

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The [2019 ReSAKSS Annual Conference](#) was organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) on 11-13 November in Lomé, Togo. Convened under the theme of *Gender Equality in Rural Africa: From Commitments to Outcomes*, the conference brought together over 140 participants to discuss findings of the [2019 Annual Trends and Outlook Report \(ATOR\)](#), on the same gender theme, and to review progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Conference participants included representatives of AUC, regional economic communities, advocacy groups, and farmers' organizations as well as policy makers, policy analysts, researchers, and development partners.
2. The conference was officially opened by the Honorable Mr. Noël Koutéra Bataka, Togo's Minister of Agriculture, Animal Production, and Fisheries, who stressed the importance of addressing the gendered agricultural productivity gap and highlighted efforts of his ministry to improve women's productivity and socioeconomic conditions.
3. On behalf of Her Excellency Josefa L. C. Sacko, Commissioner of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission (AUC-DREA), Dr. Afeikhen Jerome, a Special Advisor to the Commissioner, noted Africa's commitment to achieving gender equality and enhancing women's empowerment. He also highlighted the significant challenges African women face due to "...unequal distribution of resources, power and wealth, combined with social institutions and norms that sustain inequality."
4. The conference keynote address was delivered by Ms. Monica Kipiriri, a development facilitator, who highlighted the importance of "minding the cracks" especially when there is a narrow working definition of gender, the role of institutions is underestimated, and the focus is placed on removing constraints and not the root causes of gender inequality. She advocated the need to invest in transformative change that addresses the underlying root causes of gender inequality and to continually assess formal and informal laws, practices, and norms that govern interactions between people and resources.
5. The 2014 Malabo Declaration outlines seven commitments to enhance livelihoods through inclusive agricultural growth. Gender-sensitive policy and programming have an integral role to play in fostering inclusive agricultural growth to meet these commitments. Ending hunger, reducing poverty, boosting intra-African trade, and increasing resilience to climate and other risks will require examining how gender differences affect our ability to achieve these outcomes. This means paying attention to both women and men, and not just to women alone.
6. The 2019 ATOR applies a gender lens to several issues that must be addressed to fully achieve the goals outlined by the Malabo Declaration. Conference participants discussed issues raised in the 2019 ATOR through six plenaries on: 1) women's empowerment in African agriculture; 2) gender: social norms and leadership; 3) gender and assets: productivity, land and financial capital; 4) gendered livelihoods; 5) gender, resilience, and social protection; and 6) progress toward achieving Malabo Declaration goals.

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women's Empowerment in African Agriculture

1. The [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index \(WEAI\)](#), is a survey-based index developed by USAID, IFPRI & OPHI and launched in 2012 which measures inclusion of women in the agricultural sector.

2. WEAI results from seven African countries reveal main sources of disempowerment to include (1) not having access to and decision-making power over credit; (2) control over the use of income; and (3) having an excessive workload.
3. Women must be able to participate in productive activities, receive the income, and have some control over how the income is spent to enjoy the benefits of rural transformation on par with men.
4. Because women's economic and social roles (especially in rural economies) are interdependent, data need to be generated on both economic and social outcomes, and measures need to track their interdependence. And because women's individual and household choices are linked, data should also be generated and analyzed at both the individual and household levels.
5. To improve sex-disaggregated data collection and use, there is a need to build connections between data producers and policymakers to inform nuanced policies that can deliver for rural women and girls.

Gender: Social Norms and Leadership

1. Gender norms are social expectations that influence behaviors and practices that create invisible barriers that can undermine women's economic empowerment. Shifting gender norms requires formative research, a community-mobilization intervention, engagement with community leaders, and repeated instances for dialogue and debate.
2. Gender parity in political and agricultural leadership is lacking on the continent despite evidence that suggests that gender diversity in leadership contributes to organizational growth. It is important to create an enabling environment to provide a level playing field for all, especially women and youth by removing systemic barriers that constrain women from taking on leadership positions and collecting evidence of transformative leadership. There is need to hold leaders accountable for leadership and gender equality results.
3. Nutrition policies can improve gender equality and malnutrition outcomes simultaneously. Men have an important supportive role to play in maternal and child nutrition. As the custodians of culture, traditional leaders can positively influence gender equality and nutrition outcomes. Policy makers need to work with gender experts to strengthen the integration of gender across all levels of policy.

