



Gender Responsiveness: Women Empowerment in African Agricultural Development

Background and Context

Gender-responsive agricultural development addresses equally the needs and priorities of both men and women, young and old, across the agricultural value chain. 79% of African women who are economically active report being involved in agriculture. At present, however, there is a significant gap in the returns, technologies, processes and products in agriculture that specifically address women's needs. High-value African agriculture appears to be constructed to deliver for men rather than women. Yet women in agriculture produce nearly 80% of household food and contribute 39% to continental GDP¹, taking key decisions that impact productivity and food security.

Investment in women in agriculture has been shown to boost incomes, productivity and food security. It is, therefore a cost-effective pathway for achieving inclusive and broad-based growth and sustainable development.

In order to tap into the opportunities offered by the sector, Commitment #4 of the Malabo Declaration, *Halving Poverty by 2025*, has a specific sub-target which calls on member states '*...to support and facilitate preferential entry and participation for women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities.*' This commitment can be interpreted as a signal for deeper cross-cutting work on gender responsiveness. Merely enhancing the role of women is not sufficient to attain empowerment. Rather, power relations, social norms and intra-household decision making also need to be transformed if a shift in the status quo is to take place. In other words, gender mainstreaming which does not lead to transformative social change falls short of sustainable empowerment, including in agriculture.

KEY MESSAGES

A transformational continental agenda is not possible without the inclusion of women and young people in agriculture. National governments should embed gender perspectives within development programmes and policies, in addition to committing the investments necessary to implement those policies. Women and young people must be included in decision-making about agricultural priorities and investments, and both policy and practice must provide the space for their contribution.

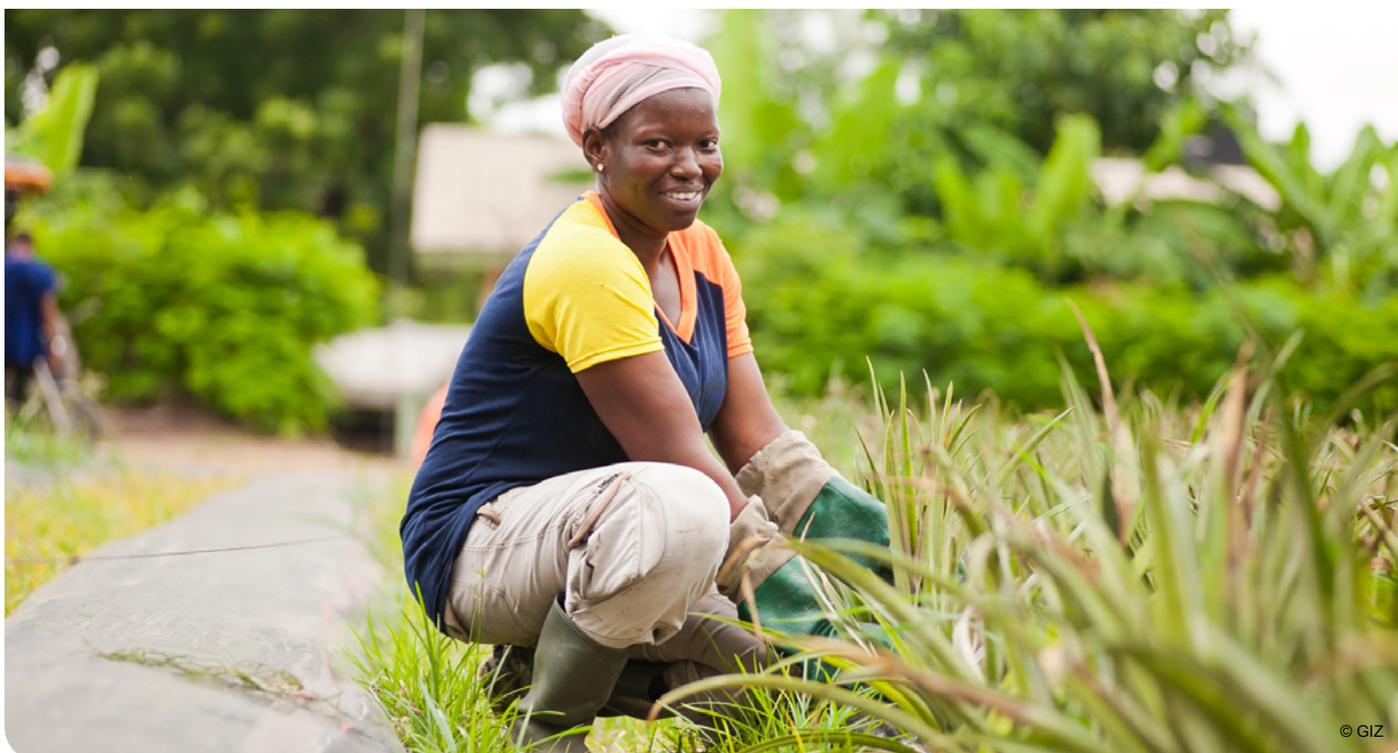
Main Challenges to Gender-Responsive Agricultural Development

