar un grado de desarrollo mayor, conformadas mayormente por mujeres, éstas tienen acceso a los niveles mencionados.

En las comunidades que fueron intervenidas por técnicas mujeres, este hecho ha sido determinante para el tipo de desarrollo y la participación de mujeres en la segunda fase. En otros términos, el terreno ya estaba abonado para continuar con otros procesos.

Fuente: Villanueva, 2001

**Recuadro 4.14 ANÁLISIS SOCIOECONÓMICO DE GÉNERO EN ZONAS DE LAS MONTAÑAS;  
PROYECTOS Y PROGRAMAS PARA EL DESARROLLO EN ZONAS DE MONTAÑAS**

Como producto de varias experiencias, los proyectos aplicados en la región utilizan una perspectiva integral y participativa. Esto se traduce en que no sólo se abocan a los aspectos técnicos forestales, de cuenca, agrícolas, sino que también se presta atención a los aspectos socioeconómicos de las familias (salud, vivienda, educación). Si bien en zonas montañosas de la región se están implementando varios proyectos y se desarrollan actividades públicas en apoyo a las mujeres rurales se verifican algunos vacíos importantes entre los objetivos de las políticas y las realidades locales. Se ha reconocido que, tanto las instituciones como el personal que trabaja en los proyectos, consideran al tema género como sinónimo de mujer y tienden a desarrollar actividades dirigidas sólo a mujeres, dejando de lado el proceso de análisis de género y la integración de éste enfoque en todas las actividades del proyecto. Otro problema es la falta de integración del tema de género en el ciclo del proyecto y por ende la identificación de indicadores género. A estas dificultades se le suman el exiguo financiamiento que se otorga al apoyo del tema de género, que muchas veces se traducen en poco más que la expresión de una intención anotada en los documentos y en las políticas.

Teniendo en cuenta esta situación, los proyectos impulsados por la FAO en las áreas montañosas incluyen una componente de capacitación en análisis socioeconómico y de género dirigida especialmente a las instituciones y su personal de campo y usuarios/as de los proyectos, como también un aspecto de apoyo a la organización y capacitación para el liderazgo de manera de poder apoyar una participación mas equitativa en las actividades que se realizan.

[Sobre la base de las experiencias de los proyecto FAO/SEARPI, (Servicio de Encauzamiento de Aguas y Regularización del Río Piraí - Bolivia [GCP/INT/542/ITA-Bolivia]; Desarrollo Forestal Campesino de los Andes del Ecuador [GCP/ECU/070/NET]; Proyecto de Apoyo a la Dirección y Coordinación del Plan de Acción Forestal para Guatemala [GCP/GUA/008/NET]; Mujeres y árboles en los países andinos promovidos por el Programa Bosques, Árboles y Comunidades Rurales (FAO-FPPP)].

Fuente: Marcela Ballara, Oficial Principal Género y Desarrollo, FAO, Oficina Regional de América Latina y el Caribe. Análisis socioeconómico de Género en zonas de las montañas. Presentación a la Mesa Redonda "Comunidades Ancestrales: cultura, género y tecnologías en el desarrollo de las montañas". Santiago, Chile, 2001.



# Conclusiones y recomendaciones

**El Plan de Acción de Género y Desarrollo (2002-2007)** constituye el marco de la FAO y es considerado como un requisito para alcanzar la seguridad alimentaria y la implementación de la Plataforma de Acción establecida en la Cuarta Conferencia Mundial para la Mujer, que se llevó a cabo en Beijing en 1995.

El Plan de Acción 2002-2007, tiene como prioridad incorporar el tema género en los diversos planes y programas que promueve la FAO. La intención es crear un marco institucional para la equidad de género en el desarrollo agrícola sostenible, en la Organización y en las instituciones nacionales. La Unidad de Género y Desarrollo de la Oficina Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe ya ha tomado acción en este sentido.<sup>19</sup>:

**Capacitación en Análisis Socioeconómico y de Género (ASEG)** para el personal de las unidades técnicas en las instituciones del agro, programas de campo y proyectos y para los expertos en desarrollo rural en los países miembros.

**Apoyo de acciones que permitan la incorporación de la perspectiva de género** en la política pública y planes de desarrollo para mejorar el acceso de las mujeres, uso y control de los recursos productivos; para fomentar la igualdad en la participación en los procesos decisorios; y promover acciones para aumentar las oportunidades para un trabajo remunerado y generación de ingreso. La FAO está promoviendo asistencia técnica en la región para la incorporación del enfoque de género en los censos agropecuarios. Esto permitirá la recopilación de información en unidades de producción con actividades desagregadas por género, generación y grupo étnico.

**Asistencia técnica y transversalización de género en los proyectos de campo** se realiza a través de actividades que beneficien a las familias rurales o a proyectos específicos orientados hacia las mujeres rurales que comprometan su organización y liderazgo, la transferencia de tecnología, métodos de educación y post cosecha, comercio y otras áreas útiles para la seguridad alimentaria y las familias rurales.

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<sup>19</sup> Para mayor detalle ver FAO. Servicio de Género y Desarrollo de la Oficina Regional de América Latina y el Caribe. INFORME DE ACTIVIDADES Trigésima cuarta reunión de la Mesa Directiva de la Conferencia Regional sobre la Mujer de América Latina y el Caribe. Santiago de Chile, 5 y 6 de septiembre 2002. [www.fao.org/mujer](http://www.fao.org/mujer)

Las siguientes recomendaciones están siendo efectivas bajo cuatro prioridades de la FAO conforme a lo que determina la XXV Conferencia Regional que se realizó en las Bahamas en 1998: lograr la **seguridad alimentaria** a nivel individual, familiar y nacional; obtener un adecuado **comercio internacional** de alimentos y de agricultura como un elemento fundamental para el logro de la seguridad alimentaria, el crecimiento económico de los países, una distribución de recursos y un sistema económico global eficiente; asegurar el **manejo sustentable de los recursos naturales** – manejo apropiado de bosques, agua y suelo – teniendo en mente el vínculo que existe entre la humanidad y el medio ambiente y promover las prácticas de producción sustentable para garantizar la calidad e inocuidad de los alimentos para mejorar las condiciones de salud de la población; y **apoyar a las instituciones rurales** en el proceso actual de reforma institucional de tal forma que ellas promuevan el desarrollo de un nuevo paradigma de agricultura dirigido hacia las habilidades de las partes interesadas en el desarrollo agrícola.

Se han identificado las siguientes conclusiones y recomendaciones para avanzar en la equidad de género como una condición para la seguridad alimentaria y para lograr los objetivos de prioridad en la región.

**Enfoque de género en las políticas.** La transferencia de acciones ad-hoc orientadas hacia las mujeres rurales deberían dirigirse hacia la incorporación del enfoque de género en todas las políticas sectoriales de desarrollo rural y en aquellas políticas que luchen por la pobreza en la región. Ampliar la comprensión y la capacitación en el Análisis Socio Económico y de Género de la FAO (ASEG) contribuirá efectivamente a la transversalización de género conforme a los principios normativos de ASEG, que sirven como un instrumento de cambio en el desarrollo humano sustentable, al cual el sector rural le da un mayor valor y en el que los aspectos de la equidad de género son un elemento fundamental.

**Prioridades macro-económicas.** Varios Planes de Igualdad de Oportunidades en la región confirman la necesidad de incorporar el enfoque de género en las políticas macro económicas que deberían considerar las opciones más adecuadas para el desarrollo rural sustentable. Éstas deberían facilitar la creación de condiciones favorables para la agricultura y asegurar los recursos financieros para un desarrollo integrado de políticas sociales proactivas para superar la pobreza y asegurar la equidad de género.

**Producción alimentaria sustentable: acceso a la tierra, irrigación, créditos y mercados.** Para promover la seguridad alimentaria es necesario remover los obstáculos económicos, culturales y otros

que impiden el acceso equitativo de género a los recursos productivos incluyendo: la tierra, el riego, el crédito y los mercados.

Las políticas públicas con enfoque de género deberían identificar estos obstáculos y determinar acciones adecuadas para removerlos. Un análisis con enfoque de género de las políticas de acceso a los recursos productivos destacaría las fortalezas y limitaciones de estas políticas y facilitaría el logro de sus objetivos.

**Biodiversidad.** La seguridad alimentaria en América Latina y el Caribe descansa en la abundancia de sus recursos fitogenéticos. Debería considerarse la importancia del rol que juegan las mujeres en la conservación de los recursos genéticos a través de la protección de las variedades de cultivos tradicionales nativos, para la alimentación de la población, especialmente las comunidades más pobres.

El conocimiento tradicional de las mujeres debería facilitar el desarrollo de su rol en la conservación *in situ* de variedades silvestres afines a las plantas cultivadas y de las plantas silvestres comestibles; en la conservación y uso sustentable de variedades locales o variedades de cultivos tradicionales en hogares campesinos o huertas y, redactar un inventario de estas variedades.

Resumiendo, un análisis con enfoque de género de los roles en las áreas rurales de América Latina podría contribuir en forma efectiva para lograr una agricultura, pesca, bosques y desarrollo rural sustentable que garanticen la seguridad alimentaria.

**Recursos naturales y desertificación.** La consideración de género en las políticas públicas para la protección de los recursos naturales determinará el logro de los objetivos del Programa de Acción para el Desarrollo Sustentable (Agenda 21) de la Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo (CNUMAD), Río de Janeiro, 1992, en la Declaración y Plan de Acción de Kyoto sobre la Contribución Sostenible de la Pesca a la Seguridad Alimentaria (Declaración y Plan de Acción de Kioto), de 1995, y en la Declaración de Leipzig y el Plan de Acción Mundial para la conservación y utilización de los recursos fitogenéticos para la alimentación y la agricultura (Declaración y Plan de Acción Mundial de Leipzig), de 1996. El enfoque de género contribuirá también al logro de los objetivos de la Convención sobre la Desertificación.

**Promoción del empleo productivo.** La promoción del empleo productivo debería comenzar con el reconocimiento de la contribución de las mujeres rurales a la actividad económica. La



promoción del empleo debería considerar todas las habilidades que poseen y exhiben las mujeres rurales en sus estrategias para salir adelante desplegadas bajo condiciones de extrema pobreza. Es necesario adoptar medidas especiales que promuevan la agricultura y el empleo productivo agrícola y no agrícola prestando atención a las condiciones de seguridad social y protección laboral.

**Educación.** Se debería ampliar la cobertura de la educación en las áreas rurales y acortar la brecha existente con las áreas urbanas. La educación debería promover la igualdad social y de género, construir habilidades acordes a las demandas de la globalización. Al mismo tiempo es importante proteger a los grupos individuales; respetar las diferencias culturales y destacar el bilingüismo. Como un proceso educacional la extensión agrícola debería incorporar en forma urgente estas consideraciones y ajustar sus modalidades para conducir el proceso educativo en igualdad de condiciones para mujeres, hombres y jóvenes.

**Salud.** El logro de la igualdad social y de género en la salud es un objetivo para todos los mecanismos de igualdad de oportunidades para los hombres y mujeres rurales. El acceso igualitario a los servicios de salud debería incluir el reconocimiento al conocimiento que tienen las mujeres sobre la medicina tradicional. Muchos Planes de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres Rurales enfatizan la necesidad de dar un seguimiento a la salud ocupacional de las mujeres trabajadoras rurales, específicamente en relación a su exposición a los plaguicidas.

**Desarrollo de la ciudadanía.** El logro de la seguridad alimentaria en la región y otros objetivos prioritarios para superar la pobreza y la lograr la equidad de género requiere que las mujeres rurales participen activamente en las políticas decisorias del desarrollo rural. Fortaleciendo sus organizaciones representativas reforzarán sus habilidades para negociar el futuro que desea la región.



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The background of the cover is a stylized illustration in shades of orange and red. It depicts several human figures in various poses, suggesting agricultural or labor activities. One figure is seated on the left, another is standing in the center, and a third is seated on the right. The lines are thick and expressive, giving it a hand-drawn or painted appearance. The overall color palette is warm and monochromatic.

# 破土：

农业中妇女的现状与前景







# 亚洲及太平洋地区

# 亚洲及太平洋地区

## 现状与前景<sup>3</sup>



Suva市场上的妇女商贩  
*P. Behlen-Dexter, 1998.*

尽管经济增长和人文进一步发展，但21世纪亚太地区仍然面临粮食安全的严峻挑战。特别是粮食的供应、获取和稳定性仍然是一个关键问题。此外，不断增加的人口压力，环境退化和正在出现的地区趋势提出这样的问题，“世界（包括亚太地区）能否以合理的成本生产足够的粮食，向贫困人口提供获取粮食的机会同时在此过程中不破坏环境？”（Falcon, 1996）。

众所周知，在亚太地区，农村妇女在确保粮食安全方面扮演着举足轻重的角色。这是通过她们在正常时期和困难时期为家庭成员生产粮食和提供获取粮食及营养安全食品的经济手段等活动而实现的。

尽管她们开展这些活动，但她们的作用总体上受到限制，被低估（Laier, Davies 等，1996）。在发挥作用过程中，她们通常面临巨大的社会、文化和经济制约（Quisumbing, Brown 等，1995）。

<sup>3</sup> 本文基于Ravathi Balakrishnan博士的工作以及Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop博士有关太平洋群岛的研究资料，Marlynne Hopper和Panpat Plungricharoensuk女士提供了研究和编辑支持。

就当地而言，粮食安全取决于个人和家庭在整个生命周期和季节生产、购买及使用足够数量和质量粮食的能力。了解家庭对控制资源获取和促进粮食安全的不同策略对了解妇女及男人在家庭中的地位及不同作用至关重要。亚洲的大多数农户和社区根据对劳动明确的性别分工管理其农村生产系统。这影响到粮食安全的实现。

亚洲许多发展中国家缺乏对农村妇女生产作用的认识和了解，这是历史上对妇女贡献低估的结果。这也导致了对妇女在获得教育和健康资源及机会方面持久的歧视。在太平洋岛屿，当地半自给和社区性质的经济传统上构成了家庭粮食安全的基础，从而保证了家庭所需粮食和基本用品的生产。在这种经济中妇女和女童对家庭生产和资源管理系统发挥不可或缺。

直到今天，发展和学术界很少注意到农村妇女的状况，Sachs提到“女权主义理论家以及农村社会理论家，仍然没有注意到农村妇女的关切。他们注重城市的理论工作而没有对农村妇女生活的背景进行足够的研究”（Sachs, 1996）。鉴于妇女在实现家庭粮食安全方面的作用，在2020年满足世界粮食需要将日益依赖妇女的能力及其资源（Brown, Feldstein, Haddad, Pena, Quisumbing, 1995）。在这种背景下，必须对亚太地区农村妇女进行一项研究，以便识别能够将性别问题纳入农业和农村发展所有方面的机会。

可持续粮食安全只有妇女作为平等的伙伴全面参与才能够实现。因此，必须了解她们在家庭、社区及当地经济中的作用和责任，以及她们日常面临的各种制约因素和不平等待遇。然而，一个关键的制约因素是没有按性别分列的数据。这些数据涉及到城乡和性别差别，妇女在农业中的多重角色（在家庭、社区和国家一级），及影响她们参与的因素。由于相关数据匮乏，以下介绍和分析很大程度上借助于现有宏观数据和当地案例研究。

## 差异与困境



印度北部一位妇女正在从村庄机井里抽取饮用水。照片背景是一个公共厕所。联合国粮食及农业组织（粮农组织）正在帮助许多发展中国家直接向其农村社区提供自来水

J. Isaac, 1986.

亚太地区各国互不相同，在地理、文化、宗教和政治制度、经济状况和社会发展方面存在广泛的差异。该地区包括世界上两个人口最多的国家和若干个最小的国家。它不仅包括全球第二经济大国，同时包括一些经济规模最小的国家；一些国家正处在经济发展的巅峰状态，而其它一些国家仍为游牧或农业经济（ADB, 2001）。东亚、南亚和太平洋及大洋洲国家之间在宗教、文化和传统上存在明显差异，包括歧视和肯定方式的性别偏见。种族多样化及语言差别会造成文化独特性，并以新的方式影响政治和国内冲突，从而进一步加剧了国家间的这些差异。

南太平洋中的二十多个岛国在幅员、与外界隔离程度、资源禀赋、发展阶段（基里巴斯、萨摩亚、所罗门群岛、图瓦卢和瓦努阿图是最不发达国家）和文化背景方面具有显著差异。所有这些国家都面临偏远、国土小而分散等地理劣势；同时，实现规模经济的机会很少。纵观太平洋岛国，农业一直是维持生计的主要来源，半自给性农作是主要的生产方式。

人口螺旋式的增长和加速向城市转移使人们的注意力集中在经济生产上，有可能打破以家庭为基础的半自给系统所维系的良好平衡。因此，粮食安全已经成为一个严肃的发展问题。

过去二十年，前所未有的经济和农业增长使亚太地区发生了变化。许多地方伴随这一转变的是引人注目的社会效益和生活条件的改善。除了良性的经济效果之外，人口压力下降在社会转型

中也发挥了重要作用。尽管存在这些引人注目的效益，但在经济繁荣程度和粮食安全方面，国家之间、国家内部以及农村与城市之间，持续存在极端不平衡的状况。

最初对全球化极度高涨的热情，后来被内部脆弱性的现实，尤其是在经济危机时缺乏保护工作阶层及农村贫困人口的安全网所平抑。尽管最近出现危机，但人们意识到全球化无法回避，必须进行有效地管理，以便惠及更多的人口，而非使少数人致富。目前的现实表明，区域经济一体化 正式和非正式继续对亚太地区的家庭粮食安全产生影响。

一个家庭是否能够获取“食物篮”商品取决于超出他们当地生产系统的经济和社会状况。例如，劳动力迁移和海外汇款，对亚洲许多农村社区的家庭粮食安全有很大影响。同样，援助和汇款在南太平洋经济规模较小的国家发挥重要作用。例如，一些太平洋岛国是世界上人均受援量最高的国家。许多情况下，汇款超过出口收入。

在整个亚太地区，伴随经济转型而来的是农业在国内生产总值(GDP)的相对比例不断下降。这种下降在一些国家十分明显。例如，在泰国，农业在GDP中所占的比例从1980年的23.2% 降至2000年的9.1%；如表2.1所示，情况并不均衡。尽管在整个亚太地区，农业在经济中的相对份额有所降低，但农业仍然对许多国家的经济，从而对粮食安全和脱贫作出重要贡献。2000年，缅甸的GDP中有59.9%来自农业。在不丹、柬埔寨、老挝人民共和国、蒙古、尼泊尔和乌兹别克斯坦，各自的GDP中有三分之一以上来自农业。在巴基斯坦、巴布亚新几内亚、汤加和越南农业在GDP中的份额达到四分之一或更高。值得注意的是，中国和印度该地区人口最多的两个国家GDP中有很大大一部分仍然来自农业，农业所占比例分别为15.9%和25.3%。



正在浇社区菜园的妇女。家庭和社区菜园所种植的优质蔬菜，一旦按当地口味适当制备，将长期解决越南农村维生素A不足的问题。

Peyton Johnson, 1992.

破土：  
农业中妇女的现状及前景



## 差异与困境

在保健领域，艾滋病毒/艾滋病在亚洲许多地区蔓延，提醒人们必须采取行动，而不是采取传统上的沉默与否认态度。同时，南亚地区妇女和儿童的营养不足也是一种正在酝酿中的重大危机。大多数严重依赖农业的国家也是低收入缺粮国 (LIFDCs)。反常的似乎是依赖农业的国家在改善粮食安全方面也滞后。这些数据表明，在高度依赖农业部门的国家，农村人口，包括妇女，可能面临粮食不安全和低收入的风险最高。



农村儿童。  
G. Bizzarri, 1996

以降低对农业的依赖为特征的经济转型，对农村妇女在经济中的作用和粮食安全有若干影响。首先，国民经济体制和农业部门中的根本性变化导致了谋生机会的丧失。第二，满足家庭粮食需要的自给型粮食生产可能无法持续，家庭日益依靠现金收入来获取粮食。第三，闲置的农村妇女需要在农村生产系统内找到其它可行的生计手段，为其劳动提供经济报酬。最后，随着农业生产在全球经济联系增加时竞争更加剧烈，技能有限、教育水平较低的农村妇女在经济易受害方面

面临更大的风险。

亚太地区的发展集中注意快速增长的城市，而近来的报告估计，亚洲农村人口数量不大可能降低。亚洲开发银行估计，到2020年亚洲农村人口可能为22亿。这些农村人口获取保健和教育的机会将减少，总体福利水平将下降 (ADB, 2000)。农村地区的老龄化和性别平衡变化因男人及青年为寻找更好的机会而被吸引到城市而加剧，有可能进一步使农村人口模式复杂化。

**表 2.1**  
**亚太地区部分国家农业对GDP的贡献(百分比)**

亚洲地区	低收入缺粮国	1980年	1990年	2000年
孟加拉国	是	41.2	29.4	24.6
不丹	是	56.7	43.2	33.2
柬埔寨	是	...	56.6	37.1
中华人民共和国	是	30.1	27	15.9
印度	是	38.1	31	25.3
印度尼西亚	是	24.8	19.4	16.9
哈萨克斯坦Kazakhstan	是	26.0	41.8	8.6
朝鲜民主主义人民共和国	是	...	...	...
大韩民国		...	...	...
老挝人民民主共和	是	...	61.2	53.2
马来西亚			15.2	8.6
蒙古	是	13.6	15.2	33.4
马尔代夫	是	...	...	9.5
缅甸		46.5	57.3	59.9
尼泊尔	是	61.8	51.6	39.8
巴基斯坦	是	29.6	26	26.3
菲律宾	是	25.1	21.9	15.9
斯里兰卡	是	26.2	22.9	19.4
塔吉克斯坦	是	...	27.1	27.4
泰国		23.2	12.5	9.1
乌兹别克斯坦Uzbekistan	是	...	33.1	34.9
越南		50	38.7	24.3
西南太平洋地区	低收入缺粮国	1980年	1990年	2000年
Southwest Pacific				
库克群岛		...	21.2	16.6
斐济岛		22.1	...	18.4
基里巴斯	是	31.5	18.6	...
马绍尔群岛		...	13.9	13.5
巴布亚新几内亚	是	33.1	29	28.7
所罗门群岛		...	...	22.1
汤加		38.5	35.1	28.5
瓦努阿图	是	...	20.7	15.8
西萨摩亚	是	...	...	16.2

资料来源: 亚洲开发银行, 《亚洲及太平洋地区发展中国家的关键指标》  
 (表13: GDP部门份额), 2001. FAO, 低收入缺粮国: <http://apps.fao.org/notes/876-e.htm>



## 差异与困境

本地区发展不均衡主要以农村地区为代价使继续从事家庭农场和自给农业生产，以及在出口型农业生产中发挥重要作用的大多数农村男人和妇女所面临的困难加重。尽管亚洲和太平洋地区的部分农村地区经历了史无前例的技术和经济转变，伴随而来的经济增长却没有使多数农村居民的福利增加。造成这种结果的主要原因是普遍缺乏支持机构，尤其是保健和教育服务，以及对农村基础措施的改善重视不够。同时，在农业和农村发展部门改革战略及预算分配方面普遍忽视妇女对农村生产及粮食安全的重要贡献。



### 平等面临的挑战

整个亚太地区在性别平等方面取得的成绩有很大的差距，反映出国与国之间和各国内部在经济和人力开发指标方面所存在巨大的多样性。在该地区复杂的资源环境中，以及在有关用粮食贸易还是自给来加强粮食安全的争论中，性别平等存在巨大的差距，正如表2.2中的人力和性别开发指标排序所显示的那样。尤其是，主要为低收入缺粮国的南亚国家（如孟加拉国、印度、尼泊尔和巴基斯坦），以其在人力和性别相关的发展指标方面的表现不佳而著称。如预料的那样，处于发展进程另一端的国家，如澳大利亚、日本、韩国和新西兰，则在这些指标上得分很高。

而且，亚洲各国大量城市妇女取得的进步，掩盖了该大陆许多地区，特别是南亚农村妇女中的低人力开发指标和极度性别不平等状况。农村妇女继续在经济生产和家务劳动的双重责任中挣扎。多数妇女面对贫困、文盲、高健康风险、获得的生产资源不足，无法进入有利可图的粮食市场。有人认为，“对许多人而言，身为女性和生活在亚洲农村地区是一种双重歧视”（Bloom, Craig 等，2001）。

总体而言，亚洲农村妇女的状况更多是由习惯法和社会禁令造成的，而不是因赞同全球平等规范造成的。东亚在性别平等方面取得的相对成就，尤其与南亚比较，可以归功于由政治观念、民族文化和教育成就所培养的有关平等的社会规范。然而，东亚妇女在公共领域的可见性在往往掩盖了她们在努力为家庭提供所需方面隐藏的不平等。



正在去进行补充授粉工作的稻作妇女。  
G. Bizzarri, 1996.

