

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Tuesday, 4 May 2021 09:00 GMT +00:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Gender-Responsive Investments in Africa's Agriculture for Inclusive Food Systems
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Dr Yemi Akinbamijo/Dr Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa/ African Women in Agricultural Research and Development
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/10415/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/10415/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Independent
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	No borders

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

# 1. PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

303

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

134

19-30

152

31-50

21

51-65

66-80

80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

145 Male

161 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

13 Trade and commerce

42 Education

3 Communication

2 Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

2 Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

126 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

42 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

27 Government and national institution

2 Regional economic community

3 United Nations

4 International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

51 Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

### HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The dialogue was built on the recognized urgent need for strengthening the engagement among research, extension, and private sector to increase gender-responsive investments in AR4D. In respect of the principle of multi-stakeholder inclusivity, FARA together with AWARD, AFAAS, and the sub regional organizations (ASARECA, CORAF, CCARDESA), engaged with a wide range of stakeholders who participated openly and actively. The dialogue employed a facilitation approach, panel discussions, poll questions and open feedback to ensure robust discussion on gender inclusivity in the private sector engagement. The announcement of the webinar was made on all partner platforms including the Food Systems fraternity. A key-note address was given by the custodian of gender equality change lever of the UN Food Systems Summit who gave insights on Gender-Responsive Investments in Africa's Agriculture for Inclusive Food Systems. The follow up panel discussion responded to the key-note address. Panelists were carefully selected from private sector, youth business, regional economic community, development partner, extension, and research. The main output of the webinar was a draft policy brief on prioritizing gender-responsive and inclusive investments in Agriculture, which aimed at bringing the specific science evidence-based actions that supports the achievement of SDGs by African Countries.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogue recognized that the issues of Gender equality in Africa's Food System are complex and diverse. The dialogue also recognized that to address these issues, there is a need to engage stakeholders who realize the urgent need to increase investment in gender responsive approaches. It is anticipated that the stakeholders will remain active, and work to complement the efforts of each other. Additionally, the panelists and discussions were addressed by stakeholders who were carefully selected to represent the wide range of actors including men, women, and youth, in efforts to ensure inclusivity in the joint actions. Also, the dialogue reflected specific aspects of the UN-FSS principles through different stakeholders' consultation, whereby break out sessions were convened representing the different sub regions in Africa, including extension services. Key areas of focus were capacity strengthening, strategies for adoption and policy recommendations towards increased gender inclusive investments.

### DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

The dialogue recognizes the importance of engagement with multiple stakeholders as the diverse views provide broader insights into specific actions. This increases the sense of ownership by all stakeholders towards implementing actions leading to achievement of SDGs.

# 3. METHOD

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The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

**DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?**

**Yes**

**No**

# 4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

## MAJOR FOCUS

The dialogue focused on an exploration of private sector investment in gender-responsive food system in Africa. It was noted that despite important initiatives advocating for gender equality for African agriculture development, there is still an increasing demand in the continent to ensure greater visibility and productivity for women who are central to food production and food security on the continent.

On the topic of equal access – There is ample evidence suggesting that there is substantial difference in women and men access, use of financial services and capital. Women, however, still lack savings, collateral to start new businesses and grow existing ones. Most often, social, and institutional support systems do not protect farmers, particularly women farmers against lost and shocks.

Discussions on capacity development within the sector, women in Africa largely lack essential business skill, particularly rural women. There are still gender differentiator social capital in terms of access to the network and social interaction that promotes business for both women and men, especially in the rural areas. The institutional framework for promoting private sector investment across Africa, are still skewed in favor of foreign direct investment, and still not targeted at indigenous growth. Thus, the institutional framework is still relatively weak or lacking in different countries.

While there are gross variations across countries in Africa, many institutions are still not investing adequately in gender-inclusive strategies and actions. For example, growth is still disintegrated, disjointed across the value chains development (production, processing, distribution, or consumption). Most private sector development investment and service providers still advocate in the agricultural sector, demonstrating a lack of gender competencies. Gender-specific needs of men and women, therefore, need to be prioritized. Policy programmes and agricultural development strategies must include their interest and intersections with other identity actors.

On the other hand, the dialogue recognized that agricultural value chains begin at the research stage and must begin by supporting the ability of researchers to lead and develop gender-responsive innovations. Agricultural value chains start at the research stage and embed the gender lens at the beginning-end of the value chains. Evidence has confirmed that gender-responsive research is more efficient, more inclusive, better targeted, and more relevant innovations with higher adoption rates. Most important are the ongoing efforts by AWARD, to ensure that women are conducting research and are also empowered to deliver the very best for the continent.

