



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

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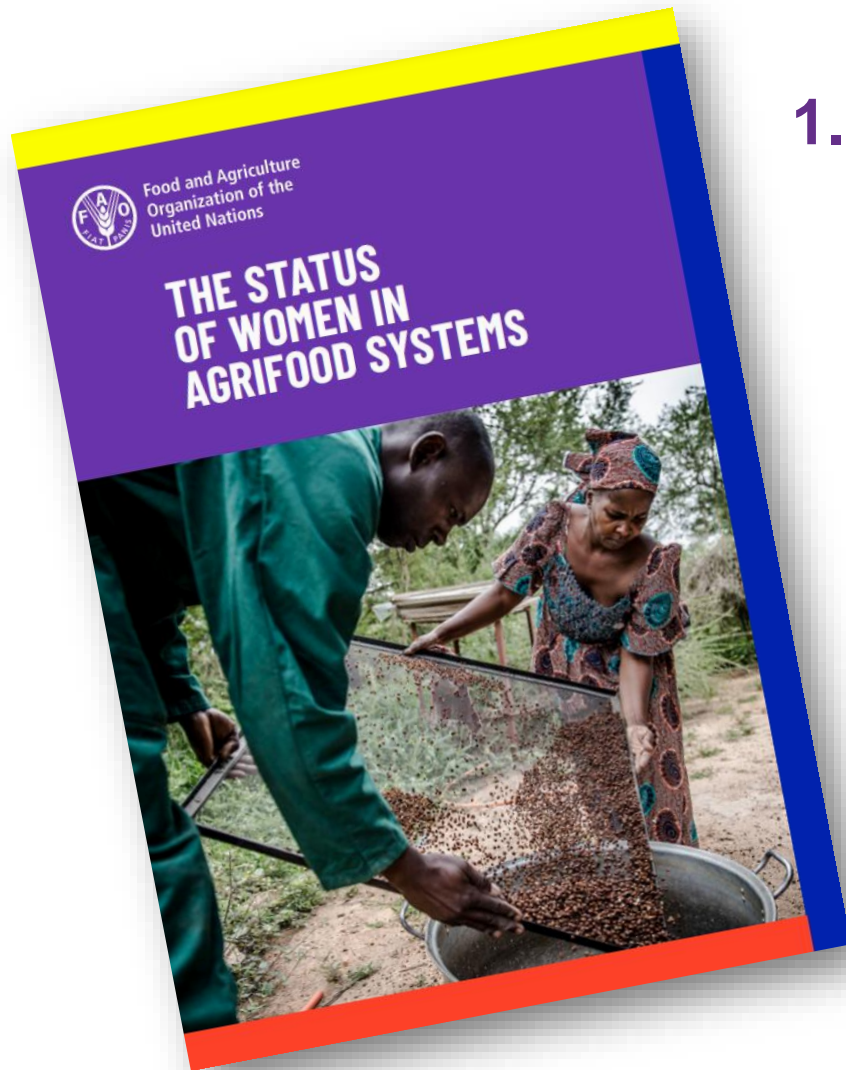
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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- The status of women in agrifood systems
- Promising approaches
- Examples of FAO's work toward gender equality
- Ways forward for closing the gender gaps in agrifood systems



