



**Draft Sub-regional Outlook on Gender and Agrifood Systems for the ECOWAS region**

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Preface by ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture

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# Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| AGDI | African Gender and Development Index |
| AGIR | Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel and West Africa |
| AHDR | African Human Development Report |
| AU | African Union |
| CAADP | Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme |
| CEDAW | Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CGA | Country Gender Assessment |
| COP 20 | Paris Declaration Conference on the Party |
| CORAF | Council for Research in Agriculture in Africa |
| CSA | Climate Smart Agriculture |
| D1 and D2 | Instruments proposed by RAIPFSN mainstream gender, including regulations on gender parity in PNIA and PRIA organs, competitive funding to contract women organizations and SME, to support diversification of incomes and support to develop regional methodological units for gender mainstreaming |
| DARD | Department of Agricultural and Rural Development |
| ECOWAP | Regional Agricultural Policy for ECOWAS |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| F&G | Framework and Guidelines |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations |
| FHH | Female Headed Households |
| FNS | Food and Nutrition Security |
| GAP | Gender Action Plan |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GEWE | Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment |
| GFP | Gender Focal Points |
| GMS | Gender Management System |
| GRB | Gender Responsive Budgeting |
| HH | Head of Household |
| ICSF | International Collective in Support of Fishworkers |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| IFPRI | International Food Policy Research Institute |
| ITC | Information Technology and Communication |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MHH | Male Headed Households |
| MFIs | Micro-finance Institutions |
| NAIP | National Agricultural Investment Plan |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa’s Development |
| NTFPs | Non-Timber Forest Products  |
| PNIA | *National Agricultural Investment Programs (French)* |
| PNIASAN | *RAIPFNS (French)* |
| POs | Producer Organizations |
| PPP | Public-Private Partnership |
| RAIP | Regional Agricultural Investment Plan |
| RAIPFSN | Regional Agricultural Investment Plan for Food and Nutrition Security |
| ROPPA | Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs de l’Afrique de l’Ouest |
| SSA | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SMEs | Small and Medium Enterprises |
| TCP | Technical Cooperation Projects |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| VGGT | Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of tenure of land, Fisheries and Forests |
| WEE | Women’s Economic Empowerment |

# Summary

ECOWAS considers gender equality as an engine of regional integration and a full-fledged development objective. Article 63 of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty calls on member States “to formulate, harmonize, coordinate and implement the appropriate policies and mechanisms to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of women.” Accordingly, member states adopted **in 2015**the **additional act relative to gender equality for sustainable development, which** includes among others a chapter 12 on agriculture and sustainable development. The Regional Partnership Pact for the Implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP 2025 was adopted in November 2015 and made commitments to improve the governance of agricultural policy by strengthening compliance with the principles of gender equality and equity, and accountability. The **ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Investment Plan for food security and nutrition (RAIPFSN)** was adopted in 2016 and includes specific output and instruments on gender mainstreaming and mainstreamed gender in several other outputs.

**Member states are also committed through various AU protocols and policies** that address gender issues in agri-food systems. These include: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015; the AU Agenda 2063; the 2014 Malabo Declaration on **on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods** and its associated result framework; the Declaration on “2015 Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”, the “African Union Campaign to confine the hand held hoe to the museum”, the AU **30% target of documented land rights** allocated to African women by 2025, the Declaration on “African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women” adopted in 2016 and **new AU Gender Strategy 2017-2027** adopted in May 2018.

In this context, during a High Level Ministerial event held in March 2016 during the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the **ECOWAS Commission and FAO launched a Technical Cooperation Project (TCP)** on “Gender Responsive Regional and National Agricultural Investment Plans for meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge in the ECOWAS region”. This sub-regional Outlook on gender and agrifood system synthesize the findings and recommendations of the National Gender Profiles of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods prepared in all ECOWAS countries to inform the second generation of Regional and National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs and RAIP). The profiles were produced following country gender assessments of the first generation of Regional and National Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIP and NAIP).

**The Outlook reveals the crucial roles of women in food production and food security in the region.** Within ECOWAS, women represent 46% of the labor force and 50% are employed in agriculture, representing around 45% of the agricultural labor force. Women contribute to the family farm and they have their own activity to generate income and meet household food needs. Women tend to dominate subsistence agriculture, non-timber forest products chains, small ruminant livestock and livestock feeding, fish processing. They also dominate the transformation, conservation and small marketing of agri-food products, mostly in the informal sector including informal trans-border trade. Finally, they are primarily involved in household food and nutrition security through the education and care of children, the preparation of meal, the diversification and resilience of household food intake through their home garden, incomes and resilience mechanisms.

Despite women’s important contributions in agrifood systems, strong **gender gaps were identified in most sectors covered by the RAIPFSN,** including in terms ofproductivity, access to productive resources, post-harvest losses, less resilience to climate change, access to value chain, market and employment, food insecurity and nutrition, resilience and social protection. The Outlook also revealed that enabling environment remained insufficiently conducive to effective gender mainstreaming in agriculture, both due to gaps in legal and policy framework, weak institutional and financial capacities, insufficient voice of women and their participation to policy and weak accountability.

A detailed **review of such gender-based constrains** was conducted across the CGAs. The constrains were categorized against the GEWE conceptual framework that was proposed in section 1.3 (see also Figure 2 and Figure 1). Frequency analysis was conducted and unearthed **specific gender-based constraints that have impacts on the productivity of agriculture and performance of the agrifood sector and on women’s condition and status across sectors and RAIPFSN outcomes**:

* **Economic empowerment** (sections 3 to 5): Specific constraints of the production systems such as poor access to land, finance, technology, research and innovation, marketing etc. were widely found to be a common concern militating against greater performance of women farmers;
* **Enabling environment** (section 6): Issues in the enabling environment of production, particularly the policy, legal and institutional issues were also frequently identified : lack of sex-disaggregated data to inform policies, weak gender budget and rural finances, weak gender analysis and monitoring of gender status, weak accountability mechanisms and weak gender machineries at country level to mainstream gender effectively.
* **Women’s agency/voice** (section 6.2): this is related to gaps in women’s capacities and entitlement including low literacy, low collective capacities and limited voice and influence in key policy processes related to agrifood sector.
* **Quality of life, infrastructure and cultural issues** (section 2): rural infrastructures such as roads, energy, transportation, water and sanitation significantly affect women both in their welfare provisioning roles, in their post-harvest activities (processing, marketing, pricing etc.) and in their ability to relate to formal structures in trade and manufacturing. Discriminatory social norms and patriarchal culture affect gender power relations, women decision making and reinforce the burden of social reproduction and women’s time poverty (women’s triple role).

Such priority issues provided the basis to make the following recommendations for a sub-regional Gender Action Plan to help address gender constrains to achieve RAIPFSN objectives:

* strengthen **the enabling environment of production and of post-harvest activities,** includingthe right policy, legal and institutional structures as well as **socio-cultural environment** that defines the rights, responsibilities and entitlements of women.
* R**ural infrastructural development** is key and should also lead to availability of **labour saving and productivity enhancing technologies** in the operation of productive and domestic activities
* **strengthen gender accountability mechanisms** in the agrifood sector including through enhanced gender benchmarks, monitoring and evaluation, gender data revolution
* **reinforce women’s collective capacity** to advocate for their needs, participate to policy, reinforce accountability mechanisms and ensure that rural women can identify and benefit from opportunities
* Document & facilitate south-south exchange of **best practices** for replication and upscaling

**Finally, such efforts require significant financial efforts. They cannot be achieved alone but requirespartnerships and coordination so as to develop multi-sectorial programmes** with other institutionsto tackle gender issues that go **beyond the agricultural sectors** (e.g. rural infrastructures, education, social norms) as well as to develop **gender targeted programs along ECOWAP priority regional initiatives** (diary, rice, women and youth employment, observatory etc.) and along **AU policy priorities** (30% documented land ownership; equal access to finance and mobile banking, “AU Campaign to banish the hand hoe to the museum”, enhanced support to post harvest sector, enhanced women’s empowerment (20% target) etc.

# **Introduction: context and methods**

## Context and objectives of the report

The agricultural sector is central to West African economies: it contributes to about 46% of the total Gross Regional Product of the West Africa economy; it is the main provider of employment as more than 50 % of the population live in rural areas and derive most of their resources from agro-forestry-pastoral and fishing activities. Similarly, 65% of the workers are in the agricultural sector, mainly in the area of production, but also in the processing and marketing of products. As such, the agricultural sector has an important multiplier effect for growth and employment, and for poverty reduction.

In ECOWAS, women represent 46% of the labor force and 50% are employed in agriculture, representing about 45% of the agricultural labor (ILO modelled statistics, 2016). Women empowerment and gender equality have consistently been seen as critical to agricultural production in ECOWAS region. The contributions of women in the region is significant due to the demographics of the rural sector, composition of the agricultural labour force *vis a vis* the cultural gender roles and responsibilities and other cultural expectations of women for household food self-sufficiency, good nutrition and quality of life (UNDP, 2012). However, there are still gaps in women and men’s welfare, right to production resources and the use of natural resources and issues that influence environmental sustainability.

The Regional and National Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIP and NAIPs) were initiated for the entire region as a means to accelerate progress through more clearly elaborated objectives or expected outcomes and budgetary commitment to these. The first stage of implementation of these Plans have taken place in several countries and the second generation plans are being put in place. The need to assess the success of the implementation is called especially because the second generation plans begin to address the challenges of social inclusiveness.

The marginalization of women farmers in the full range of programmes and strategies to promote the desired agricultural transformation goals of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), and especially ECOWAP, constitutes a critical challenge to the positive outcomes indicated in various results frameworks of the CAADP and the ECOWAP. Hence, the need to achieve the recurrent global and regional goals of gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) has been brought to the force via the AU Gender Policy, which takes account of multiple sectoral policy contexts, including the CAADP policy and essentially covers the ECOWAS region.

ECOWAS and its member countries together with several other development partner and institutions, conscious of global inclusive growth treaties, have articulated strategies and funding mechanisms for the empowerment of women in African agriculture by giving some measure of positive gender impacts in specific areas of intervention. Yet, serious gaps still exist between goals and achievements at the collective level, based on the contemporary gender status information in the sector. Also given that systematic gender indicators have been challenging to obtain, a gap exists in informing evolving global and regional policies and strategies from a gender perspective at their inception. All these needs are culminating for more specific and systematic ways of enhancing gender inclusion and outcomes and blending such into progress in the total transformation of the agricultural sector.

In this context, the ECOWAS Commission and FAO implemented a Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) on “Gender Responsive Regional and National Agricultural Investment Plans for meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge in the ECOWAS region” launched in March 2016 during a High Level Ministerial event held during the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The overarching goal of the TCP is to **ensure that agricultural transformation and inclusive agricultural growth fully benefit/empower women in ECOWAS Member countries**. It fully contributes to the ECOWAP/CAADP 2025, the ECOWAS Zero Hunger Initiative, and the ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Investment Plan.

As part of the TCP, it was decided to **evaluate further the situation of women and gender equality** along the various sectors covered by regional policy priorities (notably PRIASAN and gender policy framework) so as to generate a sound gender action plan. To do so, country gender assessment (CGA) were organized in each country and reviewed both policy context and gender mainstreaming across policies and agricultural sectors. The CGAs and regional policies were reviewed systematically to provide the basis for a first publication on the situation of women and gender equality in agriculture in ECOWAS. The draft publication was reviewed at a 4-day workshop in November 2017 by representatives of Ministries of agriculture and Ministries of Gender from the fifteen ECOWAS member countries, and representatives of CSOs including the ECOWAP Gender Group.

The present reports is a summary of such initial detailed publication. The report reviews existing gender mainstreaming capacities and carries out a scoping of existing best practices (success stories in programming) to contribute to generating a systematic and actionable gender-aware programmes as well as reinforcing the tools for monitoring and evaluation. The present publication concentrates on reviewing the situation of women and gender equality across ECOWAS member countries but does not address in-depth the mainstreaming of gender at regional level. The gender audit of regional policies is rather included in the ECOWAS Gender Action Plan on Agriculture that builds on and follows such publication.