Gender and Assets: Productivity, Land and Financial Capital

1. A high proportion (30-80 percent) of economically active women Africa South of Sahara work in agriculture. Yet, women in agriculture have less access to resources and lower productivity than men.
2. Addressing the gender productivity gap requires policies that help to increase women's access to labor (particularly male labor), increase the value of crops grown by women, and improving women farmers' access to and use of nonlabor inputs in agricultural production. This in turn requires changing norms of what is acceptable for women, improving women's access to producer groups, markets, and women's control over income, and recognizing women's contributions to joint household plots.
3. Despite recent gender-friendly land reforms in Africa, women's land rights remain insecure. Population pressure, commercialization of agriculture, commodification of land, and increased land values have eroded women's land rights.
4. There is need to prioritize hot spot areas (with high or rising land values) for gender sensitive land tenure regularization programs and to complement land rights protection programs with explicit provisions for women's land rights and legal literacy programs not only to maximize the potential gender parity outcomes of such programs but to also ensure their sustainability.
5. Women's financial inclusion is important for agriculture and enterprises but is limited by constraints of time, legal rights, human capacity, security concerns, and lack of money. About 6-19 percent of women smallholders and 14-34 percent entrepreneurs have a formal bank account.

- There are some promising financial sector innovations that specifically target women, including microfinance institutions, village savings and loan associations, mobile banking, integrated micro-insurance programs, and fintech programs. Gender transformative financial inclusion requires making financial systems “womenable” rather than making women bankable. This will require changing rules and practices, regulatory systems and social norms, and improving women’s skills, knowledge, and resources.

Gendered Livelihoods

- Enhancing livelihood opportunities for rural African youth needs to address unique barriers faced by young women and young men. Rural young women, compared to men, transition to adulthood with fewer resources, such as education and land access, and their family responsibilities limit school and paid employment opportunities.
- Patterns of economic change may not be helping African rural youth. That is, at higher levels of structural and rural transformation, landownership and current employment are lower, more youth are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) and these outcomes are even worse among young women. Interventions to improve youth livelihoods need to consider both productive reproductive responsibilities of young women and men.
- The focus on agricultural value chains has shifted from a narrow focus on women’s involvement to addressing barriers and constraints for different nodes of value chains, across sectors and enterprises. Reducing inequality can improve competitiveness and foster greater gender equity in economic participation, ultimately boosting economic growth. Approaches for achieving this can include focusing on value chains where women are heavily engaged, removing barriers to women’s participation, and working with women’s groups, co-operatives, and public private partnerships to ensure their activities are gender-sensitive.
- Men and women differ in their ability to benefit from trade. A case study of Niger shows that increased trade openness through the country’s adoption of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff would widen the gender gap in employment because of lower supply response of women-led activities compared to men. Closing the gender gap in access to employment, productive resources, and trade will be profitable not only to women but also to men and the whole economy.

Gender, Resilience, and Social Protection

- Resilience capacities and preferences differ between groups of people, especially along gender lines and social differences. Interventions need to recognize and address these differences in specific settings and to tap into skills and contributions of women and marginalized groups. In addition, approaches to integrate gender into resilience projects should include an assessment of gender differences in exposure and sensitivity to shocks and stressors, resilience capacities, preferences, responses, and well-being outcomes.
- Social Safety Nets (SSNs) in Africa are improving women’s wellbeing despite the evidence being strongly cash transfer dominant. There is strong empirical evidence that SSNs in Africa can decrease intimate partner violence, increase psychological well-being for women, and increase economic standing with minimal changes in labor force participation. However, there is less evidence that SSNs empower women, as studies are limited by measurement concerns. There is need to invest in higher quality evidence generation, to demonstrate impacts of SSNs on women’s well-being and to know how impacts differ by local underlying gender inequalities.

Progress toward Achieving Malabo Declaration Goals

- Progress in CAADP implementation has been commendable and most CAADP indicators have trended in the expected direction since 2003. However, economic growth and the reduction of inequality, poverty, and undernourishment have decelerated while child malnutrition remains relatively high.

2. Both Africa's agriculture sector growth and the share of government agriculture expenditure in total government expenditures grew at 3.2 percent in 2014–2018, below the CAADP 6 percent growth target and below the CAADP 10 percent target. However, in 2014-2018, 15 countries either met or surpassed the 6 percent agricultural growth target while 10 countries met the 10 percent agricultural budget target. There is need to accelerate efforts to transform Africa's agriculture sector by substantially raising agricultural productivity growth.
3. African countries made good progress in preparing the second Biennial Review (BR) report, with 49 countries out of 55 African Union (AU) member states submitting a country report to the AU. The consolidated continental BR report is due to be presented at the AU summit of heads of state and government in February 2020.
4. As a result of BR data improvements led by ReSAKSS in five pilot countries: Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, and Togo; data quality for the second BR is higher in the BR pilot countries compared to non-pilot countries while the pilot countries completed more data indicators, parameters, and sources in the second BR compared to the first BR. Factors contributing to the overall higher performance in the pilot countries include an assessment of the gaps in the inaugural BR, creation of data clusters and targeted training to address the gaps, and the engagement of relevant stakeholders.
5. ReSAKSS continues to provide analytical support to guide the design of second-generation national agriculture investment plans (NAIPs 2.0) in African countries; in 2019, the analytical support covered 32 AU member states. By the end of October 2019, Malabo status assessment and profile reports had been finalized for 31 countries while Malabo goals and milestones reports had been completed for 24 countries.