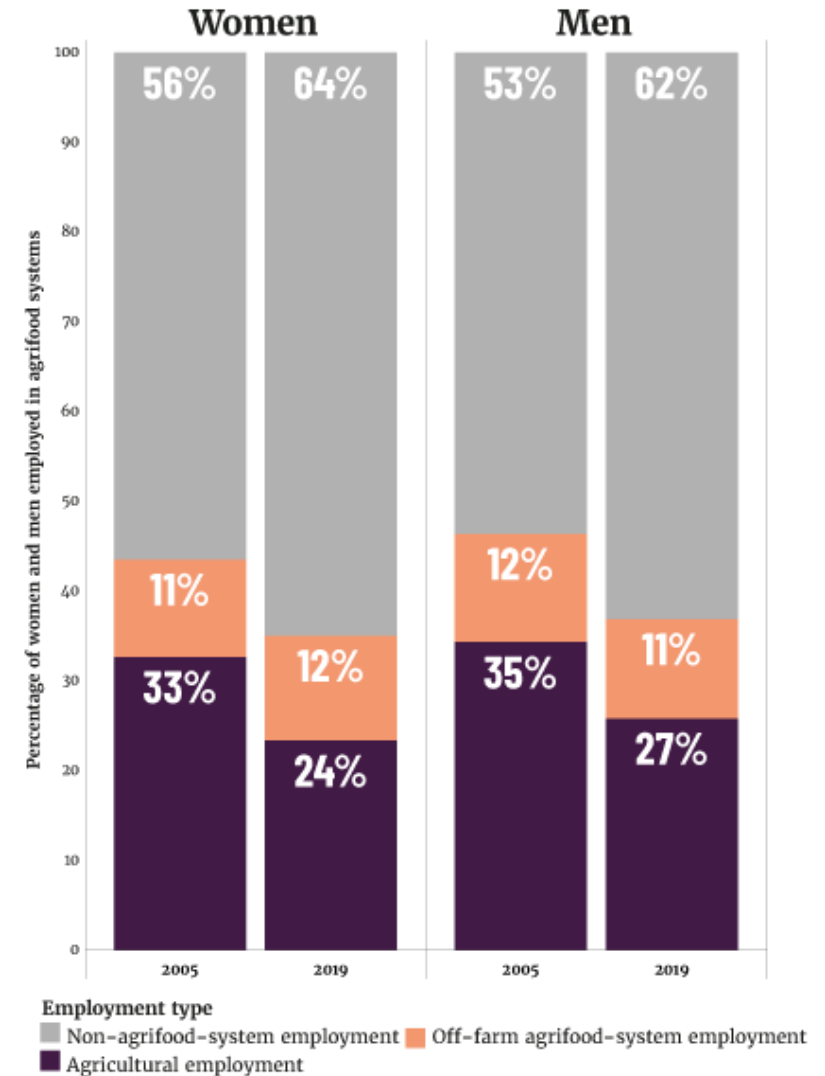
1. THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

- Provides a comprehensive, global view of the status of women in agrifood systems (AFS), beyond agriculture
- Highlights how different segments of AFS are conditioned by structural inequalities linked to gender and/or intersecting social and economic differentiation
- Places gender equality and women's empowerment as an objective in and of itself, and as a means to improve broader welfare in AFS
- Reflects evolution from a focus on gender gaps to promoting gender-transformative change



1 AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS ARE A MAJOR EMPLOYER OF WOMEN AND MEN

- Globally, **36%** of working women are employed in agrifood systems, along with **38%** of working men
- This represents an **8** percentage point decrease from 2005
- Agrifood systems are a greater source of livelihoods for women than for men in low- and middle-income countries
- **66%** of working women in sub-Saharan Africa



Source: Costa, V. et al (forthcoming). *Women's employment in agrifood systems*. Background paper for The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems report, 2023.



2 WOMEN'S WORKING CONDITIONS IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS ARE NOT EQUAL THAN MEN'

- Despite the importance of agrifood systems for women's livelihoods and welfare of their families, women's roles tend to be marginalized and their working conditions worse than men's

- ▶ **IRREGULAR**
- ▶ **LOW-SKILLED**
- ▶ **INFORMAL**
- ▶ **LABOR-INTENSIVE**
- ▶ **PART-TIME**
- ▶ **VULNERABLE**





Women are more likely to be in vulnerable employment

- In Africa, more than **80%** of employed women and men work in vulnerable self-employment activities in agriculture
- In off-farm agrifood systems employment in Africa, only **14%** of women work for wages or salary compared to **39%** of men

Employment status in agricultural and off-farm agrifood systems employment, by sex and region



Source: Costa, V., Piedrahita, N., Mane, E., Davis, B., Slavchevska, V. & Gurbuzer, Y. L. (forthcoming). Women's employment in agrifood systems. Background paper for The status of women in agrifood systems, 2023. Rome, FAO.