## Regional and global policy frameworks for gender-inclusive agriculture

Some key policy entry points for gender-equality in agricultural policies include at international level:

* The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG)** is an overarching global framework that addresses among other goals, prominent issues facing women in agriculture and calls upon States to: fulfil women’s equal rights to economic resources, basic services, technology and financial services, land and other forms of property and natural resources; and double by 2030 the agricultural productivity and incomes of women small-scale food producers including through markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.
* **Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)** adopted by the Committee on World Food Security in 2012 calls upon States to: ensure that women and girls have equal tenure rights and access to land, fisheries and forests, independent of their civil and marital status and to provide policy, legal and organizational frameworks that are non-discriminatory.
* **The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) (2014)** complement the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which, alongside the fishing provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its action point 8 speaks to gender equality in terms of developing SSF strategies and the access of better and appropriate technologies.
* The **Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI)**, endorsed by the Committee for Food Security in October 2014, addresses stakeholders involved in, benefitting from, and acted by investments in agriculture and food systems. It provides a series of principles for responsible investment, including principle 3 targeted for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The AU is also strongly committed to gender equality in agriculture:

* The **Malabo Declaration** on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods” adopted by the AU Summit in June 2014 calls for deliberate and targeted public support for women to participate and directly benefit from the growth and transformation opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods. It hence includes a gender provision on the preferential entry and participation by women and youth in gainful and attractive agribusiness (AU, 2014).
* **The African Union *Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa* (F&G) /AU Declaration (2009)** for the implementation of the AU Land Policy Initiative (LPI) which calls for removal of age-old rigidities in traditional structures and systems which tend to discriminate against women and the youth. The LPI targets include “twenty member states developing land policies and adopting implementation tools that enhance women’s secure access to land” over a specified time period; Recognition of the legitimacy of Africa’s customary land rights and institutions by 2020. The LPI Strategic Plan (2012 – 2016) has among its objectives, the enhancement and dissemination of knowledge on women’s land rights.
* The **Declaration on 2015 Year of women’s empowerment and development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063** was adopted in 2015 and sets an ambitious agenda to enhance women’s contribution and benefit from formal agriculture and agribusiness value chains. The Declaration calls upon member States, to: increase mechanization and technological innovation; intensify women’s financial inclusion in agribusiness and empower them with knowledge and skills to use modern technologies; enforce women’s rights to productive assets including land and their access to public procurement processes in agribusiness. It also calls upon financial institutions to have a minimum quota of 50% to finance women’s enterprises to grow from micro to macro businesses.
* The declaration of 2016 as “**Africa Year of Human Rights, in particular, with focus on the Rights of Women**” specifically emphasizes the rights of poor women to food, land and social protection as part and parcel of their human rights.
* **Addis Ababa Declaration on Strengthening the African Family for Inclusive Development in Africa** (May 2014) committed to “develop progressive programmes for scaling up and sustaining national integrated systems of social protection to benefit families as part of the post-2015 development framework in Africa”.
* In June 2018, the **new AU Gender Strategy 2017-2027** was adopted by the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (STC-GEWE). It succeeds the AU Gender Policy 2009 and takes cognizance of the various advancements related to gender commitments, including the SDGs adopted in 2015.Rural women are a priorty targets and the strategy stresses the need to enhance women economic empowerment with specific attention to education, financial inclusion, labor saving technology and digital revolution. In addition, it emphasizes the need to mainstream gender in all key AU flagship initiatives
* The **Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)** Results Framework’s Outcome 1.2 on “Sustained inclusive agriculture growth” recognizes the potential contribution of women; and Outcome 2 proposes “Systemic capacity for expanding women and youth opportunities in inclusive agricultural growth and for meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge”
* The launch of the **African Union Campaign to confine the hand-held hoe to the museum**, during the African Unit Summit in June 2015 in Johannesburg, highlighted the importance of modern technologies and innovations for unleashing the full potential of women to contributing to agricultural growth and transformation on the continent and in the ECOWAS region.

ECOWAS is also strongly committed to gender through:

* Article 63 of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty that calls on member States **“to formulate, harmonize, coordinate and implement the appropriate policies and mechanisms to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of women.”**
* The ECOWAS Vision 2020 adopted in June 2010 that strives for “**an inclusive society achieved through human capital development and empowerment offering a peaceful and healthy environment where women, children and youths thrive and have equal opportunities** to excel and have equitable access to resources for human and social development”.
* The **additional act relative to gender equality for sustainable development adopted in 2015** that includes among others a chapter 12 on agriculture and sustainable development, including among others women access to productive resources (including land, water, credit etc.), extension and technology, transport, competitiveness, support to participation to value chains and markets, gender integration in food security and resilience mechanisms, entrepreneurship, decent work, micro finance technology, and active participation in decision making.
* The Regional Partnership Pact for the Implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP 2025 adopted during the conference “ECOWAP+10 and Prospects for 2025” held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 2015 for the 10-year review of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) that made commitments to: “**improve the governance of agricultural policy by strengthening compliance with the principles of gender equality and equity, and accountability”.**
* The **ECOWAP/CAADP Zero Hunger Initiative** and the **ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Investment Plan that** has a gender-specific Outcome 1 for “Gender responsive and youth oriented formulation, financing, implementation and monitoring of NAIPs”. The updated RAIPFSN (RAIP-2) has even more gender targets and outcomes.

## Conceptual framework for gender-inclusive agriculture and organization of report

The recent United Nations Secretary General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment report (2017) identified several key drivers of women’s economic empowerment (WEE), which are consistent with the diagram in Figure 1 and also speak to all the strategic objectives of Agenda 2025. The nexus between (i) personal empowerment or agency *(participation in WEE related decision-making, policy and programme design),* (ii) creating the enabling environment for women’s economic empowerment *(policies, legal framework and long term commitment)*, (iii) equal opportunities *(provision of equitable access to resources and employment opportunities)* and (iv) social transformation *(community and household level support for women’s economic empowerment)* are therefore key considerations for a holistic approach to women’s economic empowerment. This framework has been adopted to conceptualize GEWE in the ECOWAS Agenda 2025.

Figure 1 UNWomen’s Preconditions of women’s economic empowerment

Figure 2 demonstrates linkages between ECOWAP/ RAIPFSN (left column) and GEWE conditions (right column). The middle column represents the key gender conditions that need to be addressed to fully mainstream and achieve GEWE within RAIPFSN. The report will therefore seek to review the current status of GEWE in ECOWAS along such priority issues that forms the basis for the draft ECOWAS Gender Action Plan on Agriculture (GAP).

Figure 2 Conceptual Linkage of RAIPFNS and the GEWE framework



The Outlook is organized according to this framework and reviews systematically gender status and best practices along RAIPFSN and GEWE major outcomes and gender conditions:

* **Section 2: Quality of life, infrastructure and cultural issues (GEWE pillar 3):** this section reviews issues that are beyond the agricultural sectors but constrains women empowerment in agriculture. The section reviews status of **rural infrastructure** such as roads, energy, transportation, water and sanitation and their implications on women status and gender issues. It also reviews the issues of social norms and women empowerment within the households, with its implications on gender roles, time constrains, decision making
* **Section 3 to 5: Economic Empowerment (GEWE pillar 1, SO1 to SO3)**
	1. Section 6 deals with women's access to **productive resources and services** (SO1): assesses gender inequalities in the different productive sectors (agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishing) and deals with unequal access to productive resources and services including land, water, technology, research and innovation, and employment, etc.
	2. Section 7 addresses **access to economic opportunities along value chains** (SO2), including access to post-harvest management, value chains and markets
	3. Section 8 assesses gender inequalities in terms of **food security, nutrition and resilience** (SO 3), also examining access to resilience mechanisms and social protections
* **Section 6: Enabling Environment (SO4):**
	1. Section 9.1 discusses **the voice of women and their influence** through their participation in collective organizations and the inclusion in political processes and institutions
	2. Sections 9.2 to 9.5 examine how gender is mainstreamed and reflected in policy, legal and institutional frameworks, assess gender resources through government budgeting and rural finance, and finally assess gender institutional capacities and accountability for gender, including data availability
	3. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the major constrains to achieve GEWE in RAIPFSN and provides recommendations for the gender action plan in agriculture.

# **Overview of general gender inequality and social transformations: women quality of life in rural areas and empowerment issues in the ECOWAS region**

## Gender inequality indexes

The African Human Development Report (2016) provides the recent trends in overall quality of life in the region, indicated by the overall human development index status (HDI) with ECOWAS achieving the value of 0.461, a 27.76 percent increase between 1994-2014 (UNDP, 2016). However, the Gender Development Index, an indicator of the ratio of female to male HDI in 2015 was 0.81 in the ECOWAS, lowest in the entire African region whose average was 0.87. As a result, while overall HDI in the countries are generally below the half-mark point, the relative figures for women and men even show some disparity in all the countries (Figure 3). The Gender Inequality Index (GII) annually compiled by the World Economic Forum was analyzed in the Africa Human Development Report. There is negative correlation between GII and HDI, meaning that the countries with the highest/lowest GII have the lowest/highest HDI (Figure 4). Specific components of the HDI (Life expectancy, expected years of schooling, gross national income per capita (GNI)) were also assessed and found to have some of the lowest values in the African regions, with clear gender differentials skewed against women (UNDP, 2016). Rural dwellers and so, predominantly women farmers, are worse off compared to urban counterpart.

Figure 3 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX OF MALES AND FEMALES IN ECOWAS COUNTRIES (2016)

*Source: UNDP, 2016*

Figure 4 CORRELATION OF GENDER INEQUALITY WITH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN ECOWAS

*Source: UNDP, 2016*

## Rural infrastructures, services, technology and women’s time constrains

Women in rural areas in the region tend to lack access to essential infrastructure and services to support basic welfare and productive activities, such as roads, water, sanitation, market facilities, information, etc.

The percentage of population who have access to improved drinking water sources and improved sanitation facilities in SSA is reported at 57 percent and 28 percent, respectively, for rural areas compared to 87 percent and 51 percent, respectively, for urban areas (IFAD, 2016). We can see wide variations across countries, with western Africa faring better than many central and eastern African countries, with generally rates above 60% in many rural areas (Pesche D., Losch B., Imbernon J. (Eds), 2016). However, on average, still 21% of household (HH) need over 30 min to access drinking water, ranging from 8% in Mali to 48% in Niger (Figure 6). Such issues are likely to concern rural population. 66% of the population still cook using fuelwood, meaning they do not have access to electricity, gaz or the required equipment to cook with it. Figure go from 36% in Ghana up to 86% in Niger (Figure 5).

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| Figure 5 Share of population cooking with fuelwood | Figure 6 % HH with water access more than 30 min in 2010-2017 |

*Source: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) accessed in World Bank gender database*

Such difficult access to water and energy have **strong implications on women’s work burden**. Indeed, most countries report that women are responsible to collect water and fuelwood for both household consumption and animal consumption. In western Africa, studies showed that rural women spend up to two to 4 hours a day on such tasks, mostly walking and carrying water and fuelwood on their heads. One estimate suggests that some 40 billion hours a year are spent collecting water in sub-Saharan Africa—a year’s labour for the entire workforce of France (UN women, 2015). For instance, in Mozambique, rural Senegal, and Uganda, women spend on average 15–17 hours per week collecting water (AfDB, 2014). Sometimes, water is accessible but the water pump is difficult to use for women (reported in Benin CGA). Therefore, the issue of accessibility of water to household should be considered, given the negative impact on productive use of time in searching for water.

Despite its large representation in agricultural labour force, the **use of labour saving technologies is also very low** in SSA compounding the burden of rural women farmers who usually even have less access to such technology (see also 3.3 on technology). In addition, women have low access to rural infrastructures to process food conveniently as well as cooking facilities and equipment to prepare food in a faster way.

## Women empowerment and gender based violence within household

Statistics show **limited participation of women to household decision making**. On average, in the period 2011-2017, only 43% of women participate in decision making regarding major household purchase and 52% in decision making on their own visit to family, friends and relatives. (Figure 7). Situation varies across countries and women participation in household purchase remain around 20% in Mali, Burkina, Niger and Senegal while it is above 70% in Ghana and Liberia. Most countries saw a progress in women participation in household purchase from the period 2003-2010 to the period 2011-2017, with notably a sharp increase in Nigeria and Ghana.

