



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Economic and Social Development Department

2010-11

THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Closing the gender gap for development



The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11



**Gender inequality
is not just a problem for women.**

**It has implications for
economic growth,
agricultural productivity,
food and
nutrition security.**



The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



WHY?

- Women grow or raise much of the world's food (FAO 2010-2011)
- Lack of access to agricultural resources and services by women farmers reduces their productivity
- Sufficient evidence shows that there are **economic** and **social** gains to closing the gender gap



The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



Women's roles in agriculture

- Farmers
- Unpaid workers on family farms
- Labourers on other's farms
- Producing food and cash crops
- Mixed agricultural operations



The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11



Gains from closing the gender gap

- Productivity gains
 - 20 - 30% increase on women's farms
 - 2.5 – 4% increase in agricultural output

- Food security gains
 - 12 -17% reduction in number of hungry
 - 100 -150 million people lifted out of hunger

- Broader economic and social gains
 - Better health, nutrition and education outcomes for children
 - Builds human capital which promotes economic growth





Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Economic and Social Development Department

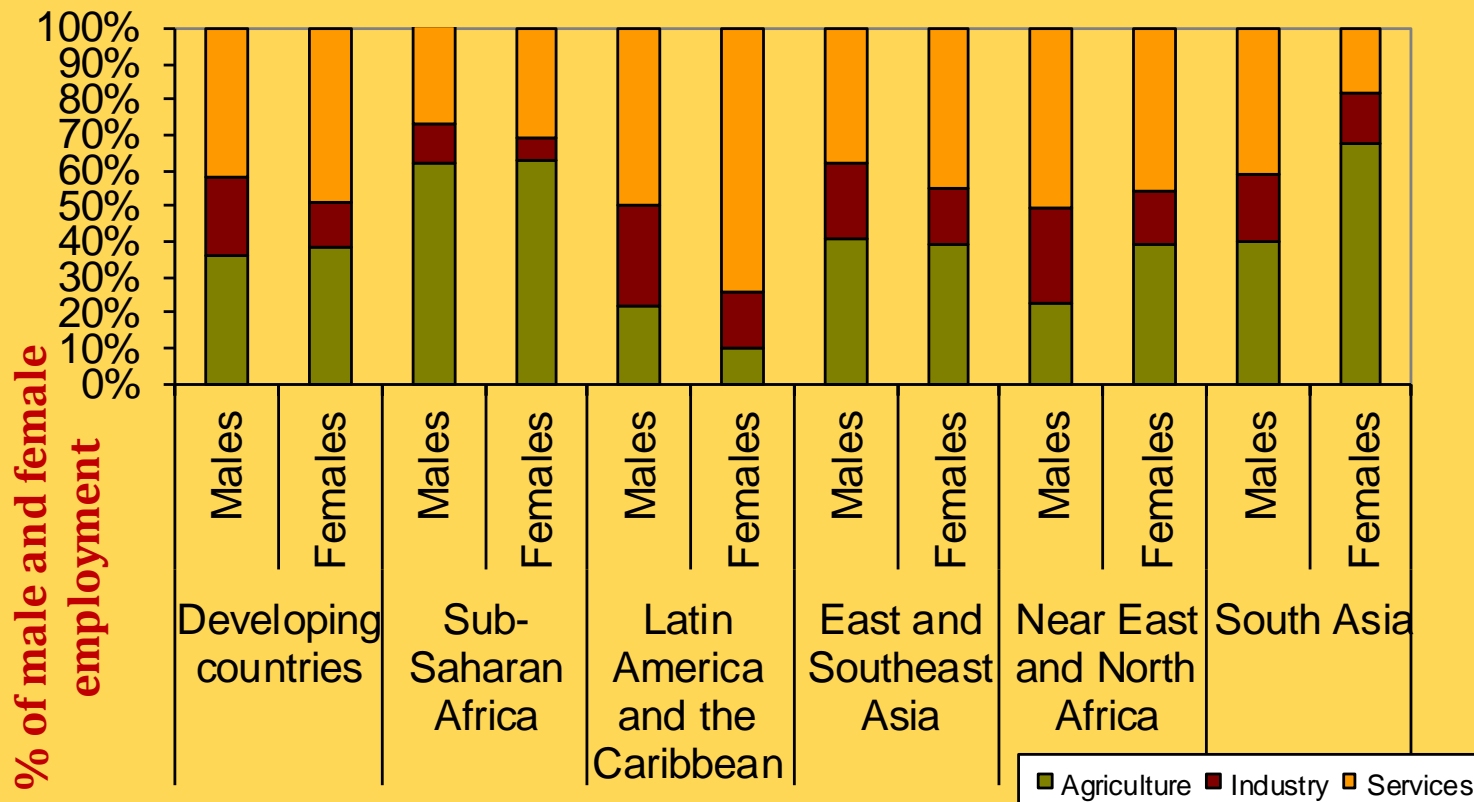
Women's participation and contribution to agriculture and rural economies