虽然多数太平洋岛国（如库克群岛、斐济和帕劳）在人力开发指数方面取得长足进展，但另一些国家，如基里巴斯、巴布亚新几内亚、所罗门群岛和瓦努阿图，则落在后面。太平洋岛国的性别平等，即妇女与男人之间的差别，一般不如亚洲明显；因为太平洋岛国的性别关系复杂；然而，在将指标普遍化时，应该慎重。值得指出的是，在一些太平洋岛国，妇女人力开发指数的分数总体上超过男人（如在性别比例一栏中分数超过100）。

亚洲与太平洋岛国妇女之间的这种差异可能与太平洋岛国农村和城市社区比在亚洲整齐一致有关。一般而言，太平洋岛国的城市和农村妇女拥有相似的就业机会和选择。此外，在太平洋国家，如斐济、新喀里多尼亚和巴布亚新几内亚等正在开发的大型城市，出现了将城镇人口与仍留在农村中的人口联系起来的网络。

亚太地区许多国家对农业部门的忽视，使农业成为拥有其它更加有利可图选择的男人和妇女的最后一种选择。因此，那些选择机会少的人，一般是贫困、不识字的农村妇女，被迫在农业部门承担主要角色，从而导致了“农业生产的女性化”。由于有能力的男人和妇女因受诱惑而离开了农业，加剧了这种趋势，孟加拉国、中国和印度为创造就业机会，发展了小规模农村工业、小型企业和乡镇企业。同时，内部迁移已经成为一种引力，吸引青年人到城市去寻找更多的获利机会。使上年纪的人，尤其是老年妇女成为主要农民。这就造成了在中国出现的“灰色农业”。总而言之，亚洲妇女的状况可以称为具有“双重性”。其特点是在新的繁荣与持久赤贫所形成的二元经济背景下，性别平等的进步与差距共存。

**表 2.2**  
亚太地区部分国家<sup>1</sup>

亚洲	人力开发 指数 <sup>ii</sup> : 排序	与性别有 指数 <sup>iii</sup> : 排序
孟加拉国*	低	121
不丹	低	...
柬埔寨*	中	109
中国	中	76
印度*	中	105
印度尼西亚*	中	92
日本	高	11
哈萨克斯坦	中	...
韩国	高	29
老挝*	低	119
马来西亚	中	55
马尔代夫	中	69
蒙古*	中	104
缅甸*	中	107
尼泊尔*	低	120
巴基斯坦*	低	117
菲律宾	中	62
斯里兰卡	中	70
塔吉克斯坦*	中	93
泰国	中	58
乌兹别克斯坦	中	86
越南	中	89
<b>西南太平洋地区</b>		
澳大利亚	高	2
斐济	中	63
新西兰	高	17
巴布亚新几内亚*	中	110
(西)所罗门	中	
瓦努阿图	中	

\* 低 GDI

<sup>i</sup> 朝鲜、库克群岛、基里巴斯、马绍尔群岛、瑙鲁、纽埃、帕劳、所罗门群岛、汤加和图瓦鲁的HDI和GDI不详。

<sup>ii</sup> 人力开发指数(HDI)用于衡量三个基本方面的平均成就: a) 长寿而健康的生活(用预期寿命来衡量); b) 知识(用成人识字率和总的小学、中学和高中入学率来衡量); c) 适度的生活标准, 用人均GDP来衡量(购买力折算为美元)。

<sup>iii</sup> 与性别有关的开发指数(GDI)用HDI衡量的平均成绩进行调整, 以反映同一地区男女不平等情况。

资料来源:《联合国开发计划署人力开发报告》, 2001, 212-213 页, 241-242页。



## 平等面临的挑战

对整个亚太地区妇女的宏观分析表明了妇女在经济成就、政治参与、教育进步和社会表达方面的差距为特征的多样性景象。这种区域多样性和普遍存在的城乡二元化反映了各国在促进妇女进步方面的重点，以及在选择发展中的性别平等干预措施方面的不同资源承诺。总体而言，该地区在

- 使农业和农村社区中妇女在性别平等上取得与城市地区相同的成就；
- 在农业对国民经济的重要性正在下降的背景中，为农村妇女创造机会，使其成为消除贫困，保证粮食安全的主力军；
- 在现有的家庭内部经济和社会现实的联系中，实现家庭粮食安全和性别平等；
- 在全球经济一体化步伐加快和农业部门商业化的背景下，防止农村妇女的
- 赋予农村妇女在一个由农业和信息新技术塑造的复杂世界上有效发挥作用的能力。

## 农业中妇女

在亚太地区发展中国家，妇女是农业劳动力的一个重要部分。但是，目前还没有系统的关于妇女作用和贡献的相关数据。该地区的微观性别研究增加是一种积极的发展态势，弥补了现有宏观数据的不足。对生产体系的重新重视，引出了一些对特定农业地区或地点中性别作用的研究。参与性农村评估的大量增加，提供了农村妇女对当地生产贡献的定性数据。然而，这些研究是各自独立进行，研究人员的技能和专业知识各不相同。结果是这些研究在质量、可靠性和准确性方面存在差异，因此难以将地方结果普遍外推到更广的国家范围。在这种情况下，本节将根据妇女参与粮食和农业部门中各类生产工作的现有案例研究，综合介绍妇女在农业劳动力及农业部门参与情况的现有汇总数据。

表2.3中的宏观数据表明了亚太地区妇女参与经济活动的情况，以及男女劳动力参与农业的相对比例。该数据表明，在南亚国家，如孟加拉国、不丹、印度、尼泊尔和巴基斯坦，高达60%到98%的妇女在农业部门就业。事实上，在以上每一个国家，从事农业的妇女人数超过男人。

在东南亚国家，如柬埔寨、中国、老挝、缅甸和越南，妇女对农业做出了实质性的贡献。例如，在经济活动人口中，柬埔寨78%的妇女参与农业，在老挝该则为81%。事实上，数据表明，在多数亚洲国家，从事农业的妇女在经济活动人口中的比例比男人的比例更大。考虑到这样一种事实，即表2.3中从事农业的经济活动人口的数据不包括农村妇女的无偿生产和家务劳动，此结论具有重要意义。因此，有理由相信，在亚太地区，妇女对农业劳动力的贡献有很大一部分没有反映在这些统计量中。如果将无偿劳动包括在内，女性劳动力在农业中就业的数字将更大。

尽管太平洋岛国妇女在服务业中就业的比例高于农业，但表2.3表明太平洋地区仍然有大量妇女从事各种各样的农业活动。



## 农业中妇女

该比例在不同国家不等，低的为1%到3%，如基里巴斯、密克罗尼西亚联邦和马绍尔群岛（该国可耕地严重短缺）等环礁国家。高的为瓦努阿图的80%，和巴布亚新几内亚的84%。巴布亚新几内亚在农业中就业的妇女比例超过男人（UNDP, 1999）。尽管表2.3中的数据显示在太平洋地区，作为经济活动人口的一部分，妇女从事农业的比例存在显著差异，但现有一些其它研究表明，在整个太平洋地区，妇女和女童在家庭生产和资源管理系统中发挥不可或。

此外，由于数据采集中使用不同的定义和时期，加上数据普遍匮乏，因此很难将妇女对农业劳动力的贡献普遍化。另外，一些太平洋岛国，如在文化传统上将农业视为男人工作的汤加，性别角色也不鼓励妇女正式参与农业。

即使存在数据不足的制约，但明显可以看出，除了个别例外，妇女在亚太地区是劳动中的主力军，并对农业部门作出实质性贡献。数据显示，在人力开发和性别领域取得较少或中等成绩的国家，往往是低收入缺粮国，这些国家有更多妇女从事农业。一般而言，这些发现和观察支持这样一种意见，即农业生产女性化正在该地区的许多国家出现。

表2.3也列出了女性成人识字率。并列出了女性识字率的百分比，以突出性别差异。鉴于所介绍的识字率数据并没有按居住地区分，（城市与农村），有理由假设，农村妇女中的成人识字率甚至更低。例如，在孟加拉国，农村妇女中的成人识字率仅为36.2%，而城市妇女和男人的识字率则分别达到56.1%和75.4%（Pal, 2001）。

表2.3提供了有关成人识字率的性别比例，说明了太平洋地区妇女受教育的状况。巴布亚新几内亚和所罗门群岛的数据这些国家中的女性成人识字率特别低证实，妇女受教育的机会长期比男人少（UNDP, 1999）。识字率低妨碍妇女获取信息和技术，影响到她们在家庭、社区和国家一级参与决策的能力，从而影响她们改变现状的能力。巴布亚新几内亚和所罗门群岛识字率低与妇女参与农业比例高之间的关系，需要进一步研究。

除了发达国家和少数发展中国家，如马尔代夫、马来西亚和部分太平洋岛国以外，该分析表明，绝大多数农村妇女在识字率方面远远落后于男人。尤其是在孟加拉国、印度、老挝、尼泊尔、巴基斯坦和巴布亚新几内亚，农村妇女成人识字率特别低。在农业生产女性化的背景下，在提高女性识字率方面没有取得进展。这将对该地区未来的农业部门和粮食安全产生严重影响，因为它们将依赖只有很少或者没有正规教育的女性劳动力。受教育程度很低的农村妇女更有可能受到经济结构变化的不利影响，在面向竞争性全球市场的农业部门尤其如此，同时她们不大可能积极地应对。这些农村女性在识字率方面的不足，再加上农业生产的女性化，意味着必须提高农村妇女的技能和知识，从而能够赋予她们技术和经济能力，并为农业发展和粮食安全。



一群正在缝纫机旁制作服装的妇女。缝制工业是联合国贷款所扶持的乡村项目之一。

### 农村妇女的工作

在整个亚太地区，农村妇女对家庭生产和粮食安全的贡献至关重要。虽然在各国之间这种贡献的具体性质不尽相同，但很明显，大多数农村妇女所承担的家庭劳动份额不断增加，她们的生活日益单调繁重。该地区各国进行的各种研究提供了关于性别角色的重要结论，为提高农村家庭生产力的政策和干预措施提供了依据。但是，目前尚未对这些研究结果进行系统的综合，这阻碍了真实了解农村妇女在家庭粮食安全中角色的努力。尽管从这些

## 农业中妇女

**表 2.3**  
亚太地区部分国家在教育和经济活动方面的性别情况

亚	低收入缺	成人女性识字率 (15岁和15岁以上)		妇女参加经济活动比率 (15岁和15岁以上)		农业经济活动人口占总人口的 百分比	
		比率 (%) 1999	占男人比率的 百分率 (%) 1999	比率 (%) 1999	占男人比率的 百分比 (%) 1999	女性 1990-99	男性 1990-99
孟加拉国	是	29.3	57	65.8	76	78	54
不丹	是	...	...	58.0	65	98 <sup>a</sup>	92 <sup>a</sup>
柬埔寨	是	...	...	81.5	96	78 <sup>a</sup>	69 <sup>a</sup>
中国	是	75.5	83	73.0	86	76 <sup>a</sup>	69 <sup>a</sup>
印度	是	44.5	66	42.0	50	74 <sup>a</sup>	59 <sup>a</sup>
印度尼西亚	是	81.3	89	55.0	67	42	41
日本		...	...	51.1	67	6 <sup>u</sup>	5 <sup>u</sup>
哈萨克斯坦	是	...	...	60.6	...	...	...
韩国		96.2	97	53.0	63	...	...
老挝	是	31.7	50	74.6	84	81 <sup>a</sup>	76 <sup>a</sup>
马来西亚Maldives		82.8	91	47.9	60	15	21
马尔代夫	是	96.2	100	65.9	79	28 <sup>a</sup>	35
蒙古	是	52.1	72	73.2	87	30 <sup>a</sup>	34 <sup>a</sup>
缅甸		80.1	90	65.8	75	70 <sup>a</sup>	78 <sup>a</sup>
尼泊尔	是	22.8	39	56.9	67	98 <sup>a</sup>	91 <sup>a</sup>
巴基斯坦	是	30.0	51	35.0	41	66	41
菲律宾	是	94.9	100	49.4	61	27	47
斯里兰卡	是	88.6	94	42.4	55	49	38
塔吉克斯坦	是	98.7	99	57.1	...	45 <sup>a</sup>	37 <sup>a</sup>
泰国		93.5	96	72.9	84	50	52
乌兹别克斯坦	是	84.0	90	62.0	...	35 <sup>a</sup>	34 <sup>a</sup>
越南		91.0	95	73.5	90	70	71
<b>西南太平洋地区</b>							
澳大利亚		...	...	55.6	76	4 <sup>u</sup>	6 <sup>u</sup>
库克群岛		...	...	...	...	6	15
斐济		90.5	96	35.4	44	28	47
基里巴斯	是	...	...	...	...	1	10
马绍尔群岛		...	...	...	...	3	28
新西兰		...	...	56.9	78	6 <sup>u</sup>	11 <sup>u</sup>
巴布亚新几内亚 Western Samoa	是	56.0	78	67.0	78	84	71
西萨摩亚	是	78.8	97	...	...	67	73
所罗门群岛		...	...	...	...	85	87
图瓦	是	...	...	...	...	34	45
瓦努阿图	是	...	...	...	...	80	69





第2、3栏：由于列出的所有国家的其它数据不详，因此利用成人识字率作为女性教育成就的指标。

第4、5栏：根据国际劳工组织（1996）的经济活动人口和总人口数据计算。由于四舍五入和省略了未归类的活动，因此按经济活动列出的就业百分比可能不等于100。关于数据的具体说明见 ILO (1996 and 1999)。

第6、7栏：u 表示使用 UNDP 数据。a 表示使用 ADB 数据。参阅1990 或最近年份。库克群岛、斐济、基里巴斯、马绍尔群岛、瑙鲁、巴布亚新几内亚、萨摩亚、所罗门群岛、汤加、图瓦卢和瓦努阿图的数据系指过去15年经济活动人口占总人口的百分比。

资料来源：第1栏：FAO LIFDC 数据；第2 和 3栏：UNDP 《人力开发报告》(HDR) 2001，表 23；第4 和5栏：UNDP HDR 2001，表24；第6 和7栏：UNDP HDR 2001 表24 和亚洲开发银行，2002。《亚洲和太平洋发展中国家的关键指标》：表5 和表7。

## 农业中妇女



妇女在属于海得拉巴水稻研究董事会的试验地里移栽水稻。  
G. Bizzarri, 1996.

研究中可以看出关于性别角色的一般情况，即在亚太地区农村男人和妇女都对生产做出贡献。但是，性别角色有可能因国家内部和国家之间农业生态和生产系统，种植作物、畜牧业与渔业生产的关系，家庭成员的非农业就业机会的不同而有差异。

采用的方法是综合各种来源的现有资料，建立理论观点，表明农村妇女贡献的多样化，持续性的单一劳动，以及她们在家庭和社区内部获取资源方面所面临的制约因素。农村妇女在家庭生产中的作用涉及农业生产，家庭劳动，非农业生产和社区劳动。

她们对劳动、管理和当地及传统知识和专业技能都有所贡献。图2.1指出了影响妇女作用和责任，以及支配她们获取粮食和资源的社区及家庭因素。

农村妇女的工作和她们对经济及社会的贡献可分为两大类，即在社区中的贡献和在家庭中的贡献。在大多数国家，农村妇女对社区生产做出了积极贡献。

这种贡献改进了社会联系、亲友关系，并有助于在困难时期交换资源。在家庭关系中，性别角色的观念是传统上形成的，并建立在文化和宗教信仰之上。这些信念决定了农村妇女如何参加家庭生产。

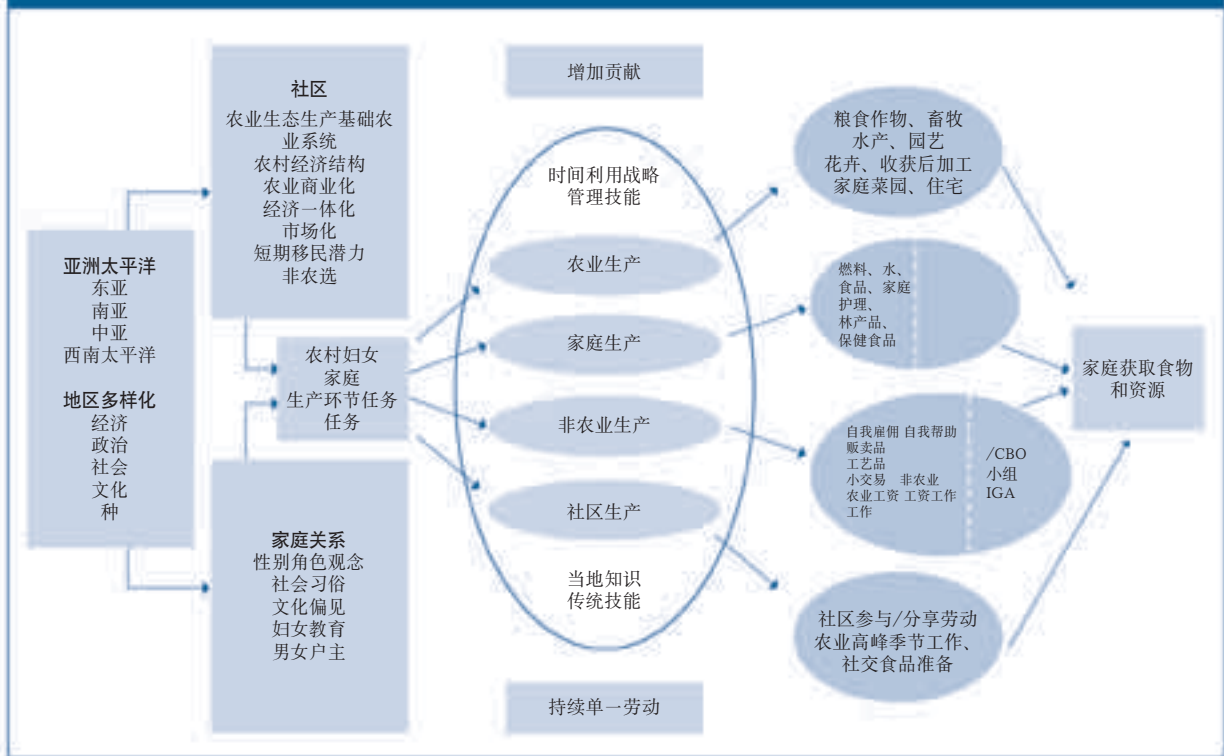
妇女对家庭的贡献正日益受到家庭外部变化的影响。例如，当家庭外部新的经济机会鼓励农村妇女跨越现有性别角色的界限，去从事家庭之外的经济活动时，农村



母亲给她的小孩在路边冲澡。  
Asupi, 1993.

贫困起到了一种外推的作用。例如，最近农村多样化方面的发展，伴随着商业化和市场趋势，为非农业有偿劳动创造了机会。甚至教育水平低、缺乏培训和社会流动性，也妨碍了许多地方的农村妇女对这些机会做出反应。尽管经济因素诱发了短期的内部迁移，农业生产季节性为农村妇女创造了新的工作模式，但家庭生产中的性别角色仍然固定不变，家庭内部的工作通常被视为妇女的工作。

图 2.1 - 农村家庭生产环节、任务及获取粮食和资源



资料来源：选自 FAO, 2000, Balakrishnan; R. “支持农村妇女的技术开发与技术转让方面的差距扩大”，《人力资源，农业和农村发展》，第89页。

### 增加经

**在亚太地区**，农村妇女工作的特点是变化、连续性、灵活性和僵化性（Gurung, 1999）。为确保家庭获取食物和资源，妇女在农业、非农业以及社区中的新的生产角色具有变化和灵活性，以保证连续性和僵化性与确定性别角色的规范相关，规定农村妇女和女童应该负责农村家庭中的家庭生产。家庭内部关于劳动分配的决定往往存在偏见，将家庭劳动指派给妇女和女童。面对经济压力，性别角色有可能变得灵活，使妇女能够从事在传统上被视为男人的工作。同时，性别角色的僵化性意味着男人不从事家务劳动。

### 南亚

**在孟加拉国**，参与经济活动的情况因性别、活动类型和居住地点不同而有很大的差别。农村妇女传统上在创收活动中发挥重要作用，如收获后工作，喂牛和挤奶，养羊，后院养鸡，养鱼，农业，园艺，食品加工，藤条和竹子编制，纺线，手工织布，缝制衣服，织鱼网，绳子生产和手工艺品。大量农村妇女，尤其是极端贫困的无土地家庭中的妇女从事建筑、土木和田间农业生产等活动。这些活动传统上属于男人。

在孟加拉国，无偿的家庭劳力是农业中劳动力的主要来源。其中，妇女的比例很高（Pal, 2001）。一项有关家庭内部稻米生产组织的研究（基于较小的样本）表明，男性和女性家庭成员从事灌溉农业和灌溉管理的程度与家庭所拥有土地数量以及她们的宗教信仰有关。女性家庭成员在稻米生产中比男性家庭成员发挥更大的作用。这项研究指出了不同经济类型农户之间的差别。例如，与边际农户相比，中产阶级家庭中从事稻米生产的妇女比例更高（大多数从事移栽和作物加工工作）。在中层，信印度教的男性户主家庭中妇女劳动占全部稻米生产劳动的54%，而信穆斯林教的男性户主家庭中妇女劳动占31%。

如果比较任务分配，则出现变化的模式。除了传统的作物加

工任务外，家庭中的妇女从事苗床、起苗和移栽、施肥、除草和收获等传统上属于男人的工作。大约40-50%的农田灌溉和非农用水管理也由妇女承担，与家庭男劳力的贡献几乎相同 (Jordans, Zwarteveen, 1997)。

在印度，根据国家样本调查机构的资料，农村妇女占全国参与工作人数的22%。但是，如图2.2所示，全国平均值掩盖了各邦之间的巨大地区差异，因为各邦之间在人口、农业-生态系统和生产的社会和经济组织方面存在差异。农业机械化水平有助于解释妇女参加农业劳动力方面的差异。例如，在旁遮普邦，绿色革命带来了繁荣，农业高度机械化，农村妇女参加劳动的比例最低。相比之下，安德拉邦主要靠妇女从事棉花、落花生等劳动密集性的作物生产。这些作物需要在干旱条件种植，该地农村妇女的参与程度最高。

在印度，社会习俗、传统和文化考虑都影响到男人和妇女从事的工作类型。国际农发基金1991年在中央邦的部落地区进行的一项研究注意到了男女分担家务和生产劳动的比例。研究结果表明，妇女和男人都在农业中劳动，在一年当中的几个月，共同采集和销售非木材林产品并且从事带薪劳动。但是，这种工作活动上的平等并没有在由男人主宰的收入分配决策过程中得到反映 (IFAD 1997)。另一项研究覆盖了印度三个生态上不同的脆弱地区。该研究得出的结论是，虽然农业是一个家庭企业，但社会规范则将劳动按性别和年龄划分。总体上，整地和犁地被视为男人的责任，移栽和除草则被视为妇女的工作，而收获和收获后工作由妇女和男人共同承担。在某些地区，在大量需要劳动力的时期，妇女承担部分较繁重的、传统上由男人承担的工作，如整地。以Kolli山丘地区小米的耕作为例，妇女承担了大部分农田活动和收获后工作，包括种子储藏，供应和交换 (Rengalakshmi 等, 2002)。

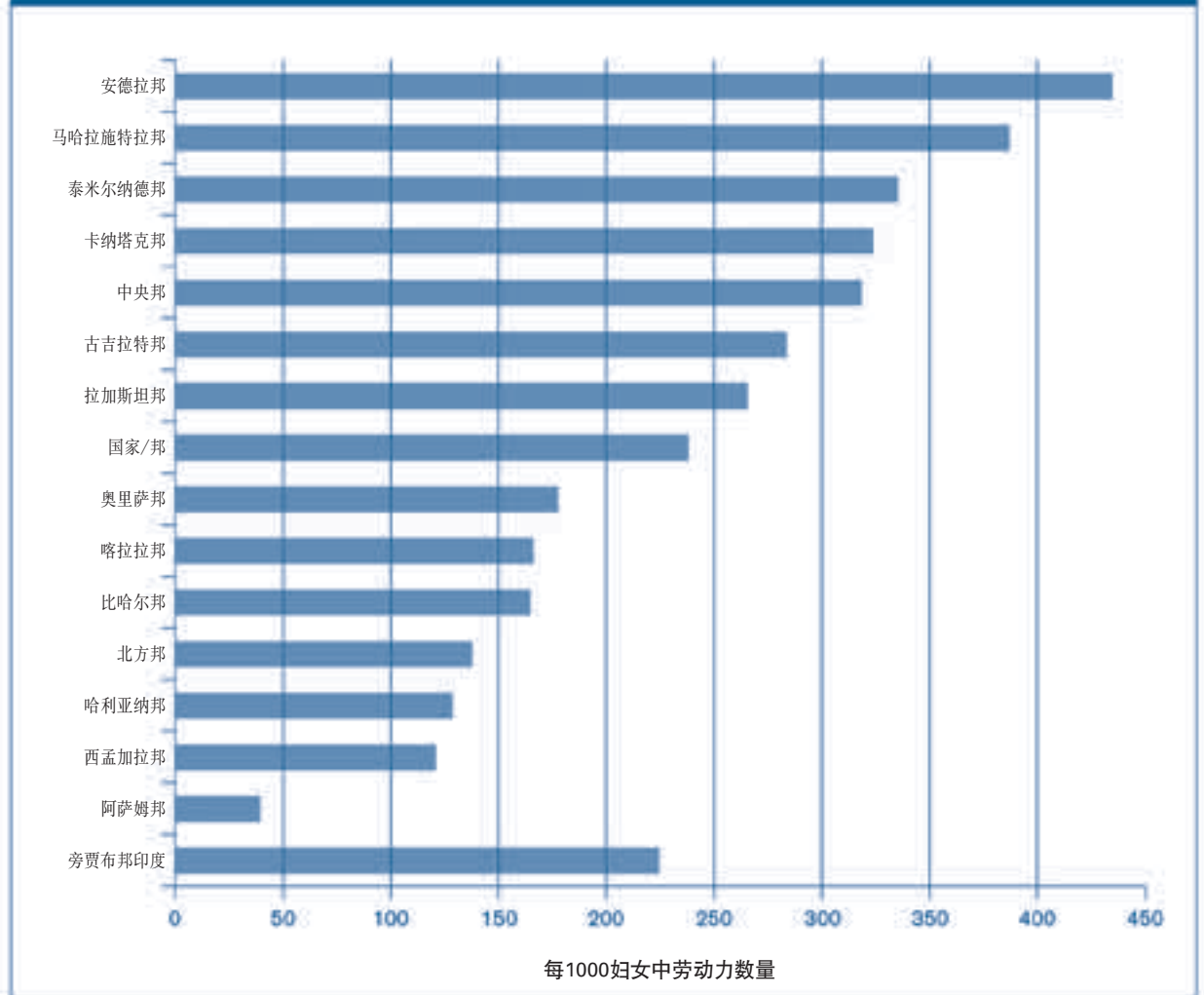
在马尔代夫，社会经济变革强化了不同工作在性别之间的隔离，加剧了不平等情况。传统上，男人从事渔业，妇女从事小规模鱼类加工。在斯里兰卡等国视为美味而称作“马尔代夫鱼”的最终产品被广泛出口。在“马尔代夫鱼”成为该国主要出口

## 农业中妇女

商品时，妇女参与劳动力的比例超过50%，是发展中国家中最高的国家之一。自从那时起，捕鱼业的现代化为渔民创造了很多机会，使他们增加了捕捞量并直接向采集船只销售。这些采集船只将其冷冻或提供给灌装厂进一步加工。结果，妇女在鱼品加工方面的参与减少。参与率1985年降到21%，1996年降到19% (Dayal, 2001)。同时，妇女更多地在自家小块菜园从事自给性农业生产如管理和选种 (Kanvinde, 1999)。

资料来源: Menon-Sen, Kumar, 2001.