Figure 7 Women participation in various decision in the households

*Source: Demographic Health Surveys, accessed from World Bank gender database*

In addition, women’s **low status is closely connected to gender based violence. Socially accepted gender based violence** limits women empowerment. The analysis of data from 32 AU countries in the period 2011-17 show the following (see Figure 8 and Figure 9):

* 52% of ECOWAS women (46% of AU women) find it **normal that husband shall beat their wives**/partner for any of 5 standardized reasons that include burning food, arguing, neglecting children, refuses sex or goes out without permission.
* Social acceptance of domestic violence depends on **the reasons for beating the spouse with variations across regions**. It is the lowest regarding burning of food (18% in Western Africa) whereas it appears the highest regarding neglect of children (36% for west Africa). West Africa has the highest level of acceptance for GBV in case of disagreement between husband and wife (36%).
* Social acceptance of such domestic violence **has significantly decreased** since 2003-2010
* **Some countries have the lowest social acceptance of GBV with also a sharp decrease since 2003 (**around 20% in Benin, Togo and Ghana around 27%, with between 30 to 40% decrease for Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

Such relatively accepted gender violence also appears pervasive along value chain and enterprises. A recent article highlighted that “sexual violence and harassment among commercial agricultural workers is widespread, perhaps even pervasive, throughout the world.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| Figure 8 Women acceptance of domestic violence in households | Figure 9 Evolution of women acceptance of domestic violence from 2003-10 till 2011-17 |
| *Source: Author’s calculations from Demographic and health household surveys accessed through World Bank gender database, extracting latest data from 2010-17 dataset* |

Regarding the agricultural sectors, most CGAs indicate that, traditionally, **agricultural holdings are managed and operated by the head of the household who is mostly a male who often adopts traditional patriarchal management**, taking all major decisions, with implications on women economic empowerment:

* In sub-Saharan Africa, 21 % of women against 10% of men are **employed as contributing family workers (generally, women are employed as contributing family workers 2 to 3 times more** than men in all regions, according to ILO statistics).
* Women are **not freely available to spend their income and sell their products**. For instance, the personal livestock and productive activities of women are not considered fully their own. Livestock belonging to women is often also considered a household saving and coping mechanisms that is first sold in case of crisis
* Women face **mobility constrains** as they often cannot decide alone to go out of the house and attend trainings, participate to producers’ organizations or undertake specific activities
* The **distribution of productive and reproductive tasks is often unfavorable to women who face a “triple work burden”.** In addition to their unpaid contribution to family farm, theyspend a major share of their time on unpaid care work within the household, or community care work, which can limit their productive activities and put their health and care capacities at risk(AfDB, 2014; FAO; 2015). Time survey usually show women’s **workdays are up to 50 % longer** than men’s, making up to 15-16 hours a day in rural developing countries

**Women who are head of the households usually enjoy more decision making power in the household and the farm. A growing number of households are headed by women.** Africa-wide, 26% of all households are currently headed by women, comprising 21% of Africa’s population, from 43% in southern Africa down to around 20% in western Africa (world bank 2015). In addition, **intra-household survey have found that decision-making is more complex,** with different household members, including women, being responsible for different aspects of the operation of the farm. Therefore, looking only at the sex of the household head may underestimate women’s role in decision-making (FAO, 2015a).

Low status of women at household level notably relates to **prevailing patriarchal norms, sex-discriminatory legal framework as well as weak women economic empowerment**.

* **Patriarchal norms[[2]](#footnote-2)** tend to prevail in African regions and people consider that “property, residence, and descent, as well as decision-making regarding most areas of life are domain of men” (AUC, 2018b). Patriarchy shape gender roles and responsibilities, imposing on women a heavy workload and low participation in household decision-making. The **responsibility of the head of household is usually attributed to men,** regardless of the duties and responsibilities devolved to women. In 2014, “all 51 national reviews on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action submitted to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) recognized that conservative gender norms, based on long-standing stereotypes, continue to prevent the full realization of women rights on the continent” (UNDP, 2016). “According to the 2015 Afrobarometer survey, one quarter of Africans do not embrace the concept of gender equality, i.e. they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fundamental notion of equal rights between men” (UNDP, 2016)
* Despite progress in removing gender discrimination in legal framework, **patriarchal management remains often recognized in legal framework that contribute to reinforce women’s low status**. Close to half of all sub-Saharan African countries designate the husband as head of the household, restricting the legal status of married women. Up to 30 percent of legal frameworks in SSA restrict married women’s exercise of trades and professions (AfDB, 2014). Some also still require women to seek men’s approval to open a bank account.
* **Women’s participation in decision making is closely connected to gender gaps in productive resources,** ownership and tenure rights, including land (see section on land)

## Examples of approaches to address social norms & enhance rural context for women

The AU and several countries are trying to implement gender transformative approaches that can address **social norms** and encourage more gender balanced intra-household dynamics **with positive impacts on productive activities.** Different possible entry points can be used to alleviate rural women’s constrains and enhance their empowerment at household level: enhancing rural infrastructures and services; conducting time use surveys and intra-household surveys to bring visibility to such issues; promoting household and community dialogue; education and media to promote social transformations; working on legal frameworks and empower civil society organization to advocate for change; etc. (see example in Box 1)

Box 1: Examples of household and community approaches to empower women at household level, contributing to higher decision making level and reduced time constrains

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| **FAO’s Dimitra radio listeners clubs** have proven effective to support dialogue between men and women on various topics, including time constrains, leading to changes in attitude and behavior. Based on community mobilization, dialogue and collective action, the Dimitra Clubs encourage informal self-help groups of rural men and women to improve their livelihood systems and be the driving force of their own development. These Clubs are efficient in promoting the participation and influence of the most vulnerable women and youth, in community life and local decision-making. They also have an outstanding impact in sustaining peace and tackling issues at the root causes of gender-based discrimination and violence. Food and nutrition security interventions influence gender equality and peace outcomes when combined with measures that strengthen agency and collective action among women, men and excluded population groups. *There are 3 500 Dimitra Clubs in rural communities in Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger, Ghana, and Senegal, accounting for 105,000 members (two thirds are women). It is estimated that 2.5 million rural people are positively impacted by the clubs. Today, 30 FAO-executed programs/projects in sub-Saharan Africa use the approach for achieving their own objectives (FAO, 2015b).* **Household Methodologies** rely on the analysis of intra-household dynamics and the construction of shared vision of the future to help men and women in the household to recognize gender inequalities, their impacts on household incomes, and how the household members could enjoy more gender equal relationships. To date, more than 100,000 people have benefited from this methodology in IFAD-supported programs in Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda (IFAD, 2017). Participants report impacts on overall livelihoods and the influence and access of household members to these resources, improving the sustainability and resilience of their livelihoods to climate change and other shocks. **Participatory decision-making and shared workloads increase agricultural productivity, and household members (both men and women) can engage in value chains**. Men become more involved in household chores, women have more say in household decision-making, and there is more transparency in the use of resources and benefits. Food and nutrition security and incomes are improved, joint investments in land and business are undertaken, school attendance of children increases and gender-based violence and alcohol consumption are reduced (FAO, 2018). **Mali developed a detailed legal status for family farm**, recognizing that the head of the farm can be male or female and providing status for the spouse and contributing family workers. However, only one head is recognized and spouses are not allowed to form a jointly operated farm.**Empowering collective organizations** to integrate such concerns and promote social and legal transformations appear key and have been at the heart of **banana link gender strategy**. Unions are working with women members to make them realize that domestic violence is a matter for the police; that it is not a private problem.The GSARS (Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics) initiative has developed **guidelines to support countries to collect sex-disaggregated** data in their national surveys. It includes approaches to better assess women participation to decision making and provides methods to develop time use surveys (GSARS, 2017)  |

# **Sustainable access and management of natural resources**

Women are known to have less access to productive resources in agriculture, including land, credit, extension services and technological inputs (FAO, 2011). In relation to natural resource exploitation, new opportunities in the forestry sub-sector also pose some challenges to women.In spite of many efforts at national and regional levels, women’s access to resources and knowledge are still constrained by rigid socio-cultural and gender-insensitive policy environments of implementation and weak institutional capacities for empowering women for change.

## Access and use of land and water resources

### Land rights

According to FAO[[3]](#footnote-3), women comprise only 8.4 percent of agricultural landholders in Burkina Faso, 50.5 percent in Cape Verde, 10.1 percent in Cote d’Ivoire, 8.3 percent in Gambia, 5.7 percent in Guinea, 3.1 percent in Mali, 10 percent in Nigeria, and 9.1 percent in Senegal. In addition, seven countries reported in their country gender assessment (CGA) that women own limited area of land then men (Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cap Verde), owning between 7% of the total surface in Nigeria, 14% in Senegal and Mali, 20% in Togo to 24% in Ghana. The average size of land managed by women is between 50% to 3 times less than men in a sample of 6 countries (Table 1). In addition, several country reports showed that **quality of land held are lower for women and that land is sometimes far away from the household.** Women own much smaller plots, more fragmented and less fertile than men which impacts their possibility to engage in specific crop & technology.

Apart from less access and use of land, 7 countries reported that women have **less access to land title/full ownership** (Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Benin, Nigeria, Niger, Guinea Conakry, Gambia). Only 10% of women have titled land in Nigeria, with wide lower/higher variability across ecologies. **CGA reports show that in many countries, women have temporary tenure rights** under community arrangements (FAO; 2012b). **User rights** depend on male relatives and traditional authorities and can be withdrawn at any time, for example by divorce or widowhood. This lack of tenure security is a barrier to access to training, financing and innovation as well as the implementation of land conservation practices requiring investments over time.

Table 1 Average land size for men and women in a few ECOWAS countries

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| **Country** | **Average land for women (ha)** | **Average land for men (ha)** | **Source** |
| Burkina Faso | 0.88 | 1.23 | RNA 2006-10 |
| Ghana | Men still hold 3.2 times more medium farmland and 8.1 time more of large land- holdings than women. Only 10.8% of farms larger than 5 acres are owned by women |
| Togo | 2.19ha (for FHH) | 4,35 ha (MHH) | RNA 2013 |
| Senegal | 0.4 | 1.3 | DAPS 2015  |
| Mali | 0.6 | 1.7 | ASS 2014 |
| Niger | 2.29 | 3.84 | LSMS-2011 |
| Nigeria | 0.56 | 2.44 | LSMS 2010 |
| Cape Verde | 10 for FHH | 14 for MHH | RNA 2015 |

*Source: Analysis of CGA reports, 2017*

Despite progressive trends in terms of gender equal legal systems, customary rights usually prevail upon legal rights (reported by Togo, Benin, Liberia, Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde). **Patrilineal system** prevails, where women scarcely inherit land (reported by 10 countries). When women do inherit, there are usually restrictions to prevent the women inheriting such land as it would be considered lost to the family. **Prejudice and traditional beliefs** are not always conducive to women ownership of land. For instance, it is often considered customary for men to own and it is feared that women ownership of land will give them too much power.

### Improved access and management of water, including irrigation

Generally, it is reported that women and female headed households have less access to irrigated land. Female headed households without male adult have almost 3 times less access to irrigation than households with both female and male adults in Niger and 40% less in Ghana (Figure 10). Most countries agricultural programmes have yet to explore the gender issues in irrigation systems, although some major activities of women farmers involve considerable use of water beds requiring irrigation channels to feed vegetable/horticulture farms. In the horticulture farming system, women use traditional irrigation systems which have been productive to certain extent (Fadama system in Nigeria). Irrigation schemes in most countries tend to be large-scale projects serviced by dams with high technologies and land use defined by proximity, particular technologies, knowledge and practice for progressive farmers. As a result, access to such project becomes discriminatory to women (Cape Verde, CGA).

Figure 10 Share of Crops farms with irrigation systems among female, male and mixed households[[4]](#footnote-4) (hh)

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

### Efforts and good practices

Several countries have made efforts to enhance women access to natural resources (see Box 2). Good practices include:

* working both on enhancing evidence and monitoring of gender issues in land;
* adopting gender specific targets in line with AU commitments for women to obtain 30% of documented land rights,
* promoting decentralized and gender inclusive land and water governance,
* improved legal framework articulated with prevailing customary frameworks,
* enhancing women voice and agency and supporting sensitization and dialogue programs to transform negative norms and customs preventing women access to land

Box 2 Good practices to enhance women access to land and water

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| **In Ghana**, civil society played a strong role through the Ghana Women's Manifesto, which led to gender mainstreaming in the Land Administration Project (PAL); the PAL has developed a gender mainstreaming strategy. The Ghana Land Bill contains gender and spousal provisions to ensure gender equality and the protection of women and vulnerable persons; prohibits discriminatory land allocation, encourages joint registration, and restricts the transfer of land by spouses without the consent of the spouse; The land strategy includes actions to raise awareness of women at the formal and customary level through dialogue. Collection of sex disaggregated data is institutionalized at the Land Commission with up-to- date data available on land registration across the country.**In Mali**, the Agricultural Land Law includes the decentralization of land management to local land institutions with which traditional authorities must "cooperate". The benefits granted to women, youth and vulnerable groups are: (i) the recognition of collective and individual rights, (ii) the granting of 15% of lands managed by the State or Local Authorities and (iii) the increase of women’s representation in land commissions,.**In Niger, the FAO-Dimitra Clubs** approach promotes greater participation of rural women and men using dialogue and communication. As a result of debates that began in their listeners’ club, the women of Banizoumbou now have secure access to a large plot of land for 99 years. The debates focused on how to develop local strategies to give women access to land. The debate on the community radio station enabled the women to share their views and suggest solutions: granting women land, with a legal document; purchasing land; land confiscation by local authorities for community purposes; or lending land to individuals or groups on a long-term basis. This initiative has attracted other investors. |

## Participation and productivity in crop, animal production, forestry, and fishery production

Virtually all CGAs reported that women are usually engaged into three major activities; i) they first contribute on the family farm diverse activities, with often clear division of tasks between men and women; secondly, ii) they are most often responsible for household garden (including nearby plots and small livestock) that notably contributes to household food security and process and prepare food for the household; iii), they have their own income generating activities that can be based on the second activity or based on additional personal land, animals and assets.