AWARD has therefore developed a model that tracks what empowerment looks like, and some of the elements measured are power from within, power to do, power over resources – the power to be able to attract funding, for example into their research institutions, power to collaborate – that's power with, and most importantly, the power to empower others. The dialogue therefore embodied an open collaboration in building science skills, synergy, expanding networks, growing institutional capacity, advancing women leadership in Agricultural research, advancing policy for inclusive agricultural research and collaborative training.

### ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

## MAIN FINDINGS

Attaining sustainable inclusion of women in Africa's Food System, requires a set of game-changing actions by stakeholders. These include but are not limited to:

Increase capacity to a gender-inclusive private sector engagement.

Access to proven technologies will help improve food production and food security, and job and wealth creation for women and youth across the value chains. Having the technology at scale will help more women and youth to access the technology for their agribusiness development. Thus, the need for private sector engagement to produce the technology and put them at scale.

Additionally, promotion of gender-sensitive technology that meet women's needs, labor-saving and very simple to operate by non-educated youth. Hence, promoting research products that do not add to women's daily workload and household engagements. With the availability of proven technologies, the private sector can put them at scale and enable conditions to facilitate the adoption and use of the technologies by women and youth. Therefore, it is essential to build the capacity of women and youth for efficient use of the technology. This can be across the incubation centers or other ways of mechanism for capacity building. Similarly, capacity building is needed for the private sector to address the specific needs of women and youth in terms of technologies and solutions that fit their needs and other productive resources to increase sustainable agribusiness development.

Building up policy support for gender-responsive investment.

Research must aim to solve the market's need and be in line with the need for women who are primarily involved in agricultural trade. Also, research must consider women and meet their needs. Research must, therefore, target at developing products that meet the needs of women who use agricultural services. Ensure inclusivity and diversity in frameworks by considering the needs of women and vulnerable groups and establish approaches that meet the needs of all groups of people. This can be done by understanding the environment to develop policies that cover the different cultures of the people they will serve towards ensuring collective uptake of policies and participation of all actors.

Advocacy by RECs for gender-responsive products and investments at member states is also crucial while at the same time, RECs to leverage their position as regional coordinators to mobilize support for gender-response policies in member states.

On extension, the ratio of women extension to men is very low most because extension agent and services are not gender sensitive. In some countries like Ethiopia and Sudan, women have almost no access to extension services. In Sierra Leone, for example, less than 5% of women have access to extension agent. This is limiting women's productivity/yields. To solve the financial issue for women, a women's cooperative can be created to train them on business practices and technology and increase the ratio of women extension agents in agricultural services. Cultural and religious barriers for instance, where men do not want their women to be in close contact with men, often limit women's access to extension services or resources.

Develop Strategies for implementing a gender-responsive food system.

Women need to be provided with the solution because they need the solutions, research products, communication products, market access and linkages. So, women need to be involved in developing the solutions. Research needs to have them at the table to let the researchers know what they need and vice-versa. There is a need to put the women at the forefront, to be the advisers to researchers as they conduct their research and other field experiments.

There is a need to design an approach that encompasses all the groups and meet the need of all the people including the youth, vulnerable groups, and women. Also, there is a need to operate intelligently on the uneven field, making it even and bring onboard women and the vulnerable group to have a part in this uneven environment where the policymakers and private sectors tend to dominate and exclude the women. Hence, we need to ensure that our framework brings women, vulnerable groups, and youth onboard to have a voice in this uneven terrain. Member states need to push for policies that address critical issues for women and youth. Also, RECs have a solid role to play in lobbying, advocating and influence investments and gender-responsive products.