Despite the potential of women to contribute to African agricultural productivity² and, despite efforts made by national governments to mainstream gender, outcomes unfortunately fall below expectations. Of the 47 countries that participated in the 2017 CAADP Biennial Review, only 8 were on track to achieve their gender targets. Major challenges hampering the active participation of women and young people in agriculture include:

- ▶ **Limited integration of gender perspectives into national policies, programmes and action plans:** Gender issues are either ignored completely or only weak gender planning tools are used. This limits the consideration given to gender-based constraints and their impact on national programmes. It also leads to

¹ McKinsey Global Institute report, 2015

² A prosperous Africa based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development



© GIZ

the non-alignment of policies to gender commitments. Legislative and policy reforms relating to gender are slow-paced and lack real political backing. Weak inter-ministerial coordination results in overlapping and unclear mandates on gender issues are often located in special departments or ministries as opposed to being treated as integral, cross-cutting issues.

- ▶ **Weak and under-resourced gender institutions, poor budgeting and limited enforcement at local and national levels:** Legislative reforms are often not supported by adequate budgetary allocations. Weak institutional structures and unfavourable socio-cultural norms limit women and youth's access to productive opportunities such as equitable access to land, productivity-boosting technologies, financing and high-value markets.
- ▶ **Limited capacity of gender focal persons:** There is generally very limited know-how about gender responsiveness. The few gender experts deployed to work on agricultural issues, for example, are usually trained in mainstreaming but do not work on responsiveness. Building capacity for integrating gender-responsive project development is, therefore, critical.
- ▶ **Weak data management and monitoring systems:** First, there is limited investment in the collection, analysis and use of gender data. Second, there is low capacity for gender analysis, which is not simply the

presentation of gender-disaggregated data, but which requires deeper analysis of parameters as a basis for influencing differential gender effects..

Recommendations for Anchoring Gender Dimensions within NAIPs

The challenges presented above systematically limit the consideration of gender perspectives in agricultural development³. In order to address the challenges, actions such as strengthened gender management systems and gender-responsive budgeting must be prioritised in policy and investment policy. The advancement of women and youth in agriculture must be addressed explicitly in NAIPs and responsibility vested in the highest possible level of government. Sufficient human, political and financial resources should be committed. More specifically, every NAIP could include:

- ▶ **Preferential entry and participation of women:** Since women are already historically marginalised, this situation cannot be corrected by being gender neutral or gender blind. Women will not enter value chains or win procurement contracts without affirmative action. NAIPs should include strategies and opportunities which support and facilitate preferential entry and participation of women and youth into gainful and attractive agri-business. Such efforts may include allocating and ring-fencing supply quotas for women-

³ National agricultural investment plans (NAIPs) are a key vehicle for translating CAADP goals of agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security, nutrition, economic growth and prosperity at the country level.

owned agri-enterprises and / or facilitating their access to knowledge, technology, finance, infrastructure, inputs and markets.