### Crop production and productivity

Empirical evidence suggests that **women’s deficits in agricultural productivity** lie between 20 and 30% in the SSA region (AfDB, 2016a). Such **lower productivity comes notably from gender gaps** in land ownership, access to credit and productive farm inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and farming tools, support from extension services, and access to markets and other factors essential to their productivity (World Bank, 2014).

Most women have their own production systems and tend to be engaged in subsistence farming, roots and tubers, vegetables and condiments for household needs whereas men are generally more involved in commercial and perennial crops. In addition, women will participate to family farm production as contributing family workers, with gender specific share of tasks. Women support labor-intensive tasks (planting, weeding, harvesting, processing, local and bulk marketing) while men clean, develop and prepare land and manage farms. Women are also often responsible for household garden that notably contributes to household food security and process and prepare food for the household.

### Animal production

There is first a clear discrimination regarding ownership of animals by men and women. Majority of men in the livestock sub-sector are engaged in the production of both small ruminants (sheep and goats) and large livestock like cattle. Women are into poultry, pigs, small ruminant production (reported in all countries).

In addition, as reported in Togo, female-headed households own much less animal stock than male-headed ones, with respect to each animal type. In a sample of 4 ECOWAS countries, female headed households without male adults have almost three times less animals than mixed households in Niger, Nigeria and Ghana while the difference is smaller in Sierra Leone where households have much less animals (Figure 11). In a sample of 7 countries, 45% of female headed households without male are involved in livestock production against 55% of mixed households (Figure 12).

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| Figure 11 Gender gaps in livestock assets by female, male and mixed household4 [tropical livestock unit[[5]](#footnote-5)] | Figure 12 Share of farm hhs involved in livestock production among female, male and mixed HH4 [%] |
| *Source:* FAO, Rural Livelihoods Information System, Statistics Division, September 2018, Rome |

In addition to taking care of their own small animals, women are involved in husbandry of household/spouse’s large animals. There is a clear gender differentiations of tasks in animal husbandry within the family farm. Men are usually responsible for bringing the animals to pasture, whereas women are responsible for feeding them with fodder and household waste, provide water and other care services and process animal products, notably dairy milk and its transformation into cheese, meat and skin processing (Togo, Guinea Conakry and Bissau, Senegal, Gambia). Decision-making regarding the sale of animals is taken by men in most countries, even when the livestock is owned by women (Guinea Conakry, Togo, Gambia, Mali (except Bambara), and Senegal).

Livestock entrepreneurship is therefore low among women. It is because livestock assets of women are rarely regarded as productive assets, they are rather held to sustain families’ incomes and nutrition. Although women earn income from processing of livestock products, the products and income are mainly used to support household food needs, as they are rarely seen as assets to hold for the future. Women are sometimes traditionally forbidden to be involved in animal slaughtering and processing of fresh meat. Yet, selling meat is more profitable than selling live animals.

### Forestry

Currently, women's participation in agroforestry and plantations is low, mainly due to lack of land ownership and / or access to forest land, which often belongs to the community or government (Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo). Women and men have distinct roles within forest production systems. In Senegal, for example, women are poorly represented in cashew nut production due to a problem of access to forest land, but they are involved in harvesting, processing and selling.

On the other hand, women tend to dominate the valorization of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (Gambia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, etc.). In Burkina, women represent 90% of those engaged in the exploitation of NTFPs. Women most often participate in unpaid collection activities for domestic purposes. However, there is an increase in the commercial use of these resources. For example, shea butter production, the valorization of baobab seed extracts, hibiscus fruit beverages, the export of raffia handmade products are gaining ground and are dominated by women. Although NWFPs are a traditionally reserved area for women, access to them becomes increasingly compromised as these products become more commercial. Also, the rights of women to collect and use such NTFPs are often insufficiently recognized; in addition, women are often insufficiently involved in the governance of forest resources. Thus, women may lose access to these NTFPs and sources of income when such forest are exploited or protected.

### Fisheries

All in all, women represent 50% or more of the fishery employment in Western Africa, much more than in northern and eastern Africa (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Male and female employment in fishery and aquaculture



Source: NEPAD, AU, 2016

**Gender role differentiation** is observed in all countries:

* Men tend to control the artisanal fishing and own the technology. However, some countries reported few women involved in artisanal fishery (Guinee Conakry) with women owning fishing boats and hiring migrant men to fish for them. In West Africa, the so called “Fish Mamas” play a major role: they usually own capital and are directly and vigorously involved in the coordination of the fisheries chain, from production to the sale of fish.
* Women **mostly predominate in fish processing**, usually by smoking. For instance, sixty percent of fish-smoking is done by women in Nigeria. When fish preservation occurs in other ways through cold storage, women are not prominent in this. However, women are the main retailers of frozen fish in larger cities. Cold storage remains low in rural areas because of power/energy scarcity.
* Women in the fish smoking activities still use **traditional methods** because they lack the technologies for large volume smoking as well as to prolong shelf life. **Poor processing technology** contribute to deforestation and climate change, and create hazards from direct heat and smoke. In addition, traditional equipment used in both activities is inefficient and contributes heavily to post-harvest losses. Finally, it tends to generate unsafe products, which have health impact and is regulated by EU importers. For example, Côte d'Ivoire lost US$ 1.6 million between 2006 and 2011 due to a self-ban from export.
* The fisheries value chain has begun to evolve especially with introduction of aquaculture fisheries by women and youth.
* Women dominate the base of the fisheries value chain, they lose the benefits of value addition at the higher nodes of the value chain. When fisheries products enter the agro--trade system, the businesses are owned by males.

### Review of good practices in crop, livestock, forestry, and fishery sectors

Several efforts can be noted across the region to enhance women participation in and benefits from the various sectors. Such efforts combine integration of specific gender policies and quota for women participation, enhanced gender sensitive monitoring and data, enhanced voice of women and their participation to policy dialogue and gender targeted initiatives to respond to women specific issues and constrains (see Box 3).

Box 3 Good practices to enhance gender consideration in crop, livestock, lorestry and fishery sectors

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| **Ghana** has an affirmative action program where men and women are benefitting from all crop interventions, with women forming 40 per cent of beneficiaries. The Livestock Production Directorate mainstreams gender and includes an affirmative action of 30 per cent of women beneficiaries.**In Niger,** the government seeks to improve women’s access to livestock assets & extension services to enhance resilience. Data show increase in the animals owned by women over the year. **Green wall initiative for the Sahara and gender activities in Nigeria:** Launched in 2007, this initiative aims to restore Africa’s degraded landscapes and halt desertification through various inter-connected projects on tree planting and land restauration in more than 20 countries across Africa’s Sahel region. In Nigeria, a gender component was developed and includes women empowerment and capacity building to construct energy efficient cook stoves from local materials to reduce health hazards associated with the burning of biomass and save the vegetation from degradation. **In Senegal**, fisheries employ about 15% of the population and supply 70% of food intake. The Government mainstreamed gender in its strategy with several support activities, including the creation of a national network of women fishers in Senegal (REFEPAS) in 2010, capacity development and support to women participation in international and regional fair trade. They have developed specific infrastructures for production and fish processing, established a credit line for women fishers, and supported the development of aquaculture for women in Louga in collaboration with COMFISH et Fish for Live.The African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations (CAOPA) was initiated by members of Mauritania, Senegal, and Guinea Conakry. In November 2012, they organized a conference in Côte d’Ivoire on the theme **“Improving the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security: the role of women”.**CAOPA, in partnership with ICSF (International Collective in Support of Fishworkers), followed this conference by a day of discussions on **“Women in African small scale fisheries: West Africa fish trade issues”.**The workshop allowed women to make robust proposals to enhance gender considerations in fish trade. |

## Access to technologies, innovations and extension

**Productive inputs**

Data from Nigeria’s 2015/16 General Household Survey Panel Report revealed that the percentage of plots that use fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and animal traction is significantly less for female-headed households (25.4%, 5.1%, 17% and 3% respectively) than for male headed households (50%, 22.6%, 32% and 23.7% respectively). In Senegal, 48.5% of women against 70.5% of male used animal draught power, meanwhile 49% of women against 26% of men use manual equipment. In Niger and Nigeria, female headed households without male adult have 9 time less access to mechanical equipment (Figure 14). In a sample of 5 ECOWAS countries, use of chemicals is 50% more frequent in mixed households than in female headed households without male (**Figure 15**).

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| Figure 14: % households using mechanical equipment among female, male and mixed households[[6]](#footnote-6) (hh) | **Figure 15: % households using chemicals among female, male and mixed households (hh)** |
| *Source: FAO, Rural Livelihoods Information System, Statistics Division, September 2018, Rome* |

**Access to extension and research to promote technology**

All ECOWAS countries have reported that **women have lower access to technology and extension services** (Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso etc.). Burkina Faso reports that only 26% of beneficiaries are women. In Ghana, 12 % of MHH against 2% of FHH had received extension visits. In MHH that were targeted, only 2% of female spouses had received such extension (Croppenstedt, Goldstein, Rosas, 2013). In Nigeria, female headed households without any male adults receive on average six times less extension services than mixed households while there is little difference in Niger (LSMS-data 2016 and 2014).

In addition, countries in the ECOWAS region have less focus on research and technology for women dominated activities. For instance, research agendas are often less concerned with women’s crops, rather they are benefiting cash crops such as cereals and plantation systems. Women-intensive cropping systems as well as livestock (small ruminants, poultry) and their processing have benefited less from technological research. Key areas of interest for agricultural mechanization include rice and horticultures with regards to improvement of technologies for seeds, planting and harvesting, and preservation of fresh produce.

Other challenges in providing technology for women is the low access to training mainly due to poor information and communication systems, and time poverty of women caused by domestic work burdens. In general, intermediate technologies that are more gender friendly are in short supply. Information and Communication Technology-based knowledge may be discriminatory for women as they usually have less access to such technology and are less literate (Benin). There is therefore disparity in access and use of different farm technologies between women and men.

In addition, there is a **limited number of women among agricultural extension workers**, which can hamper women’s full access to such services due to cultural factors and social norms. A study by FAO from 1988-89 in 97 countries showed that only 5% of extension resources were directed at women and 15% of extension personnel were women. More recent assessment from the World Wide Extension Study and FAO CGAs show that women represented from 5-7% in Senegal, Mali, 12.6% in Togo to 30% of field staff in Ghana, (GFRAS, 2013- Table 2 below)

Table 2: Women as % of public extension staff in selected countries (2012)

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| **Country**  | **Senior management staff**  | **Subject matter specialists**  | **Field staff**  |
| Senegal (CGA) |   |   | 5.5 |
| Mali  | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Togo (CGA) |   |   | 12.6 |
| Ghana  | 26 | 23 | 29 |

*Source: Data reported 2012 from Worldwide Extension Study and compiled in GFRAS, 2013 plus inputs from CGAs as indicated*

The following good practices (Box 4) include the setting of quota and gender targeting systems in extension services, specific services for women, increased voice and participation of women in various activities and increased understanding of gender issues at household levels.