The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



In most regions employed women are more likely than men to work in agriculture sector



The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11



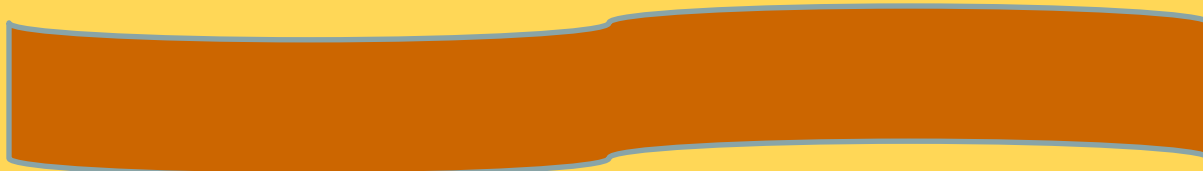
Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Economic and Social Development Department

Women in rural labour markets

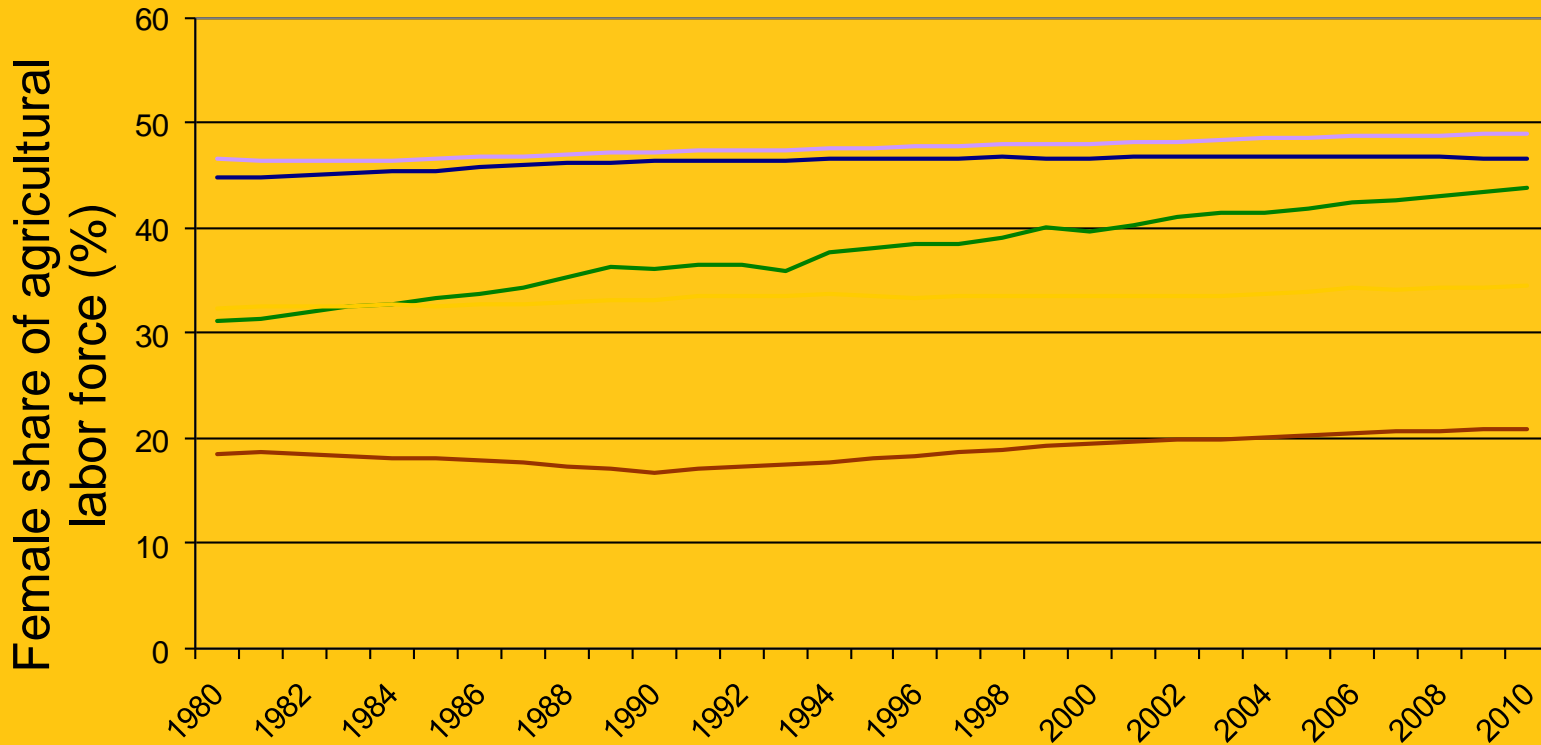


The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11





Female share of the agricultural labour force by Region



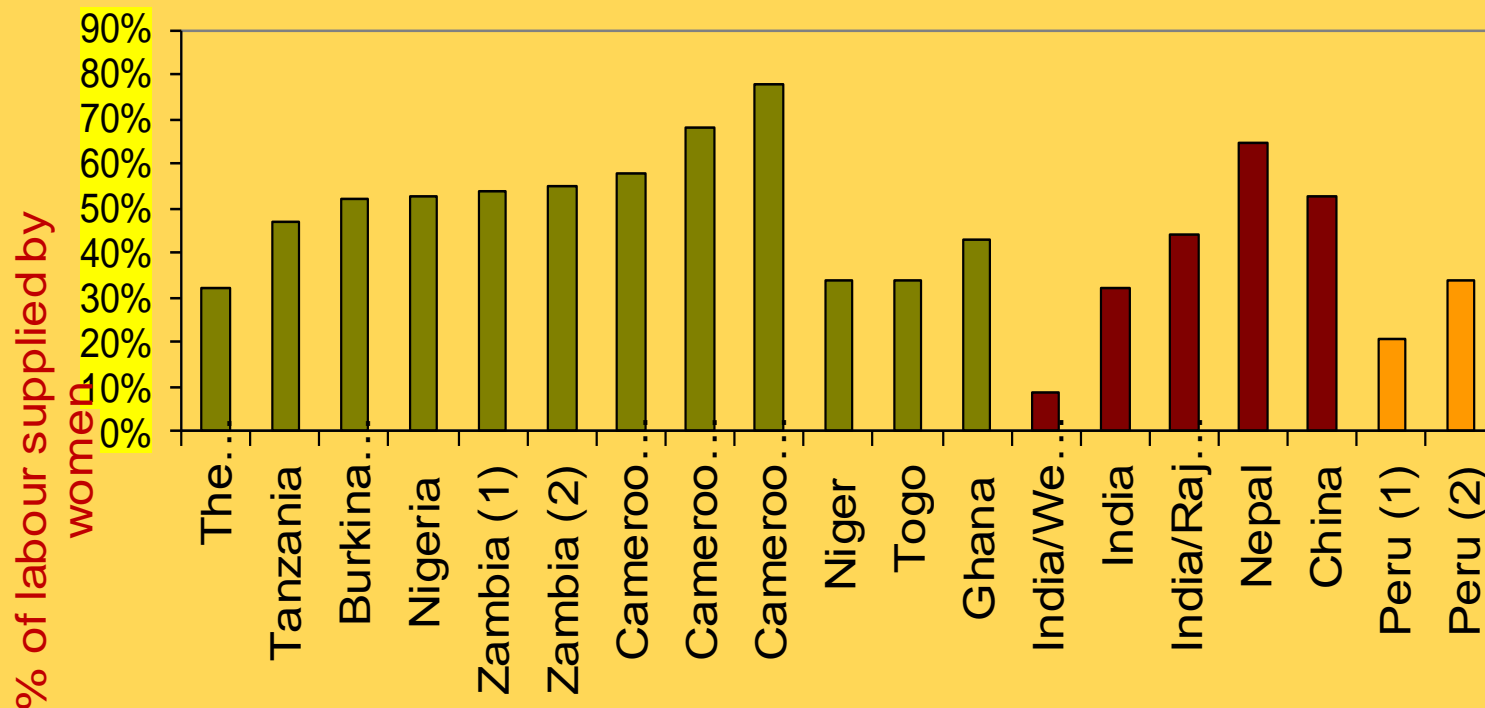
— East and Southeast Asia
— Near East and North Africa
— Sub-Saharan Africa