表2.2 - 印度: 农村妇女在劳动力方面的参与情况



在尼泊尔，大约40%妇女从事经济活动。大多数在农业中就业。她们多数以无偿家庭劳动力的形式，从事技术含量低、工作方式原始的自给农业生产。事实上，随着更多男人转移出农业生产，农业正逐渐女性化(Acharya, Acharya, Sharma, 1999)。除了基于文化原因的劳力分工之外，以下原因也造成了妇女工作负担加重：(1)地理和基础设施因素；(2)向外迁移；(3)通过开发项目促进新的活动 (IFAD 1997)。

传统农牧经济的显著变化和非农活动的增加，在以出口为导向的产业市场上创造了正式和非正式的就业机会。而产业市场又严重依赖低工资的女性劳动力。这是对基本生存需求和新的欲望混合在一起时作出的反应。与本村之外的世界更多的接触，产生了这种新的欲望。一项全国性的研究认定了农村家庭所采用的三项资源开发策略：家庭农业经济、本地市场经济和短期迁移。大约67%的妇女参与家庭农业经济，59%参与本地市场经济，75%短期迁移。应注意的是，妇女在农忙和农闲季节采用的策略有所不同 (Shtrii Shakti 1995)。

在巴基斯坦，妇女是农业中的主力。从事作物、蔬菜和畜牧生产的妇女达到1200万人。棉花占全国出口收入的二分之一，主要依靠女性劳力。妇女专门负责棉花采摘，从而使她们面对大量使用农药引起的健康危害(Bari, 2000)。在巴基斯坦进行的一项性别研究发现了按性别和家庭地位作用分工的大量证据。其中，男人主要负责“市场”工作：种植、放牧和其它增加收入的活动，而妇女则负责家庭生产活动 (Fafchamps, Quisumbing, 1999)。

在斯里兰卡，殖民地时期的种植园为满足劳动力需求，招收了来自印度南部的妇女。这些妇女是该国最早挣工资的人。从那时起，妇女一直在农业中发挥重要作用。1997年，斯里兰卡大约有42%的劳动妇女从事农业Chena（砍伐和焚烧）、稻田和家庭菜园中的性别角色因生产过程的不同而存在差异。男人专门从事整地、播种、施用化肥和杀虫剂以及销售，而妇女则从事移栽、收获后工作和在家庭加工自有菜园产品 (M.S. Swaminathan 研究基金会, 1999)。尽管妇女对该部门作出了贡献，但她们的作用



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与男人的作用相比是次要的。因此，在斯里兰卡女性农民通常被视为农民的妻子，而不是自己拥有权利的经济生产者。在农村发展当地工业的失败，进一步限制了妇女获取非农就业的机会 (Jayaweera, 1999)。

## 东亚

**在中国，农业生态特点及生计方式的差异**导致了农村妇女状况的不同。经济增长步伐和迈向市场经济，对全国农村妇女的生活既有积极也有消极的影响。一些农村妇女因这些新的经济机遇而受益，而另一些妇女则面临新的挑战，在日常生活中需要付出更大的努力。

国际农发基金的一项研究发现，中国的农村妇女花在再生产上的时间 (56.7%) 高于花在生产上的时间 (43.3%)。应该指出，在所研究的省份中，不同年龄和教育程度的妇女在时间使用上存在差异。50岁以上的妇女将一天中的大部分时间花在家务上，因为人们认为农田的体力劳动太繁重。中年妇女不仅在家庭发挥关键作用，而且和男人一起分担作物和畜牧业生产。在很多地区，凡有可能时，青年妇女往往喜欢农业之外的其它活动。该研究还认识到农村地区在时间使用上有季节性差异。例如，在农忙季节，妇女可能每天在田间工作8到10小时，而在农闲时间，则从事温室生产和其它创收活动 (IFAD 1995)。

在云南青山区进行的一项案例研究发现，妇女承担了80%的农业劳动，并参与除犁地以外的所有其它劳动（包括耕作和作物管理、收获及销售）。该研究再次显示，妇女参与农业活动是由她们在家庭中的地位决定的。青年妇女和中年妇女负责大部分农业和林业活动，如收集薪柴，非木质产品，以及松叶用作厩肥。这些活动主要是在11月到1月的农闲季节进行。60岁以上妇女不参加农业生产，女童则帮助家务和照看弟妹。男童的活动不太规律 (Jieru, 1999)。



第三项研究是在中国另一省进行的。该项研究发现妇女没有被习惯性排除在非农就业机会之外，经济发展没有均衡地增加中国家庭中的性别不平等。研究指出，尽管男人比妇女更有可能受雇于非农工作，但当地和地区性商业发展造成男性工人的短缺，迫使雇主雇佣妇女。在这种情况下，妇女的非农就业机会显著增加。该研究进一步指出，随着商业进一步发展，男性与女性非农业工人对家庭收入贡献的相对比重进一步缩小。与此同时，留下从事农业生产的妇女更有可能成为家长。这种地位给女性家庭成员带来更大的家庭决策权 (Matthews, Nee, 2000)。

在蒙古，游牧家庭在生产和再生产经济中发挥一定的作用。家庭权力和责任按性别区分。以合作与专业化相结合为特点，传统的游牧活动在男人与妇女的工作之间仍有明显的差别。私有化模糊了男人和女性工作之间的区别，更多妇女和男童承担起传统上被视为男人的工作。私有化也为增加畜群数量，发展奶制品加工提供了机会。奶制品加工传统上是妇女的工作，进一步加大了妇女的工作量。虽然被视为妇女责任的有偿和无偿生产性工作量增加了，但仍然进行了少数传统的分工。因此，一些工作中存在灵活性，妇女和男孩承担起男人的工作；而另一些工作则继续存在僵化情况。尽管工作量增加，但妇女仍然继续独立承担属于她们的工作；总体上，妇女的工作量增加了 (UNIFEM 2001)。

## 东南亚

**柬埔寨妇女在农业、林业和渔业中发挥主导作用。**根据《柬埔寨人力开发报告》，妇女占农业、林业和渔业劳动力的55%，而男人仅占45% (柬埔寨王国政府，2000)。劳力的组织似乎围绕在家庭现有的交换和雇用劳力上。通过这种方式，男人和妇女分担许多农业生产活动，如担水、搬运柴薪、照看牲畜 (Gray, Wouters, 1999)。

在印度尼西亚，妇女是农村家庭的主力，为家庭和农业生产



## 农业中妇女

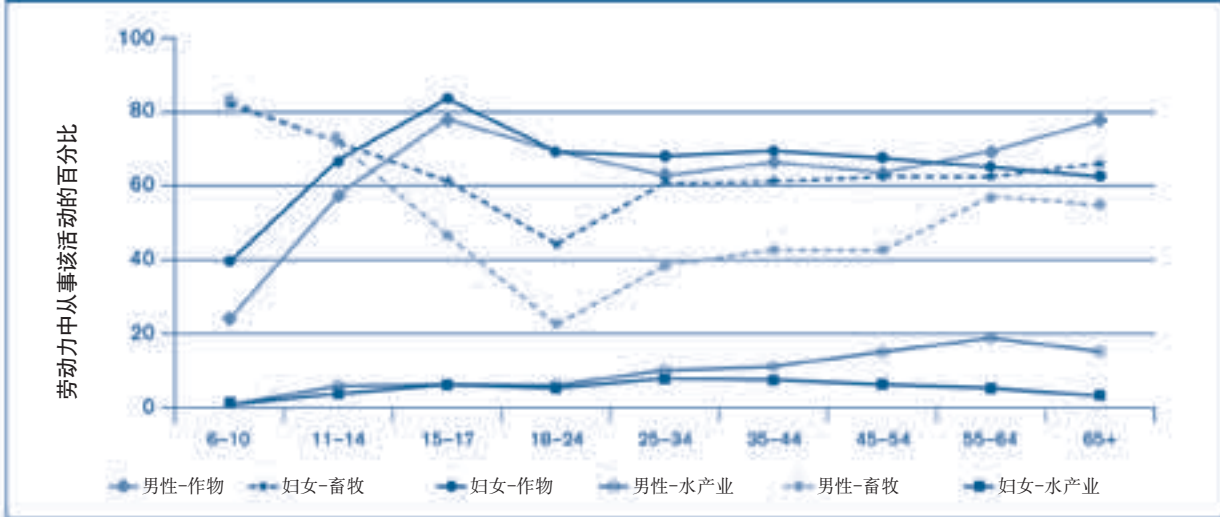
提供劳力。农业占农村就业的比率最高。每100名从事农业的男人，大约就有63名从事农业的妇女。因为大多数农村家庭拥有少量土地或者根本没有土地，农村妇女往往通过在中小企业中从事非农就业而补充家庭收入和粮食安全。一些企业与农业生产有联系 (Mugniesyah, 2002)。在老挝，研究表明，妇女和女童在家务劳动之外，还承担50%到70%的农业和其它生产活动。女性农民主要为家庭消费进行生产。通过她们的劳动，农村妇女可获得高达30%的家庭食物和所需用品(UNICEF, 1996)。性别角色和家庭女性成员参与有关农业和水产养殖的决策过程，因地区和种族而异 (Murray, Kesone, 1998)。

马来西亚是东南亚最成功地例子之一，过去15年的就业模式发生了根本性转变。在马来西亚，混农林业、畜牧业和渔业过去曾是妇女就业的主要来源。1995年，这些部门仅雇佣了15.9%的女性和20.3%的男性工人。马来西亚妇女利用经济转型过程，转向收入相对较高的其它部门。今天，制造业是唯一雇佣妇女最多的部门，其次是社区、公共、社会服务、贸易和农业 (Ahmad 1998)。相比之下，菲律宾的大多数妇女1997年超过50%继续从事农业工作。妇女主宰农村非正式就业市场 (APEC 南北研究所, 1999);五个种稻村的数据表明，妇女在农业和非农工作中承担的工作与男人一样多 (Estudillo, Quisumbing 等, 2001)。

在泰国，妇女在农村生产和创收系统中扮演主要角色。1995年大约40%的妇女从事农业。在小农户中，所有成员不分年龄和性别，都在农业生产中发挥作用。然而，在较年长的年龄组 (3034, 3539和4049岁)，农村妇女参与劳动的比例最高，大约为80% (Thonguthai, Thomson, Bhonsung, 1998)。随着经济转型，农户以外的有薪就业机会和自我雇用机会增加，农村妇女参与经济活动的情况开始类似于城市妇女。曼谷附近的一项研究证实了妇女在农产品销售方面的重要性。一项对10个农产品市场的调查表明，大约80%的蔬菜和水果摊属于妇女 (Korsieporn, 2000)。

在越南，最近的越南生活标准调查数据显示，妇女大量参与农业活动。如图2.3所示，数据表明农村妇女对畜牧业生产的贡献

图2.3  
越南：劳动力参与作物生产，畜牧管理和水产养殖的情况



资料来源: Desai, 2001

超过了男人。在作物生产方面，两者贡献相同，调查数据进一步表明，在1992-1993年至1997-1998年五年间，在18至64岁年龄组中，男女成人有薪雇用的比例从26%增加到32%。而且，增加的大部分人是来自对农村地区的妇女，城市地区则无变化。最近的另一项研究也支持这些关于妇女对农村生产系统贡献的发现。并再次证实了妇女在牲畜饲养方面的主要作用。它发现妇女劳动平均占家庭全部劳动的69% (Desai, 2001)。

在东南亚国家，如马来西亚、泰国和越南，妇女通常在加工和销售鱼品中发挥重要作用。当然，在南亚的许多地方，尤其是孟加拉国和印度，深闺制度和其它文化习俗传统上限制了妇女的活动，她们在鱼类捕捞方面的参与程度有限。在巴厘，妇女在鱼产品销售方面很活跃。而在南苏拉威西，男人则完全控制了该项活动 (Felsing, Brugere, Kusakabe, Kelkar, 2000)。

### 太平洋岛屿

**在太平洋岛国**，农业生产单位以小农户为主，其产品供家庭消费，在国内及出口市场上交换和销售。传统上，妇女和女童承担粮食生产和家庭粮食安全的主要责任。她们在家庭园地上种植作物，饲养小家畜，制作手工艺品，并从事其它增值的活动，如制作干椰肉、晒鱼、织布、生产椰子油、备制传统药材、种植材料和种子。而男人则从事经济作物生产。随着时间的推移，种植经济作物因其经济价值和对国家发展的贡献而变得更加重要，妇女所从事的各类农业活动仍然与粮食安全有关，在日渐崛起的经济模式中人们认为这些活动不太重要。

虽然一些研究报告显示太平洋地区农业生产可能正在下滑，但现有的有限数据表明，在整个生产和产后环节，妇女在农业的作用正在增加。关于小农户系统中妇女和男人工作的最新数据来自1999年萨摩亚的农业调查。该调查显示，所有年龄段的妇女都从事农场管理、生产和销售。例如，调查表明，绝大多数农场主为男性，为17 993人，女性仅有185人。五分之二农场工人为女性，妇女负责几乎二分之一的农产品交易。从事手工艺品的妇女与男人的比例为9:1。考虑到周边国家中的相似性，该数据重新强化了这种观点，即在所有太平洋岛国，家庭系统中男女分担工。

**萨摩亚农业普查进一步**萨摩亚农业普查进一步反映出妇女在带薪农业就业中的作用，并表明了妇女参与兼职农业的新趋势。兼职妇女平均每月投入农业的时间为58小时，接近所记录的农业工人的时间(63小时)，高出兼职男性(53小时)。从事全职带薪工作的妇女，除了她们的全职工作以外，每周仍有大约8小时花在农业上。该趋势在周边的太平洋国家也可以看到。这也许反映出对农业自信心的丧失，一种分散风险的欲望，一种因生活费用增加和/或正常或专业投入要求水平低而补充收入的需求。妇女在兼职工作中的高度参与反映出特有的地方因素。在萨摩亚，该现象可能与人口外迁引起的农业劳动力不足有关。而在图瓦卢，则表明男人由于受雇于出海船而不在农村的情况。

现有研究表明，在斐济和萨摩亚，妇女在奶业中扮演重要角色。瓦努阿图73%的养牛小牧民家庭中，妇女和男人一起修建牧场，除草和建筑围栏。对斐济的研究表明，在同一个村庄的居民中，妇女能够识别和利用更多植物。她们承担多种家庭和社区责任可解释这种现象 (Lechte, 1998)。

斐济、萨摩亚、所罗门群岛和瓦努阿图经济状况的恶化，促进妇女从事的非正式交易，尤其是农产品，如作物、海产品、家畜、手工艺和熟食的交易显著增加。这对家庭粮食安全是一个很好的征兆。来自所罗门群岛的一份随机抽样显示，大约66%的妇女（三分之二）从事非正式交易。萨摩亚则为70%。该调查强调了这些国家非正式交易收入的重要性。因为在所调查的样本中，斐济高达70%家庭的唯一收入来自非正式交易。在所罗门群岛和萨摩亚，该比例分别为33%和24%。

在太平洋岛屿，作为当地经济的一个必要部分，深海捕鱼传统上是男人的领域，妇女和女童则在礁石和内海的海湾采集海产品。近来，全球对海产品的需求不断增加，新技术（水产养殖和海藻工业）、鱼类资源枯竭以及对现金收入的需要，开始改变传统上的性别分工。结果是越来越多的妇女从事捕鱼，在基里巴斯等国海产品已经成为主要出口产品的环礁社区尤其如此。

这些关于亚太地区各国农村妇女生活的短镜头，表明了所有年龄段妇女在粮食生产和粮食安全中发挥重要作用。这些妇女在当地农业和非农业生产系统中的广泛和多种责任，是她们在其中发挥作用的整个社区和家庭联系的一个因素，也是超出妇女控制范围的国家性和全球性因素。

### 持续的单一家务劳动

作为整个亚太地区的一个社会现实，农村妇女在每天的日常生活中，工作时间长，工作单调。尤其是，贫困妇女使用一系列生存措施来赚取足够现金养活和维持家庭，其中的一个侧面是家庭内外劳动时间过度延长。回顾现有的案例研究，有证据表明，基

## 农业中妇女

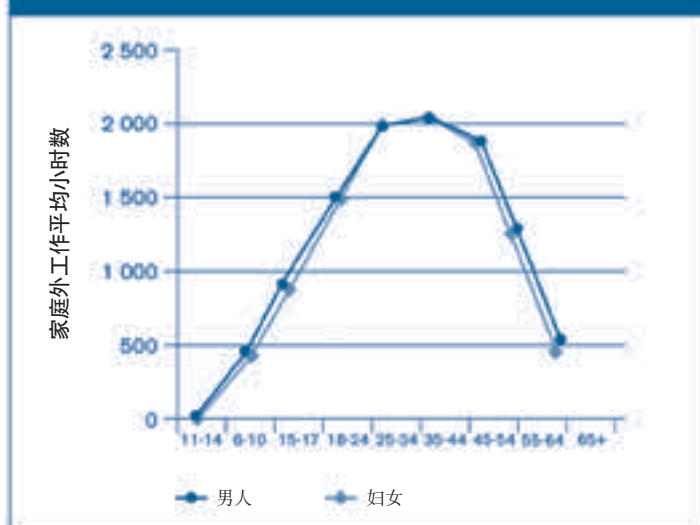
基础服务不足，如饮水和卫生及需要寻找燃料和其它补充食品，使农村妇女的一天延长，劳动量加重。在印度大吉岭对山区妇女进行的一项案例研究表明，随着森林退化，在森林中寻找薪柴的困难加大，并导致妇女工作负担及对身体健康的损害加重 (Gurung, 1999)。

同样，尼泊尔妇女承担了家庭和农场工作的双重重担 (Acharya, Acharya, Sharma 1999)。国际农发基金最近的一项调查发现，尼泊尔丘陵地区的妇女面临繁重的工作负担，身体受到伤害的程度高。尽管在不同阶层和社会等级之间存在差异，但与男人每天工作9到10小时相比，妇女每天大约工作16小时。除了过度的工作之外，该研究发现其中的许多妇女也挨饿 (IFAD, 1999)。

在巴基斯坦，许多农村妇女和女童的困境也无多大差别。她们的责任包括取水、备食、农业和其它家务劳动。这些工作不仅需要体力，而且剥夺了女童学习的机会 (Bari, 2000)。同时，妇女作为农民“无可见性”，意味人们对她们工作中危险的各个方面，如妇女作为巴基斯坦拾棉花劳动的唯一承担者，农药对其身体的伤害很少给予关注 (Nathan *et al.*, 1999)。

在中国，在云南一个村庄进行的一项研究发现，妇女负责砍柴，一般每天用2到3小时时间，将70-80公斤薪柴从很远的山区背回家 (Jieru, 1999)。根据菲律宾的一项研究，农村妇女每天工作高达16小时，远远超过男人 (APEC North-South Institute 1999)。而在蒙古，向私有化转变使女性牧民的工作量增加，使她们每天的工作时间延长（在已经很长的情况下）。尽管目前还没有系统的时间利用数据，但妇女劳动似乎已经利用过度 (UNIFEM, 2001)。

图2.4.  
越南:用于收入的工作小时数



资料来源: Desai, 2001

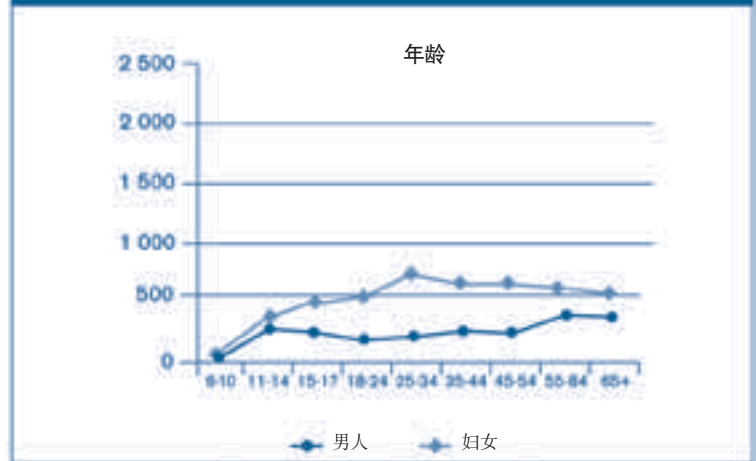
在越南，男人和妇女花在创收活动上的时间差距相对较小(见1997/1999年越南生活标准调查，如图2.4所示)。妇女花在家务劳动上的时间则几乎是男人的两倍。因此，在生命周期的每一点上，妇女工作的总时间一直超过男人 (Desai, 2001)。

在太平洋岛国，家庭花在自给农业生产和经济作物生产上的时间，与花在社会义务、家务劳动和非农经营及就业上的时间持平。比较萨摩亚妇女和男人的家务劳动，可以看出一个有趣的模式，即10-24岁之间的青年男性似乎花在做饭上的时间多于妇女。然而，由于妇女在照顾子女和洗涤这些传统上属于妇女的工作中扮演主要角色，妇女可能仍然面临繁重家务。

农村妇女工作的单一性引起了对农村妇女以及她们为加强家庭粮食安全所做各种努力的性别平等的关注。在妇女为获取粮食和生活用品所采用的措施中，时间是关键资源。亚太地区的多数农村妇女没有足够的时间。再者，即使有提高能力的项目，繁重的工作负担使她们几乎没有时间参加。根据世界银行的一项评估，发展中国家的妇女一般比男人工作的时间长。并且在维持和照料家庭方面承担了不成比例的责任。

为这些责任所花的时间常常意味着，妇女没有男人那么多机会去参加以市场为基础的工作或独立地赚取收入。这又使她们在家庭中讨价还价和决策的权力受到了影响，拥有的自由休息或自我照料时间较少 (世界银行2001)。认识到这些挑战，世界银行及其它一些机构提出了一系列区分性别的行动，以减少妇女在时间上的负担。在柬埔寨，人们以便改善能够减少妇女往返时间的物质基础设施，并以发展用户团体为手段来减少妇女花在取水和薪柴以及在水资源管理上的时间 (世界银行2002)。

图 2.5  
越南: 用于管理家庭活动小时数



资料来源: Desai, 2001

随着农业多样化继续将劳动密集型工作转移给农村妇女，理解妇女的工作负担增加对农户福利的影响，并确保干预措施努力赋予妇女权力，集中为她们提供实际需要，以便减少家庭单调劳动，变得更加重要。农村妇女的工作负担应以目前正在形成的有关劳动强度和性别对福利影响的讨论背景进行考虑。这些讨论对家庭内部“讨价还价”和按性别分工都有影响。

Jackson 和 Palmer-Jones认为，“在基于农业和自然资源的生计中有理由强调在连续绝对贫困背景下体力劳动的艰巨性，正说明了这些人口的贫困”（Jackson, Palmer-Jones, 1998）。在这种背景下，纠正农村所忽视的，如劳动妇女不能够获得足够的水、薪柴、卫生和保健资源，应该是关于性别平等宣言的一个重要的方面。

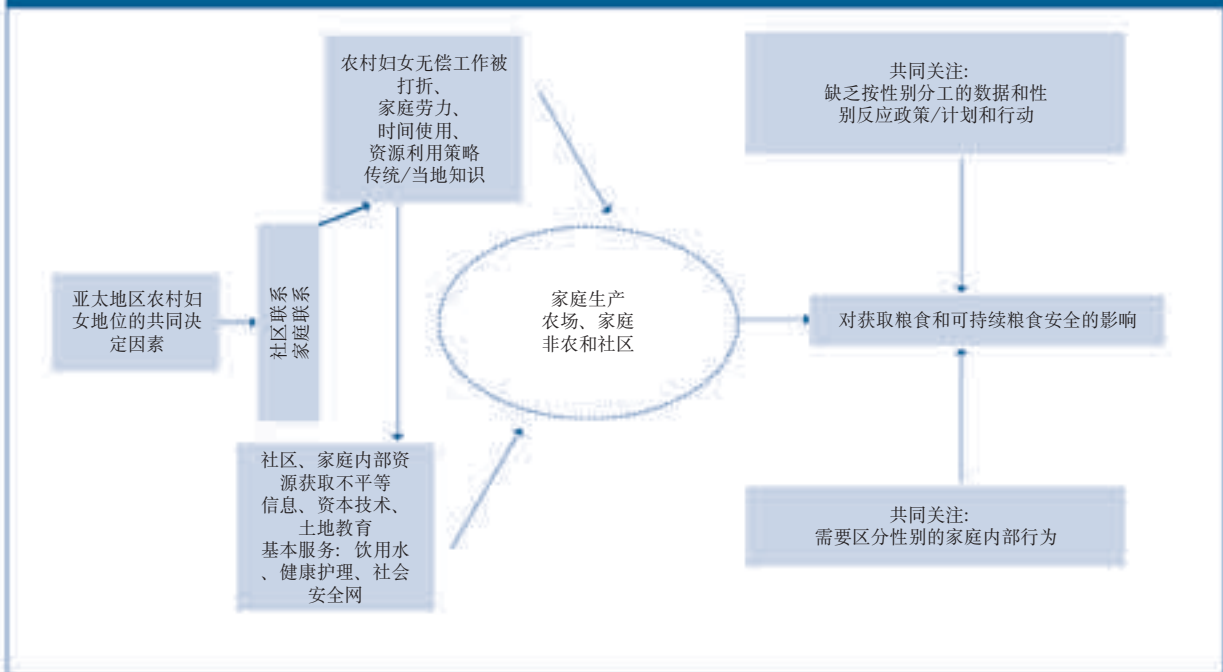
### 持续的麻木不仁

**对整个亚太地区农村妇女的分析性回顾**，识别出两个共同的决定因素，即社区和家庭对农村妇女的劳动持续低估和资源获取不平等，一如图2.6所示。由于家庭和社区漠视农村妇女的劳动，导致妇女对农业和家庭生产的贡献被习惯性地打折扣和/或忽视。社会忽视加上经济冷漠导致妇女为支持和提高她们对一系列活动的贡献所必需取得的各种资源中存在显性和隐性的不平等。