Women receive lower remuneration, have lower productivity and higher care burden

- The gender gap in land productivity between female- and male-managed farms of same size is **24%**
- On average, women earn **82 cents** for every dollar earned by men in wage employment in agriculture
- **Discrimination** explains a large share of the wage and productivity gaps in agrifood systems
- Gender inequalities in unpaid domestic and care work limit employment opportunities



On average, women spend 4.2 hours a day on unpaid domestic and care work...



...while men spend 1.9 hours



3 WOMEN'S ACCESS TO ASSETS AND RESOURCES LAG BEHIND MEN'S

- It is alarming how little the gaps in women's access to extension, irrigation and ownership of livestock have closed in the past decade. Gaps in access to finance and technology instead are closing.

▶ **LAND**

▶ **INPUTS**

▶ **SERVICES**

▶ **FINANCE**

▶ **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

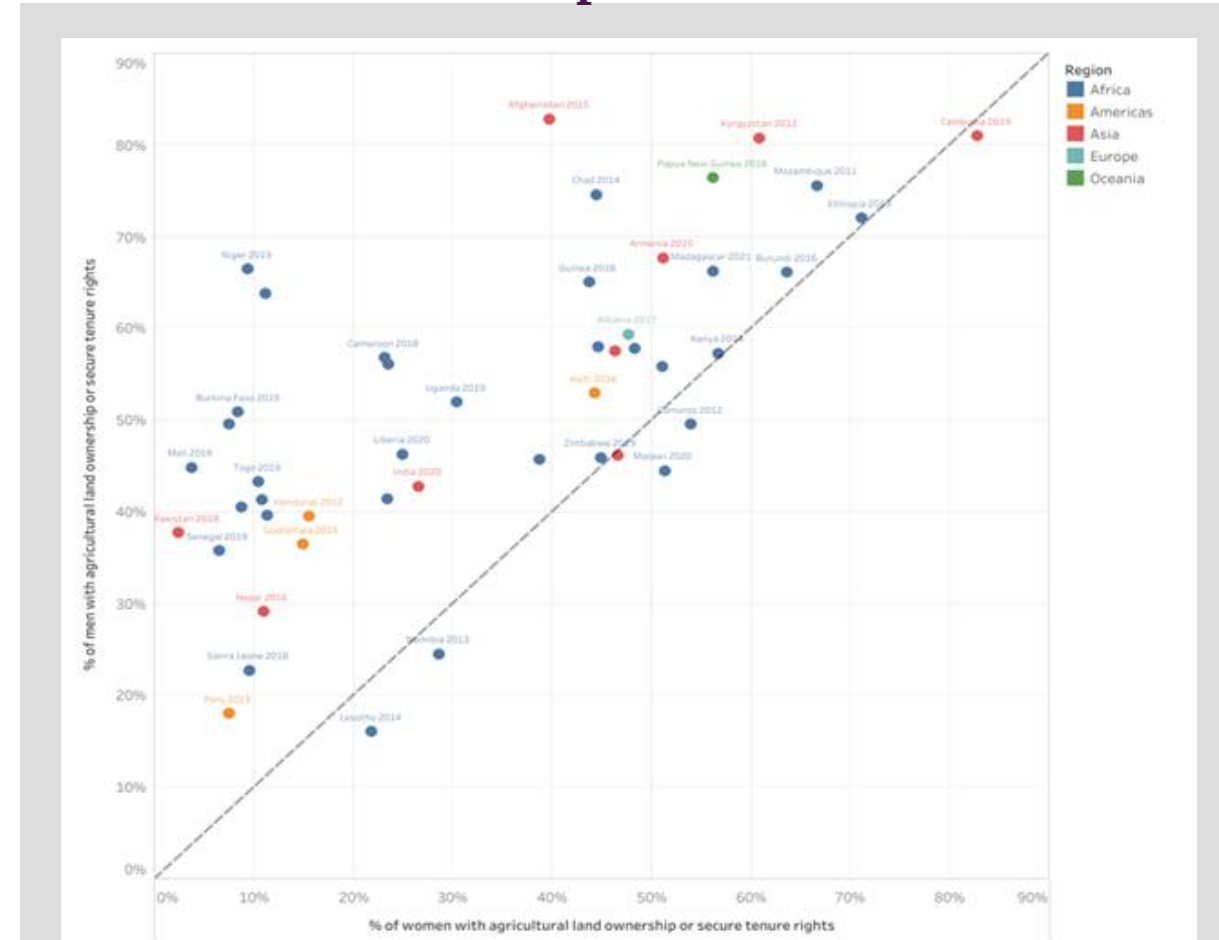




3 SUPPORTING DATA

- Men have greater ownership of land than women in **40 out of 46 countries, 26 out of 31 in Africa**
- Protections of women's land rights are low in **50% of countries**
- Gender gap in women's access to mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries narrowed from **25% to 16%**

Men are more likely to have land ownership than women

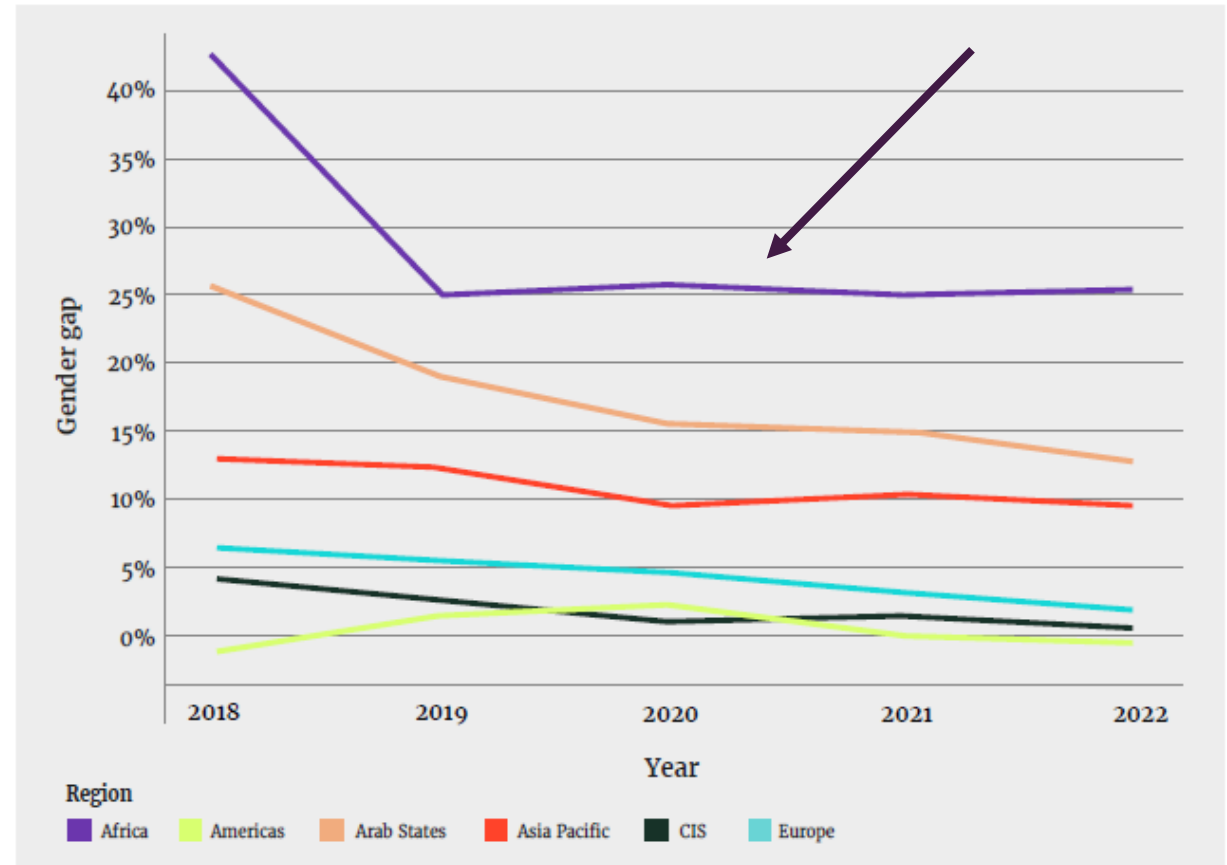


Source: FAO data for SDG Indicator 5.a.1(a) for 40 countries. February 2023



Globally, the gender gap in women's access to mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries narrowed from **25%** to **16%** between 2017 and 2021

