

Understanding the past and focusing on the present

A **timeline** was set for the period between 1995 and 2008 – each participant had to discuss his or her experiences over this period and share a vision of key events and developments as regards land access. The following four contexts constituted the main focus of the discussions:

- Personal/organisational (professional)
- National/regional/global
- Thematic: gender inequality and land access
- FAO-Dimitra: achievements made in the domain of gender inequality and land access

Participants exchanged experiences on each of these points, which allowed them to obtain an overview of the situation as regards the impact of gender inequality in land access on the food security and living conditions of rural populations in Africa.

The personal/organisational context

- **Personal:** marriage/ children, acquisition of property, death in the family, change in marital status (marriage, divorce, remarriage)
- **Professional:** beginning professional activities, absences, capacity-building /training, new projects, promotion and change of professional status
- **In organisations and in the domain of access to land:** starting work in an organisation, supporting women's organisations in the domain of land tenure, project evaluation, experiences in field-schools, flourishing community radio stations, creation of Dimitra in 1994, shift from “women & development” to “gender & development”, advocacy for the adoption of laws on tenure, promotion, repackaging and dissemination of inheritance laws

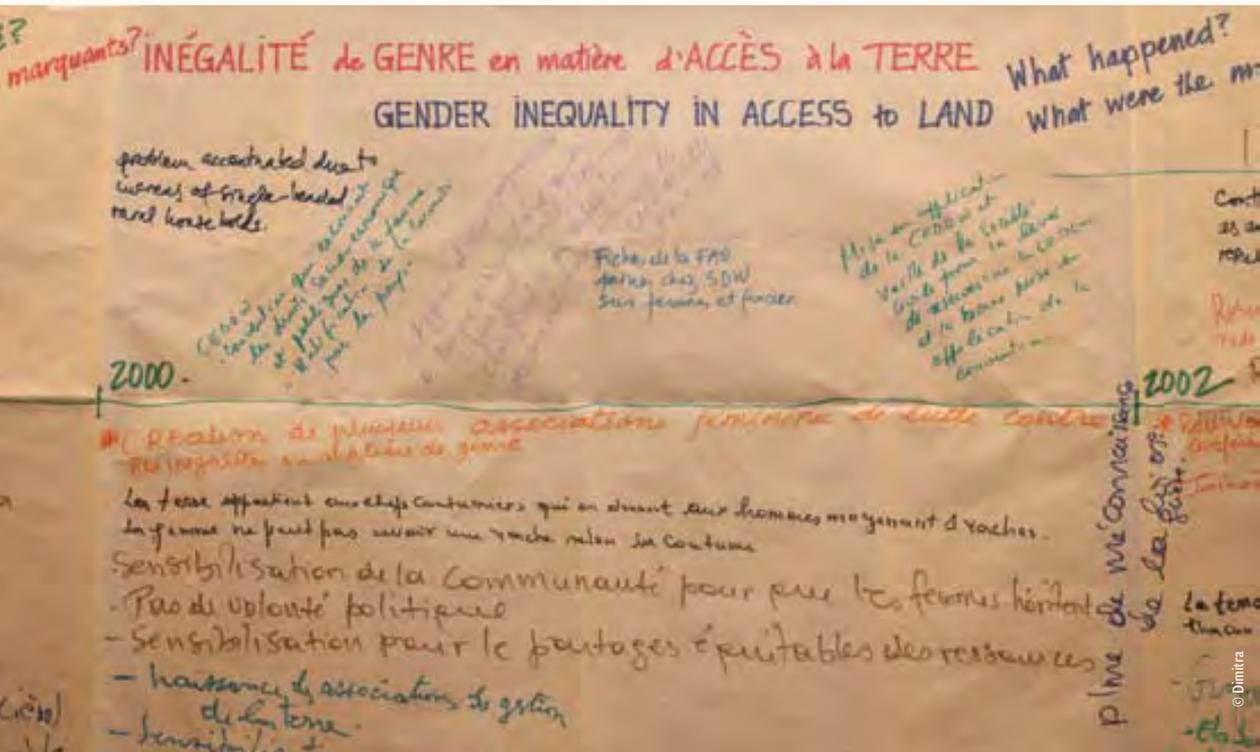
The national/regional/global context

Economic and development issues:

- Overall background of climatic, political and economic instability
- Millennium Development Goals far from being achieved
- World food crisis
- International community not interested in financing agriculture
- Creation and adoption of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), including food security
- Decentralisation processes
- Boom in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), both traditional and modern (Internet, text messaging, etc.)

Gender issues:

- The Beijing Conference
- Increased attention to gender issues, but with no tangible results
- Adoption of laws on quotas and creation of Gender Units in several countries (ministries, institutions) and international organisations
- Adoption of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security by the UN Security Council



The context as regards gender inequality in access to land

Obstacles and constraints related to land access:

- Absence of laws or non-application of laws on land tenure
- Dichotomy between state/customary systems
- Lack of political motivation
- Poverty in rural areas
- Single-parent families (female-headed households)
- AIDS

Some progress and achievements:

- Involvement of civil society
- Documentation of the problem
- Early stages in development of political motivation
- Participatory approach when drawing up laws and texts
- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by many countries
- Information and communication on gender and land tenure: FAO publications, Dimitra newsletters, Dimitra workshops in Senegal, FAO-UNFPA-UNICEF documentary films, discussion forums, media, and so on

The FAO-Dimitra context

Publications :

- Several publications: Dimitra newsletter, workshop brochures
- Database: online and on CD-ROM
- Reports and publications in national languages
- Media: radio, written press, television

Participatory communication:

- Via the radio and other media
- Radio listeners' clubs

Partnerships, synergies and activities

- Cooperation and sharing with all local partners
- Cooperation with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC), German development cooperation (GTZ-Health), Swiss development cooperation, Canadian development cooperation, UNDP, UNIFEM, and others.
- Future project in the framework of the 'Knowledge management and Gender' programme (led by FAO)
- Networking