根深蒂固的观念进一步低估了妇女在家庭中的价值，从而导致性别偏见扩散到社区的互动及政策领域。关于农村妇女劳动的数据少，加上缺乏对妇女在农业和农村发展中所做的无偿工作的关注及估价，使这种状况进一步持续。这造成部门政策和发展战略对农村妇女的忽视，并最终妨碍促进农业发展和加强粮食安全的各种努力。



图 2.6  
共同决定因素、亚太地区农村妇女



资料来源: R. Balakrishnan

### 无偿劳动—社会上忽视和经济上冷漠

**对全面理解亚太地区农村妇女现状**对全面理解亚太地区农村妇女现状的一项持续挑战是，普遍缺乏系统收集和客观分析过的可靠数据。特别是，该地区现有宏观系统中常见的一个缺点是对生产、农业、创收活动和农村经济中妇女的数量统计不足。

例如，在孟加拉国，在农村地区42.5%的无偿家庭帮工中，妇女占83.2% (孟加拉国统计局, 1996)。在柬埔寨，在15岁以上劳动力中，66%的无偿家庭工为妇女。

在印度，1997年国家统计资料将22%农村妇女划归工人。收集机构承认对作为工人的妇女数量统计严重不足。国家样本调查估计至少17%的农村妇女和近6%的城市妇女被错误地登记为“非工人”。由于对有关何为工作普遍存在错误的社会观念，在国家统

计资料中大多数农村妇女工人都未列入。妇女在家庭土地上，或家庭企业中类似烹饪、打扫、照顾儿童和老人、集水、薪柴和饲料等无偿工作均未得到承认(Menon-Sen, Kumar, 2001)。

这种统计上的不可见性在巴基斯坦的表现是，尽管1980年农业普查估计农业家庭中73%妇女从事经济活动，但在劳动力调查中只有15%的妇女被登记。使用传统调查问卷，1990/91年劳动力调查报告的女性从事经济活动的比例为7%。当受访者被问及具体的活动，如移栽稻谷、拾棉花、磨面、晒种子和饲养牲畜时，该比例上升到31%。在与巴基斯坦有相同文化习俗，即妇女带薪工作被看作是对男性自尊和身份威胁的国家中，对妇女为多种家庭经济活动所做的大量贡献，都未给予足够的补偿(Bari, 2000)。

在菲律宾，在农村劳动力中过度地少计算妇女主要是因为对“生产性工作”、“家庭工作”和“工人”定义混乱和模糊。妇女的工作被排除在计算国民生产总值之外的主要原因是，许多工作是自给性的和在家庭内部进行(APEC 南北研究所, 1999)。在另一些国家，农村经济中的变化从根本上影响到妇女所从事的工作类型。这在国家就业统计资料中得到反映。在马尔代夫，发展出口型渔业剥夺了妇女从事有现金收入工作的机会，使她们成为看不见的无偿家庭劳动力(Dayal, 2001)。

尽管统计资料显示太平洋岛国妇女在经济中扮演至关重要的角色，其中一些国家的妇女因她们日复一日的捕鱼行为没有被政府、工业和银行视为工作，但她们仍然为争取在社区渔业管理中的发言权而斗争。结果，她们也许不能够获得贷款去发展小企业，不大可能获得制造职位方面的技能培训，不大可能获得关于养护实践的有价值的信息(Robinson, 2000)。

总结喜马拉雅山脉兴都库什地区有关山区妇女研究的发现，Gurung 断言“由于目光短浅地将妇女的自给性工作标作‘内部工作’，因而无足轻重，发展计划人员直到最近还不承认妇女劳动对农业生产及家庭生存的重要作用”(Gurung, 1999)。由于这种短视，在整个亚太地区，农村妇女无偿劳动的巨大作用和贡献

继续在经济分析中被忽视，在社会中被低估。由于她们对农业和粮食安全的贡献得到的尊重如此之低，当地很少有支持措施来改善妇女状况和减少造成她们在获取资源方面不平等的各种困难。

同时，由于普遍缺乏考虑到工作妇女单独贡献的国家经济分析，造成不区分性别的政策和计划对国家生产力产生消极的影响。在这种背景下，必须澄清工作定义中的模糊之处，使现在看不见的妇女工人的贡献不再被掩盖。事实上，以家庭为基础的工人的例子说明，有必要改进非正式部门的统计资料，更好地了解政策对非正式部门的影响，以及非正式部门对国家经济的贡献 (Chen, Sebstad, Connell, 1999)。

### 农村妇女获取资源不平等的

**最近世界银行的一项研究强调了**贫困妇女在获取资源方面所面临的双重劣势她们既贫困又是女性 (世界银行2001)。在亚太农村地区不难找到有关的例子。在这些地区，因一直忽视现有服务和基础设施，使资源获取方面的不平等加剧。传统观念和态度使性别偏见一直存在，在获取社区和家庭资源方面歧视农村妇女。

同时，自然资源退化威胁妇女获取农村地区维持生计的资源。另一个令人日益担心的问题是，全球化的力量有可能进一步使农村妇女边缘化，并导致在资源获取方面更加不平等。农业和信息部门新的和正在出现的技术很可能绕过教育程度低的农村妇女。

### 获取土地

**农村妇女获取土地**—作为土地所有者和使用者—展现出了一幅关于法律权利和传统习俗以及由家庭喜好和个人做法所确定的财产继承之间相互冲突的混合画面 (Agarwal, 1994; Bari, 2000; Tinker, 1999; Meinzen-Dick, Brown, Feldstein, Quisumbing, 1997)。在苏门答腊，继承制度正从严格的按照父系关系向更加人人平等的方

向发展，即儿子和女儿继承的土地类型更多与他们各自的工作相关。

尽管在土地继承方面无性别偏见，或有很少偏见，女儿在受教育上存在劣势 (Quisumbing, Otsuka, 2001)。资源上人人平等的交易也许在一定社会流行，但是土地法或土地法的执行则往往对妇女存在偏见。在农村，缺乏土地所有权或直接租赁权有可能进一步妨碍妇女获取灌溉和信用等资源 (Mehra, 1995; Agarwal, 1994)。

在整个太平洋岛屿地区，家庭成员在家长的保护下，按习惯拥有大多数土地。土地所有权有可能按照父系或母系关系传给下一代。由于种种原因，妇女在行使她们的权利时存在困难。尤其是，传统观念认为，妇女不需要土地，因为农业是男人的工作，妇女得到家庭支持系统的保护。此外心，即当妇女结婚时，给她们的土地就会失去。

最近，这些和其它一些歧视妇女的社会习俗已正式纳入法权。例如，基里巴斯土地法 (原始土地条例61, IX部分: 11- ii节) 中将习惯法正式纳入法律的条文规定：在儿子和女儿之间的土地分配中，长子所得比例应超其它兄弟，儿子所得比例应超过女儿。

## 获取信贷

**提供小额信贷**—通常免抵押和集体担保—为亚太地区农村男人和妇女提供了一项重要的资金来源。高经济回报率被归功于农村妇女良好的还贷表现。这种以集体为基础的小额信贷和小额融资方式，改善小交易机会出现时的现金流动状况，很好地满足了农村家庭短期的资金需要 (Zeller, Sharma, Ahmed, Rashid, 2001)。

但是，按照这种方式进行的各种小型金融计划，存在明显差别。在加强农村妇女成为自我依赖的生产者和拥有个人权力的自信的贷款者所进行的能力建设的承诺方面尤其如此 (联合国 DAW/UNIFEM, 2001)。由于农村家庭依赖较长的农业生产和畜牧饲养周期，他们通常没有每周流动的现金，小额信贷所规定的

还款条款（义务性和每周还款，加上一定存款）和利率不适合农村家庭的需要。因此这种以妇女为中心的信贷模式迫使农村妇女去追求另外的、替代性的创收措施，以便能够按计划还款。这导致她们的工作量加重。

近来的一些研究对小额贷款能效提高妇女权力的假设提出了质疑。这些研究指出，在某些情况下，妇女充当了家庭中男人获取资金的前锋，她们对以其名义所贷款项缺乏实际控制权。简而言之表明，对表现的过于重视 主要是以高还款率来衡量 已经影响到批准和回收贷款人员的动机，导致人们更少注意妇女是否和如何才能真正控制她们自己的投资活动 (Goetz, Gupta, 1996)。

在太平洋岛屿地区，由于妇女缺乏抵押和贷款数额小，她们在向商业银行贷款时，往往遇到困难。一些现实情况，如银行通常位于城市地区，加上妇女缺乏对银行程序的了解，进一步妨碍了女性获得资金。这种情况下，许多妇女组织制定了储蓄和贷款计划。按照这些计划，其成员可以定期存款和选择以合理的利率借款。然而，与这些计划相关的主要制约因素包括管理上的弱点，以及经营小规模计划并在农村地区执行这些计划的成本很高 (Fairbairn-Dunlop, Struthers, 1997)。

在斐济、马绍尔群岛、萨摩亚、所罗门群岛和太平洋岛屿进行的一项关于妇女与粮食生产的研究发现，家庭菜园的质量取决于是否有土地、土地数量、土壤、妇女所能获取的种植材料、培训、是否有劳力和有关病虫害的知识。在一些环礁岛国，土壤贫瘠、雨水及海潮对菜园的冲刷等也造成困难。在所研究的每一国家，拥有最成功的菜园的妇女来自双收入或高地位家庭。这表明培训本身不足以实现家庭粮食安全 (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1997)。

## 环境资源

**自然资源退化**直接影响到农村妇女的生产率和获取替代生计的机会。迄今的大多数研究集中在森林和沿海资源退化对妇女获取



## 农业中妇女

资源的影响上。关于土壤和水资源退化对女性工作模式影响的信息十分有限。一项研究揭示了马来西亚沙捞越北部传统上依赖打猎、采集和农业轮作的原始社区的生计是如何受到伐木、毁林和政府原始土地政策改变的威胁的。这导致了土壤侵蚀，河水质量退化，生物多样性减少和鱼类及野生动物种群减少。结果是，寻找替代生计引起男人外流，留下妇女应付不断下降的资源基础 (Heyzer, 1996)。

获取环境资源，对劳动的管理，使生计措施和决策过程多样化的能力方面存在性别不平等，造成了男人和妇女在如何面对贫困和环境变化方面出现显著差别 (Masika, Joeques, 1997)。经过对印度农村30多年地区性差异和临时性变迁的分析，Agarwal 得出了这样的结论：自然资源退化、私有化和邦政府对自然资源的占用对农村家庭中的女性成员造成了特别消极的影响 (Agarwal, 1997)。

在巴基斯坦北部，近年来，在农业生产力和畜牧业生产增加的同时，森林覆盖率大量减少。同时，妇女的农业劳动量加重，而男人则将更多的时间用于创收活动。这使男人得以垄断获取社区的货币经济，使妇女没有任何权力 (Joeques, 1995)。

在尼泊尔，一项研究对过去20年间现有环境物品采集方面妇女的工作量进行了审查。该研究发现，虽然所有家庭成员用在采集各种当地资源，如水和木材方面的时间减少，但妇女花在采集上的时间下降最多。同时妇女所花时间占总采集时间的比例也下降。鉴于该地区妇女在采集上所花的大量时间，以及由此带来的负担，这一结论表明了一种正面趋势，即这可能是由现有当地环境资源的增加促成的。例如，在研究的每一地区，至少安装了一个水管。同时一些人注意到在研究所涉及的14年间，他们的社区森林状况得到改善 (Cooke, 2000)。

## 社区组织

**促进发展妇女团体**，作为一种扩大妇女获取信息，增加协商能力和创造机会采取集体行动获取经济投入的手段。然而，实际

上，持续的性别偏见，根深蒂固的社区动态和妇女在时间上的制约，妨碍她们积极参加这些旨在给她们带来社会效益和女性权力的团体。

广泛存在的将灌溉管理责任从邦转移给社区，或转移给当地用户团体，忽视了社区内权力差别对水资源管理效率和公平的影响。性别是反复造成这种差别的一种原因。尽管存在各种赞美之词，就妇女的参与而言，回顾南亚有关的证据显示女性参与用水团体是最少的。部分原因是由于正式和非正式的成员标准将妇女排除在外 (Meinzen-Dick, Zwarteveen, 1998)。

许多因素已被认定为限制妇女参加正式环境管理机构的制约因素。这些因素包括规则、习俗、观念，已形成的对土地的占有，以及家庭和妇女的经济及社会禀赋 (Agarwal, 2000)。主要从事家务和农场劳动的妇女每天极其繁忙，不大可能有时间参加会议。农村地区的一些妇女也许与男性垄断的政府阶层没有联系。柬埔寨的一项以工代赈项目发现，独身妇女和贫困妇女，由于她们花在独自工作，寻找食物、担水和照顾家庭上的大量时间而与村庄隔绝 (WFP, 2001)。

## 获取教育和技能开发

**在获取教育上的性别差异是影响农村妇女获取其它资源的不平等的**一个关键方面。世界不同地区进行的多项研究，纪录了妇女教育对儿童教育和营养的重要性；教育对赋予女性权力至关重要。如果妇女想发展参与知识密集型经济活动所需的技能，她们至少需要基础教育。

无法获取基础教育的妇女，很可能被排除在新的机会之外。并且，由于长期存在于教育上的性别差异，这些妇女面临更大的、使她们参与发展的能力落后于男人的风险。(King, Alderman, 2001)。亚洲研究已经记录了妇女在参加教育和培训上的不平等。在巴基斯坦25个农村进行的一项研究发现，一系列严重的供给方

面的制约(村庄附近没有足够的女童小学,缺少女教师)剥夺了女童接受初级教育的机会(Sawada, Lokshin, 2001)。

同样,在印度南部,有关研究认定了一系列将贫困男童和女童排除在教室之外的因素,其中包括贫困,童工的机会成本和已形成的社会及文化习俗所造成的宗教等级、阶层和性别不平等(Subrahmanian, 1997)。由亚太经济合作组织开展的一项调查发现,花在无偿工作上的时间是妇女提高其技能和培训的主要障碍(APEC 南北研究所, 1999)。

发展中国家的技术开发和传播计划尚未充分解决与不同生产活动相联系的家庭劳动的单一性。尤其是,这些计划未认识到农村妇女对提高她们生产力的技术的需要。在尼泊尔,尽管国家政策 and 计划致力于赋予妇女权力,但在开发和传播针对女性农民需要的新的改进农业工具方面很少作出努力(Guatam, 1999)。

在孟加拉国,一项关于现代农业技术对家庭影响的参与性评估认定了多项为何贫困妇女未能利用新技术知识的原因,其中包括不利的土地占有制,由深闺制度确定的工作场所的性别划分,以及家庭地块面积有限(Naved, 2000)。

在畜牧部门,大多数技术解决方案包括那些针对妇女的方案忽视了妇女的需要,而生产系统的改善总体上加大了她们的工作量。今后,应考虑到妇女工作量及技术对她们的地位、资源和财产的经济控制的潜在影响而设计适当的技术(Niamer-Fuller, 1994)。正如一位著名的印度科学家M.S. Swaminathan所强调的那样,“如果妇女被赋予技术信息和技能,家庭的所有成员都会受益”(UNDP, 2001)。

## 新技术

近期在基里巴斯、斐济和萨摩亚完成了[亚太地区性别科学和技术项目](#)。该项目的重点是生物技术、环境、水、能源和信息技术。该项目的一个重要结论,妇女获取技术主要通过依靠捐助方供资的妇女非政府组织(斐济妇女经济, Wainimate 和南太平洋大学所属



研究所)。农业研究和推广服务目前仍将注意力放在出口作物和男人上。亚太地区的农村基础设施应该增加获取非农就业的机会，并促进农民采用新技术和信息以及支持服务 (Nathan 等, 1999)。

### 农村贫困的女性化

**国际农发基金的一项评估承认亚洲农村的贫困女性化**，并注意到两个主要方面。尤其是，该地区妇女为家长的家庭通常比男人为家长的家庭更贫困。因妇女及其子女更难逃避，贫困程度更严重，对妇女约束更大 (IFAD, 1999)。根据这项研究，女性为家长的家庭在柬埔寨 (35% 的家庭女性为家长)、孟加拉国和尼泊尔的比例很高。在尼泊尔女性为家长的家庭占无土地和边际农户总数的16%。

在柬埔寨，男人和成年子女的外迁产生了积极和消极影响。一些男人和子女在外工作有可能寄钱回家，明显提高了家庭的生活水平。另一方面，那些丈夫长期在外的妇女可能遇到一些类似单身贫困妇女的困境。例如，世界粮食计划署的一项研究表明，男人不在的家庭中妇女没有足够渠道接触决策网络、法律知识和稻米、劳动等财产 (WFP, 2001)。同样，越南生活标准调查认定，女性为家长的家庭中劳动力短缺是扩大经济资产和农业生产力的重要资源制约。在越南的农村地区，女性管理的企业的平均利润是男性管理企业利润的84% (Desai, 2001)。

太平洋岛屿妇女所面临的特殊困难包括由劳动力外移和儿童入学，年轻人不愿意从事农业生产，以及男劳力的季节性变化造成家庭劳动力短缺。在基里巴斯和图瓦卢，男人长期在海船上从事带薪工作。与此同时，传统上保护妇女不受经济负面变化影响的家庭支持系统也正在受到侵蚀。婚姻破裂不断增加，未婚先孕数量增加。所有这些都导致以女性为家长的家庭增加。简而言之，这些因素意味着今天整个太平洋岛屿地区的妇女作为一个群体，最容易遭受贫困。

## 资源和可持续粮食安全

表2.4指出了妇女所面临的在资源获取方面不平等的各个方面。该表说明了不平等的内在关系及其与遍布生产各个环节的可持续粮食安全的联系。粮食安全的主要风险包括改良土地和提高生产力的鼓励措施少，收入来源多样化的机会不足、能力有限。妇女没有时间提高农业生产，这也意味着在家庭危机和作物损失时，农村家庭营养摄入量低和粮食获取不确定。这些因素对提供足够粮食，保证国家粮食安全具有重大影响。

表 2.4  
农村妇女资源获取不平等表

生产环节	资源领域	获取问题	不平等关系	实现可持续粮食安全的风险
农场生产	土地	缺乏土地权和获取土地的机会 获取用于生产的土地不确定	没有法定土地权 习惯法和当地实际情况 对给予平等权利的土地法规的实施程度差 妇女不热衷于行使土地法权利和所有权责任 公共财产的私有化	改良土地和提高农业生产率 缺乏鼓励措施，对国家粮食供应和粮食安全有影响
	森林资源	无法获取非温带森林资源 牲畜缺乏牧场和饲草	森林保护措施 私有化造成社区资源使用的变化	缺乏收入多样化和粮食获取的手段
	土壤和水	没有土壤肥沃的好土地 无法获得灌溉和生产用水	有限的可供自给型生产的土地质量退化，无力协商获取肥沃土地 劣质水和缺乏参与用水团体 在用水团体内不能清楚表达要求和需要	改良土地和提高农业生产率 缺乏鼓励措施，对粮食供应和国家粮食安全产生影响

# 亚洲及太平洋地区

## 第二章

生产环节	资源领域	获取问题	不平等关系	实现可持续粮食安全的风险
农场、家庭和非农业生产	技术	<p>无法获取适于妇女所从事生产活动的技术</p> <p>无法获取家庭技术</p> <p>缺乏扩大生产规模和提高质量的技术</p> <p>无法获取现有技术、生产方法和技术信息</p>	<p>过去和目前仍忽视妇女在技术开发方面的需要和作用</p> <p>由于女性技能和教育水平较低和性别偏见倾向于男人，以机械化代替妇女</p> <p>假设用于家务的技术是女性家庭化的同义词</p> <p>忽视妇女家庭生产所需的技术的妇女技术培训计划薄弱和不足</p> <p>妇女缺乏时间和教育水平去利用技能培训和技术转让计划</p>	<p>收入和粮食获取多样化的手段有限</p> <p>提高农业部门的生产率缺乏鼓励机制，对粮食供应和国家粮食安全产生影响</p>
	劳动力	<p>缺乏农业技术所需的现有劳动力</p> <p>无劳动力从事家务劳动</p>	<p>由于男性外流，以女性为家长的家庭数量增加</p> <p>缺乏男劳动力，女性为家长的家庭规模小</p> <p>家庭结构和亲属网络的变化</p>	<p>收入多样化和粮食获取的手段很少</p> <p>提高农业部门的生产率缺乏鼓励机制，对粮食供应和国家粮食安全产生影响</p>
	贷款	<p>无法获取进行农业生产和建立和扩大企业规模的正式贷款</p>	<p>农村银行和农村信贷系统不完善</p> <p>由于缺乏传统形式的抵押（如土地、房屋），在大额贷款中，妇女被视为不可靠的客户</p> <p>官方贷款交易中，男人被视为家长</p>	<p>收入和粮食获取多样化的手段很少</p> <p>提高农业部门的生产率缺乏鼓励机制，对粮食供应和国家粮食安全产生影响</p>
	农业支持服务体制资源	<p>无法获取农业生产和非农业生产投入</p> <p>缺乏非农业劳动就业</p> <p>无法接触发展组织和政府机构</p>	<p>提供农业支持的系统差</p> <p>缺乏适于农村妇女的适当信息和处延活动</p> <p>传统偏见忽视妇女在农业中的作用，从而忽视对性别敏感的农业推广计划</p> <p>妇女教育有限和缺乏对公共部门和计划的理解</p> <p>农村就业计划方面的投资不足</p> <p>妇女缺乏教育和适当技能去利用新的经济机遇</p>	<p>收入多样化和粮食获取的手段很少</p> <p>提高农业部门的生产率缺乏鼓励机制，对粮食供应和国家粮食安全产生影响</p>

破土：  
农业中妇女的现状与前景

## 农业中妇女

生产环节	资源领域	获取问题	不平等关系	实现可持续粮食安全的风险
			<p>公共部门机构传统上使妇女边缘化</p> <p>妇女关于公共部门机构和服务的知识不足</p> <p>妇女缺乏与公共部门发展机构打交道的能力</p>	
	市场和商业联系	可靠市场的准入有限与城市商业中心的联系不足	<p>农村地区市场基础设施差和市场信息服务有限</p> <p>利用农村生产者生产性资源的经济和社会组织忽视女性生产者</p> <p>全球经济联系</p>	<p>缺少收入多样化和粮食获取的手段</p> <p>提高农业部门的生产率缺乏鼓励机制，对粮食供应和国家粮食安全产生影响</p>
家庭生产	饮用水、卫生、保健和儿童照料服务	无法获取履行照顾家庭责任所需的基本服务	<p>农村地区服务基础设施差</p> <p>传统上认为妇女需要少和习惯于处理困难任务</p> <p>缺乏联系农村社区与服务中心的道路和交通</p>	<p>提高农业生产率妇女没有足够时间和精力，对粮食供应和国家粮食安全产生影响</p> <p>农村家庭的营养摄取差</p>
社区生产	正式安全网	<p>在家庭危机时，无法获取现金或支持性服务</p> <p>社区组织的准入</p> <p>家庭关系网络的准入</p>	<p>过去和现在都忽视了农村社区所需的适宜作物/牲畜和个人/医疗保险或现金转移</p> <p>缺乏技能去对付外部有组织的社区团体</p> <p>男人占据领导地位，主宰了社区组织中的讨论</p> <p>妇女遵循传统，没有有效表达她们对资源的需要</p> <p>妇女缺乏时间和技能，阻碍了她们的积极参与</p> <p>扩展家庭体系和传统亲戚关系网络的瓦解</p>	<p>农村家庭在遭遇家庭危机和作物损失时，粮食获取不确定</p> <p>缺少使收入多样化和粮食获取的手段</p>

## 地区趋势

社会、经济和技术领域近期的一系列发展，包括经济一体化、商业化、城市化和全球化、农业和信息技术的进步、政治不稳定、内战、艾滋病毒/艾滋病、自然灾害，对亚太地区农村妇女造成重大影响，其中包括家庭健康、农业生产率 and 经济福利。很少有系统性的研究考察这些趋势对农村妇女的影响。以下说法似乎有一定的道理，即经济一体化和农业及信息技术的进步给农村妇女的生计和工作同时带来了机遇和威胁，而政治不稳定、自然灾害和艾滋病毒/艾滋病则对农村妇女产生巨大的额外压力。

### 1990年代的经济危机

东南亚经济危机导致城市地区的贫困大量增加。尽管对农村地区和农业的影响并不像当初担心的那样大，但是这些影响是广泛的。考虑到国家之间和国家内部的巨大差异，一些农村地区受到的影响格外严重。总体上，因危机引起政府缩减农村开支，汇款数额减少，失业的城市工人返回农村，以及随之导致农村家庭收入需求增加，农村贫困人口受到不利影响 (Hooke, Warr, Shaw, Forde, Brassard, 1999)。