Gender gap in internet use, by region



Source: International Telecommunication Union (various years). *Measuring Digital Development: Facts and figures, various years.* Geneva, Switzerland, ITU.



4 DISCRIMINATORY SOCIAL NORMS AND RULES AFFECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE AT THE HEART OF GENDER INEQUALITY

- Social norms are slow to change
- In a majority of countries globally, people believe young children suffer when mothers work
- Wife beating remains acceptable in many countries
- Policies are changing more quickly, yet while **75%** of policy documents analyzed in agrifood systems recognize women's challenges, only **19%** include policy goals related to gender





4 SUPPORTING DATA

- Increasing gender equality and women’s empowerment is essential for women’s well-being and their families.
- It also has a positive impact on agricultural production, food security and child nutrition.

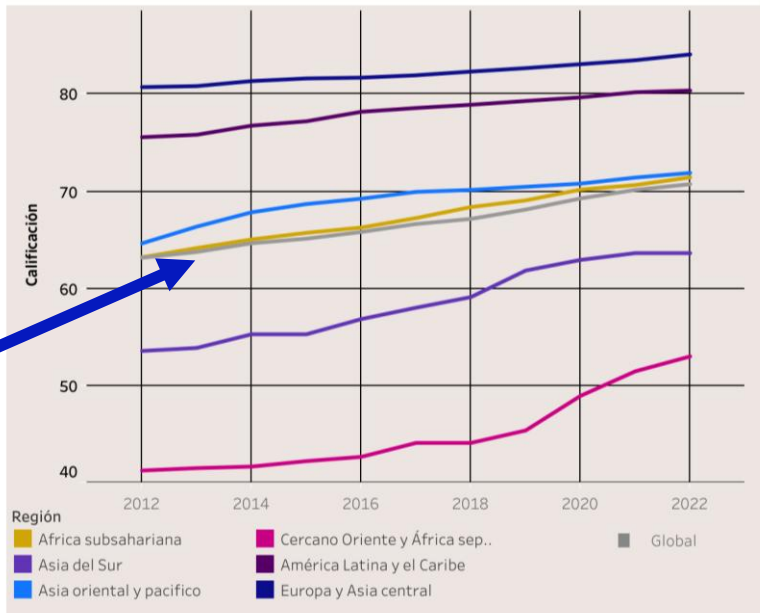
The strength of evidence on women’s empowerment varies by outcome

		AMOUNT OF EVIDENCE		
		Low	Medium	High
DEGREE OF AGREEMENT AMONG STUDIES	Low			
	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Women’s nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Household-level food security ■ Agricultural production
	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Life satisfaction ■ Educational outcomes ■ Water, sanitation and hygiene 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diets ■ Child nutrition

Source: Quisumbing, A. et al (2022). *Measuring women’s empowerment in agriculture: Innovations and evidence*. Background paper for The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems, 2023. Nairobi, Kenya. CGIAR Gender Impact Platform