Box 4 Good practices in gender mainstreaming in extension and research

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| **Benin’s CARDER**: Training are organized for field officers who are equipped with diagnostic tools reporting formats and gender targets (50% women covered). is planned. However, implementation has been hampered by insufficient financial and material support and thus, low population coverage was achieved (around 20% of targeted women). Despite the low achievement, the model tcan be improved and upscaled.**Nigeria**: WIA (Women in Agriculture) programme is a unit that was created within the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP) as the main implementation platforms for key programmes since 1987. WIA develops specialized extension services to women farmers in Nigeria. This was in recognition of the important role played by women farmers in agricultural activities. The critique of WIA technology packages may be that they tend to reinforce existing gender roles and differentiations rather than promoting gender transformative actions blurring existing disparities. The Community-based Development programmes (CBDD) through Village and Community Development Associations have been able to reach more women with development information.**ROPPA recently reviewed advisory services** offered by its members. It showed that major farmer based support systems to female farmers exist in 5 countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, and Benin), and that partially functional farmer systems or systems under development exist in 4 countries (Niger, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana). In Senegal, The Federation des ONGs du Senegal (FONGS) initiated a family farm monitoring system which provides advisory services. CNCR collaborated with FONGS to extend it to its various national producer organizations platforms. ‘The facilitator engages 2000 families in a participatory diagnosis to analyze the different livelihood strategies and see how the family is managing to ensure food security. Due attention is paid to gender by involving both men and women in this process and identifying their specific roles and responsibilities. Joint dialogue with women and men on future options promotes more participatory decision making (Roppa,2017b; CNCR. 2014). Such system is based on household methodology approaches that have also been widely implemented by IFAD (see Box 1 and IFAD, 2017). This system also enhance knowledge and recommendations on gender issues that were incorporated in national report (see section 6.2) |

## Sustainability and Adaption to climate change

Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change, not only because of its climate variability across the ecologies, but also because many African communities depend on natural ressources for income and employment and they lack the capacity to respond or adapt to the impacts of climate change. Almost all country reports state that **women are specifically vulnerable to climate change, environmental degradation** **and disasters** (CGAs of Ghana, Sierra Leone, Niger, Togo, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia), with:

* Increased water and fuel scarcity have direct impact on time spent in domestic chores while women firewood harvesting influences climate change.
* Deforestation reduces income of women in terms of non-wood forest product due to greater difficulties to find additional income in harvesting of forestry products when forest protection measures are in place.
* Women are more affected by increased land scarcity, desertification, exacerbating soil degradation as they have usually less access to land and even lesser access when land scarcity increases.
* Climate change affects cropping calendar and can increase labour constraints for women (GACSA practice in brief 2).
* A few CGA reports pointed out that disasters affect women more than men and climate change has increased frequency of disastrous events (Gambia, Liberia, Burkina Faso). Women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die during a disaster (UNDP, 2013)
* As a coping strategy, women & household heads respond to increased drought by decapitalization/ sale of animals, notably women’ own animals.
* Disasters lead to increased migration, often of men, leaving women isolated and more vulnerable, with increased work burden.

Adaptation efforts include the dissemination of climate smart and land conservation practices such as agroforestry, contouring, terracing, mulching, and minimum-tillage, development of more resistant crop and animal varieties as well as promotion of diversified systems and alternative income generating activities to enhance resilience of households to expected changes. Women and men farmers will respond differently to these challenges due to gender-based constraints:

* They use different coping mechanisms to climate change. Burkina Faso report points out activities related to agro-forestry, mixed farming, soil conservation, as well as indigenous food storage methods, using crop residues and plastic materials for energy and alternative sources of income. Women are ingenious to adapt to some of these practices but generally have less opportunity in more technologically advanced systems
* Women’s resilience and skills in coping with disasters make a valuable resource that is underutilized by agencies working on disaster risk reduction and agriculture.
* Women usually have lower adaptive capacity due to weaker assets and less diversified activities.

In relation to climate change, **7 countries acknowledge specific consideration of women in climate adaptation plan** (CGAs of Togo, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Liberia). A few examples of best practices are inserted in Box 5.

Box 5 Success stories of gender integration in climate change and environmental programs

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| **Burkina Faso** has a very detailed gender assessment of climate change impacts and formulated activities considering women specific issues, with specific activities targeting them: i) training of women groups; ii) implementation of AGIR resilience programs (Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel and West Africa) with women groups; iii) specific research for good practices favorable for women.**Senegal**‘s national Mechanism for climate change adaptation and mitigation targets women more specifically, and includes resilience and risk management programs. For instance, women farmers gained better access to productive assets and enhanced their saving through “the Saving for Change” program. In addition to having increased access to land, seed, and water for irrigation and drinking, they benefited from training in numeracy, literacy, and business. Women felt more confident about their ability to feed their families, pay school fees and other expenses through selling their surplus crops.**In Côte d’Ivoire,** successful adoption of **improved FTT- Thiaroye fish processing technique** reduces the amount of fuel needed to smoke fish, decreasing deforestation and food waste and contributing to climate change mitigation. At the same time, the FTT-Thiaroye system improves adaptive capacity of the processors, as they are able to use the equipment also during rainy and humid periods and can apply it to a larger variety of fish. (GACSA practice brief 2, World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2015.) **Niger: as part of a project to rehabilitate degraded land in Sahel,** women were the main executors of performance-based payment initiatives to restore degraded land. In particular, they have learned to plant contour lines and build stone barriers on slopes of 0 to 3%. Women benefited from the restored land, which they cultivate, thus increasing their income improving their nutrition and food security through the diversity of the crop produced. For instance, Since 2011, a group farming the 1.7 hectare site of degraded land has included 170 women, who produce vegetables (okra, senna, sorrel, cabbage and lettuce) and woody plants (moringa, apple of the Sahel, pigeon pea and henna). (FAO 2016 resilience practices) |

##

## Gender gaps in decent employment and income generation

**The section** includes gender roles in different farming systems and women’s employment and income generation in farm and non-farm rural enterprises.

Women represent 46% of the labor force in ECOWAS and about 45% of the agricultural labor force. A compilation of labour statistics on women, men and youth in all the ECOWAS countries is presented in Figure 16. We can see **gender gaps in labor participation for both adult** (59% for women, 69% for men) and youth (44% for young women against 51% for young men). Women are predominant in vulnerable work (82% against 69% of male) with much less women employed as waged workers (17% against 28% for male). Such vulnerable employment conditions can be partially connected to **very low literacy**, with only 35% of adult women literate (against 55% of male). The situation is a bit better for youth but remains worrying, with 52% of young women against 66% of young male literate.

Figure 17 provides further details on women contribution to agriculture. It shows that in general, **50% of women are employed in agriculture in ECOWAS against 53% of men** in 2016. However, such average figures hide large variations across countries, with several countries with lower employment rates for women in agriculture (such as Nigeria, Burkina Faso) and others where women are more employed than men in agriculture, notably in countries with higher share of employment in agriculture (for instance Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde). However, the differences among countries appear strange and may reflect different ways of accounting for employment in agriculture. Indeed, official definition from ILO[[7]](#footnote-7) appears to cover notably activity for pay or profit states. It is possible that some countries may not consider subsistence production as employment, thereby excluding a high number of people from such statistics, notably women.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Figure 16 Labor statistics for men,women and youth in ECOWAS in 2016Source: world bank dataset from ILO  | Figure 17 Employment in agriculture of men and women in 2016 in ECOWAS countries [%]Source: world bank dataset from ILO statistics |

Agricultural employment yields revenues from production and post-production activities as well as remuneration from paid work (farm labour wages). The latter is a major avenue to boost rural income for women due to their high involvement in providing farm labour in all production systems. However, time use of women is highly constrained by involvement in “social reproduction” at home and unpaid farm work on family farms.

Recent studies focusing on women’s wage work in the sector have pin-pointed **gender-based wage discrimination**, poor environment of work and insecure employment contracts that continue to jeorpardize women’s income and welfare. FAO synthesis of 14 studies showed that on average women are paid 28 % less than men in rural areas, the wage gap being between 14 to 58% in Nigeria, Malawi and Ghana in 2009 (FAO, 2011a). In case of paid labor force, women earn half of what men earn according to the Cape Verde report. In Senegal, only 2% of women against 28% of men have permanent contracts (CGA Senegal). This has been studied in many types of large scale agricultural enterprises including contract farming as well as a good number of emerging agricultural value chains such as in horticultures.

# **Inclusive value chains, access to markets, and decent employment**

## Gender issues along Post harvest management

**In SSA** in particular, per capita food losses are 120 kg to 170 kg/year and over 40% of food losses occur at post-harvest and processing stages (WB, NRI, FAO, 2011).

**T**he bane of post-harvest management of commodities leads to income loss for women who are predominant in the activities. A major dimension in addressing hunger and food insecurity is women’s role in curbing post-harvest losses. Post-harvest losses are rife for most staple crops such as cassava, rice, legumes and horticultural crops. For instance in Ghana, losses recorded include around 34% loss in cassava and worse for other crops especially vegetables, fruits, livestock products and fish. Thus, for highly perishable products such as horticultures and livestock products, women lose most of their potential income by selling immediately at harvest without temporal price gains that could enhance their future investment capital. Thus, the greatest problems in this realm are with post-harvest management of horticultural crops where women are very active as operators and actors (enterprise owners) in several countries. With respect to livestock products, improvement in processing and storage will also enhance current capacities in activities such as dairy production, meat and skin curing and drying.

In Ghana, a study on “Determinants of Post-harvest losses in tomato production in the Offinso North District of Ghana (2013-2014)” showed that **gender and household size were the demographic variables that had a significant effect on postharvest losses in tomato production**. Female farmers had significantly higher levels of losses than their male counterparts. All things being equal, women tend to use longer period for fruit harvesting which then causes high levels of post-harvest losses. The study suggested that such higher post-harvest losses can be connected to women’s specific time constrains (conflicts with other chores), more limited access to hired labor due to their cash limitations and physical constrains (Aidoo, Danfoku & Osei-Mensah, 2014). Similar study in Sierra Leone CGA shows that women were not able to harvest perishable products early morning due to their household commitments that include care and domestic chores, productive activities and community responsibilities.

Several technological innovations can curve post-harvest losses but often require parallel support in capacity development and access to financial services (see

Box 6).

Box 6 Examples of Post harvest innovations

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| **In Nigeria,** several gender-sensitive post-harvest technologies were developed over the years by the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Liaison Services (NAERLS). However adoption studies showed that majority of rural women had constraints in accessing the technologies due to low contact with the extension services, low access to credit and little know-how about their operations, which calls for special innovation systems to better serve women. **In Sierra Leone,** a Ministry of Agriculture scheme provides machines to help reduce post-harvest losses where women play a dominant role. Training programmes are included for post-harvest management for farmers within the Agric-Business Centers (ABCs), a major organizational platform for reaching small farmers and providing them with credit, technological training, market information, etc. The problem to be addressed is the scope of the intervention which still reaches so few women. **FTT technology for fish processing in Cote d’IVoire, Ghana, Gambia, Senegal and Togo.** Starting in 2005, **collaborative investigation between FAO and several national research institutes resulted in the development of the FTT-Thiaroye fish processing technology that** Improves fish quality and safety, hence minimizing post-harvest losses, improving productivity, significantly reducing wood requirement for smoking fish and health hazards (respiratory, skin and eyes diseases due to exposure to hot smoke). Various pilot tests show that FTT is financially and economically profitable, with an internal rate of return between 32 and 35% based on a discounted rate of 10% over a period of 10 years. FTT is formally established in Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Togo and other African countries. |

## Value chains and market access

Inclusive and dynamic value chain have a key role to play to enhance employment and income opportunities for women and youth. Indeed, recent data shows that agricultural production contributes to 24% of the GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), while agribusiness input supply, processing, marketing and retailing contributes with another 20% of the GDP, and 10% to the region’s exports (World Bank, 2013). Value chain development as elaborated in Agenda 2025 in the ECOWAS will contribute to economic growth and sustainable development especially for rural women and the youth. This will promote the transformation of and income-earning potentials of primary agricultural commodities.

Women tend to **dominate processing and marketing activities** within each value chain, with variations across countries. For instance, if they are little involved in cattle, they tend to dominate small scale diary processing. They play **key roles in strengthening rural-urban linkages** through their food processing and marketing activities.

Women’s involvement in value-adding agricultural activities tends to be **invisible and they tend to remain at the lower (local) ends of value chains** while the more profitable nodes are overtaken by men. Generally, women’s marketing activities within countries are mostly at the local scale and for products not meant to be exported or to generate significant incomes, like food crops. Therefore, women tend to represent lower share of value addition (see example of gender sensitive value chain analysis in Box 7).

Their **mobility is often restrained because of their reproductive roles** in the family. They mostly sell smaller quantities of products than men, which does not generate satisfactory incomes. Often the income is controlled by men (*Cape Verde, Togo, Niger*) because of gender stereotypes keeping women away from economic power and management. When women are involved in marketing activities at a larger scale (in *Nigeria* and *Ghana*) they travel long distances that expose them to security risks and such journeys are also difficult because of poor infrastructure and women’s lack of financial resources to ensure good transportation and then avoid post-harvest losses. In the Gambia, women marketers travel averagely five kilometers to sell their products. Transportation is therefore seen as a major constraint in marketing agricultural products.