— Latin America and the Caribbean
— South Asia

The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



Time use data shows high labor contributions by women



The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Economic and Social Development Department

Reasons for the gender gap in Agriculture

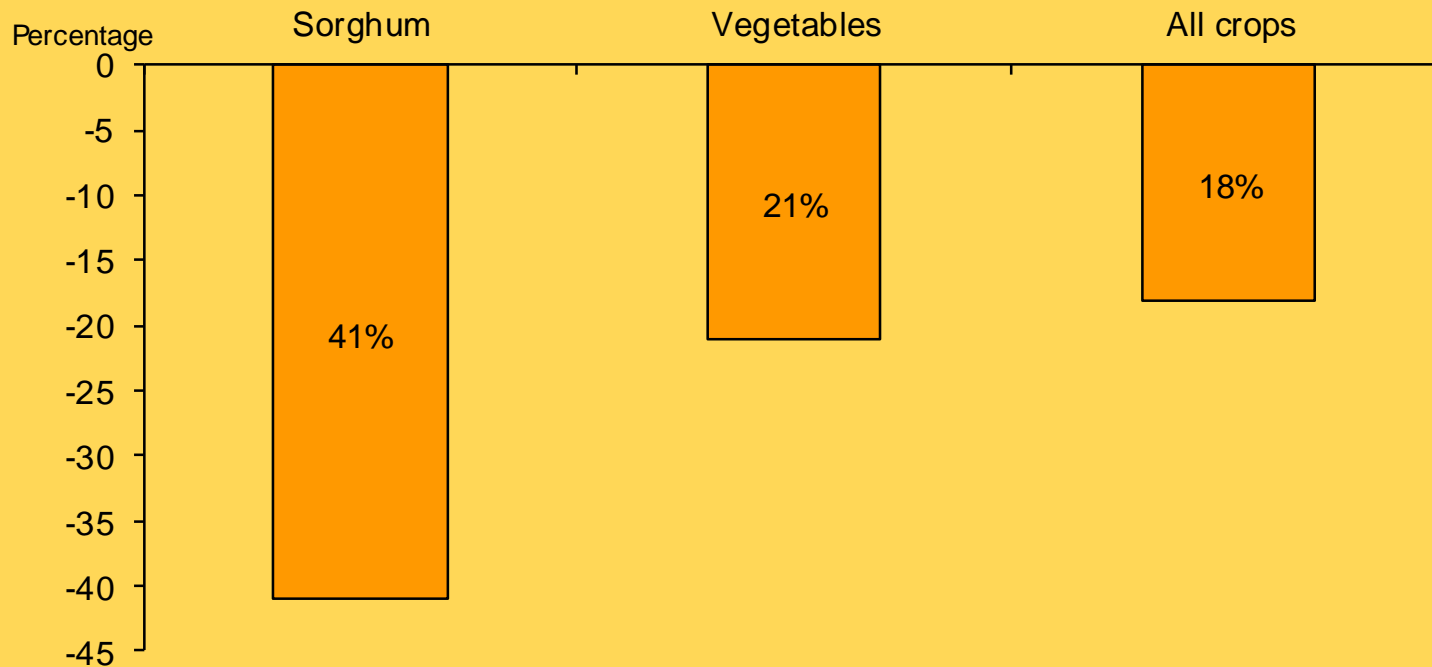
The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11





Women farmers produce less ...