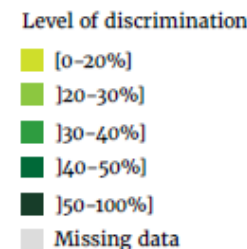
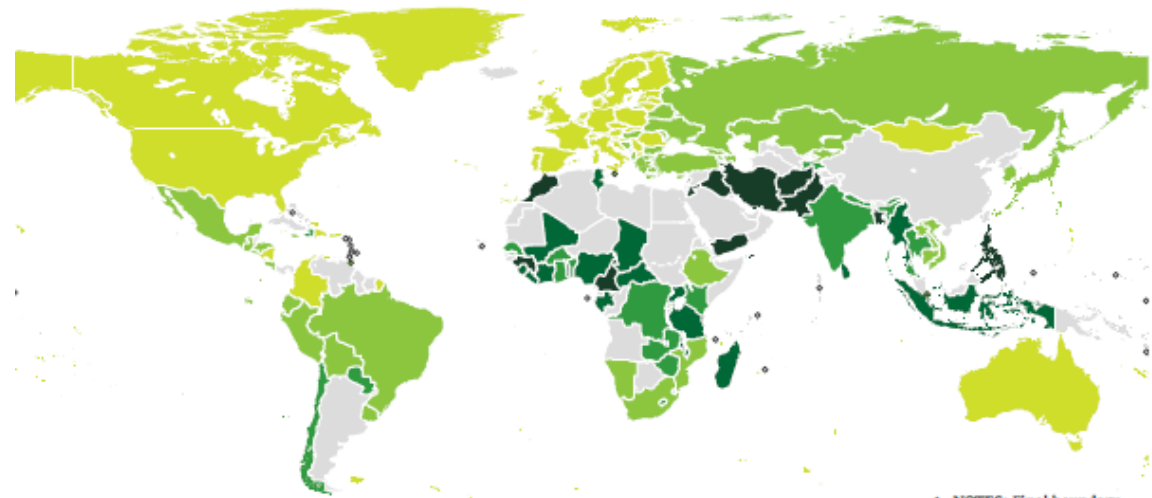


Laws on women's participation in business are improving globally



Source: World Bank 2022. Women, Business and the Law Panel Data [2012-2022]. Washington, DC. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>

OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index: gender discrimination varies by region and country



↑ NOTES: Final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

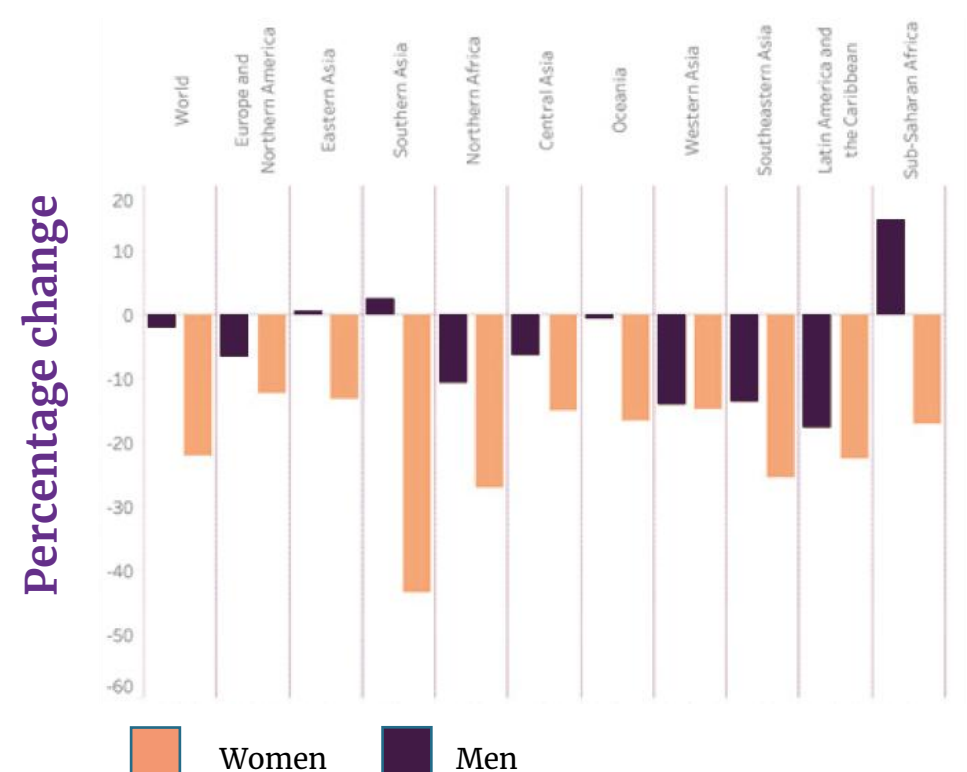
Source: OECD. 2019. SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming challenges into opportunities. Social Institutions and Gender Index. Paris, OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/bc56d212-en>