Box 7 Example of gender sensitive value chain analysis and Best Practice in ECOWAS

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| --- |
|  **In Cote dÍvoire**, women own 25 % of the cocoa plantations and make up about 68 % of the labour force. In primary processing and production, the majority of women are excluded from cooperatives and their associated benefits, as membership in cooperatives usually requires land ownership; and, the broad exclusion of women in aggregation, trade and transport activities and their under-representation as intermediaries prevents them from moving further downstream into sales (AfDB, 2015).**Nigeria is the world’s largest cassava producer**. Women account for 25 % of these but earn just 17 % of the income, mainly because of their lower productivity. Men own most commercial production and processing, while 90% of women are smallholder processors. Women cassava producers and processors face a number of constraints with 25-30% less productivity, small scale traditional processing, lack of electricity and equipment, limited capital and training (AfDB, 2015)In **Benin:** the GIZ (German Cooperation) conducted a project promoting inclusive value chains. Its gender-sensitive value chain analysis shows that women are mostly involved in food processing (70% cassava, more in rice production) as well as significant involvement in trade, notably at the domestic and cross-border levels.**In Togo, the** Program “ProDRA” supporting cash crops (cocoa, pineapple, cashew) is reinforcing women’s capacities along the value chains by encouraging their participation as decision makers and improving their access to land.The **world banana forum[[8]](#footnote-8)** gathers all stakeholders of the banana value chains and seeks to promote more sustainable and socially responsible practices. A gender task force was created and actively promotes increased understanding of gender issues, increased voice of women across the platform and series of recommendations for stakeholders to better address gender.**Ghana reported significant efforts on marketing and value chains**, with specific focus on women. GADS (Gender and Agricultural Development Strategy) II identified the challenges of women as carriers of farm produce to marketing centers and proposes intermediate transport system to lessen the burden on them. It also proposes: - Market information and improved agribusiness activities;- Building business/marketing capacities of Farmer Business Organizations (FBO); Creating awareness on the use of standard weights and measures for women to reap the benefits of their production as they are mostly cheated with ‘bush weights’ by middlemen. |

# **Food security, social protection and resilience**

## Food security and nutrition status

Most of the countries in the ECOWAS region achieved SDG Target 1C which is halving the proportion of the undernourished, though Cote D’Ivoire and Liberia did not meet the target (mainly due to the conflicts in those countries) and Sierra Leone, Guinea and Mali made limited progress. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) scores for the ECOWAS region decreased from 25.5 in 1990 to 15.6 in 2014. This is below the average of 18.2 for the SSA region as a whole. However, there is a concern about the uneven distribution of hunger. While Cape Verde, Mauritania and Ghana have moderately lower indices, Liberia and Sierra Leone are worse off due to the emergency situations of wars and Ebola. Furthermore, structural causes are also implicated, resulting from constraints of the agricultural market, productivity of farm holdings and employment for wage workers, according to the report (op cite).

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Figure 18 GHI Scores in West Africa (2013)

*Source: UNDP 2016: African Human Development Report*

These indicators all have deep-set gender dimensions and often, the proportion of women is shown to be higher among this remaining vulnerable population. The indicators of hunger and malnutrition for females in the ECOWAS region thus, pose an alarming picture. Data from Niger (Table 3) shows that higher rates of food insecurity are recorded in female-headed households than in male headed households. While 52.8% of male households are food secure, only 36.8% of female headed households are food secure. When measured by severity, female headed households fared worse than male headed households.

Table 3 Distribution of population in % according to the sex of head of household and levels of food insecurity

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Severe | Moderate | At risk | Secure |
| Sex of head of household |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 2,4 | 12,3 | 32,5 | 52,8 |
| Female | 3,4 | 20,4 | 39,4 | 36,8 |

*Source: INS-Niger « Enquête Conjointe sur la Vulnérabilité des Ménages à l’Insécurité Alimentaire au Niger (décembre 2014-janvier 2015) », Niamey.*

Women tend to also suffer more from anemia than men (Niger, Cape Verde, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Benin, and Nigeria). For instance, in Togo, 48% of women suffer from anemia compared to 20% of men.

The **nutrition status of pregnant women and lactating mothers has also negative implications** on children nutrition and health. Prevalence of anemia of women of reproductive age is shown in Figure 19. Eight countries have more than 50% incidence of anemia for women. All others range between 40% and 50% incidence except Liberia and Cape Verde with around 34%. Incidence of general underweight (thinness) for women in reproductive age (Table 4) shows that in seven countries, more than 10% of women are underweight (thinner than expected), with highest percentage in Senegal (19%) and Burkina Faso (14%).

Roughly, 39%, 12% and 75% of children aged under five (5) are affected by stunting, acute malnutrition, and anemia, respectively with alarmingly high rates of 51% in Niger and 40% in Guinea.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Figure 19 Prevalence of Anemia in women of reproductive age ECOWAS Countries (2016)*Source: world bank gender data base, from WHO dataset* | Table 4 Indicator of Malnutrition: Thinness in Pregnancy (% of population)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| COUNTRIES | Thinness in Women of reproductive age |
| Benin | 9% (2006) |
| Burkina Faso | 14% (2010) |
| Cape-Verde | NA |
| Cote d’Ivoire | 6% (2011-2012) |
| Gambia | NA |
| Ghana | 8% (2008) |
| Guinea | 11% (2012) |
| Guinea Bissau | NA |
| Liberia | 6% (2013) |
| Mali | 10% (2012-2013) |
| Niger | 13% (2012) |
| Nigeria | 10% (2013) |
| Senegal | 19% (2010-2011) |
| Sierra Leone | 8% (2013) |
| Togo | 11% (1998) |

*Source: Global Nutrition Report 2015 (WHO data)*  |

On the other side, overweight and obesity are rising in ECOWAS (33 to 40% increase since 2003 for overweight) and affect women disproportionately (Figure 20). On average in ECOWAS, 36% of women are overweight against 21% of male.. Gender disparity is stronger for obesity, with 5% male obese but 13% of female considered obese, with prevalence of obesity 2 to 3.5 times higher for female in every countries. Overweight and obesity are indicative of bad nutrition in terms of the choice of the wrong food, often calorie-dense due to low availability/high cost of more nutritious foods such as legumes and proteins.

Figure 20 Prevalence of overweight and obesity among male and female in ECOWAS countries in 2016

*Source: World Bank gender data base, WHO dataset*

Another critical importance of gender in food and nutrition security is illustrated by the data from Togo. As data (Table 5) shows, the educational level of mothers is an important determinant of children’s nutritional status. The risk of chronic and severe malnutrition, underweight and anemia among infants and children decreases significantly with a higher educational level of mothers. According to the table 5, higher educational level of mothers is strongly correlated with better nutrition of children.

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Table 5 The Important Linkage of Female Education and Nutrition in Togo

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **INDICATORS - TOGO** | **NO EDUCATION (**%) | **PRIMARY (**%) | **SECUNDARY OR SUPERIOR (**%) |
| Chronic Malnutrition for children under 5  | 33  | 25  | 18 |
| Severe Malnutrition for children under 5 |  9  | - | 5 |
| Underweight for children under 5 | 21  | 13  | 10  |
| Anemia - 6-59 months old | 74  | 73  | 61  |

Source: Demographic Health Survey, Togo, EDST-III, 2014

## Risk management and Social protection for women smallholder farmers

Food insecurity is in part cyclical and shock related, with specific issues arising during the lean season with both strong cash shortage and food price peaks in the months preceding the harvest. In addition, “the gains made in ending hunger and malnutrition are being eroded by **climate variability and exposure to more complex, frequent and intense climate extremes**. Hunger is significantly worse in countries with agricultural systems that are highly sensitive to rainfall and temperature variability and severe drought, and where the livelihood of a high proportion of the population depends on agriculture” *(*FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2018). Levels of chronic and acute food insecurity and undernutrition are also **higher in countries affected by conflict** (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2017). Nigeria’s CGA reported that food insecurity has been worsened by the Boko Haram insurgency especially in the north east of Nigeria.

Food insecurity is closely related to **risks and the resilience capacity of households** to cope with such risks, including conflict, climate and value chain risks. Yet, women and women headed households are often more vulnerable to risks. For instance women are at the **forefront of providing coping measures for the households** in case of disasters. They have often lower and different coping mechanisms (Gambia, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone). Findex surveys data show that in sample of 12 ECOWAS countries, **43% of women against 54% of male are capable of coming up with emergency funds** in case of shocks or disasters (Figure 21). Similar gaps appear when comparing poor and less poor, rural/urban and educated / non-educated. Therefore, such gaps would be worse for rural women who most often are less educated and poorer. Livestock also plays a key role in resilience of households. Yet, female headed households without male have less livestock activities and when they are involved in livestock, the size of their livestock is smaller (Figure 11 and Figure 12).

Figure 21 Capacity to come up with emmergency funds

*Source: Global findex database, 2017 dataset including data from 4 countries in Northern Africa and 30 in sub-Saharan Africa. Author’s calculations*

Women adapt to shocks by using different coping mechanisms. Women’s resilience and skills in coping with disasters make a valuable resource that is underutilized by agencies working on disaster risk reduction and agriculture:

* A World Bank report on disaster risk management Sierra Leone cited that an agricultural rehabilitation was ineffective because of faulty implementation strategy. After the disaster, seeds were distributed at household levels, without fully analysing who is in charge of food production at household level. This negatively impacted women who grow different crops and require different sets of tools and seeds.
* In Burkina Faso, reports of women’s coping activities related to agro-forestry, mixed farming, soil conservation, food storage, migration, using crop residues and using waste plastic materials for energy are notable. Such activities are an alternative source of income for the poorest.

Given the important challenges faced by women and their potential roles to enhance resilience, it is crucial to effectively **mainstream gender along the different resilience mechanisms.** These include: i) the strengthening of an enabling environment (govern risks and crisis along legal, policy and institutional systems and regulatory frameworks), ii) monitoring and alert mechanisms to measure vulnerability, resilience, risks and provide early warnings, iii) risk and vulnerability reduction measures at household and community level, including safety nets and social protection mechanisms and iv) preparedness and response mechanisms to prepare for and manage responses when crisis occur.

Social protection coverage is weak in the region, and usually does not include the informal sector, therefore excluding most rural households engaged in agriculture. The situation is considered worse for women who are more engaged in informal and unpaid work within family farms (Togo, Gambia, Cape Verde, Nigeria, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone). Absence of crop insurance programs to mitigate shocks resulting from disasters and conflicts is one of the greatest risks faced by rural households (Gambia).

The review of the first generation NAIPs showed that seventy percent of the countries NAIPs programmes did not include social protection while about 10% of the programmes offered missed opportunities to cover social protection. Less than 20% of the countries had explicit gender focus in social protection and other resilience building programmes.

Box 8 Country Best Practices in Resilience Building Programmes

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| Some countries **however reported increasing efforts** to enhance social protection and safety net programs and to reach rural population and women. **Togo** reported specific **pilot programs benefiting** 15,000 **men and women**: food for work, school feeding (182 schools); money cash transfer (10,000 beneficiaries composed of pregnant women and households??? with undernourished kids), health measures etc.**Senegal** indicated general progress in **social protection** for both women and men with health insurance (progressed to 46% in 2015), card for people with disabilities, family support etc.The CGA acknowledged strong issues regarding social protection (notably the exclusion of informal work, the lack of crop insurance mechanisms etc.).**Gambia** has developed a **Social Protection Policy (2015-2025)** which seeks to achieve greater transparency and better targeting of social protection schemes, enhancing the participation of the most vulnerable **Ghana**’s Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme is an example of **social protection in agriculture with predominantly women farmers beneficiaries****Nigeria** used to spend less on social protection than many other African countries, despite its relative wealth. However, Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in collaboration with State Governments and development partners has sought to develop social protection mechanism to tackle high rates of poverty and vulnerability in the country. To this end, FGN in 2016 budget allocatedt 500 billion naira for **social assistance targeted to vulnerable citizens (women, elderly an**d persons with disabilities) through social protection programmes including conditional cash transfer of 5000 naira monthly to reduce gender inequalities in rural areas.**Niger:** The NAIP (National Agricultural Program) allocates **cash transfers to women** mostly so they can contribute to food security |

# **Enabling environment: Policy framework, institutions and funding**

## Gender mainstreaming in policy and legal framework

Most countries signed international and regional protocols to advance GEWE, notably the Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), the additional protocol to the African Charter on human and people’s rights on the right of women in Africa (commonly referred as Maputo Protocol) and the Additional act relative to women and men rights of ECOWAS. However, domestication of such protocol and CEDAW reporting is often lagging behind.

Several countries highlighted that their constitution and in some cases their legal framework and codes had been reviewed for gender equality (Benin, Guinee Conakry, Mali, Togo, Burkina Faso, Senegal). Some reports mention specific efforts were made regarding sexual and domestic violence (Gambia, Ghana), labor (Ghana) and land (Senegal). Nonetheless, discrimination often remains in some areas, for example on inheritance and marriage issues that have implications for women's access to property, employment and credit. Also, many countries stress that customary law is considered as much as the legal framework and this right is more often sexist (see section on land).