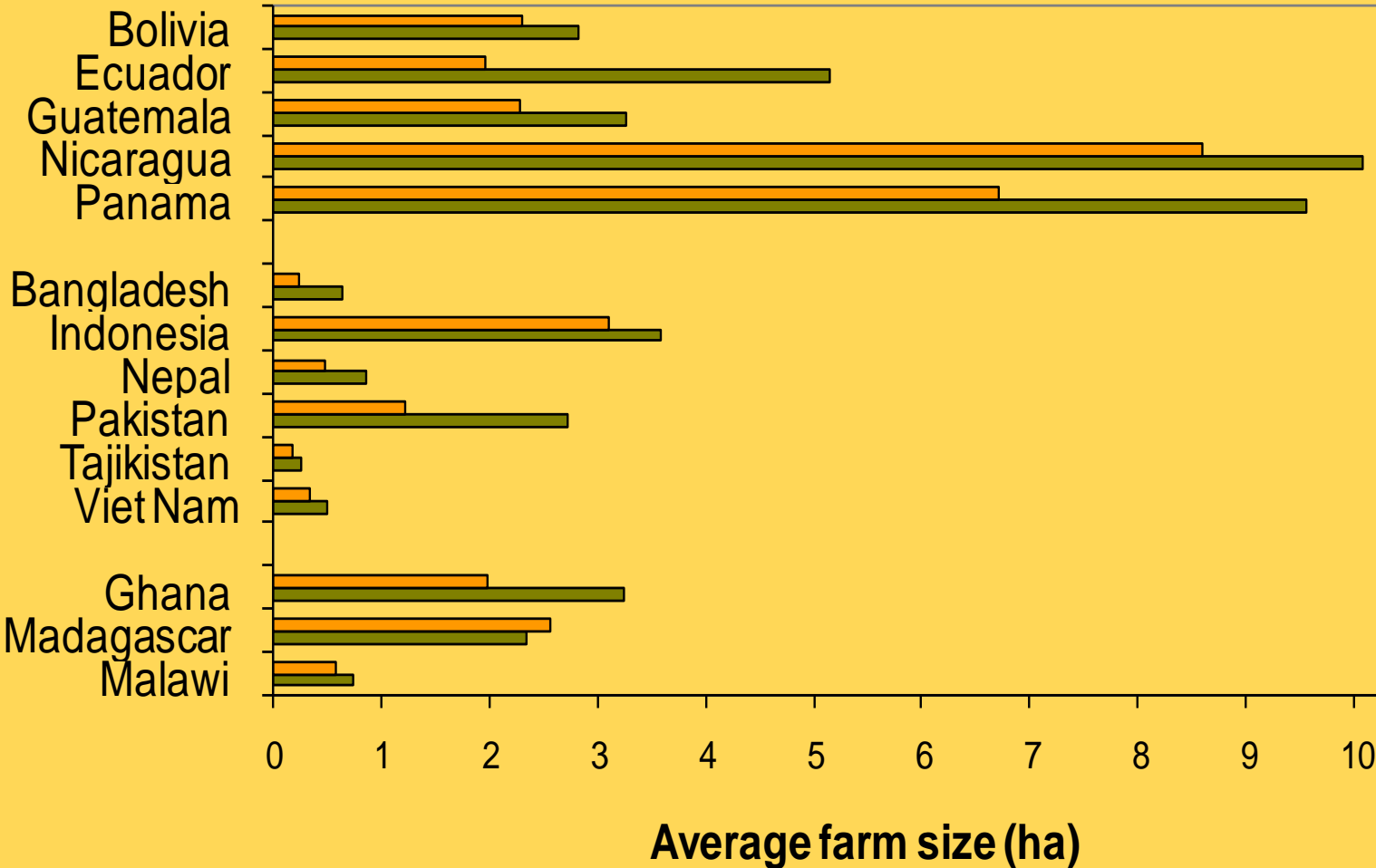
Gap between yields on male- and female-controlled plots in Burkina Faso



The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



... because they operate smaller farms...