5 SENSITIVITY, COPING MECHANISMS AND RESILIENCE TO SHOCKS AND STRESSORS ARE SHAPED BY GENDER INEQUALITIES.

- **COVID – 19:** 22% of women lost their jobs in off-farm AFS work in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared with 2% of men.
- **COVID-19:** The gap between women and men’s food insecurity widened from 1.9 to 4.3 percentage points between 2019 and 2021
- **Climate change:** During climate shocks like heat stress, women reduce their working hours in agriculture less than men

Off-farm agrifood-system employment



Source: Costa, V. et al (forthcoming). *Women’s employment in agrifood systems*. Background paper for The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems report, 2023.



6 POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Gender-transformative approaches** are cost-effective and can change discriminatory norms at local level
- **Closing gaps in land tenure** has benefits on employment, investment, natural resource management, access to services, resilience, food security and GBV
- **Access to formal childcare** has a large positive impact on mother's employment and returns in agrifood systems
- **Group-based approaches** are important for increasing empowerment and resilience
- **Social protection** can increase women's employment and enhance resilience





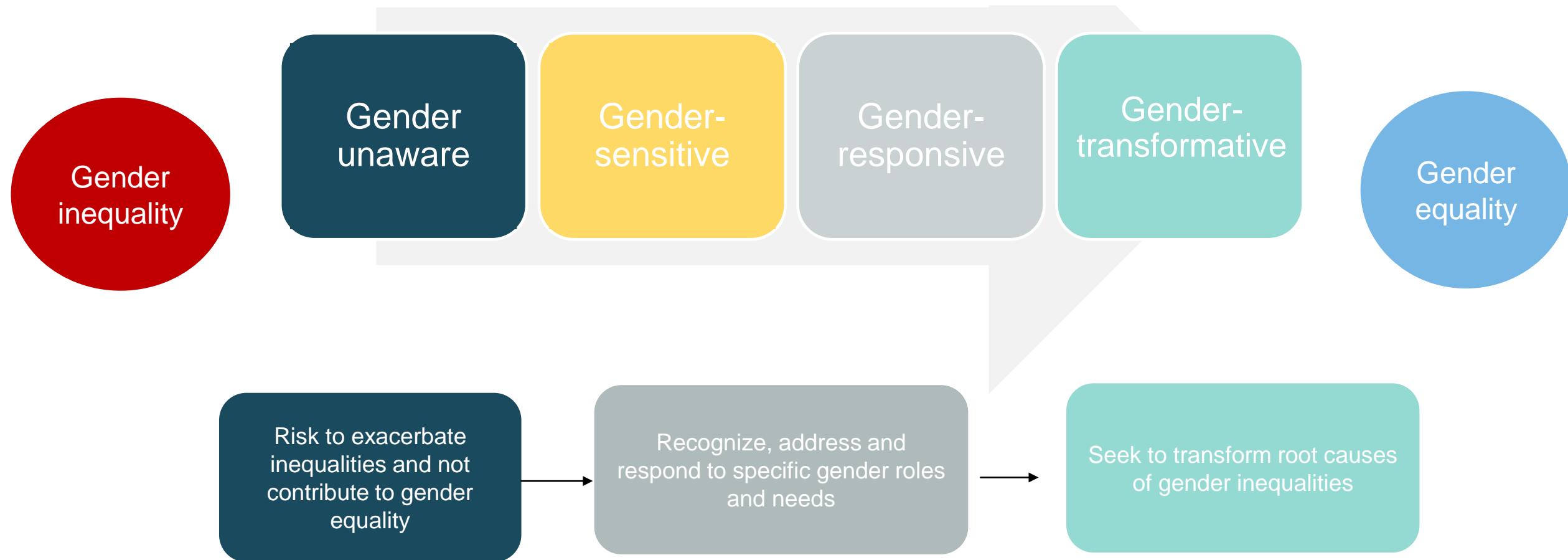
2. PROMISING APPROACHES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