然而，主要由于危机被认为是一种城市现象，目前尚无系统性的研究来分析亚洲危机对农村妇女的影响。在全球层面，人们认为，不考虑到性别关系的重要方面（包括妇女无偿的再生产工作和家庭内部分配），造成了关于经济自由化对劳动力市场内外妇女影响的不准确评价 (Fontana, Joeques, Masika, 1998)。这引起了如下问题：农村妇女的生计措施是否和如何缓冲经济危机对亚洲农村地区的影响。

### 全球化

**经济一体化**可以在国内和国家之间发生，与经济全球化加快的趋势也许有也许没有联系。不管是否有全球市场准入，农村生产可以从自给性农业转变为现金经济；然而全球市场对农产品的需求作为一种力量，可以影响生产，并对农村妇女产生影响。差异取决于农业企业的规模和类型（联合国大会，1999）。

由于妇女采取行动在当地市场和城市中心销售她们自己种的农产品、小牲畜和家庭自产的食品，对现金的需求可以推动自给性生产商业化。这些家庭自产物品有可能面对来自工业加工食品的竞争。

容易追踪全球市场对农产品需求对一定大小的土地拥有量，包括由农业家庭所承担的合同生产，或者是对要求具有一定教育和技能标准的农业加工企业的直接影响。在这些追求夺取全球农业市场份额的生产系统中，具有基本技能和教育的妇女能够增加她们的经济机遇。

然而，对正式劳动合同的处理和条款的理解不透彻，使妇女面临受剥削的风险。与此同时，全球消费者爱好和需求的变化，使参与这类农业合同企业中的农村妇女的经济风险增加（联合国DAW/UNIFEM, 2001）。

此外，受全球金融机构所制定的小额贷款限制的社会计划，经常对农村妇女造成问题。当全球层面的金融市场一体化和正式贷款组织作为一种提高农业生产率和农村企业的方式而受到鼓励时，小额贷款计划的影响仍不确定。

### 新技术

**生物技术作为一种新的力量已经在亚太地区出现。**以非政府部门（多数反对）和科学界及私营部门（支持）之间强烈不同的观点为标志，有关生物技术利弊的争论仍在继续，毫无减弱的势头。

现代生物技术对实现人人享有粮食安全所做贡献的程度，目前仍然是一个未找到答案的问题（Pinstруп-Andersen, Pandya-Lorch, Rosengrant, 1999）。

在这种情况下，这一地区的大多数政府似乎采取了一种“关注、等待和观望”的态度。对新的生物技术推动的农业革命所带来的潜在机遇和风险，妇女农民知道和了解的程度如何，总体上缺少相关信息。鉴于整个地区中妇女受教育程度低，而以生物技术为基础的农业则需要高度精密的生产组织，有理由推测大多数农村妇女将被这些发展进一步边缘化。

信息和通讯技术（ICTs）在促进妇女获取信息和知识、加强教育和学习、加速技术转让方面的潜力，已被亚太地区的许多人认可。在一些国家，广播和电视广泛用于告知和教育农村妇女有关健康、营养和农业的信息。一些关于使用新的ICTs赋予妇女权力的成功事例，如孟加拉国的Grameen交流网络、印度安得拉邦、卡纳塔克邦和奥里萨邦的ICT计划及马来西亚电视推销业所创造的农村就业，被用作新信息技术潜力的例子，。

尽管有这些潜力存在，“数字鸿沟”增加有可能加剧城市与农村社区之间在知识和教育上的差距，其威胁是真实的。因特网联接，包括相关语言内容的提供和质量，在国家之间和国家内部已经不同。与大多数亚洲国家相比，太平洋岛国妇女获取和使用信息技术，基本上限于城市地区，且总体上较少（Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001）。

在更多利用ICT赋予妇女权利方面，存在若干障碍，其中包括基础设施不足，费用高和能力有限；所有这些问题在农村地区更加突出（Atkin, 1998）。ICTs在推广服务方面传递传统男性偏见的程度，尚未验证。当然，只要用户友好和性别敏感的信息材料得到开发，发展人员受到良好培训并具有性别敏感性，用ICTs教育大量农村妇女和男人并赋予他们权力的机会就会存在。

### 政治不稳定和冲突

**整个亚太地区政治不稳定增加**，冲突增多，已经加大了对许多农村生产者的压力。阿富汗、东帝汶和斯里兰卡的冲突对农业和粮食生产的影响已众所周知。然而，太平洋地区布干维尔岛和所罗门群岛发生的内战及民族矛盾所造成的影响却少有文字报道。对妇女而言，由于男人卷入冲突、政治不稳定和冲突导致了更多的农业工作。即使在和平的国家，地雷持续提醒过去的冲突，对农村社区构成真正的威胁。在柬埔寨和老挝，被扔弃的炮弹数量之多，迫使农民不得不放弃良好的土地。

### 人口压力

**在亚太地区的许多地方，人口压力对农村家庭**已经造成严重影响，尤其影响到妇女的工作、谋生手段和护理活动。太平洋岛国的人口每30年翻一番，对自然资源和粮食安全造成很大压力。快速向城市迁移 以青年男性为主 在增加城市人口密度的同时，导致农业劳动力严重短缺。例如，在马绍尔岛，9000多人生活在Ebeye岛上，而该岛面积不足0.5平方公里。南Tarawa(基里巴斯)、Majuro(马绍尔群岛)和Funafuti(图瓦卢)的城市中心人口密度极大，增加了家庭菜园占有土地、清洁水供应的压力，同时导致了很高的失业率和更容出现贫困的情况。

### 艾滋病毒/艾滋病

**同样，艾滋病毒/艾滋病**对农村人口和粮食安全的影响是该地区许多地方关切的问题。艾滋病毒/艾滋病在湄公河流域各国，尤其是缅甸和泰国大量流行 (Bain, 1998)。经济一体化的加强、前所未有的增长、和中央计划经济向市场经济的转型创造了新的工作机会，人们为寻找这些机遇开始流动。艾滋病毒/艾滋病的蔓延与不断增加的流动人口有关。经济发展不均衡导致了农村与城市地区和农业与工业之间的不平衡。在多数地方，健康和教育系统



不能满足这些城市新居民的需要。轶事和观察信息进一步表明，感染了艾滋病毒/艾滋病的城市居民回流到农村村庄，有可能增加对农村妇女作为创收者和照料者的需求。

### 自然灾害

**亚太地区以容易遭受自然灾害**，如洪水、干旱、台风和地震而闻名。自然灾害发生率上升导致财产和农业资产严重损失，威胁到农业生产，加剧了易受害程度，导致粮食冲击和粮食不安全 (Ninno, Dorosh, Smith, Roy, 2001; FAO-RAP, 2001; O' Brien, 2001)。

各种案例研究和事例表明，在构成社会对风险伤害的脆弱性及对危害和灾难的反应时，性别是一个十分重要的因素。在一个灾难周期，男人和妇女明显采用不同的应付措施。孟加拉国在1991年的龙卷风时期，据报大量伤亡人员为妇女。这是由于社会对她们的流动性所施加的限制以及她们照料儿童和牲畜的责任，使她们没有收到警报信号。

同样，在灾后期间，妇女遭受困难更多。她们因多重角色引起的工作量急剧增加。与此同时，她们的许多传统创收活动，家庭菜园和牲畜都消失了。妇女(不像男人)无法到家庭以外去寻找工作(联合国经济及社会理事会，2002)。在这种情况下，在灾难管理方面需要具有性别反应能力的体制变革和集体行为措施，使妇女的对灾难的易受害性与她们已经被证明了的在困难情况下的应付能力保持平衡 (D' Cuhana, 2001)。

虽然一些案例研究和经验性发现表明了近年来全球化、技术进步、艾滋病毒/艾滋病趋势在该地区造成的影响。这些发展对农村家庭，尤其是妇女的综合影响尚未系统研究。未来，必须将农村地区的性别分析纳入宏观趋势的大环境中，以便制定有效的干预措施，支持农村妇女有效地管理这些变革的力量。



## 结论

在整个亚太地区，农村妇女对农业和农村生产的贡献多种多样，并受到特定社区和所涉家庭的独特因素的影响。普遍情况是具有变化和连续性，灵活性和僵化性的特点。不断增加的经济压力促使许多妇女改变她们的角色，从事一系列通常与她们无关的工作。

尽管有这些经济领域中的新责任，但妇女上在家庭范围内继续维持她们传统上的性别角色；男人的角色未发生同样的变化。妇女已经承担更多传统上属于男人的工作，但社会习俗上的严格边界仍为男人维持着。这已经给妇女带来更多的工作量和对体力要求大、回报率低的工作责任。

在农村妇女工作量增加且繁重的情况下，获取生产资源方面的性别持续不平等所造成的影响日益严重，并关系到粮食不安全的风险上升。缺少对妇女工作及单调性以及资源获取方面不平等的关心，已经植根于性别偏见之中，并通过家庭和社区层面的文化制约和社会习俗得以延续。反映在家庭内部行为上的偏见蔓延到政策领域，助长了无法控制的性别不平等。

经济一体化、环境退化、移民、技术和对自然灾害持续脆弱方面的地区趋势，已经对农村妇女发挥作用的不同环境产生了巨大影响。然而，农村妇女以及延伸到农业生产和粮食安全面临的机遇和威胁 尚未系统地研究、分析和量化，而用于支持政策和规划的制定。

## 建议

通过回顾亚太地区农村妇女的状况可以看出，农业对国民经济的贡献已经下降，但农村妇女在农场和家庭经济中的作用显著增加。尽管如此，农村妇女对农业和农村经济的巨大贡献，在地方或国家层面并没有得到广泛或正式承认。

由于缺乏对她们所做贡献和作用的认知及评价，支持农业发展和粮食安全努力往往忽视妇女对资源的需求和她们在发挥其生产作用时所面临的制约。与此同时，新的地区趋势和外部力量正在根本性地改变妇女所处的环境，为她们未来的生计带来了机遇和威胁。

因此，下面的建议力求将注意力放在农业发展和粮食安全中的农村妇女身上，以及加强政策和计划干预措施的需要上，以提高她们的总体福利。

### 改进信息和数据

应收集该地区农业和农村发展各个方面按性别划分的数据和性别差异的信息。这将能够对农村妇女所处环境和作用与男人和城市人口对比的情况进行综合了解。这样一种数据库将有助于开发具有性别针对性的人力资源 and 活动数据库，从而可以进行国家内部和国家之间的分析及比较。

必须提高各国政府对按性别划分数据的重要性的认识，加强国家部门收集、管理和分析信息的能力。在那些国家样本调查或者其他调查已经收集按性别划分信息的国家，应该对这些数据进行系统性分析，以便对农村妇女的状况进行深入了解。应该利用信息技术的进步和先进的数据管理系统汇编相关的、以需求为基础和用户友好的信息资源。然后，可将这些资源提供给政策制定者、计划管理者和宣传团体。

## 将性别纳入农业和农村发展规划

**在亚太地区**，在农业和农村发展规划中使用现有的按性别划分的数据的好处尚未被人们广泛了解。在规划过程中使用现有数据的努力不够，突出说明在涉及农业和农村发展政策及规划制定的机构中需要进行能力建设。这些努力应该集中在将性别和性别差异性指标纳入整个计划及项目周期的各个阶段。

## 无偿劳动的估值

**国家政府、双边和多边组织及学术机构**应该明确承认妇女的无偿劳动在家庭和农场生产系统中的重要性。这意味着，对这种劳动的确切估值应该达成一致。就粮食安全而言，农业家庭生产的家庭生产模式，为无偿工作投入的量化提供了一种方法。要作出协调一致的努力，说服包括农村妇女在内的不同利益相关者，承认和补偿农业和农村生产中的无偿劳动。

## 增加获取教育和信息的机会

**在国家层面要增加资源和加强努力**，实质性地改进女童的正规教育，提高成人女性的识字率并通过知识和信息赋予农村妇女权力。应该探索新的信息和通讯技术在减少年轻农村妇女面临的教育劣势方面的潜力。这可以通过开发和传播适当形式的以需要为基础的信息及接触媒体来进行。

## 减少家庭单调劳动

**要减少家庭的单调劳动**，就必须改变对妇女无偿工作毫无价值的持续传统看法。在农村地区应发展基本服务，以支持妇女在家庭、社区和农业中发挥的许多作用。应开发适当技术，减少妇女在日常家务上花费的时间。

### 技术开发和培训

鉴于女性拥有当地知识和发挥各种作用，农村妇女应充分参与开发面向女性的技术。应深入评估农村妇女在各种情况下发挥的作用和面临的制约，以指导这些技术的开发和应用。培训应根据妇女的各种生产任务加强她们的能力。应掌握新的信息和通讯技术，增加妇女获取信息技术和公共部门支持服务的机会。

### 性别和地区趋势

**应该开展系统研究**，认定和评价重要的地区发展和趋势 包括经济一体化、新技术、艾滋病毒/艾滋病、政治和内部不稳定及自然灾害 对农村妇女的作用、工作、获取资源机会和生计的影响。决策人员在制定部门政策和计划时应考虑这些研究，以便农村妇女能够利用新的机遇，同时尽管减少可能的负面影响。



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# فتح آفاق جديدة:

الآفاق في الحاضر والمستقبل للمرأة في الزراعة



## الفصل هـ - الشرق الأدنى





## الفصل ٥ - الشرق الأدنى (٢٠)

### سياق التنمية الريفية

**يتناول هذا الفصل التقدم** الذي تحقق خلال السنوات الخمس الأخيرة فيما يتعلق بدعم دور المرأة الريفية في إنتاج الأغذية ومساهمتها في تحقيق الأمن الغذائي في إقليم الشرق الأدنى. وهو يستكشف إجراءات تعزيز وضع المرأة الريفية، مما يؤدي إلى زيادة مساهمتها في إنتاج الأغذية وفي تحقيق الأمن الغذائي. ويتوقف نوع أو مدى المساهمة التي يمكن أن تقدمها المرأة الريفية على إمكانية حصولها على الموارد والامتيازات وعلى سيطرتها على تلك الموارد والامتيازات.

واليوم، على الرغم من عدم توافر بيانات بشأن المرأة الريفية والأمن الغذائي إلا فيما يتعلق ببضعة بلدان فقط، فإن هذا الوضع أخذ في التحسن. وقد تحقق تقدم في الاعتراف بالمرأة الريفية كمشاركة نشطة في البرامج والمشاريع الإنمائية. وفي بلدان كثيرة وضعت خطة عمل لتعميم وضع المنظور الجنساني في المسار الرئيسي، وبرامج للتخفيف من وطأة الفقر. وأقيمت رابطات نسائية وأضيفي الطابع المؤسسي على آليات المنظور الجنساني على الصعيدين المركزي واللامركزي؛ بما في ذلك المجالس واللجان والاتحادات. وتحقق تقدم فيما يتعلق بإمكانية الحصول على الموارد، وذلك من قبيل منح المرأة الأراضي المستصلحة حديثاً، وإمكانية حصولها على الائتمانات من أجل تنظيم مشاريع متناهية الصغر. وتوجد استراتيجيات مختلفة موجهة إلى المرأة كمستفيدة من القروض والائتمانات وترتبط الائتمانات بالوضع المحدد للمرأة.



Harvesting a good crop of dwarf beans in a greenhouse.  
(F. Botts, 1979)

(٢٠) يستند هذا الفصل إلى أعمال نادية رمسيس فرح، استشارية منظمة الأغذية والزراعة.



ويتضح من البيانات والملاحظات أن المرأة الريفية في إقليم الشرق الأدنى تساهم في تحقيق الأمن الغذائي على مستوى الأسرة المعيشية، وتشارك في الإنتاج الزراعي، كعامله بدون أجر في محيط الأسرة على الأغلب. وهي تؤدي جميع المسؤوليات الأسرية وخدمات رعاية الأطفال، فضلاً عن أنها مسؤولة أساساً عن الحفاظ على الأمن الغذائي للأسرة المعيشية؛ بحيث تتدبر الأمور بأي موارد قد يتاح لها الحصول عليها. وعلاوة على ذلك، يتزايد عدد النساء اللاتي يمارسن الزراعة في بضعة بلدان بالإقليم، وذلك بسبب هجرة الذكور داخل البلدان وخارجها وبسبب الحروب.

وعلى الرغم من التقدم المذكور آنفاً، تظل هناك فجوات بين الجنسين. وعلاوة على ذلك، تواجه المرأة الريفية معوقات مماثلة لما تواجهه المرأة في مختلف أنحاء العالم، من قبيل محدودية إمكانية حصولها على الأرض، والائتمانات، والتقانة الملائمة، والتعليم، والخدمات الصحية المناسبة. وهذا كله من شأنه في حالة توافره لها أن يبسر أداء أدوارها المتعددة داخل الأسرة المعيشية وخارجها من أجل زيادة الإنتاجية وكفالة تحقيق الأمن الغذائي.

## الخصائص الرئيسية لإقليم الشرق الأدنى

**على الرغم من وجود اختلافات كبيرة بين بلدان الإقليم فيما يتعلق بموارد الأمن الغذائي فإن هناك عدداً من القضايا المشتركة التي تجمع بين تلك البلدان، وهي:**

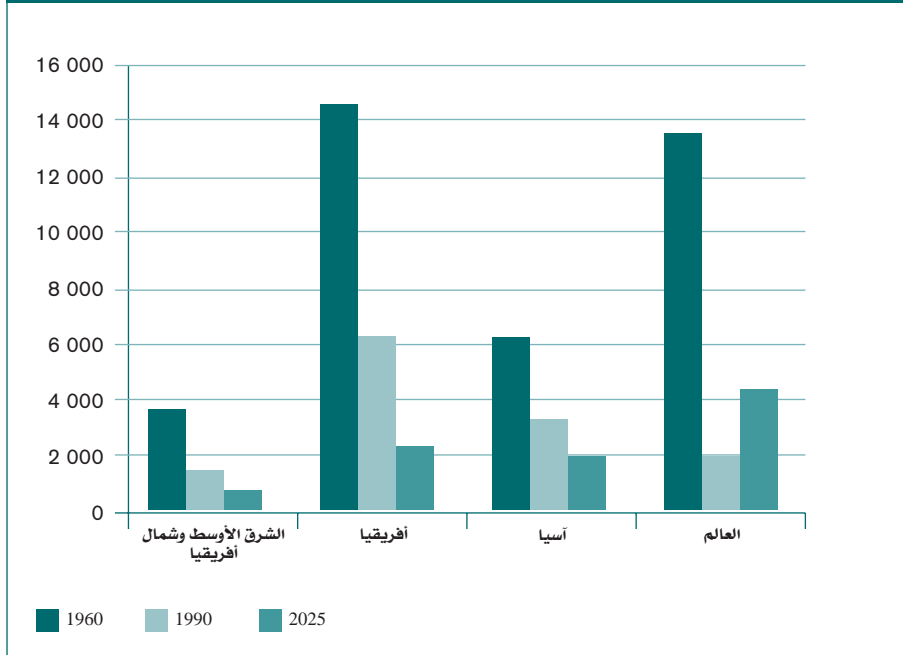
(١) أن حوالي ٧٠ في المائة من إجمالي مساحة تلك البلدان قاحل أو شبه قاحل، حيث لا يروى سوى ٢٨ مليون هكتار فقط من الأرض الصالحة للزراعة (أي نحو ٣٤ في المائة من إجمالي الأراضي الصالحة للزراعة) (٢) كان هناك تدهور شديد في الموارد الطبيعية بسبب تحات التربة والتصحر والتشبع بالمياه والملوحة (يعاني حوالي ٣٥ في المائة من إجمالي مساحة الأراضي من التحات بفعل الرياح، بينما يعاني حوالي ١٧ في المائة من إجمالي تلك المساحة من التحات بفعل المياه). (٣) أن بلدان الإقليم جميعها تقريباً قد بدأت عملية إصلاح اقتصادي موجهة نحو السوق، وإن يكن بدرجات متفاوتة من الالتزام والنجاح. وتسود صعوبات اقتصادية وسياسية واجتماعية كبيرة. (٤) أن بلداناً عديدة في الإقليم تعاني معاناة كبيرة من نقص التغذية. ومع ذلك يلزم وجود شبكات سلامة غذائية ملائمة لحماية الفئات القابلة للتأثر في كل من المناطق الحضرية والمناطق الريفية. (٥) أن الإقليم يعتمد اعتماداً شديداً على الواردات التجارية. وتعتمد بلدان عديدة

## الخصائص الرئيسية لإقليم الشرق الأدنى



على المعونات الغذائية لتلبية احتياجاتها الغذائية. وزاد صافي واردات الحبوب الغذائية من ٦.٥ ملايين طن في الفترة ١٩٦٩-١٩٧١ إلى ٣٩.٣ مليون طن في الفترة ١٩٨٨-١٩٩٠ ومن المتوقع أن يبلغ ٧٥.٥ مليون طن بحلول سنة ٢٠١٠ (NERC، ٢٠٠٣). واحتياطيات المياه هي الأدنى في المنطقة العربية بالمقارنة بالمناطق الأخرى في مختلف أنحاء العالم. وإقليم الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا هو أشد أقاليم العالم جفافاً، واحتياطياته المائية أخذة في الانكماش.

الشكل ١-٥  
نصيب الفرد من موارد المياه المتجددة بالأمطار المكعبة بحسب الإقليم

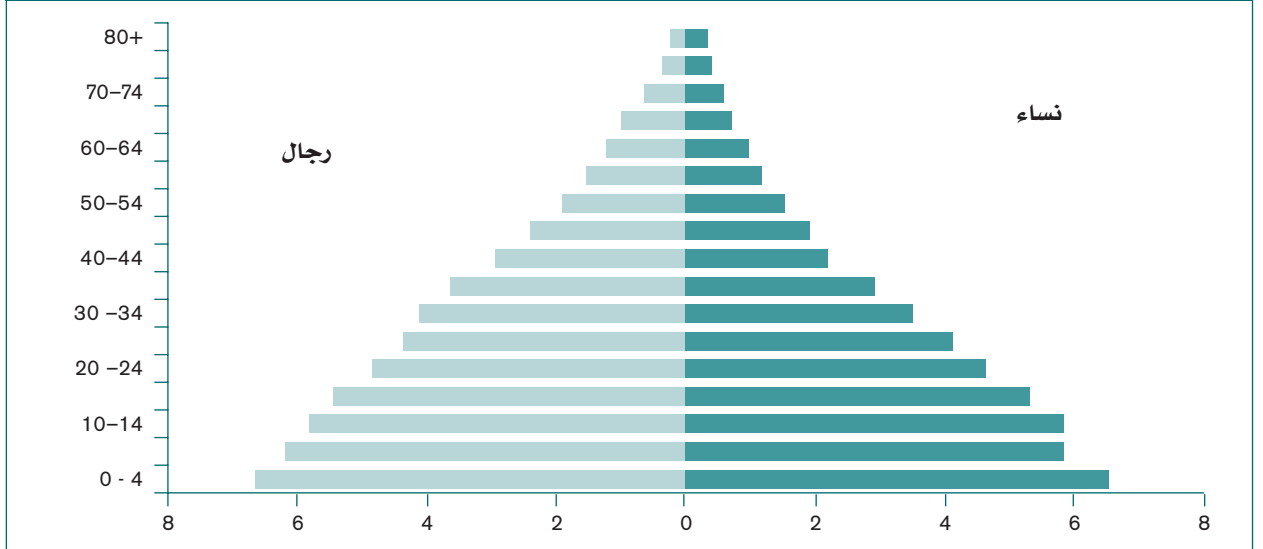


المصدر: Safiris, 2000.

### الخصائص السكانية

ربما كانت خصائص معينة من خصائص المجتمعات الريفية في إقليم الشرق الأدنى تفسر دور المرأة الريفية في تحقيق الأمن الغذائي تفسيراً أفضل. ومن بين المعوقات التي تحول دون مشاركة المرأة الريفية في تحقيق الأمن الغذائي، تقسيم العمل بين الجنسين في مجال الزراعة، والعمل بدون أجر في إطار الأسرة، ودور المرأة في عملية صنع القرار، وفي الإنجاب، والتقييدات الاجتماعية وغيرها من التقييدات. وهذه العناصر جميعها يمكن تحليلها وتصف حالة المرأة الريفية في إقليم الشرق الأدنى.

الشكل ٢-٥  
الهيم السكاني في المنطقة العربية ٢٠٠٣



المصدر: مجموعات بيانات الإحصاءات الاجتماعية الخاصة باللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٣.

يبلغ مجموع سكان المنطقة العربية حوالي ٣٠٧ ملايين نسمة، وتشكّل النساء زهاء ٥٠ في المائة منهم. إلا أن الرجال يشكلون أكثر قليلاً من نصف عدد السكان في بلدان مجلس التعاون الخليجي: أي في البحرين والكويت وعمان وقطر والمملكة العربية السعودية والإمارات العربية المتحدة. ويرجع ذلك إلى ارتفاع عدد العمال المهاجرين الذكور نسبياً في هذه البلدان. وتشكّل نسبة السكان العاملين الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين ٢٤ سنة و ٦٤ سنة ٥٩ في المائة من مجموع السكان. وتمثّل النساء غالبية السكان الذين يبلغون من العمر ٦٠ سنة فأكثر، وذلك بسبب ارتفاع متوسط أعمارهن المرتقب عند الولادة بالمقارنة بالرجال، بحيث يبلغ هذا المتوسط ٦٨.٥ سنة في حالة النساء بالمقارنة بمتوسط قدره ٦٥.٨ سنة في حالة الرجال في الفترة ٢٠٠٠-٢٠٠٥.