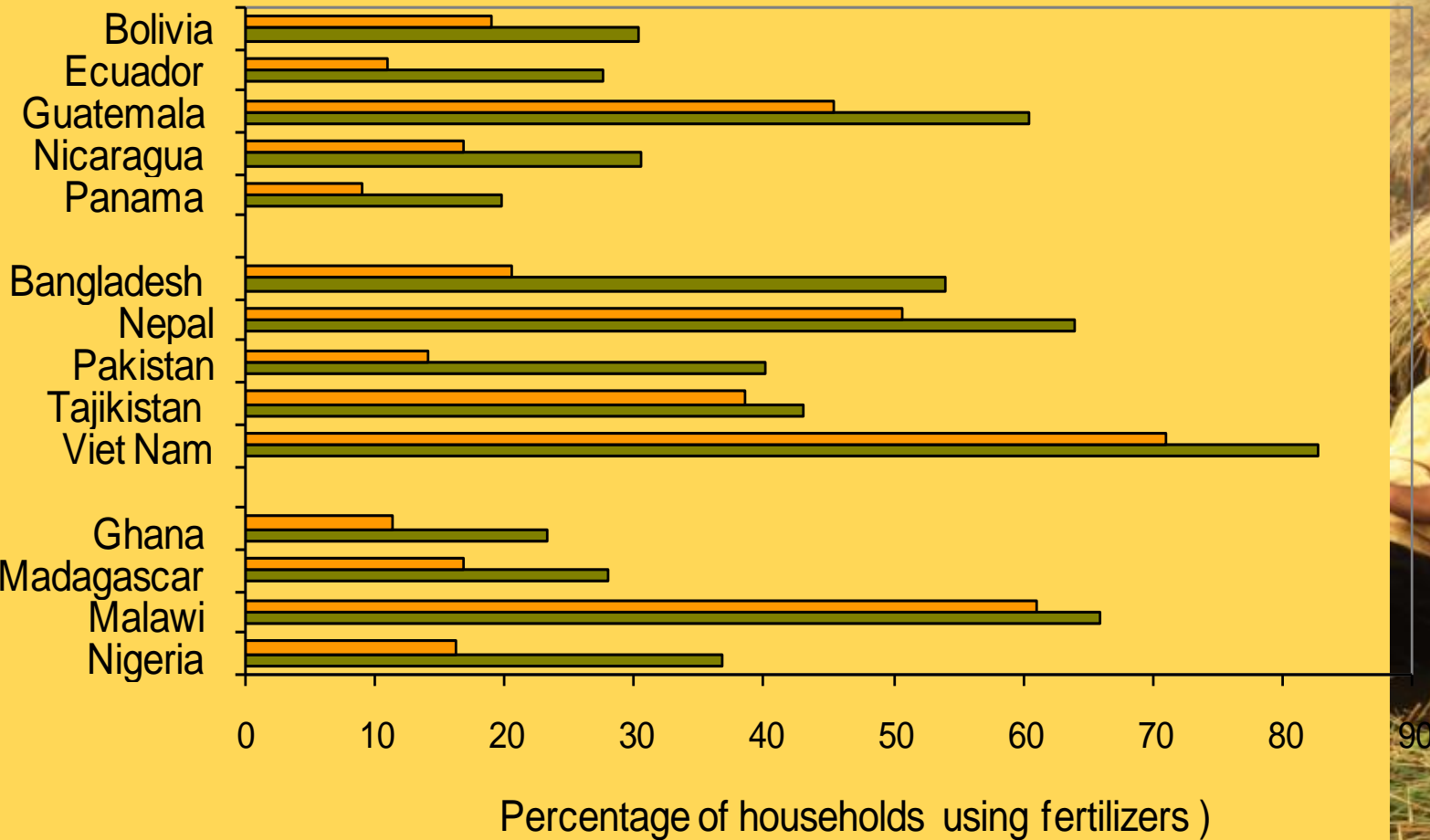


Milk
The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11

Female-headed households Male-headed households



... tend to use less fertilizer (have lower access or can afford less)



Female-headed households

Male-headed households

The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11





GAINS from closing the gender gap

- ✓ Can close a yield gap of 20-30% ...
- ✓ Could increase agricultural output in the developing countries by 2.5 - 4%
- ✓ Could reduce the number of undernourished people by 12-17% (100-150 million people).