In all countries, there is a national gender policy to centralize and impulse policies for equitable participation of women and men and in several case, to provide a framework for gender mainstreaming in other sectors. For seven countries, gender is explicitly mentioned in agricultural policy, strategy or action plan, either as specific objectives or as cross-cutting issues (Liberia, Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso). However, such commitments are not always accompanied by clear implementation strategies and expected outcomes with measurable indicators. Only four countries developed explicitly a gender strategy for agriculture (Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso).

Box 9 Example of good practices in strenghtenning legal and policy framework for gender in agriculture

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| **Ghana:** a **National gender policy** was developed by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection for gender mainstreaming across all Ministries. **Gender and Agriculture Strategy** (GADS) supports gender mainstreaming process and women empowerment. Agricultural policy and investment plans include GEWE notably along inclusive M&E, food-based nutrition education, food safety, value chain development (VCD). **Burkina Faso:** the **legal system generally includes gender equality** (constitutions, civil code etc.). There is a **national Gender Policy** for mainstreaming across sectors access and control of resources and sharing of income. The Presidential plan included gender objectives. The **National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of Burkina Faso includes two gender objective:** 5) economic and social status of women and rural youth; 6) empower rural people, with priority on women work; entrepreneurship, access to land, representation and financing, **Gambia:** is one of the few countries with a legal framework on sexual offences, domestic violence act and a woman amendment act. Efforts to mainstream gender in agriculture are supported by: a National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women (1999-2009); and a National Gender and Women Empowerment Policy 2010-2020 coupled with a Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment Strategic Plan (2010-2015) with objectives 2 on agriculture. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy 2017-2026 has a component on gender mainstreaming (land tenure, credit, technology, marketing). |

## Women voice and participation in policy

Generally, women **participate insufficiently in producers’ organizations** but with variations across countries (17% in Benin, , 30% in Togo, 48% in Burkina Faso). They often occupy less executive positions and some countries reported **patriarchal norms that hamper women meaningful involvement**. However, CGAs reported s**everal efforts to enhance women participation and voice** with adoption of gender strategy, women quota, sex-disaggregated membership data, development of women colleges and specific associations and network etc At regional level, networks of civil society organizations and producers organizations have published guidelines to help their members better mainstream gender in agricultural activities and advocate for gender responsive policies in the sector. Several countries offered **training programmes** along Farmer Field Schools and supported the formation of more producer organizations (See Box 10).

Box 10 Good practices regarding women voices in Producers'organizations

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| Fupro in **Benin** developed a **gender strategy with 20% budget for women****Niger** and **Benin** have **quota** of participation (25% of women in women council in Niger, 20% in Benin) while **Liberia** is also seeking to adopt a bill to ensure 30% women participation at all levels of decision making. **Sex disaggregated data** on membership is at least implemented in 5 countries.Four countries supported the development of **women college or women associations** to strengthen the voice of women in mixed PO (**Togo** with RENAFAT, **Senegal** and **Guinea Conacry** with a college, **Benin** with ANAF). Six countries reported **women associations** (**Togo** with RENAFAT, **Senegal** and AWAW, **Benin** with ANAF, **Gambia** with GWF, **Liberia** with Rural Woman Structure, **Sierra Leone** with a woman association).**In ECOWAS**, civil society and farmers’ organizations have formed an ECOWAP Gender Group to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in ECOWAP processes. The RAIP contains activities to build the capacities of civil society and farmers’ organizations to participate effectively in policy process, with specific mention to the ECOWAP Gender Group. Civil society alliances published a guide to integrate gender in NAIP and RAIP (Cultivons, 2016). ROPPA also developed guidelines to support its member organizations to participate and influence national and regional NAIP. Such guidelines include gender among the topics (ROPPA, 2017a). **Togo, Senegal, Benin, and Gambia developed specific services** for rural women, to strengthen women groups, advocate for women needs to be addressed at policy level and implement specific women economic empowerment programs.  |

**Only 3 countries reported inclusive policy concertation** mechanisms, while Sierra Leone explicitly regretted the weak opportunity for rural women to contribute (Gambia, Togo and Senegal). However, we can also identify innovative effort **to ensure women participation at different levels** (Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gambia etc. see Box 10).

Box 11 Enabling environment to favor women participation in decision making

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| **Ghana: the Affirmative Action Polic**y of 1998 provides for **a 40% quota of women’s representation on all government and public boards, commissions, councils, committees and official bodies**, including Cabinet and the Council of State. it was not a law.. However, affirmative Action is now on the 30% Bill representation in Government so that it can be made a law.**Sierra Leone** Gender Equality Bill underway guarantees 30 percent representation of women at all levels of decision-making. The government also supported the establishment of Women Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs).**Gambia**: the government encouraged the creation of Gambia Women’s Federation to promote gender. It provides also an e**xemplary institutionalized inclusive process**. The NAIP involved the Women’s bureau, National Farmers’ Platform, National Women Farmers’ Association (NAWFA), the Gambia Women Finance Association. It identified women farmers needs and focused on sectors with active women participation (rice, fishery, value chains, nutrition). Out of 18 projects in the NAIP, 2 used the women empowerment approach while 16 used gender quotas or targeting of women for participation. The **Local government act institutionalizes decentralized and inclusive governance,** calling for **equal representation of women and men at the Village Development Committees**, which is the entry point of all development programmes into the communities.  |

##  Gender institutional capacities

In order to mainstream gender effectively, there must both institutions, procedures and capacities to identify gender issues and design gender equitable policies.

* First step **is a Ministry / secretariat that deals with women affairs**, with capacity to impulse, coordinate and monitor gender mainstreaming across sectors. The Ministry for gender mentioned in 11 countries but most deals with social affairs & children and tend to restrict women roles.
* Second step is to have strong **gender capacities in the Ministry of agriculture**. Most West African countries have **gender focal points** in Ministries. However, they often have limited capacities. Several countries mentioned **some trainings provided on gender mainstreaming** (Gambia, Senegal, Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Benin etc.). However, perpetual change of ministers and focal point hinders impact of trainings. In addition, most reports highlighted that such focal points had weak **actual participation, voice and influence in** policy process. Most reports deplored **insufficient budget** to undertake meaningful action. Gender focal points are differently settled in the organization, with varying but often lower power and influence. 3 had directorates (Ghana, Burkina Faso), 2 had specific units (Sierra Leone, Niger), 3 had specific cells / team (Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal). In conjunction with low position, focal points often mentioned difficulties to receive gender reports from other units.
* Finally, third step is to have strong c**oordination and partnership mechanisms between Ministry of gender, gender focal points and other sectoral ministries. However, it is sometimes weak, reducing capacity for accountability (to gender efforts) & integrated approach (business, infrastructures).** Only 5 CGAs mentioned ongoing collaboration with others. Only **3 countries clearly reported that such units were involved** in agricultural policy (Gambia, Senegal, Mali) while 4 said they were not (Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conacry, Burkina Faso)

Another challenge is the **representation of women in these institutions**, not only in gender units but at all levels of responsibility in such ministries. Women usually between 12 to 20% of staff and they tend to have lower responsibility.

Box 12 Examples of good practices and issues regarding gender institutional capacities

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| **Nigeria**: FMARD (Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development) Gender Task team has 60 gender focal points. It works with administrative reform ministry, ministry of water, research and local government. Nigeria has a Federal Department of Gender in FMWASD and a Gender Desk at FMARD. It has developed Agriculture and Gender policy and coordinates the implementation of the policy at all levels.**Ghana**: the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is responsible for gender mainstreaming across all ministries, departments, and agencies. There is a **directorate of women in agriculture (WIAD)** in Minagri to mainstream gender in policy.**Cape Verde**: The Ministry of Inclusion and Family is responsible for promoting gender, in coordination with the **Cape-Verdian Institute for Gender Equality and Equity (ICIEG)** and Gender Focal Points in Ministries and Municipalities. The ICIEG supports Ministries with a **Methodological Manual for Gender Integration** in Planification & training of staff. **Togo: the Ministry of Gender coordinates partnership** with the Ministry of numeric economy (in terms of mobile phone input distribution), territorial administration on Land, trade for value chain, forestry for environment, school feeding program with education & health, behavior change with ministry of communication, planning & budgeting with Ministry of planning and finances. **Burkina Faso: has** Interesting practices related to the survey called “SIG” to analyze gender integration and non-discrimination in institutions. They have put in place a permanent secretary for promotion of gender, with gender cells in all ministries, regions and communes with a clear role of monitoring, reporting and support to gender mainstreaming. The Permanent Secretary office organized capacity needs assessment and provided various trainings. It reports yearly to a national council presided by the prime minister and there is similar reporting at local level. It also organized training for gender “caucus” in Assembly |

## Gender financial capacities: public budgets & access to private finances

### Public budget for gender in agriculture

The budget devoted to gender is generally weak and unstable (Ghana, Cape Verde, Togo). Benin has a target of 1% of budget for gender while Sierra Leone allocated only 1% of national budget for gender. **Only 2 CGA provided specific analysis of gender budget in Agriculture** (Senegal, Gambia), showing that the PNIA in Senegal only targeted 0.6% for women (against 49% for youth) while Gambia reported some progress. Seven countries reported ongoing or planned mechanisms to engender the budget (Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Benin and Sierra Leone).

Apart from government budget, a substantial source of funding for GEWE was technical cooperation programs from UN organizations (notably FAO, UNICEF, WFP, IFAD, ILO, UN Women), International Financial Organizations (AfDB and world bank mentioned in some countries), bilateral donors (USAID, GIZ, Swiss, DFID, EU, Japan and DANIDA mentioned) and numerous NGOs (Care International, Action Aid, Oxfam etc.). In addition, the CGA showed that producers’ organizations and women associations (ANAF and FUPRO in Benin, CNOP in Guinea Conakry, CNCR and FNGPFS in Senegal, National Federation of Farmers of Sierra Leone) also allocated specific support and actions for gender.

Good practices include **(see** Box 13**):**

1. various mechanisms to enhance gender in government budget through adoption of gender sensitive budgeting with specific target, guidelines, capacity development and co-financing of gender budgeting to provide additional incentive for gender mainstreaming;
2. better leveraging other funding by setting up of gender **coordination mechanisms with other stakeholders as well as integration of gender in usual donors coordination meetings.**

Box 13 Example of good practices to enhance gender budgeting

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| **Ghana: The budget allocation to** the Ministry of Gender is weak and unstable. There is a requirement by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) for ministries, departments, and agencies to allocate at least 40 per cent of their budget to gender issues but this is not being adhered to in disbursement.**Senegal** has adopted a Circular letter for gender sensitive budgeting. There is also a Technical guide for planning, budgeting integrating gender. However, only one project (*Projet de Développment Agricole de Matam*) is gender sensitive, identifying 54% budget for women. The NAIP targets 0.6% of budget for women, 49% for youth, 50% mixed. **Mali:** In 2011, Mali adopted the National Strategy Planning and Gender Responsive Budgeting (PBSG), focusing on: (i) the inclusion of GRB approach in the budgeting process at national level;(Ii) the inclusion of women's priorities in budget allocations; (Iii) regular review mechanism for the implementation of gender responsive budgeting (GRB).**Burkina Faso** has developed a **Specific framework for gender, including consultation mechanisms** on gender for technical partners (notably FAO, WB, GIZ and UN Women) and developed specific **funding mechanisms** (Common fund for gender and gender components of programs). |

### Rural Finance and Financial inclusion for women in agribusiness

Financial inclusion (rural finance) is critical for agricultural production, commercialization and trade as well as SME development. Yet, the availability of finance is very low in rural contexts, and often, those existing financial avenues intended for rural people benefit men far more than women even in the agribusiness context. Improving women’s access to finance in agriculture is a proven strategy for contributing to women’s social and economic empowerment as well as to improve on their livelihoods. Having access to financial services is of great importance for women because it enables them to invest in income-generating activities, by procuring inputs, labour and equipment needed for their agricultural activities and to reach markets more efficiently. It also enables women to care for their children because most of their income and savings goes to their children’s education, nutrition and health.

As a result, improving women's access to finance is at the heart of most policy agendas: in particular, the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063 call for equal access to productive assets: land, credit, inputs and financial services

According to the World Bank (2014) approximately 1.1 billion women in the world are excluded from formal financial services (World Bank, 2014b) with a 7 percentage point gap between men and women in account ownership on a global level and 9 percentage points in Sub-Saharan Africa. In ECOWAS, account ownership has increased sharply since 2011 without closing a strong gender gap, reaching 30% of women but 43% of men in 2017. Mobile account has multiplied by 3 for both men and women, reaching 18% of women and 26% of men (Figure 22). There are strong differences among countries in account ownership and gender gaps. In some countries, less than 20% of women; in most, between 26 to 38% have an account. Ghana shows both highest account ownership (54%) and lowest gender gap (Figure 23).