## الخصائص السكانية

وعلى المستوى الإقليمي يزيد حالياً عدد السكان سنوياً بمعدل يقدر بنسبة ٢.٤ في المائة والمتوقع أن يتضاعف في غضون ٢٩ عاماً، بينما من المتوقع أن ينخفض هذا المعدل إلى ٢.١ في المائة في الفترة ٢٠٠٠-٢٠١٥. ومعدل النمو السكاني هذا يرتبط ارتباطاً رئيسياً بارتفاع معدلات الخصوبة السائدة في عدد من البلدان العربية (اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٤). ويشهد الإقليم، على وجه الإجمال، معدلاً مرتفعاً للنمو السكاني، يُقدَّر بنسبة ٢.٤ في المائة سنوياً ويتسم بتفاوت توزيع السكان والموارد؛ وتقل أعمار نحو ٣٨ في المائة من السكان عن ١٥ عاماً. وفي سنة ٢٠٠٠ كان أكبر عدد من السكان موجوداً في إيران (٧٠ مليوناً) ومصر (٦٨ مليوناً) تليهما المغرب والجزائر (٣٠ مليوناً لكل منهما) بينما كان عدد السكان لا يتجاوز ٥٦٥ ألفاً في قطر. ولكن يوجد معدل أعلى للنمو السكاني في فلسطين (٣.٧ في المائة)، وعمان (٣.٥ في المائة)، واليمن (٣.٣ في المائة)، والمملكة العربية السعودية (٢.٩ في المائة)، وقطر والعراق (٢.٧ في المائة لكل منهما).

### الجدول ٥-١: التركيبة السكانية بحسب الجنس والفئة العمرية، ٢٠٠٣ (%)

	مجموع السكان		السكان الذين تقل أعمارهم عن ١٥ عاماً		السكان الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين ١٥ و٢٤ عاماً		السكان الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين ٢٥ و٥٩ عاماً		السكان الذين تبلغ أعمارهم ٥٩ عاماً فأكثر	
	الرجال	النساء	الرجال	النساء	الرجال	النساء	الرجال	النساء	الرجال	النساء
البحرين	٥٢.٥	٤٢.٥	٥٢.٥	٤٨.٩	٥١.١	٤٦.٩	٥٣.١	٣٦.٩	٦٣.١	٥٠.٥
مصر	٥٠.١	٤٩.٩	٥١.٠	٤٩.٠	٥٠.٨	٤٩.٢	٥٠.٨	٥٠.٩	٤٩.١	٥٣.٨
العراق	٤٩.٣	٥٠.٧	٤٩.١	٤٩.١	٥٠.٩	٤٨.٩	٥١.١	٤٩.٣	٥٠.٧	٥٢.٦
الأردن	٤٧.٩	٥٢.١	٤٨.٨	٤٨.٨	٥١.٢	٤٨.٧	٥١.٣	٤٦.٦	٥٣.٤	٤٨.٧
الكويت	٣٩.٨	٦٠.٢	٤٩.٠	٤٩.٠	٥١.٠	٤٦.٣	٥٣.٧	٣٣.٧	٦٦.٣	٤١.٦
لبنان	٥١.٠	٤٩.٠	٤٩.٠	٤٩.٠	٥١.٠	٤٩.٤	٥٠.٦	٥٢.٣	٤٧.٧	٥٤.٨
فلسطين	٤٩.١	٥٠.٩	٤٨.٩	٤٨.٩	٥١.١	٤٨.٦	٥١.٤	٤٨.٦	٥١.٤	٥٧.٣
عمان	٤٢.٦	٥٧.٤	٤٨.٩	٤٨.٩	٥١.١	٤٧.٥	٥٢.٥	٣٤.٠	٦٦.٠	٤٥.٤
قطر	٣٦.٦	٦٣.٤	٤٨.٩	٤٨.٩	٥١.١	٤٨.٤	٥١.٦	٢٨.٢	٧١.٨	٣٣.٥
المملكة العربية السعودية	٤٦.٣	٥٣.٧	٤٨.٨	٤٨.٨	٥١.٢	٤٨.٦	٥١.٤	٤٢.٥	٥٧.٥	٤٧.٥
سوريا	٤٩.٦	٥٠.٤	٤٨.٩	٤٨.٩	٥١.١	٤٩.٢	٥٠.٨	٥٠.١	٤٩.٩	٥٣.٩
الإمارات	٣٥.٠	٦٥.٠	٤٩.٠	٤٩.٠	٥١.٠	٤٥.٣	٥٤.٧	٢٦.١	٧٣.٩	٣٦.٢
اليمن	٤٩.٢	٥٠.٨	٤٨.٩	٤٨.٩	٥١.١	٤٨.٦	٥١.٤	٤٩.٩	٥٠.١	٥١.٧

المصدر: ESCWA Gender Statistics، ٢٠٠٣.

## خصائص المرأة

## التعليم والتدريب

**هناك تفاوتات بين الجنسين في جميع مستويات التعليم.** إلا أن صافي معدلات القيد في التعليم الابتدائي في البحرين ومصر وتونس في سنة ٢٠٠١-٢٠٠٠ كان ١٠٠ في المائة تقريباً. وعلى المستوى الإقليمي، يقدر أن ٧.٤ ملايين طفل لم يكونوا ملتحقين في المدارس في سنة ٢٠٠٠، كانت الفتيات يمثلن ٤.٤ ملايين منهم. وعلى المستوى الإحصائي كانت نسبة القيد الصافية للنساء ٥١.٧ في المائة في سنة ٢٠٠٠-٢٠٠١، بالمقارنة بنسبة قدرها ٥٦.٤ في المائة للرجال. وفي السنة الأكاديمية نفسها كانت نسبة النساء الملتحقات بالتعليم الثانوي تبلغ ١٧.٨ في المائة وكانت نسبة الرجال تبلغ ٢١.٦ في المائة. وعلى المستوى الجامعي في بعض البلدان كان عدد النساء الملتحقات بالمدارس الثانوية أعلى من عدد نظرائهن الذكور. وهذا يرجع إلى إبقاء البنات في البلد نفسه في المنزل، بينما يُرسل الأبناء إلى الخارج لمتابعة تعليمهم الأعلى خارج المنطقة العربية. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database).

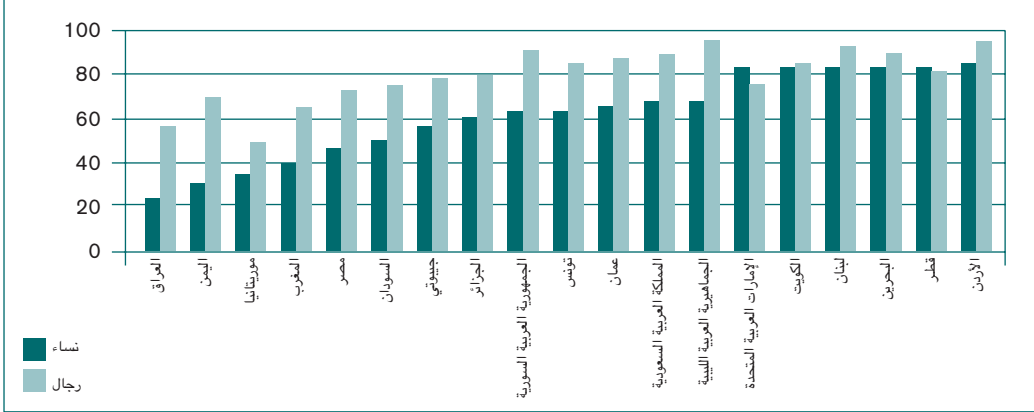
وتكون معدلات أمية المرأة أعلى عادةً من معدلات أمية الرجل. وتوجد أعلى معدلات لأمية الإناث البالغات في العراق (٧٦ في المائة)، واليمن (٧١ في المائة)، وموريتانيا (٦٩ في المائة)، والمغرب (٦٢ في المائة)، ومصر (٥٤ في المائة)، والسودان (٥١ في المائة) (البنك الدولي، Development Indicators Database World، ٢٠٠٢).

ومعدلات أمية الفتيات والشابات (اللائي تتراوح أعمارهن بين ١٥ و ٢٤ سنة) أعلى عموماً من معدلات أمية الفتيان والشباب الذين ينتمون إلى نفس الفئة العمرية وأعلى من معدلات أمية نساء المناطق الحضرية. أما النساء العاملات في مجال الزراعة فإن معدلات أميتهن أعلى كثيراً في اليمن حيث تبلغ ٩٤ في المائة، ومصر حيث تبلغ ٧٩ في المائة، وسوريا حيث تبلغ ٥٣ في المائة (Farah، ١٩٩٩، ٢٠٠٠a، ٢٠٠٠b).

وخلال الفترة ما بين سنة ١٩٩٠ و سنة ٢٠٠٠ زاد معدل معرفة البالغين للقراءة والكتابة في المنطقة العربية من نسبة قدرها ٥٠ في المائة إلى نسبة قدرها ٦٠ في المائة ومن المتوقع أن تتجاوز ٧٠ في المائة بحلول سنة (٢٠١٥) اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٤)



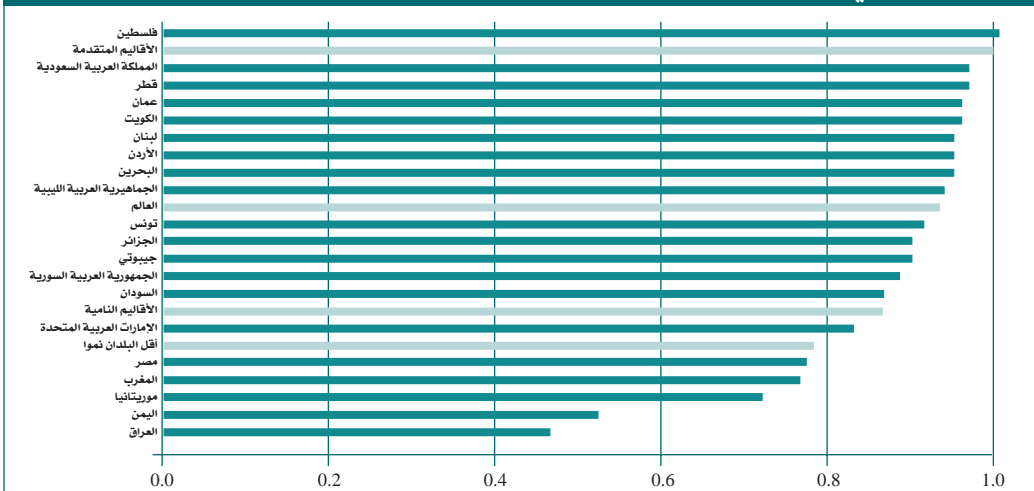
الشكل ٥-٣: معدلات معرفة النساء البالغات والرجال البالغين للقراءة والكتابة في بلدان عربية مختارة في سنة ٢٠٠٣ (%)



المصدر: اليونسكو، معهد الإحصاءات (UIS).

**الفجوة القائمة بين الجنسين فيما يتعلق بمعرفة الشباب للقراءة والكتابة:** لقد تراوح دليل التعادل بين الجنسين فيما يتعلق بمعدل معرفة الشباب للقراءة والكتابة في سنة ٢٠٠٠ بين ٠.٨٦ و ٠.٠٠١. وفي فلسطين كان الدليل فيما يتعلق بمعدل معرفة الشباب للقراءة والكتابة يبلغ ١.٠٠١، مما يشير إلى أن الإناث صغيرات السن كانت معرفتهن للقراءة والكتابة أعلى بدرجة هامشية من معدلات أقرانهن من الذكور. وقد لوحظت أوسع الفجوات بين الجنسين لصالح الرجال فيما يتعلق بمعدلات معرفة الشباب للقراءة والكتابة في العراق وفي اليمن حيث تبلغ تلك الفجوة ٠.٠٥٣. وعلاوة على ذلك كان دليل تعادل الجنسين فيما يتعلق بمعدلات معرفة الشباب للقراءة والكتابة أقل من المتوسط في خمسة بلدان عربية، هي مصر والعراق وموريتانيا والمغرب واليمن (اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٤).

الشكل ٥-٤: دليل تعادل الجنسين فيما يتعلق بمعدلات معرفة الشباب للقراءة والكتابة في بلدان عربية مختارة في سنة ٢٠٠٠



المصدر: معهد الإحصاءات التابع لليونسكو (UIS).

### الصحة الإنجابية

من الأصعب بالنسبة للمرأة الريفية أن تكفل الأمن الغذائي لأسرتها المعيشية وذلك لأن حجم أسرتها يكون أكبر. وفي الأسر الريفية يعتبر الأطفال استثماراً لا عبئاً من حيث النفقات، وذلك لما يقدموه من عمل في مرحلة مبكرة من العمر. وتساعد الطفلة في الأعمال المنزلية وقد تحل محل المرأة التي يكون لديها أطفال صغيري السن للغاية في الجمع ما بين العمل في المزرعة والعمل في إطار الأسرة. ولذلك فإن المرأة الريفية في هذه المنطقة يكون حجم أسرتها أكبر عادةً.

ومعدلات الخصوبة الإجمالية للنساء اللاتي تتراوح أعمارهن بين ١٥ و ٤٩ سنة شديدة الارتفاع. إلا أن هناك تفاوتات واضحة بين البلدان. وقد كانت البلدان ذات أعلى معدلات للخصوبة في سنة ٢٠٠٠ هي اليمن (٧.٦)، وأفغانستان وموريتانيا (٦.٨)، تليهما فلسطين (٥.٦)، وعمان والمملكة العربية السعودية (٥.٥ لكل منهما)، والسودان (٤.٥)، والأردن (٤.٣)، مما يبين أن معدل الخصوبة الإجمالي للمنطقة ككل مرتفع. أما أدنى معدلين للخصوبة فهما موجودان في البحرين (٢.٣)، وتونس (٢.١)؛ وكان معدل الانخفاض في معدل الخصوبة الإجمالي بطيئاً خلال الفترة ما بين سنة ١٩٩٠ وسنة ٢٠٠٠.

ولم يعتمد بعض البلدان حتى الآن برامج لتنظيم الأسرة، وهذا يصدّق فيما يتعلق بمعظم بلدان الخليج. أما العراق وفلسطين والسودان وسوريا والجزائر ومصر وتونس فتوجد لديها سياسات فعّالة لتنظيم الأسرة من أجل كبح النمو السكاني وتمثل قصص نجاح في هذا المضمار في المنطقة.

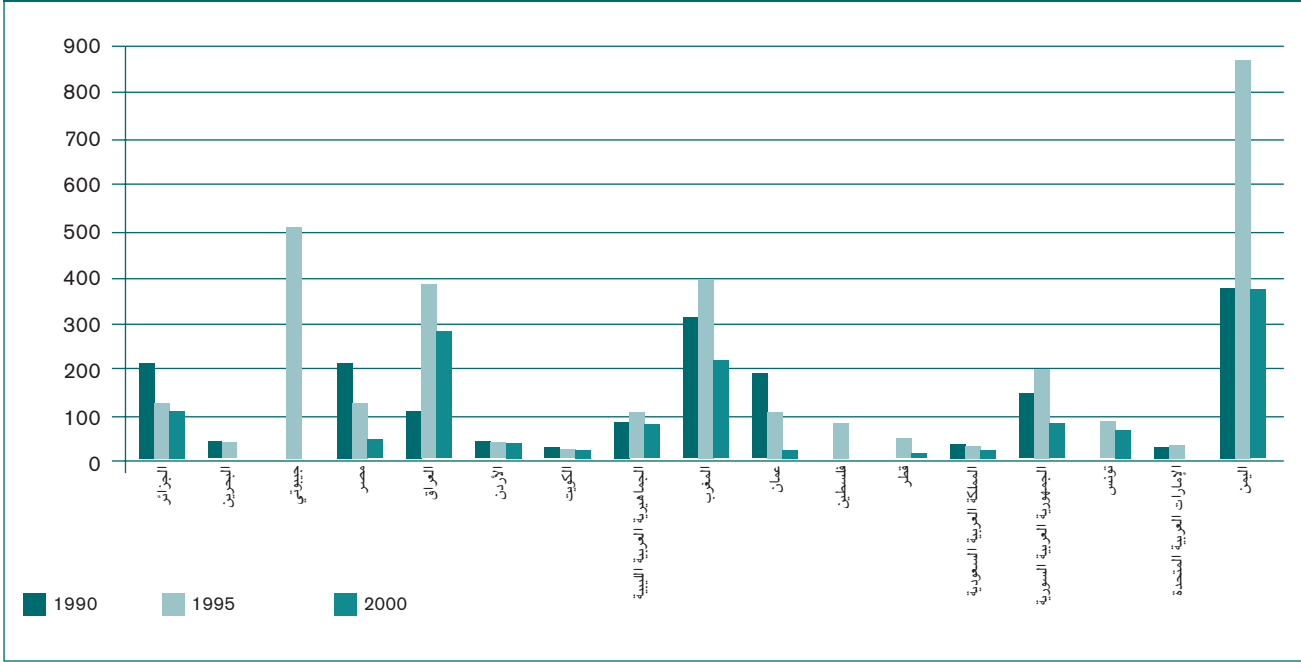
وفي الوقت ذاته توجد اختلافات بين بلدان المنطقة الغنية وبلدانها الفقيرة من حيث إمكانية حصول المرأة على خدمات الصحة الإنجابية. فالبلدان الغنية بالنفط حققت معدلات شاملة تقريباً فيما يتعلق بتقديم الرعاية المتعلقة بالولادات التي تجري تحت إشراف موظفين صحيين. وتقدّم هذه البلدان خدمات صحية مجانية فائقة الجودة لمواطنيها، وعلاوة على ذلك فقد نجحت في خفض معدلات الوفيات النفاسية لديها للأسباب نفسها المذكورة آنفاً.

وعلى العكس من ذلك، نجد أن البلدان الأفقر لديها قطاعات زراعية كبيرة الحجم وتعيش نسبة مرتفعة من مواطنيها في المناطق الريفية، حيث تتاح موارد أقل يمكن تخصيصها مجاناً لمواطنيها، وبخاصة للنساء. ويوجد بين نساء الريف أسوأ معدل للرعاية المتعلقة بالولادة وأسوأ نسبة مئوية للولادات التي تجري تحت إشراف موظفين صحيين؛ كما توجد لديهن معدلات وفيات نفاسية مرتفعة.

وتوجد أسوأ معدلات للوفيات النفاسية في موريتانيا والسودان (بين كل ١٠٠٠٠٠ ولادة



الشكل ٥-٥: نسب الوفيات النفاسية في بلدان عربية مختارة فيما يتعلق بسنوات مختارة بين سنة ١٩٩٠ وسنة ٢٠٠٠ (في كل ١٠٠.٠٠٠ ولادة حية)



المصدر: مجموعات بيانات الإحصاءات الاجتماعية الخاصة باللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٣.

حيّة) تليهما اليمن (٣٥٠) ومصر (١٧٠). ومن الممكن أن نستنتج مما نُكِرَ آنفاً أن المرأة الريفية ذات الأسرة الكبيرة والتي لا تتوافر لها إمكانية كافية للحصول على خدمات الصحة الإنجابية أكثر عرضة للوفيات الإنجابية والنفاسية المرتفعة. كما أنها مجبرة على كفالة الأمن الغذائيّ لعدد كبير من الأطفال في ظل فقر نسبي.

لقد انخفضت الوفيات النفاسية في معظم البلدان انخفاضاً هائلاً خلال الفترة ما بين سنة ١٩٩٠ وسنة ٢٠٠٠. فقد تحققت انخفاضات ملحوظة في تلك النسب في لبنان (١٠٤ في سنة ٢٠٠٠)، مع حدوث انخفاض إلى ثلث الحالات في سنة ١٩٩٠؛ والجزائر (١٢٠ في سنة ٢٠٠٠)، مع حدوث انخفاض إلى ما يقرب من نصف عدد الحالات في سنة ١٩٩٠؛ ومصر (٤٤ في سنة ٢٠٠٠)، مع حدوث انخفاض إلى ما يقرب من خمس الحالات في سنة ١٩٩٠، وعمان، التي شهدت أعلى انخفاض في تلك النسبة، بحيث انخفضت من ١٩٠ حالة وفاة إلى ١٤ حالة وفاة بين كل ١٠٠.٠٠٠ حالة ولادة. وتناقض ذلك مع حالة العراق حيث زادت النسبة من ١١٧ حالة إلى ٢٧٤ حالة خلال الفترة ما بين سنة ١٩٩٠ وسنة ٢٠٠٠. وإبان تلك الفترة ظلت نسبة الوفيات النفاسية مرتفعة في



اليمن، بحيث زادت عن ٣٥١ حالة في سنة ١٩٩٠ (اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٤).

وثمة حكومات اعتمدت سياسات للتحكم في النمو السكاني محققة نجاحاً كبيراً (البنك الدولي ١٩٩٤; Egypt: Demographic and Health Survey, 1995; Ministry of Health, Iran 1998). وفي تونس أنشئت رابطة لتنظيم الأسرة في سنة ١٩٦٨ رُوِّجَت، علاوة على اتخاذ الإجراءات التقليدية، لأهمية المباحة بين الولادات حفاظاً على صحة الأم والطفل. وسُنَّت قوانين لرفع سن الزواج للمرأة إلى ١٧ عاماً و سن الزواج للرجل إلى ٢٠ عاماً. واقتصرت امتيازات الأسرة على أول ثلاثة أطفال في الأسرة المعيشية. ويُقدَّم التعليم الأساسي مجاناً، وقد كانت هناك مساواة بين البنات والبنين فيما يتعلق بإمكانية الحصول على التعليم كما كانت معدلات القيد متماثلة بينهم تقريباً. ولقد كان معدل النمو السكاني في إيران يبلغ ٣.٢ في المائة في سنة ١٩٨٦. ثم أنشئت لجنة سكانية في وزار الصحة والتعليم الطبي لدراسة الآثار التي تترتب نتيجة لذلك فيما يتعلق بالغذاء والصحة والتعليم والعمالة وغير ذلك من الخدمات. واشتملت فيما بعد أول وثاني خطة خمسية حكومية للتنمية على سياسة ترمي إلى الحد من النمو السكاني من خلال تحقيق زيادة في شمول خدمات منع الحمل ومستويات تعليم الفتيات ومشاركة المرأة في المجتمع فضلاً عن مشاركتها في الأسرة.

أما مصر فتوجد لديها سياسة سكانية رسمية منذ سنة ١٩٦٦، عندما أنشئ البرنامج القومي لتنظيم الأسرة. وقد بدأت أول سياسة سكانية قومية في مصر سنة ١٩٧٣. وخلال الفترة ما بين سنة ١٩٨٠ و سنة ١٩٩٦ انخفض معدل الخصوبة من ٥.١ أطفال لكل امرأة إلى ٣.٣ أطفال لكل امرأة وارتفع معدل شيوع استعمال وسائل منع الحمل من ٢١ في المائة إلى ٥٠ في المائة. ولا يزال البرنامج السكاني يمثل أولوية قومية بالنسبة للحكومة.

وسكان البلدان الأكبر حجماً تكون مواردهم عادةً أقل من سكان البلدان الأصغر حجماً، وبخاصة بلدان الخليج الغنية بالنفط. وعلاوة على ذلك من الأرجح أن تحصل البلدان الأفقر على نسبة مئوية أعلى من دخلها من الزراعة.



## السكان النشطون اقتصادياً في القطاع الريفي

**إن المرأة والرجل على حد سواء يدران دخلاً** ويتزايد عدد الرجال والنساء في سوق العمل. ويُعتبر التعليم سبيلاً لحماية الفتاة من مستقبل مجهول؛ وعلاوة على ذلك بدأت المرأة تنخرط في دراسات وفي ممارسة أعمال كانت حكراً على الرجال من قبل. ففي سوريا، مثلاً، تمثل الفتيات نسبة قدرها ٥٠ في المائة تقريباً من طلبة كلية الزراعة. وعلاوة على ذلك نجد في سلطنة عمان أن ٤٨ في المائة من الفتيات مقيدات في الجامعة الزراعية (١٩٩٨)؛ وتتولى المرأة مسؤوليات إضافية لسد فجوة العمل الناجمة عن هجرة الرجال بحثاً عن أجور أفضل (الصندوق الدولي للتنمية الزراعية ٢٠٠٣)

### المرأة العاملة في مجال الزراعة

**يظل معدل النشاط الاقتصادي للمرأة العربية أقل** من معدل النشاط الاقتصادي للمرأة في أقاليم أخرى من العالم. ففي سنة ٢٠٠٠ كانت المرأة العربية تمثل حوالي ٢٩ في المائة من قوة العمل الإقليمية وكان من الأغلب أن تكون عاطلة عن العمل بالمقارنة بالرجل. وعلاوة على ذلك، كان معدل بطالة المرأة في سنة ٢٠٠١ حوالي ١٧.١ في المائة بالمقارنة بمعدل بطالة للرجل قدره ١٠.٦ في المائة (اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٤) ويبلغ معدل النشاط في المناطق الريفية في سوريا ٨٣.٧ في المائة للذكور و ٣٣.٤ في المائة للإناث. وفي عمان تمثل النساء نسبة قدرها ٢٤ في المائة من السكان النشطين. أما معدل بطالة إناث الريف فهو الأعلى (١٢.١ في المائة) مقابل (٧.١ في المائة) للذكور الريف بحيث توجد فجوة بين الجنسين تتجاوز ٥ نقاط مئوية. وأكثر من ٧٠ في المائة من العاملات يحصلن على دخل يتراوح بين ٤٠ دولاراً و ٨٠ دولاراً من دولارات الولايات المتحدة، أي ما لا يتجاوز نسبة قدرها ٤١ في المائة من الدخل الذي يكسبه الرجل (منظمة الأغذية والزراعة، برنامج التعاون التقني، وسوريا).