▶ **Specific gender assessments, analyses and project proposals within NAIPs:** Malabo-compliant NAIPs should include sections which explicitly address gender issues. These may be stand-alone chapters or short sections within each substantive chapter. The treatment of gender issues within a NAIP development process may include two three distinct elements:

▷ **Gender audit:** This is an assessment of the extent to which gender-related commitments have been addressed by existing policies, investment plans and recommendations so as to align with the Malabo Declaration.

▷ **Gender analyses** of the alternative investment proposals contained within NAIPs, with a view to illustrating their differential 'returns on gender', can be used a basis for prioritising investments.

▷ **Committed funding streams**, projects and policy proposals can:

▶ Build the capacity of relevant national institutions to expressly integrate gender perspectives into the core functions of the agricultural sector.

▶ Foster inter-ministerial cooperation and other strategic partnerships with development partners, the private sector, universities and civil society organisations (CSOs) which synergise agricultural programmes and avoid overlapping and duplicated effort.



© GIZ

▶ Establish dedicated gender units and gender focal persons who will follow through on gender-related activities.

▶ Support gender advocacy work, including that of CSOs. This could include the creation and role modelling of 'gender champions'.

▶ Invest in gender-responsive knowledge management and M&E systems.



© GIZ

How Gender Dimensions are Measured in the CAADP Biennial Review

Several commitments and indicators call for inclusivity, but two indicators of the CAADP Biennial Review explicitly measure women's and youth's involvement in agriculture:

Malabo Commitment	Commitment Performance Category	Objectives	Indicator	Target value
Halving Poverty, by 2025, Through Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation	4.3 Youth jobs in agriculture	Engage youth in agricultural sector development to contribute to reduced levels of unemployment and poverty.	4.3 Percentage of youth engaged in new job opportunities in agriculture value chains.	30%
	4.4 Women's participation in agri-business	Promote initiatives that facilitate preferential entry and participation of women in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities.	4.4 Proportion of rural women empowered in agriculture.	20%

Further Information

- ▶ AfDB (2016). *Jobs for Youth in Africa*. (Accessed 13 August 2018). African Development Bank: Abidjan. - [View](#)
- ▶ AGRA (2015). *Africa Agriculture Status Report 2015: Youth in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa*. - [View](#)
- ▶ AU (no date). *African Union Gender Strategy Draft Two (2018–2027)*. African Union: Addis Ababa.
- ▶ AU (2015). *African Gender Scorecard 2015*. African Union: Addis Ababa. - [View](#)
- ▶ Asante-Dartey, J. and George, C.A. (2018). *Priority Action for Effective Engagement of Women in Agribusiness – Policy Brief Recommendations for Malabo Domestication*. African Union, NEPAD, CAADP. - [View](#)
- ▶ COMESA (no date). *Regional Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Agriculture and Climate Change – Strategic Framework 2011 – 2015*.
- ▶ McKinsey Global Institute (2015). *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth*.
- ▶ FAO (2011) *The State of Food and Agriculture (2010–2011). Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Rome. - [View](#)
- ▶ UNESCO (2017). *UNESCO and Gender Equality in Sub-Saharan Africa: Innovative Programmes, Visible Results*. - [View](#)

Other declarations and strategies on gender:

- ▶ African Union Gender Policy (2009).
- ▶ Beijing Platform for Action (1995).
- ▶ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).
- ▶ Dakar Platform for Action (1994).
- ▶ Sustainable Development Goal 5 – focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.
- ▶ UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) – on Women, Peace, and Security.
- ▶ The World Bank Gender Action Plan (2006) – labels investments in women's empowerment and gender equality 'smart economics'.

Published by: African Union Commission - Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture (AUC-DREA) and African Union Development Agency – NEPAD

Prepared by: Juliana Asante-Dartey

Designed by: Twaai Design

Supported by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

ISBN-Number: 978-1-928527-01-5

Date: June 2019