Exploring an integrated or combination approach is critical given that gender is a cross-cutting approach, and it involves different institutions and stakeholders. Stakeholders should therefore examine the involvement of the private sector because most are looking at profit-making as their primary interest. Hence, the need for a balanced perspective to understand why the private sector wants to advocate and help mainstream issues of gender. Private sector involvement is essential, but there is a need to define the extent of their participation, especially in assessing and managing risks. It is therefore imperative to strengthen advocacy towards ensuring that women's livelihoods are sustained, and their working conditions are improved and not exploited.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

1. Capacity for gender-inclusive private sector engagement
  - i. Access to proven technologies will help improve food production and food security, and job and wealth creation for women and youth across the value chains.
  - ii. Promotion of gender-sensitive technology that meet women's needs, labor-saving and very simple to operate by non-educated youth.
  - iii. Build the capacity of women and youth for efficient use of the technology. This can be across the incubation centres or other ways of mechanism for capacity building.
  - iv. Capacity building is needed for the private sector to address the specific needs of women and youth in terms of technologies and solutions that fit their needs and other productive resources to increase sustainable agribusiness development.
  - v. Build technical skills and capacity of women researchers and provide mentorship to women who tend to be grossly underrepresented in research leadership on the continent
2. Building up policy support for gender-responsive investment
  - i. Research must aim to solve the market's need and consider women' needs. It must also be targeted at developing products that meet the needs of women who use agricultural services.
  - ii. Policy programmes and agricultural development strategies must include and prioritize gender-specific needs of men and women.
  - iii. Understand the environment to develop policies that cover the different cultures of the people they'll serve towards ensuring collective uptake of policies and participation of all actors.
  - iv. Regional Economic Communities in Africa must leverage their position as regional coordinators to mobilize support for gender-response policies in member states.
  - v. Member states need to push for a policy that has been made to address critical issues for women and youth. Also, COMESA and other RECs have a solid role to play in lobbying, advocating and influence investments and gender-responsive products
3. Women and youth empowerment
  - i. Empowering women through access to finance and markets while accelerating job creation for women through skills enhancement and increase in women's access to social services through infrastructural development.
  - ii. Provides quality information for women to scale up modern agriculture practices and enhance access to farm inputs.
  - iii. Provides youth with the complete ecosystem of the value chain in ideation, acceleration, financing, coaching, and mentorships.
  - iv. Improve gender equality and women's empowerment as pathway to get closer to food and nutrition security.
  - v. Strengthen advocacy towards ensuring that women's livelihoods are sustained and their working conditions are improved and not exploited
4. Data and evidence
  - i. Provide one-stop-shop for gender indicators and sex-disaggregated data across the food systems.
  - ii. Ensure that young people have access to data and accurate data to make a precise decision and scale up their business across the continent.
5. Innovation
  - i. Facilitation and the application of science, technology and innovation in African agriculture while tightening the loop between technology generation, adoption, refinement, use of technologies and its commercialization.
  - ii. Deploy innovative solutions to addressing critical issues on issues on climate change, cultural, political and economic environment, and agricultural systems in particular
  - iii. Develop technologies with the users, the people who will use them because it ensures that they are going to address the needs and priorities of the users.

### ACTION TRACKS

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|---|--|
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### KEYWORDS

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|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
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| ✓ |                           | ✓ | Environment and Climate |



## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Some divergence areas were highlighted during the dialogue as listed below:

- o In the food systems approach, technology cannot be looked at in isolation. It is not just about putting technology on a farm, but also ensuring that the market systems is working such that if farmers invest in the technology, they can make money out of their investment.
- o Across countries, mainly agriculture, forestry, natural resource management, climate change, trade policies, and investment do not always include or provide for gender equality and women's empowerment. In many cases, efforts for women's empowerment has been limited to initiatives that sometimes fall outside of the policy framework.
- o When talking about women in agriculture or women in food systems, stakeholders should go back to the roles women play in the sector. Thus, the need to reframe the conversation to reflect how our food and agricultural systems contribute to achieving empowerment and justice.
- o Agricultural value chains start at the research stage and embed that gender lens at the beginning-end of the value chains is critical.
- o Governance remains a key part/output for gender-responsive agricultural research.
- o Gender-responsive policies should not only be limited to production but cutting across the entire agricultural value chains including agri-finance, agro-processing, access to inputs and research.
- o The pandemic had devastated so much with the countries, but it also presented a tremendous opportunity to show that these adaptations are possible. That, it is possible for people to work from home and be productive.
- o Recognize that gender mainstreaming is about the empowerment of women and the building of individuals, organizational, and institutional capacities to mainstream gender.
- o Most agricultural policies mainly focus on the production, processing, and marketing aspects of the value chains. In nearly all cases, these policies do not look at matters on relations of production.
- o Examine the involvement of the private sector because most are looking at profit-making as their primary interest. Hence, the need for a balanced perspective to understand why the private sector wants to advocate and help mainstream issues of gender.

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