وتعمل أغلبية النساء في الزراعة كعاملات في محيط الأسرة بدون أجر. وتبلغ النسبة المئوية للعاملات بدون أجر إلى مجموع العاملات في الزراعة ٧٩ في المائة في اليمن، و ٦٦ في المائة في سوريا، و ٦٠ في المائة في مصر، و ٤٥ في المائة في فلسطين (Farah, 1997, 1999, 2000a, 2000b) وهذه المعدلات المرتفعة للعاملات في محيط الأسرة بدون أجر في مجال الزراعة هي السبب الرئيسي لارتفاع النسبي في معدل

العاملين بدون أجر في محيط الأسرة على الصعيد القطري. ومع أن بعض الذكور (الفتيان عادةً) يعملون في محيط الأسرة بدون أجر فإن الفجوة بين الذكور والإناث كبيرة. وبناءً على ذلك تُحرم المرأة التي تعمل كمنتجة زراعية من الحصول على دخل بينما تؤدي مهمة بالغة الأهمية، وهي مهمة كفالة الأمن الغذائي للأسرة المعيشية.



Young woman carrying load of fuelwood.  
(R. Faidutti, 1987)

### أثر سياسات التكيف الهيكلي

لقد تحولت أغلبية بلدان الشرق الأدنى عن الاقتصاد المركزي إلى اقتصاد سوق حرة واعتمدت برامج للتكيف الهيكلي تيسيراً لاندماجها في النظام الاقتصادي الدولي. والسمات الرئيسية لسياسات التكيف الهيكلي هذه هي التحرير الاقتصادي للسوق والخصخصة. وتصر برامج التكيف الهيكلي على الحد من الإنفاق الحكومي، وإزالة الإعانات (وبخاصة الإعانات الزراعية والغذائية)، ومسايرة الأسعار الدولية.

وهذه التدابير أدت إلى زيادة أوجه انعدام المساواة في الدخل وإلى ارتفاع مستويات الفقر وأثرت في بعض الأحيان تأثيراً سلبياً على صغار المزارعين وعلى الفقراء منهم. وأثرت تخفيضات الإعانات للقطاع الزراعي تأثيراً سلبياً على سكان الريف، وبخاصة المرأة الريفية، باعتبارها صاحبة حيازة زراعية صغيرة، وذلك لعدم تأهيلها أو إعدادها لمواجهة التحديات الجديدة للمنافسة القطرية والدولية.

ومعدل فقر سكان البلدان التي يوجد فيها قطاع زراعي كبير، من قبيل مصر واليمن، أعلى. فعلى سبيل المثال يعيش ٥٣ في المائة من السكان المصريين و ٣٥.٥ في المائة من السكان اليمنيين على أقل من دولارين يوميا (البنك الدولي، ٢٠٠١).

### الأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث

إن عدد الأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث هو مؤشر أيضاً لفقر الإناث في مختلف أنحاء المنطقة. ولا يختلف هذا الرقم كثيراً عن المعدل القومي. ويشتبه في أن معدل الأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث أعلى كثيراً مما تكشف عنه الإحصاءات المتوافرة، وبخاصة فيما يتعلق بشمال أفريقيا، وذلك بسبب هجرة الذكور على نطاق واسع إلى بلدان أوروبية.

## السكان النشطون اقتصادياً في القطاع الريفي



وتُعرّف الأمم المتحدة الأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث بأنها الأسر المعيشية التي تكون النساء مسؤولات فيها عن الإنفاق وإدارة شؤونها في حالة غياب ذكر. ويتزايد عدد الأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها نساء بسبب جملة أمور من بينها هجرة الذكور وإصابة الذكور بالإعاقة والترمل والطلاق.

وتوجد أعلى نسبتين مؤويتين للأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث في باكستان والسودان، حيث تبلغان ٢٥ في المائة و ٢٣.٨ في المائة على التوالي (منظمة الأغذية والزراعة، ١٩٩٥). وأحدث معدل فيما يتعلق بمصر والمغرب مرتفع أيضاً ويبلغ ١٧ في المائة. والأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث في مصر لها خصائص اجتماعية - اقتصادية تنفرد بها وتختلف عن الأسر المعيشية التي يعيلها ذكور في المناطق الريفية. وفيما يتعلق بهذا الجانب نجد أن الأرامل يمثلن نسبة قدرها ٦٢ في المائة من النساء اللاتي يعلنن أسراً. ونسبة أمية النساء اللاتي يعلنن أسراً (٧٣٪) أعلى من نسبة أمية نساء الريف بأكملهن (٦٣.٣). وتحصل نسبة يبلغ مجموعها ٤٢ في المائة من الأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث على دخل يقل عن ١ ٢٠٠ جنيه مصري (٢١) سنوياً، وتحصل نسبة قدرها ٣٠ في المائة من تلك الأسر على دخل يتراوح بين ١ ٢٠٠ جنيه مصري و ١ ٨٠٠ جنيه مصري سنوياً. ولا يحوز نحو ٨٠.٥ في المائة من الأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث في المناطق الريفية أرضاً. وفي هذا الصدد أدى تحرير علاقة استئجار الأراضي إلى إخراج بعض الأسر التي تعيلها إناث وتستأجر أرضاً من حيازاتها للأراضي الزراعية (Ahmed, M., 2003).

### السياسات المتعلقة بالمنظور الجنساني

**منذ منتصف تسعينات القرن العشرين أثارَت الاتفاقيات الدولية المتعلقة بالمرأة والسكان، كما أثار مؤتمر القمة العالمي للأغذية وغيره من المؤتمرات، ووعي واضعي السياسات بشأن ضرورة إدماج النهج المتعلق بالمنظور الجنساني ضمن عملية وضع السياسات والمشاريع والبرامج. والاتجاهات الرئيسية الثلاثة التالية آخذة في الظهور: المرأة والمشاركة السياسية، وتعميم وضع المنظور الجنساني في المسار الرئيسي ضمن السياسات والبرامج الزراعية، وإنشاء آليات بشأن المنظور الجنساني.**

#### المرأة والمشاركة السياسية

**المشاركة السياسية للمرأة في الإقليم هزيلة.** وما زال عدد الوزيرات منخفضاً. وفي بعض البلدان، وبخاصة بلدان الخليج، لم تحصل المرأة حتى الآن على حق التصويت أو المشاركة في البرلمان. وفي بلدان أخرى نجد أن عدد النساء الأعضاء في البرلمان أعلى بسبب تخصيص مقاعد لهن، كما هو الحال في سوريا (١٠.٤ في المائة) (المرجع نفسه). ومع ذلك لا تزال المشاركة السياسية هزيلة وينبغي اعتماد تدابير ترمي إلى زيادة المشاركة السياسية للمرأة في الإقليم. ومن ناحية أخرى من الملاحظ أن المرأة تشغل مناصب عليا في كثير من المجالات الأخرى من قبيل القانون والتعليم والصحة والضمان الاجتماعي. ويوجد لدى ما مجموعه ١٦ بلداً عربياً برلمانات فعّالة، وقد أعطت هذه البلدان المرأة حق التصويت وحق ترشيح نفسها لشغل المناصب العامة. إلا أن حصة المرأة من المقاعد البرلمانية لا تتجاوز، في المتوسط، ٤.١ في المائة. ويوجد لدى السودان وسوريا وتونس أفضل سجل لتمثيل الإناث في البرلمان، حيث تبلغ نسبة تمثيلهن في تلك البلدان ٩.٧ و ١٠.٤ و ١١.٥ في المائة على التوالي (اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا، ٢٠٠٠).

#### تعميم وضع المنظور الجنساني في المسار الرئيسي ضمن السياسات والبرامج الزراعية

**تُعَمِّمُ وزارات الزراعة في الإقليم وضع المنظور الجنساني في المسار الرئيسي ضمن سياساتها ومشاريعها وبرامجها. وتحقيقاً لذلك استفادت بلدان كثيرة من الدعم الذي يقدمه المكتب الإقليمي للشرق الأدنى التابع لمنظمة الأغذية والزراعة عن طريق المشاريع التقنية التي تُعد منهجيات لوضع استراتيجيات وخطة عمل. ويتمثل الهدف من**

## السياسات المتعلقة بالمنظور الجنساني



ذلك في إدماج بُعد المنظور الجنساني ضمن سياسات وبرامج التنمية الريفية والزراعية. وقد بدأت الاستراتيجيات وخطة العمل بإجراء تقدير لوضع الرجل في المرأة في القطاع الزراعي. وأُجريت عمليات مسح في مناطق نموذجية وأدى ذلك إلى جمع وتحليل بيانات. وقد حددت أدوار الجنسين في مجال الزراعة، بما في ذلك المعوقات والإمكانات (الموارد الطبيعية، والموارد البشرية)، والأولويات، والاحتياجات. واقتُرحت الجهات الفاعلة واقتراح الشركاء الرئيسيون الضالعون في التنمية الزراعية على صعيد القاعدة الشعبية حلولاً.

وكان الهدف من الاستراتيجيات وخطة العمل هو تحسين سبل كسب العيش للرجل والمرأة، والعمل على تحقيق تكافؤ الفرص فيما يتعلق بالحصول على الموارد والخدمات. ويتضمن ذلك التدريب، والإرشاد، والائتمان، والمعلومات، وغير ذلك من القضايا التي استبانت باعتبارها من معوقات النهوض بالمرأة. وكانت المعلومات والاتصال والتربيط الشبكي من بين مكونات خطة العمل. وتضمنت مبادئها الرئيسية زيادة إنتاجية الزراعة وتنمية الأنشطة المدرة للدخل في سياق الاستخدام المستدام للموارد الطبيعية. وتضمن الدعم المقدم من خلال الدعم التقني تدريب المدربين على اتباع منهجية واستخدام أدوات تستند إلى نهج المنظور الجنساني. وكان الهدف الرئيسي من التدابير النموذجية هو تطويع الأدوات المنهجية التي تستند إلى نهج المنظور الجنساني بحيث تصبح مناسبة للسياق الاجتماعي الثقافي للبلدان. ونُفذت مشاريع في الجزائر ومصر والأردن والمغرب وسوريا وتونس.



Woman with her baby purchasing products in the local market.

## إنشاء آليات للمنظور الجنساني

**لقد بادرت بلدان الإقليم جميعها تقريبا إلى اتخاذ تدابير، في إطار وزارات الزراعة، لترجمة نهج المنظور الجنساني ترجمة عملية إلى بنى مؤسسية. والبنى المقامة الرئيسية هي وحدات المرأة في التنمية/ المنظور الجنساني، ووحدات توجيه المرأة والسياسات والتنسيق للمرأة في مجال الزراعة، وشعبة المرأة. وهذه البنى إما مستقلة أو تشكل جزءاً من خدمات الإرشاد الزراعي. وفي بعض الحالات انتقلت الوحدة المسؤولة عن الاقتصاد المنزلي إلى وحدة المرأة/ المنظور الجنساني. وفي حالات أخرى توجد مستشارة خاصة معنية بقضايا المرأة والمنظور الجنساني داخل مكتب الوزير. وقد تلقى من يرأسون البنى المتعلقة بالمرأة/ المنظور الجنساني تدريباً على اتباع نهج ومنهجيات واستخدام أدوات تستند جميعها إلى المنظور الجنساني.**

وقد نظم المكتب الإقليمي للشرق الأدنى التابع لمنظمة الأغذية والزراعة دورات

تدريبية إقليمية بشأن برنامج التحليل الاجتماعي-الاقتصادي والمتعلق بالمنظور الجنساني باللغات المنطوقة في الإقليم. وييسر المتدربون اتباع نهج قائم على أساس المنظور الجنساني في التنمية الريفية في عملية التريبط الشبكي لمنطقة الشرق الأدنى. وقد أنشأت بلدان الإقليم جميعها لجاناً/منظمات غير حكومية قومية ومنظمات أخرى من أجل النهوض بالمرأة، ترأسها السيدات الأوائل. وأعلن في مؤتمر المرأة العربية الذي نظّمته اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا في بيروت في يوليو/تموز ٢٠٠٤ عن إنشاء جائزة خاصة لأفضل عمل يرمي إلى تحقيق النهوض بالمرأة. وعلاوة على ذلك أنشئت وزارات مسؤولة عن المرأة والأسرة في الجزائر وموريتانيا وتونس.



## أدوار الجنسين في الزراعة

### تقسيم العمل بين الجنسين

**تُسهم المرأة في تحقيق الأمن الغذائي بطرائق كثيرة.** فهي تُنتج الغذاء من أجل استهلاك الأسرة المعيشية؛ وتكسب دخلاً كعاملة بأجر أو كمنتجة لمواد زراعية تباع في السوق لتكملة احتياجات أسرتها المعيشية من الأغذية.

وتقدّر منظمة الأغذية والزراعة أن المرأة تُنتج أكثر من ٥٠ في المائة من الأغذية التي تُزرع على نطاق العالم، وأنها تمثل أغلبية منتجي العالم الزراعيين. وفي الشرق الأدنى تُقدّر المشاركة الحقيقية للمرأة في مجال الإنتاج الزراعي تقديراً أقل كثيراً مما يجب ولا يُحدّد نشاطها الاقتصادي إلا تحديداً ضيقاً في إحصاءات التعدادات السكانية والمسوح في معظم أنحاء الإقليم. فقد قدّرت مصر، في مسح التعداد السكاني الذي أُجري في سنة ١٩٩٦، أن النساء الريفيات النشاطات اقتصادياً تبلغ نسبتهن ٩ في المائة. وهذا يرجع إلى أن معظم عمل الإناث في مجال الزراعة يكون بدون أجر كما يرجع إلى تقدير عمل الأسرة تقديراً أقل مما يجب. إلا أن استخدام تعريف المشاركة الاقتصادية في هذا الإقليم الذي وضعه برنامج لأفارولاً ويتسم بمزيد من المرونة يكشف عن وجود معدلات مرتفعة لمشاركة الإناث في الزراعة ويكشف في جيبوتي والعراق وإيران والأردن وليبيا وتركيا وموريتانيا والمغرب عن وجود اتجاهات واضحة نحو تأنيث الزراعة (قاعدة البيانات الإحصائية لمنظمة الأغذية والزراعة FAOSTAT).

وتوجد في جميع بلدان الإقليم تفاوتات متماثلة بين الحضر والريف. ويفرض ارتفاع معدل الفقر الريفي ضغوطاً جديدة على الأسر المعيشية ويؤدي إلى تغيير التقسيمات الراسخة للأدوار والمسؤوليات والموارد بين المرأة والرجل.

وتنفق المرأة في الإقليم ساعات طويلة كل يوم في إنتاج المحاصيل والثروة الحيوانية. وهي تعمل في جوانب إنتاج المحاصيل جميعها تقريباً، باستثناء حرق الأرض وإدارة المياه والأنشطة الأخرى ذات الاستخدام الكثيف لرأس المال والتي تتبع فيها الميكنة. ومع ذلك توجد نساء يعملن في جميع المجالات في بعض الحالات. والمهام التي تؤديها المرأة تكون عموماً في الغالب يدوية وكثيفة الاستخدام لليد العاملة. ومن ثم تنثر المرأة البذور والمخصبات يدوياً، وتجمع الثمار والخضروات، وتحمل إنتاج المزرعة على ظهرها. وتقضي المرأة ساعات طويلة في أنشطة ما بعد الحصاد من قبيل الدرس والتنقية والفرز وتحديد درجات النوعية.

وتقضي المرأة الريفية قدراً كبيراً من الوقت كل يوم في أداء مهام زراعية ومنزلية، حيث لا يتاح لها سوى وقت ضئيل لتحسين مهاراتها أو للراحة أو للترفيه. وقد تقضي



المرأة، كعامله بأجر و/أو بدون أجر، ما يصل إلى ١٩ ساعة يومياً في أداء أعمال أساسية من قبيل الغرس وإزالة الأعشاب الضارة والحصاد وتربية الحيوانات والتنظيف وجلب المياه وخشب الوقود والخبز والطهي والخياطة وتنشئة الأطفال وذلك تأميناً لعيش الأسرة المعيشية.

ومع ذلك تشير البيانات إلى أن المرأة لا تكافئ عادةً على عملها، وتوجد تفاوتات واضحة بين الأجر التي يتقاضاها الرجل وتلك التي تتقاضاها المرأة. فغالباً ما

تتقاضى المرأة ثلثي أو حتى نصف الأجر الذي يتقاضاه الرجل مقابل أداء نفس العمل (منظمة الأغذية والزراعة، ١٩٩٥). فعلى سبيل المثال، تشارك المرأة في مصر في جميع مراحل الإنتاج بدءاً من الري ومكافحة الآفات والنقل والتسويق والحرث والتسوية والتثليم، ومن المتصور عادةً أن هذه المهام لا يؤديها إلا الذكور. وتوجد أوضاع مماثلة في معظم بلدان الشرق الأدنى من قبيل المغرب والشرق والسودان وموريتانيا. (2000b, Farah, N.R.)

يشترك الذكور والإناث على حد سواء في أنشطة الزراعة في سن مبكرة. ويزيد مستوى مشاركة الإناث بنفس معدل زيادة مشاركة الذكور. ويزيد مشاركة المرأة زيادة كبيرة في الفئة العمرية ٣٠-٣٤ سنة بالنظر إلى أن معظم الرجال يسعون إلى الحصول على فرص عمل

خارج إطار الزراعة نتيجة لحجم حياة الأسرة المحدود. (Abdel Aal, M., 2002). وفي مناطق الشرق الأدنى الريفية تتمثل النظرة التقليدية في اضطلاع الرجل بجميع الأعمال التي تتطلب قوة بدنية، وكذلك أعمال النقل والتسويق. أما المرأة، فعلى الرغم من عملها في مراحل متعددة من مراحل الإنتاج الزراعي، فإنها تضطلع بجميع الأعمال المنزلية وبالغناء بالحديقة المنزلية وبالحيوانات.

ومن الممكن أن يُوصَف على النحو التالي النمط الحالي لتقسيم العمل التقليدي بين الجنسين، وبخاصة فيما يتعلق بالمرأة في مجال الزراعة:

«إن البنية التقليدية للأسرة هي نتاج مجتمع جمعي يكبح الفردية ويشدّد على التكامل بين الأدوار. ويوجد تسلسل هرمي في الأسرة. وأدوار الجنسين في إطار الأسرة محددة: فالذكور هم الذين يكسبون العيش؛ أما النساء فهن مسؤولات عن الأطفال وعن الأسرة

الجدول ٢: ٥-تقسيم العمل بين الجنسين بحسب المحاصيل الرئيسية في مصر، النسبة المئوية للنساء

الأنشطة	الذرة	القمح	الأرز
الغرس	٣٥.٠	٣٢.٠	٣٤.٠
التسميد	٤٥.٠	٣٩.٠	٣٧.٠
الري	٢٢.٠	٤١.٠	٢٨.٠
إزالة الأعشاب الضارة	٣٥.٠	٤١.٠	٤٢.٠
مكافحة الآفات	٢٨.٠	٢٩.٠	٢٣.٠
الحصاد	٤٠.٠	٣٥.٠	٤٠.٠
النقل	٣٨.٠	٣٧.٠	٤٠.٠
إعادة الغرس	٤١.٠	-	-
التخزين	٧٦.٠	٧٣.٠	٦٤.٠
التعبئة في أجولة	٣٦.٠	٣٣.٠	٤٣.٠
التسويق	٥٨.٠	٦٣.٠	٥٠.٠
التخشير	٣٧.٠	٣٦.٠	٣٩.٠
التسوية	٣٨.٠	٣٤.٠	٣٨.٠
التثليم	٣٥.٠	-	-

المصدر: (b2000, Farah, N.R.)



المعيشية. وتكتسب المرأة مكانةً من خلال دورها التقليدي كزوجة وأم. ولا تمثل عمالة المرأة مقياساً لتبوُّئها مكانةً أعلى؛ وقد تكون مقياساً للحاجة الاقتصادية. ويحقق التقسيم التقليدي للعمل بعض المزايا المستمدة من دور المرأة التقليدي داخل الأسرة. وتسيطر المرأة، في حقيقة الأمر، على تنظيم الشؤون المنزلية والتوزيع المالي للموارد معظم اليوم إن لم يكن طيلته. والمرأة هي القوة الرئيسية في التواصل بين الأسر المعيشية. وهي تتحكم في الأمور التي يعطيها الرجل قيمة، وهي الجنس والشرف والأطفال وحسن تنظيم الأسرة المعيشية» (Rugh, 1988).

وفي معظم بلدان الشرق الأدنى تكون للمرأة الريفية السلطة الكاملة تقريباً على الدواجن والشراء والبيع والتلقيح. وفيما يتعلق بمعظم النساء الريفيات تحقق تربية الدواجن وبيعها دخلاً للأسرة ولأنفسهن. ووفقاً لدراسة أُجريت في مصر، لا تدلي المرأة بدلها إلا بدرجة محدودة في معظم الجوانب الأخرى، باستثناء الاستثمار الزراعي (بحيث تبلغ نسبة ضلوع المرأة بدور في هذا الصدد ١٩ في المائة) وتلقيح الماشية (١٦.٥ في المائة). ومن المؤشرات الرئيسية الأخرى للسيطرة على الموارد الاقتصادية تسويق المنتجات الزراعية. وهنا لا تشارك سوى نسبة قدرها ٤ في المائة من النساء في عملية صنع القرار هذه (Boutros, 1993).

وتشارك المرأة الريفية في مصر مشاركة ضئيلة في عملية صنع القرار على مستوى الأسرة المعيشية في المناطق المروية. فالرجل له سلطة حصرية تقريباً على الأمور المتعلقة بالبذور وشراء الماشية والأراضي وبيعها. ويتضمن ذلك أيضاً استخدام مبيدات الأعشاب واستخدام الآلات الزراعية، وتحديد ما يُزرع وتحديد أماكن بيع المنتجات. أما المرأة فتتخذ القرارات المتعلقة بالدواجن وتساهم في القرارات المتعلقة بالمشاريع الزراعية وتلقيح الماشية.

### إمكانية الحصول على الموارد

**البيانات المتعلقة بإمكانية حصول المرأة على الأراضي هزيلة في الإقليم.** وتشير بعض البيانات إلى أن حائزات الأراضي يشكّلن حوالي ٥ في المائة من مجموع حائزي الأراضي في مصر وسوريا. أما ملكية الإناث للأراضي فهي تبلغ حوالي ٥١ في المائة في قبرص، و ٢٩ في المائة في الأردن، و ٢٤ في المائة في مصر، و ١٤ في المائة في المغرب، و ٤ في المائة في سوريا. وأما مساحة حيازة الأراضي فهي متماثلة تقريباً في مصر (٢.٤ فدان للذكور وفدان للإناث). ولكنها لا تتجاوز ٥٧ دونماً فيما يتعلق بالإناث السوريات بالمقارنة بمساحة قدرها ٨٠ دونماً للذكور. وقد أخذ بعض البلدان على عاتقه مهمة تنفيذ برامج بشأن الأراضي المستصلحة حديثاً. إلا أن حصة المرأة من الأراضي المستصلحة حديثاً في مصر لا تتجاوز ٧ في المائة (Farah, 2000).

ويوجد اختلاف بين حيازة الأراضي وملكية الأراضي. وملكية الأراضي لا تؤدي بالضرورة إلى حيازة الأراضي. وأغلبية نساء الطبقة المتوسطة يمتلكن الأراضي عن طريق التوريث، ولكنهن يقمن بتأجيرها لآخرين، معظمهم من الرجال. وقد جرى العرف في بعض البلدان على عدم توريث الفتيات أراضٍ، حتى لو كان ذلك مخالفاً للقانون. إذ تخشى الأسر من أن يستولي الزوج على تلك الأراضي كما تخشى من تفتيت حيازات الأسرة من الأراضي. وهناك أسر تمنح بناتها هبة نقدية أو مجوهرات بدلاً من الأراضي. وعلى الرغم من مشاركة المرأة مشاركة كبيرة في الأنشطة الزراعية فإن إمكانية حصولها على الأراضي وسيطرتها عليها محدودة. وحائزات الأراضي لا يمثلن، على وجه الإجمال، سوى نسبة قدرها ٥.٧٢ في المائة من مجموع عدد حائزي الأراضي في مصر. أما المرأة في الوجه البحري من مصر فهي تتمتع بأعلى حصة من الأراضي بين الأقاليم إذ تشكّل نسبة قدرها ٧.٢٨ في المائة من مجموع حائزي الأراضي في الوجه البحري (Abdel Aal, M, 2002).

### إمكانية الحصول على الخدمات

**تنص التشريعات على المساواة في إمكانية الحصول على الموارد والخدمات في** معظم البلدان وقد لوحظ تحقيق تقدّم في خدمات من قبيل التعليم والصحة. إلا أن هناك تفاوتات ما زالت باقية في المناطق الريفية بالمقارنة بالمناطق الحضرية. ومع أن المرأة نشطة في القطاع الزراعي فإنها لا تستفيد من كل الدعم والخدمات ذات الصلة. وقد لوحظت الفجوات التالية بين الجنسين في هذا المضمار:

- المرأة لا تستفيد، كما ينبغي، من التدريب ومن خدمات الإرشاد الزراعي لتحسين مهاراتها وظروف عملها وإنتاجيتها.
- تعاني المرأة الريفية، بالمقارنة بالمرأة الحضرية، من ارتفاع معدلات الأمية ومن ضخامة عبء عملها المتعلق بمهامها المنزلية والزراعية مما يحد من مشاركتها في دورات التدريب والإرشاد.
- غالبية موظفي الإرشاد الزراعي ذكور، مما يحد عموماً من التواصل وذلك لأسباب ثقافية. وقد تخرجت نساء كثيرات في الكليات والمعاهد الزراعية (٥٠ في المائة)؛ ولكنهن لا يشغلن مواقع صنع القرار والمناصب التقنية. وغالبية النساء يعملن في مجال البحوث الزراعية والتعليم والإدارة. وتعمل موظفات الإرشاد الزراعي عموماً في المكاتب وغالباً ما يتعاملن مع الأمور التقليدية المتعلقة بالاقتصاد المنزلي.
- تغيّر هذا الاتجاه إلى العكس؛ إذ توجد خريجات حالياً على مستوى القرية في الجزائر والمغرب وتونس والأردن وسوريا ومصر.