The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11



Broader social and economic benefits

Inter-generational benefits –

not only women..

her children,

her household,

her family,

resulting in improved household wellbeing

Increased incomes of women can -

- improve women's bargaining power within the family

- enhance her valuation, and

- Her ability to contribute to household wellbeing

- Linked to improved health, nutrition and education outcomes for children.

Improved gender equality

- raises human capital of women

- of her household

- her community

- the nation, which leads to long lasting impact on economic growth



The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11



HOW to close the gender gap in agriculture and rural employment?

A photograph showing two women working in a rice field. They are wearing traditional conical hats and are bent over, tending to the rice plants. The field is lush and green, with rows of rice plants visible.

The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



POLICIES

- Can eliminate discrimination under the law and in practice
- Can channel public services and technologies that free-up women's time
- Will build the human capital of women and girls – translates to inter-generational benefits
- Can address multiple constraints to agricultural productivity

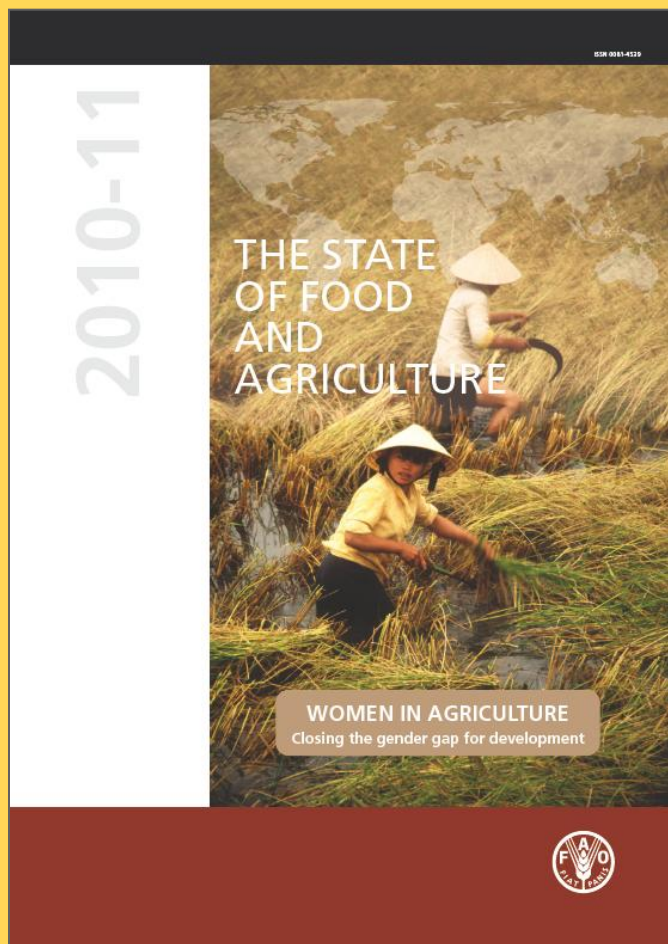


The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11



For more information



The State of Food and Agriculture Women in agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development

FAO's major annual flagship publication.

Available in English, French, Spanish,
Russian, Arabic and Chinese

www.fao.org/publications/sofa



The State of
Food and
Agriculture
2010-11



Questions for discussion

- Do we have sufficient data from East and SouthEast Asia to support the SOFA findings?
- What other gender-disaggregated data do we need to inform us of gaps in productivity in East and SouthEast Asia?
- Are policy-makers able to draw upon existing data to address agricultural productivity problems? If not, how could the NSOs in East and SouthEast Asia regions generate reliable and robust data as the evidence base for policy decisions?
- What type(s) of gender-specific data and analyses are still needed?



The State of
Food and
Agriculture

2010-11