- Gender mainstreaming is the **process of assessing the impacts of all actions, including legislation, policies and programmes**, on women and men, in all domains and at each level
- It is a strategy for **making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension** of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in all political, economic and societal spheres **so that women and men benefit equally** and inequality is not perpetuated
- Final objective is to achieve equality between men and women and gender equity.



GENDER MAINSTREAMING APPROACHES





GENDER EQUALITY VS GENDER EQUITY

OBJECTIVE

Gender equality
defines a situation in
which women and men
enjoy equal rights,
opportunities and
entitlements in civil and
political life

MEANS

Gender equity
means fairness of
treatment, the provision
of equal opportunities,
including by eliminating
obstacles and structural
barriers

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

- Economic advancement and enhanced **power and agency**, which can enable women (and men) to have increased control over their lives.
- It encompasses many dimensions, in particular:

Access to productive resources



Agency and power



INTERSECTIONALITY

- Explores how **gendered power relations** give rise to discrimination, subordination and exclusion in society.
- Particularly when **overlap happens across social characteristics** such as class, ethnicity, caste, age, disability status, sexuality, etc.

WHO?
Men / women
Youth / old
In urban/ rural areas
Migrants
Persons with disabilities





INCLUSIVITY

- A principle, process and outcome whereby all people **equally participate** in and contribute to economic, social, cultural and political life and **equally benefit**, “irrespective of **age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status**”.
-
- For FAO’s work it means prioritizing **poor/extreme poor, food insecure, marginalized people**, in situation of discrimination or vulnerability as part of its main target group, including **small-scale producers, family farmers and actors in agrifood systems**.



COMMIT TO GROW EQUALITY INITIATIVE

- Initiative to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment in agrifood systems through financing and partnerships.
- It brings together key stakeholders to commit investments and partnerships to make agrifood systems work better for women and transform them in the process.
- First initiative that shifts the spotlight directly onto women's role in agrifood systems, calling stakeholders to focus on gender equality and women's empowerment as key objective of agrifood development interventions.



VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT IN CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY

- Guidelines provide guidance to plan gender-responsive public policies, programmes and innovative solutions.
- Their aim is to address the root causes of gender inequalities, by promoting impactful gender-responsive and gender-sensitive approaches.
- Actions: improve legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, national plans, and establish innovative partnerships and investments in human and financial resources conducive to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls identified as rights-holders and agents of change.



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FAO'S WORK TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS: RIGHTS. EQUALITY. EMPOWERMENT

8th March celebration and call for action to unlock **equal rights, power and opportunities for all** and a feminist future, where no one is left behind.

Vision centered in empowering youth, particularly young women and adolescent girls, as catalysts for lasting change.



THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE WOMAN FARMER

- FAO will lead its implementation with Governments, other UN agencies, international and regional organizations, Civil Society, academia, development partners and the private sector.
- It is an opportunity to better understand the challenges women face, help close the gender gap and contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda :
 1. Raise awareness on multiple key roles of women farmers in agrifood systems, food security, nutrition and poverty eradication.
 2. Highlight actions to help close the gender gap – like providing better access to land, credit, markets, education, training and technology.
 3. Guide policymaking, programming and increased investment to advance gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in agrifood systems, engaging them along agrifood value chains.



CALLS TO ACTION

- 1** Invest in high-quality research and data disaggregated by sex, age and other dimensions of social and economic differentiation
- 2** Intervene at scale using proven approaches which close asset and resource gaps: doing so could increase global GDP by **1%** and provide food security for **45 million** people
- 3** Interventions must be intentional and transformative – doing so could increase the incomes of an additional **58 million** people and the resilience of an additional **235 million** people.



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**THANK
YOU**



**LET'S
GROW
EQUALITY**