- ما زالت إمكانية حصول المرأة الريفية على الائتمانات لأغراض الاستثمار في المدخلات الزراعية محدودة. ولكن أنشئت برامج كثيرة لتقديم الائتمانات الصغيرة للمرأة الريفية في السنوات الخمس الأخيرة. وقد أنشئت هذه البرامج عن طريق المؤسسات لتزويد المرأة بالدعم المالي اللازم لتحسين دخلها وزيادة الأمن الغذائي للأسرة المعيشية. إلا أن الدخل المكتسب يظل منخفضاً. وفي مصر لم تتجاوز النسبة المئوية للنساء اللائي حصلن (في تسعينيات القرن العشرين) على قروض قصيرة الأجل لأغراض الإنتاج ١٢ في المائة. وحصلت نسبة لا تتجاوز ١٦ في المائة على قروض لأغراض الاستثمار. وفي الأردن حصلت النساء الريفيات على ١٩.٦ في المائة من مجموع القروض الزراعية، ولكن قيمة قروضهن لم تتجاوز ١٢ في المائة من مجموع قيمة القروض الزراعية التي مُنحت في سنة ٢٠٠١. وتراوحت حصة المرأة من القيمة الإجمالية للقروض بين ٩،٩ في المائة و ١٨،٩ في المائة. وكانت أعلى نسبة مئوية للقروض المقدمة للنساء هي القروض متوسطة الأجل، إذ بلغت ٢١٪ من مجموع القروض في هذه الفئة؛ بينما بلغت حصة النساء من القروض طويلة الأجل ١٠ في المائة؛ وبلغت حصتهن من القروض قصيرة الأجل ٢،٤ في المائة، وبلغت حصتهن من القروض الموسمية ٤ في المائة (Qura'n, R, 2004). وما زالت النظم المطوّعة بحسب السياق المحلي، بما فيها البنوك الزراعية والتعاونيات والصناديق الاجتماعية للتنمية، قيد التجريب.
- إمكانية الحصول على المعلومات على مستوى القرية محدودة. وقد أظهرت المسوح أن المرأة لم تستفد من الدعم المقدم من الحكومات لأغراض الاستثمار في المدخلات الزراعية لعدم وصول المعلومات المتعلقة بالبرنامج إليها.

وتفتقر المرأة الريفية لإمكانية الحصول على مدخلات الإنتاج وخدمات النقل والتسويق وذلك بسبب التقسيم التقليدي للعمل في مجال الزراعة في الإقليم. وتشير معلومات غير كاملة، استناداً إلى مؤشرات مقدرة من خلال العمل التجريبي ومسوح العينة، إلى وجود انقسام بين الجنسين فيما يتعلق باستعمال التقانة. فالمرأة تستفيد من موائد الطهي المحسنة، ووسائل تصنيع الأغذية وتخزينها، بينما يستفيد الرجل من الري ووسائل الدرس بعد الحصاد، والنقل المحسّن (Mansour, 1994).

وتكون البحوث الزراعية موجهة إلى الوحدات الزراعية ذات الحجم الكبير، ولذلك لم تتطور التقانات الموجهة إلى الوحدات ذات الحجم الصغير التي تحوزها نساء. ولم تُزود المرأة الريفية حتى الآن بتقانات بسيطة ويسهل الحصول عليها تكون قد جرت عملية تطويع لها بحسب احتياجاتها (Bou-Salah Fatiha).

### تمثيل المرأة في المنظمات الزراعية

لقد أقيمت رابطات نسائية في الإقليم. إلا أن قلة منها توجد على مستوى القرية. وهي تتعامل بصفة رئيسية مع قضايا إدارة الموارد الطبيعية، والنباتات الطبية، والإنتاج، والتسويق. وقد تلقى معظمها دعماً مالياً من الحكومات والمانحين لتنمية الأنشطة المتعلقة بالتعليم والصحة وإدارة الدخل.

ويرتأى أن المرأة ممثلة أقل مما يجب في مجالس إدارات التعاونيات. ففي فلسطين، تمارس المرأة بكثافة العمل الزراعي، مع أنها لا وجود لها تقريباً في أي نظام من نظم صنع القرار. وفي الضفة الغربية توجد ثمانى تعاونيات للتسويق الزراعي تحت مظلة اتحاد التعاونيات الزراعية، يبلغ مجموع عدد أعضائها ٤١٤ ٧ عضواً منهم امرأتان فقط، أي أن نسبة عضوية الإناث تبلغ ٠.٠٣. ولا يتضح من البيانات التي جمعت سبب عدم ظهور أي وجود للمرأة في نظم صنع القرار. وفي حالات كثيرة يكون ذلك مرده إلى اختيار المرأة ذاتها، لأسباب ينبغي تحريها عن طريق إجراء مسح محدّد.

### معوقات مشاركة المرأة الريفية في التنمية الزراعية

من المعوقات الرئيسية لمشاركة المرأة الريفية في الزراعة وتحقيق الأمن الغذائي ضخامة عبء العمل الذي تتحمله داخل الأسرة المعيشية وخارجها، وبخاصة في حالة وجود عدد كبير من الأطفال. فالنقسيم التقليدي للعمل يفرض على المرأة الريفية أن تكون مسؤولة عن جميع الأعمال المنزلية، إلى جانب جميع أدوارها في الإنتاج الزراعي والاعتناء بالماشية.

وإذا حسبنا جميع الأنشطة التي تضطلع بها المرأة في المناطق الريفية لزاد عدد ساعات عمل المرأة الأسبوعية زيادة هائلة. ويتضح من تقدير سريع تشاركي لعمل المرأة الريفية في مناطق مختلفة من الشرق الأدنى أن المرأة تعمل، في المتوسط، من ١٠ ساعات إلى ١٦ ساعة يومياً، بينما يعمل الرجل في المتوسط من ست إلى ثماني ساعات. ويتوقف طول يوم العمل الزراعي للمرأة على عوامل كثيرة من قبيل تقسيم العمل القائم على أساس المنظور الجنساني، ومهنة الزوج/الأخ أو الأب، وحجم الأسرة وعدد النساء في الأسرة الممتدة، ومساحة الأرض المزروعة، واستخدام التقانة في كل من الزراعة وداخل الأسرة المعيشية.

والتقانة في الإنتاج الزراعي موجهة أساساً نحو الوحدات الزراعية ذات الحجم الكبير التي يرأسها رجال، والتي تُستخدم الميكنة في معظمها. وما زالت الجرارات تُستخدم في حراث الأرض، ويكون الري بواسطة مواسير مياه، وتنقل شاحنات المنتجات إلى السوق. وفي حالة عدم وجود طرق مُعبّدة أو عدم وجود شاحنات تسير المرأة إلى السوق حاملة المنتجات على رأسها، حيث تبيع الدواجن والخضروات والفاكهة. أما في حالة



وجود طرق معبدة وشاحنات فلم تعد المرأة تشارك في تسويق المنتجات. فالساعات التي تخصصها للعمل لا تتيح لها عادة تسويق منتجاتها. وهذه المعوقات المذكورة آنفاً تؤدي إلى فقدان المرأة فرصاً تدريبية وعدم تمكنها من الانتظام في دروس محو الأمية؛ وعلاوة على ذلك تتقاضى المرأة الريفية عموماً أجراً أقل مما يجب مقابل منتجاتها، وذلك لعدم مشاركتها في عملية التسويق.

وفي بعض الحالات يعمل الرجل في الأسرة المعيشية خارج القطاع الزراعي ولكن المرأة تؤدي جميع الأنشطة داخل الأسرة المعيشية وخارجها. وإذا كانت الأسرة المعيشية أسرة ممتدة، تضم عدداً كبيراً من البنات وزوجات الأبناء، قد يخف عبء العمل هذا. وفي هذه الحالة ينقسم العمل بين نساء الأسرة الممتدة. فالنساء اللاتي يعملن في الحقل يقمن بجميع الأنشطة الزراعية وبيعض الأعمال المنزلية، بينما تبقى الأخريات في البيت ويقمن بمعظم الأعمال المنزلية وبرعاية الأطفال. وتعمل المرأة عادةً في الحقل لمدة تتراوح بين ٩ و ١٠ ساعات. ويصبح عبء العمل المنزلي أسهل للمرأة التي توجد لديها أجهزة: موقد غاز، وغسالة، وثلاجة (براد)، والتي تتاح لها وإمكانية الحصول على مياه شرب تجري في مواسير.

ويختلف الحال فيما يتعلق بالمرأة ذات الأسرة النووية التي توجد لديها مساحات كبيرة من الأرض المستأجرة أو المملوكة. ففي هذه الحالة لا يعمل الرجل والمرأة على السواء إلا في مجال الإنتاج الزراعي. إلا أن صغر حجم الأسرة وكبر مساحة الأراضي يؤثران على استخدام المرأة لوقتها بطرائق شتى بحيث تعمل ساعات أطول كثيراً، تبلغ حوالي ١٤ ساعة يومياً.

أما الفئة الثالثة من النساء فهي فئة أشد النساء فقراً. وهن لا يحصلن على الكهرباء ولذلك لا توجد لديهن أجهزة منزلية تساعدن. وكل شيء يُنجز في هذه الحالة يدوياً ويؤدي الطهي على مواقد خشبية تقليدية أو على مواقد يُستخدم الروث فيها كوقود. وتشتد صعوبة المهمة فيما يتعلق بالأسرة النووية وبالأسرة المعيشية التي تعيلها نساء، حتى تلك التي يوجد لديها عدد كبير من الأطفال. فقد تعمل المرأة في هذه الحالة ١٦ ساعة يومياً أو أكثر.

وفي مصر وسوريا تستعيز المرأة الريفية بعمل بناتها عن عملها هي، خارج الأسرة المعيشية وداخلها على حد سواء، وبخاصة في حالة وجود أطفال صغار. وفي الزراعة المصرية والسورية تشكل الفتيات اللاتي تتراوح أعمارهن بين ١٥ و ١٩ سنة نسبة تبلغ ٢٠ في المائة من قوة عمل الإناث. وهذه الاستعاضة عن عمل الأم بعمل بناتها تؤثر على تعليم الفتيات وصحتهن. ومن المعروف أن الآباء الذين يعتمدون على عمل بناتهم الزراعي يكونون أكثر ممانعة في السماح لهن بالزواج في سن مبكرة، وذلك بسبب خسارة عملهن المتوقعة.

### الاستنتاجات والدروس المستفادة

لقد بدأت عملية دينامية في بلدان الشرق الأدنى خلال العقد المنصرم. وأُحرز تقدمٌ في تعميم قضية وضع المنظور الجنساني في المسار الرئيسي ضمن السياسات القومية. وقد تحقق ذلك عن طريق استراتيجيات وخطط عمل قومية وعن طريق وضع برامج للتخفيف من وطأة الفقر. ولكن حدث انخفاض في مؤشرات الإنتاج الزراعي والغذائي. وفي بضعة من بلدان الإقليم تعاني نسبة مئوية مرتفعة من السكان من نقص التغذية، ربما نتيجة للصراعات الداخلية والخارجية.

وعلاوة على ذلك تحقق تقدم في الاعتراف بالمرأة الريفية وبمشاركتها كشريكة نشطة في برامج التنمية الريفية والزراعية. وعلى الرغم من هذه الجهود الرامية إلى تحسين وضع المرأة الريفية، ثمة حاجة إلى تعزيز الدعم المقدم للمرأة الريفية فيما يتعلق بدورها في كفالة الأمن الغذائي. ويتضمن ذلك تيسير حصول المرأة على موارد الإنتاج الزراعي (الأرض والمياه والائتمان ومدخلات الإنتاج والتسويق، وما إلى ذلك) وعلى الخدمات الاجتماعية من قبيل التعليم والتدريب والإرشاد الزراعي وخدمات الصحة الإنجابية، وما إلى ذلك.

وقد انبثقت أنماط معينة عن هذه الجهود يمكن وصفها بأنها دروس مستفادة:

- اعتمد مفهوم المنظور الجنساني في الإقليم وإن كانت أهداف المضمون ومضامينه لم تُفهم فهماً كاملاً في بعض الحالات. ومن المهم تطويع المصطلحات المتعلقة بالمنظور الجنساني والأدوات المنهجية وعناصر التدريب المتعلقة بتلك القضية وفقاً للخصائص الاجتماعية الثقافية المحلية.
- يُطبَّق نهج المنظور الجنساني إلى حد كبير في ميادين معينة من قبيل التعليم والصحة؛ إلا أن هذا النهج ما زال تطبيقه هزياً في الميادين التقنية.
- لا تشارك حتى الآن المؤسسات البحثية والأكاديمية في القضايا المتعلقة بالمنظور الجنساني. وبالرغم من استخدام مفهومي المنظور الجنساني والمشاركة في وضع وتنفيذ المشاريع الممولة من مانحين خارجيين ومن الوكالات الإنمائية يقل استخدام النهجين في المؤسسات الحكومية.
- تظل قواعد البيانات المراعية للمنظور الجنساني شرطاً لا بد منه لتعميم قضية المنظور الجنساني في السياسات والتشريعات والبرامج الإنمائية. والتدريب بشأن نهج المنظور الجنساني موجه بصفة رئيسية إلى الموظفين الذين يعملون في الوحدات المعنية بالمنظور الجنساني. ولا يشارك المخططون والإحصائيون وغيرهم من صنّاع القرار، مشاركة كما ينبغي، في التدريب على اتباع نهج المنظور الجنساني.



- دور الوحدات المعنية بالمنظور الجنساني ووظائفها داخل وزارات الزراعة محدود. ولا تلقى تلك الوحدات دعماً كافياً من حيث المدخلات، ومن ثم فهي غير قادرة على أداء الواجبات المتعلقة بالدعوة والرصد وتقييم عملية تعميم قضية وضع المنظور الجنساني في المسار الرئيسي في إطار السياسة والبرامج والمشاريع الزراعية.
- قدمت منظمات إنمائية عديدة مبالغاً في ائتمانية صغيرة للمرأة الريفية الفقيرة عن طريق مشاريع متعددة مدرّة للدخل. ولكن بعض النساء رفضن قبول هذا النوع من الائتمانات. وقد كان السبب في ذلك هو شروطها أو فرض المنظمات مشاريع من شأنها أن تزيد من عبء عملهن مع عدم وجود ضمان لاستفادتهن مباشرة من تلك المشاريع. ومن الدروس المستفادة أن المرأة الريفية لها احتياجات وأولويات خاصة بها. فهي لن تقبل الدعم المالي (سواء كان منحة أو قرضاً) إذا لم يكن مناسباً لها.



### التوصيات

**من المهم أن يكون لدى من يتعاملون مع سياسات وبرامج التنمية الريضية والزراعية إدراك صحيح لمفاهيم وأهداف النوع الاجتماعي.** وينبغي تطوير مصطلحات المنظور الجنساني وفقاً للسياق الاجتماعي-الثقافي لكل بلد. ولا بد من مراعاة أن نهج المنظور الجنساني يستهدف أدوار كل من المرأة والرجل في الأسرة. وبدءاً بالدروس المستفادة، خلال ما يقرب من خمس سنوات من تنفيذ نهج المنظور الجنساني والتنمية في البرامج الريفية والزراعية في بلدان الشرق الأدنى، ووفقاً لخطة عمل منظمة الأغذية والزراعة بشأن المنظور الجنساني والتنمية للفترة ٢٠٠٢-٢٠٠٧، وضع المشاركون في اجتماع الخبراء الإقليمي المعني بتعميم قضية المنظور الجنساني في التنمية الريفية في بلدان الشرق الأدنى، الذي عُقد في القاهرة بمصر في الفترة ٢٩-٢٦ مايو/أيار ٢٠٠٣، عدة توصيات. وعلاوة على ذلك، تتضمن التوصيات التالية تلك التي وُضعت من أجل المؤتمر السابع والعشرين لبلدان إقليم الشرق الأدنى الذي عُقد في الدوحة، بقطر، في مارس/آذار ٢٠٠٤، كما تراعي أولويات الإقليم وسياقه.

### بناء القدرات في نهج تحليل المنظور الجنساني ومنهجيته وأدواته:

- دعم بناء القدرات الوطنية فيما يتعلق بنهج تحليل المنظور الجنساني مع مراعاة الجوانب البيئية. وإعداد أدوات لتحليل المنظور الجنساني ومواد ووثائق تدريبية.
- تدريب واضعي السياسات والمخططين والعاملين في مجال التنمية على المستوى المركزي واللامركزي في إطار برنامج منظمة الأغذية والزراعة العالمي للتحليل الاجتماعي - الاقتصادي وتحليل النوع الاجتماعي.
- التدريب على قضية المنظور الجنساني والإحصاءات في مجال الزراعة.
- وضع نهج جديدة لبرامج التدريب والإرشاد الزراعي والبحوث تكون مناسبة لحالة وأدوار المرأة الريفية والرجل الريفي في مجال الزراعة.
- زيادة عدد العاملات في مجال التنمية والإرشاد الزراعي على صعيد القاعدة الشعبية. ويجب أن تُصَحَّح السياسات الداخلية عدم توازن الدخل الناجم عن سياسات التكيف الهيكلي والعولمة وذلك تجنباً لإضعاف الاقتصادات القومية وعملاً على زيادة الاعتماد على مصادر الدخل الأجنبية.
- ينبغي أن تستحدث السياسات والبرامج الزراعية، ومن بينها خدمات البحوث والإرشاد الزراعي والتدريب في الإنتاج، نُظماً تستجيب لوضع كل من الرجل



- والمرأة واحتياجاتهما وأولوياتهما، وذلك لإبقاء السكان في المناطق الريفية وتجنباً لهجرة الذكور والإناث من تلك المناطق.
- تحسين إمكانية حصول المرأة على الموارد، من قبيل الأرض، والتدريب والمدخلات وتسويق المنتجات. وعلاوة على ذلك ينبغي استشارة المرأة الريفية فيما يتعلق بوضع السياسات والمشاريع والبرامج الزراعية. فهذا يكفل إدماجها في البرامج والمشاريع الزراعية التي تستجيب لاحتياجاتها وأولوياتها المحددة.
- ينبغي استمرار الجهود الرامية إلى دعم بناء القدرات الوطنية فيما يتعلق بنهج تحليل قضية المنظور الجنساني وإنشاء قواعد بيانات مراعية للمنظور الجنساني، باعتبار أن ذلك أمر لازم لتوجيه عملية وضع السياسات.
- ينبغي تشجيع البحوث الموجهة نحو المنظور الجنساني، بالنظر إلى وجود ثغرات خطيرة في المعرفة المتعلقة بقضايا المنظور الجنساني.

### دعم إضفاء الطابع المؤسسي وتشجيع إدماج بُعد المنظور الجنساني في سياسات وبرامج التنمية الزراعية والريفية

- إدراج آليات وأدوات مراعية للمنظور الجنساني لأغراض التخطيط الإنمائي والرصد والتقييم كغالبية تطبيق تعميم قضية المنظور الجنساني على المستوى المركزي وكذلك على المستوى اللامركزي.
- إدماج بيانات مفصلة بحسب الجنسين في الدراسات وورقات البحوث والمسوح والتعدادات الزراعية.
- إضفاء الطابع المؤسسي على نهج مراعي للمنظور الجنساني في التدريب والإرشاد الزراعيين، فضلاً عن مناهج الإحصاءات ودراسات التخطيط.
- إضفاء الطابع المؤسسي على نشاط/وظيفة تعميم قضية المنظور الجنساني، مع وجود ولايات ومهام محددة بوضوح تشمل الدعوة وتقديم المشورة بشأن السياسات والرصد والتقييم في إطار الأقسام/الإدارات الرئيسية بالوزارات المسؤولة عن الزراعة والتنمية الريفية. ومن أمثلة ذلك جعل عملية إجراء دراسات ووضع إحصاءات والتخطيط لبرامج وتخصيص موظفين والإبلاغ والتنسيق وإقامة قواعد بيانات قضية شاملة بالنسبة للأقسام/الإدارات. وهذا من شأنه أن يكفل مراعاة بُعد المنظور الجنساني عند إعداد السياسات والبرامج والتشريعات الإنمائية.
- تنظيم لجان مشتركة بين الإدارات تكون معنية بالمنظور الجنساني والتنمية لأغراض تنسيق التدابير المتخذة وتحديد أولوياتها.

- المبادرة إلى إقامة شراكة بين المؤسسات الحكومية والمجتمع المدني عن طريق إنشاء رابطة للرجل والمرأة الريفيين على مستوى القرية لوضع برامج إنمائية تستجيب لاحتياجات وألويات الرجل والمرأة.
- تدريب الباحثين والمخططين والإحصائيين على نهج المنظور الجنساني لتحسين المهارات المتعلقة بجمع بيانات مفصلة بحسب الجنسين وتحليلها.

### المعلومات والاتصال

- إنشاء قاعدة بيانات بشأن أدوار الجنسين في الزراعة والتنمية الريفية.
- إعداد معلومات عن أدوار الجنسين واحتياجاتهما في المناطق الريفية ومناطق البدو، وجمع تلك المعلومات ونشرها.
- من اللازم اتباع سياسة متكاملة بحيث يكون هناك سعي إلى تشجيع الإنتاج الزراعي مع العمل على تحقيق الأمن الغذائي وأن يصحب ذلك توفير الإرشاد الزراعي والتعليم والصحة.

### التربيط الشبكي

- تعزيز التربيط الشبكي على كل من الصعيد الوطني والإقليمي والدولي وتبادل المعلومات المتعلقة بتعميم قضية المنظور الجنساني في الإقليم، من قبيل الدروس المستفادة، والنهج الناجحة، والممارسات السليمة.
- المساهمة في إقامة مواقع على الإنترنت وشبكات باللغات المنطوقة في إقليم الشرق الأدنى تتضمن معلومات عن الممارسات السليمة/أفضل الممارسات فيما يتعلق ببرامج المنظور الجنساني والتنمية الزراعية.

### تعظيم إمكانات الرجل والمرأة الريفيين

#### لتحسين مشاركتهما في التنمية الريفية

ثمة حاجة إلى مساعدة المزارعين من رجال ونساء، وبخاصة الشباب منهم، على البقاء في المناطق الريفية وذلك عن طريق استراتيجيات كسب عيش جذابة وتنوع الأنشطة. وفي هذا الصدد ينبغي تشجيع التعاون وتبادل الخبرات بين بلدان الشمال-الجنوب وبلدان الجنوب-الجنوب (برنامج CTDP للشراكة التابعة لمنظمة الأغذية والزراعة).

- وضع برامج متكاملة موجهة إلى السكان الريفيين لكفالة التنسيق بين الجهات المعنية ببرامج التنمية الريفية.



- وضع استراتيجيات اتصال فعّالة من أجل توعية الرجال والنساء الذين يعيشون في المناطق الريفية النائية.
- تشجيع المشاريع متناهية الصغر وغيرها من الأنشطة الريفية.
- الترويج للتقانات والمنهجيات المطوّعة من أجل تحسين إدارة الموارد الطبيعية وتحسين دخل الأسرة المعيشية الريفية/البدوية. وتعظيم إمكانات الرجل والمرأة الريفيين ومعارفهما التقليدية وأفضل الممارسات المحلية التي يتبعانها.
- اتباع نهج مبتكرة لمساعدة المرأة والرجل الريفيين على التوصل إلى استراتيجيات فعّالة تمكنهما من مواجهة التحديات الجديدة للعولمة والسوق الحرة، ومن ذلك مثلاً إستحداث أنشطة مدرّة للدخل تستند إلى الموارد المحلية لتحسين الدخل وسبل عيش الأسرة.
- تحسين إمكانية الاستفادة من البرامج المتعلقة بالأراضي من قبيل تلك التي بدأ تطبيقها في بعض البلدان. ومن ذلك مثلاً تخصيص الأراضي المستصلحة حديثاً للرجال والنساء في مصر والجزائر.
- تيسير إمكانية الحصول على الائتمان وإعطاء أولوية للأسر المعيشية التي تعيلها إناث للتخفيف من النتائج السلبية. وقد يتمثل أحد البدائل في إنشاء رابطات نسائية للنقل والتسويق لتمكين المرأة من السيطرة على الامتيازات. وتحريّ الأوضاع قبل تقديم الائتمان للمرأة الريفية، والابتكار عند اقتراح أنشطة مدرّة للدخل.

وعلاوة على ذلك يمكن بلورة المواضيع التالية عن طريق إجراء مزيد من البحوث:

- رصد وتقييم آليات المنظور الجنساني الوطنية؛ وإدماج المرأة في المشاريع الزراعية، بما يتضمن أثر خدمات الإرشاد الزراعي التي تقدمها إناث متخصصات للمرأة الريفية؛
- التقانة الملائمة فيما يتعلق بالمنظور الجنساني في مجال الزراعة؛
- الآثار المرتبطة بالمنظور الجنساني والمترتبة على الصراع المسلح فيما يتعلق بسبل عيش المرأة وأمنها والقطاع الزراعي؛
- عواقب تأنيث الزراعة على الإنتاج الزراعي من حيث الجوانب المرتبطة بالمنظور الجنساني من جوانب إدارة الموارد الجماعية من قبيل الري، وما إلى ذلك؛

# الشرق الأدنى

## الفصل هـ

- إجراء تحليل مُقارن للمشاركة السياسية للمرأة في جميع أنحاء الشرق الأدنى؛
- تحليل للعلاقات بين الجنسين فيما يتعلق بإدارة الأسرة المعيشية.



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