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| Figure 22: Evolution of account ownership (mobile and classic) among adult men and women in ECOWAS countries | Figure 23: Account ownership among adult men and women in ECOWAS countries in 2017 |

*Source: World Bank’s Global Findex Database, 2017*

The country gender assessment confirms a **generally lower access** to credit for women particularly in rural areas (reported by Togo, Gambia, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone). For instance, in Nigeria 15% of women have a bank account against 85% of men and 30% access agricultural credit against 70% men. In Burkina Faso, 26% women access loan against 46% men.

The review of CGA also show some interesting practices (see Box 14).

Box 14 Country examples regarding women access to rural finances

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| On the positive side, some reports mention **higher access to informal credit** (Tontine in Togo, Self-help group in Benin). However, such informal credit is highly dependent on women’s networks and provides usually lower amount at high interest rate. **In Benin**, women are main beneficiary of less formal micro credit institutions with several institutions for women (national funds for micro finance, promotion of enterprise and youth employment).**Guinea:** the Financial mutual institution of African women (*Mutuelle Financière des Femmes Africaines, MUFFA*) is a guarantee fund established by the President with 11 million USD to facilitate women access to credit.**In Togo**, the National funding for inclusive finance was launched in 2014 to support women with small loans at low interest rate (331,300 beneficiaries). In addition, INADES (*Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social*) and AVSF (*Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières*) collaborated to develop input credit, warrantage credit to avoid direct sale at low price at harvest time and guarantee fund to enable financial institutions to initiate credit for farmers despite risks.  |

## Gender accountability capacities: monitoring, evaluation and statistics for gender

**Fifty% of the CGAs reported absence of gender target and indicators** & sex disaggregated data. Six CGAs reported however that gender was mainstreamed in the monitoring and evaluation systems **(Nigeria, Senegal, Benin, Ghana, Togo, Gambia)** but sometimes such gender indicators are not well reported.

**Gender statistics** are often weak and do not **cover all topics which are important targets for policy**. 80% of countries have some data on gender in employment and land, over 40 % food security, crops access to inputs but there was no data on environment, Value chain & HH decision mechanisms (Figure 24). Countries reported a lack of **qualitative dat**a & room for participation to better understand specific issues of women. Often, gender data just captures the sex of the household head but does not provide intra-household sex disaggregated data that are key to actually understand women contributions and issues.

Figure 24 Share of countries with gender mainstreamed in various sectoral statistics



**A major issue is that such kind of data are insufficiently analyzed and used to inform policy.** Only three countries reported some kind of gender assessment report (Nigeria, Senegal and Burkina Faso).

Box 15 sample of positive efforts to mainstream gender in M&E and statistics

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| **Nigeria:** Gender audits were carried out by the gender task team to provide a sector baseline and a prioritized action plan. Gender Sensitive Indicators were indicated. M&E is to be conducted at community level using participatory approach and will include women and youths as stakeholders. Several statistics (but census) are gender disaggregated with rural component. However, data are not used enough to highlight gender impacts. **Gambia:** the M&E is aligned with ECOWAS. 39 of 57 indicators are gender disaggregated ( e.g. %HH under poverty, number of jobs created, food security, income, asset, crop, yield, livestock, use of technology & post-harvest, access to extension credit, value chain jobs, sustainable forestry etc.) **Togo:** There is aspecific strategy for gender mainstreaming in planning and evaluation along the PNIASAN 2016-18. A Gender focal cell coordinates gender screening, sex disaggregated reporting and impact assessment to better understand women constraints and measure reduction of gender inequality. The agricultural census is sex disaggregated.**Mali** has set up anational information system on Women and Children with validated gender indicators.**ROPPA has developed an observatory of family farms** (ROPPA, 2016) and has issued reports highlighting specific constrains of women and made recommendations to improve gender equality and empower women (ROPPA, 2017b). Building on such strong gender capacities, the 2nd generation RAIP of ECOWAS has quite strongly mainstreamed gender, including specific result and budget for gender mainstreaming as well. |

# Conclusions and recommendations

The sub-**regional outlook on gender and agrifood systems in the ECOWAS region reveals the crucial roles of women in food production and food security.** Women contribute to the family farm and they have their own activity to generate income and meet household food needs. Women tend to dominate subsistence agriculture, non-timber forest products chains, small ruminant livestock and livestock feeding, fish processing. They also dominate the transformation, conservation and small marketing of agri-food products, mostly in the informal sector including informal transborder trade. Finally, they are primarily involved in household food and nutrition security through the education and care of children, the preparation of meals, the diversification of household food intake through their home garden and incomes and have their own resilience mechanisms.

On one hand, strong **gender gaps are identified in most sectors covered by the RAIPFSN and GEWE framework, including in terms of** productivity, access to productive resources, management of post-harvest losses, resilience to climate change, access to value chain, market and employment. They also tend to suffer more from food security and nutrition issues and tend to be less resilient to shocks The report also revealed that the enabling environment remained insufficiently conducive to effective gender mainstreaming in agriculture, both due to gaps in legal and policy framework, weak institutional and financial capacities, insufficient voice of women and their participation in policy and weak accountability mechanisms.

For each gender gap reviewed in the report and along each CGA, a detailed review of the main constrains leading to such gender gaps were conducted. Many constrains are similarly seen among countries and across sectors. The constrains were categorized against the GEWE conceptual framework that was proposed in section 1.3 and that corresponds as well as to major sections of this sub-regional outlook (see also Figure 2 and Figure 1). Frequency analysis was conducted and unearthed specific gender-based constraints that have impacts across all major sectors, showing the importance of an integrated approach (see Figure 25 ):

* **Access to productive resources and services and economic empowerment (correspond as well to sections 3 to 5):** Specific constraints of the production systems such as **poor access to land, finance, technology, research and innovation, marketing** etc. were widely found to be a common concern militating against greater performance of women farmers;
* **Enabling environment (correspond to section 6):** Issues in the **enabling environment of production, particularly the policy, legal and institutional** issues were also frequently identified such as lack of sex-disaggregated data to inform policies, weak gender budget, weak gender analysis and monitoring of gender status, and weak agency for women producers, as shown by **low participation in the entire policy and programming process**. Others are weak accountability mechanisms and weak capacity of the gender machineries at country level to function effectively.
* **Women’s agency/voice (section 6.1):** The social environment including the norms and customary practices, critical issues around the gender power relations and women’s capacities and entitlement including **low literacy, the burden of social reproduction and attendant time poverty** (women’s triple role) were indicated as limitating factors to women’s agency. These constrains weaken the capabilities of women as individuals as well as the community groups, including producer organizations, to function efficiently as these barriers lower their resource entitlement and decision-making roles within households and communities. This highlights the need for social transformation to enhance the status of women.
* **Quality of life, infrastructure and cultural issues (section 2):** Finally, issues of the physical environment of agriculture relate to **rural infrastructure** such as roads, energy, transportation, water and sanitation and so on which affect all small farmers, but also significantly affects women both in their welfare provisioning roles, in their post-harvest activities (processing, marketing, pricing etc.) and in their ability to relate to formal structures in trade and manufacturing. Discriminatory social norms, **patriarchal culture** number among the challenges that prevent women from taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the agrifood sector.

Figure 25 Frequency Distribution of Constraints of Women in the Agri-food System in ECOWAS Countries

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| Distribution of constrains / GEWE | Detailed occurrence of constrains per GEWE category along CGAs

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| --- | --- |
| Category and type of constrains | Count |
| **Culture & social norms**  | **50** |
| **Rural infrastructure & services** | **24** |
| Political and economic context (insecurity, migration, political crisis etc.) | 6 |
| Rural infrastructure & service (water, energy, roads) | 18 |
| **Enabling environment** | **91** |
| Gender institutional capacity | 19 |
| Policy coordination & implementation | 8 |
| Technical and financial gender capacity | 22 |
| Visibility & data | 18 |
| Women rights & governance | 24 |
| **Access productive resources & services** | **138** |
| Access natural resources | 85 |
| practices & technology | 28 |
| Rural finances | 13 |
| Value chain & market | 12 |
| **Women voice and participation** | **69** |
| Education | 32 |
| Women participation to collective organization | 17 |
| Women Rural organization | 20 |
| **Grand Total** | **372** |

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*Source*: authors compilations and analysis from CGAs and NAIP

Such priority issues provided the basis to prioritize actions for the gender action plan for achieving GEWE in RAIPFNS 2016 – 2020. From the gender assessment findings, the enabling cultural and political environment may have been the greatest impediment to GEWE in the first generation NAIPs and have to be addressed in priority in the forthcoming Gender Action Plan:

* A key policy implication is that greater attention is required in **the enabling environment of production and of post-harvest activities**. Meaning that, unless the right policy, legal and institutional structures are in place, gender mainstreaming, as is widely touted, cannot be effectively achieved. Specific gender outputs may need to be developed to reinforce gender capacities in agricultural institutions, producers’ organizations and to tackle transversal gender constrains (e.g. women’s empowerment in household and time constrains etc.).
* Unless the **socio-cultural environment** which defines the rights, responsibilities and entitlement of women are improved for claiming these rights, the implementation of the numerous articulated legal instruments would be ineffective.
* R**ural infrastructural development** is key and should also lead to availability of **labour saving devices** in the operation of productive and domestic activities.
* Specific efforts are required to **strengthen accountability mechanisms** for gender equality and women’s empowerment. There is need to **elevate the gender benchmarks in the planning, monitoring and accountability mechanisms related to SDGs, CAADP, ECOWAP and gender policies**. Such requires as well **a “Gender data revolution” in the agri-food sector, to inform sound policies and programmes** and facilitate gender sensitive analysis, monitoring and evaluation.
* We need to **reinforce women’s collective capacity** to advocate further for their needs, participate in policy, reinforce accountability mechanisms and ensure that rural women can identify and benefit from the opportunities offered across agricultural investment.

To feed such a gender action plan, the status report also provides **access to several good practices** that have been implemented in the countries and provide ideas to enhance gender considerations across sectors. Similar capitalization efforts have been implemented in ECCAS and at AU level, with a policy brief presented during the latest UN general assembly (FAO, 2018). To facilitate changes, it appears key to support effort to further document best practices and **facilitate south-south sharing of experience**.

**Finally, such efforts cannot be achieved alone but requirespartnerships and coordination so as to develop multi-sectorial programmes** with other institutionsto tackle gender issues that go **beyond the agricultural sectors** (e.g. rural infrastructures, education, social norms) as well as continental program that can facilitate cross learning and upscaling. Specific efforts are required to also integrate gender or develop **gender targeted programs along ECOWAP priority regional initiatives** (diary, rice, women and youth employment, observatory etc.) and along **AU policy priorities** (30% documented land ownership for women; women’s equal access to finance and mobile banking revolution (50%), “AU Campaign to banish the hand hoe to the museum”, enhanced support to post harvest sector and women’s empowerment (20% target) etc.

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1. https://www.agrilinks.org/post/womens-work-agribusinesses-and-gender-based-violence-what-do-we-know [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . AU gender strategy defines patriarchy as the “traditional form of organizing society which often lies at the root of gender inequality. According to this kind of social system, men, or what is considered masculine, is accorded more importance than women, or what is considered feminine. Traditionally, societies have been organized in such a way that property, residence, and descent, as well as decision-making regarding most areas of life, have been the domain of men. This continues to underlie many kinds of gender discrimination” (AUC, 2018b) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. FAO’s Gender and Land Rights Database [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Female and male household refers to the composition of household and not the sex of the head of the household. Female household represent a major sub-category of female-headed household that do not have any adult male within the household. They represent around 15% of households in a sample of 15 African countries and 62% of FHH according to World Bank, 2015. Such analysis focuses on the household level, rather than individual level and therefore does not capture intra-household gender inequality, [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The tropical livestock unit is a standardized unit developed by FAO that allows to convert different types of livestock and add them up to have an estimate of the total size of the livestock [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Female and male household refers to the composition of household and not the sex of the head of the household. Female household represent a major sub-category of female-headed household that do not have any adult male within the household. They represent around 15% of households in a sample of 15 African countries and 62% of FHH according to World Bank, 2015. Such analysis focuses on the household level, rather than individual level and therefore does not capture intra-household gender inequality, [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “employment is defined as persons of working age who were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit, whether at work during the reference period or not at work due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangement. The agriculture sector consists of activities in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, in accordance with division 1 (ISIC 2) or categories A-B (ISIC 3) or category A (ISIC 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.bananalink.org.uk/world-banana-forum-gender-equity [↑](#footnote-ref-8)