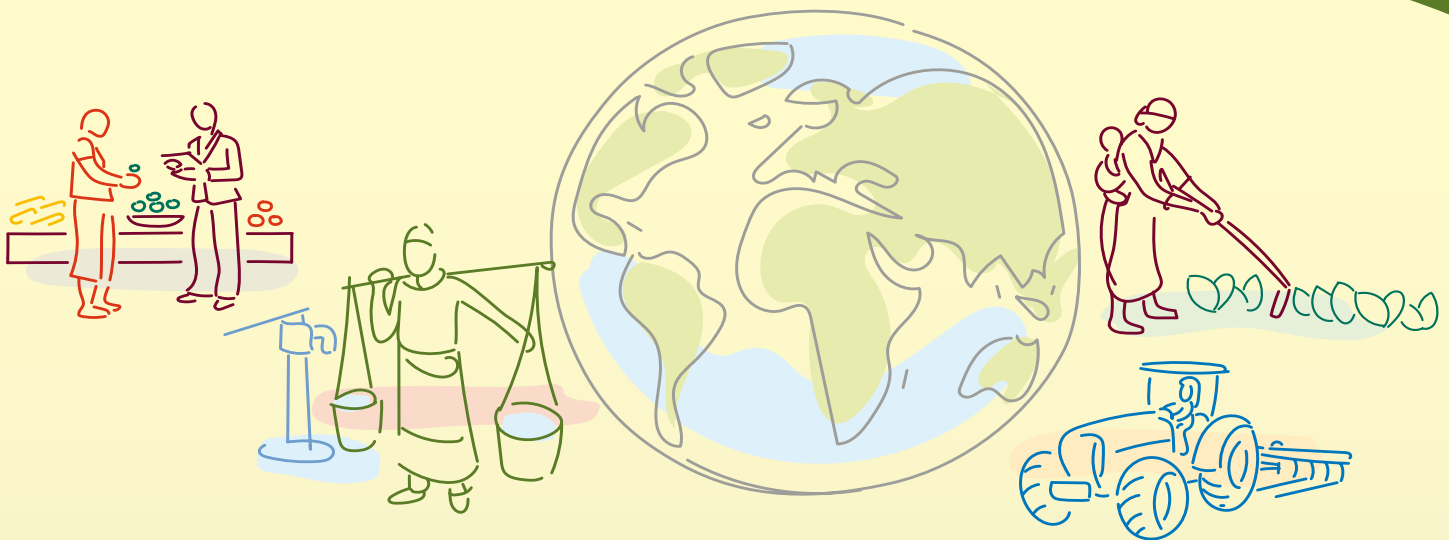


Together: Strengthening Women's Voices for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

18th to 20th of February 2025, Nairobi

KEY TAKE-AWAYS



Imprint

The conference “Together: Strengthening Women’s Voices for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems” was organised by



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Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and of the participants of the event and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

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Foreword



The *Together* conference on strengthening women's voices in agriculture and food systems (AFS) was more than just a gathering; it was a powerful statement of intent, a collective commitment to driving real change. Over the course of three days, farmers, policymakers, researchers, civil society organisations (CSO), and development practitioners came together to exchange ideas, share best practices, and forge pathways toward a more equitable and sustainable agrifood future.

From the outset, the discussions underscored a critical reality: women are at the heart of global AFS. Contributing over 60% of the agricultural workforce in Sub-Saharan Africa, they play a fundamental role in ensuring food security, economic stability, and rural development.¹ Yet, their potential remains constrained by structural inequalities: limited access to land, financial resources, and decision-making spaces.

We were honored to hear from leaders who framed this urgency with clarity and conviction. Theresa Herbold, Senior Policy Advisor at Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), opened the conference by declaring: *"We need women as change agents... Empowering women could increase the productivity of farmers by nearly 25 %, boost global GDP by 1 %, and improve food security for 45 million people."*² This potential cannot remain untapped." She highlighted Germany's feminist development policy, which anchors gender equality in the "3Rs" framework; *rights, resources, and representation* and called for systemic collaboration: *"Let's push for a new narrative where including women is not regarded as a courtesy anymore, but where women are recognized for their power to drive transformative change."*

Laban Kiplagat, Agricultural Engineering Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development,

echoed this call to action: *"This is not just a conference, it must be a catalyst. Governments, businesses, and communities must work together to remove barriers, invest in women-led solutions, and create spaces where women lead. The future of our agri-food systems depends on it."* He emphasized the need for documented outcomes to guide continental policy shifts, ensuring women's leadership is *"recognized and supported at all levels."*

Elke Siehl, Director General at GIZ, grounded the dialogue in evidence: *"When women are empowered, entire households and communities' benefit. Food security improves, poverty decreases, and resilience to climate change strengthens."* She cited FAO data showing that equal access to resources could raise women's farm yields by 20–30 %, boosting national agricultural output by 2.5–4 %³. *"We need bold steps beyond panels and workshops to center gender justice in food systems."*

Throughout the sessions, one theme remained central: recognition is not enough; action is required. The lively discussions, interactive workshops, and inspiring testimonials demonstrated the depth of expertise and dedication among participants. But the real measure of success will be in the impact we create beyond the conference halls.

As we move forward, let this report serve as both a reflection of the rich exchanges shared and a roadmap for tangible change. The opening speeches call for coordinated efforts to dismantle barriers and create inclusive spaces where women can lead. The future of our AFS depend on it, and together, we have the power to shape a more just and sustainable world for generations to come.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all speakers, panelists, organisers, and participants for their invaluable contributions.

1 FAO (2024): The Status of Women in Agri-food Systems, p. 22.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e7689bf7-00f0-465b-ad03-e0c56ffb14b1/content>

2 FAO (2024): The Status of Women in Agri-food Systems, p. 185.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e7689bf7-00f0-465b-ad03-e0c56ffb14b1/content>

3 FAO (2011): The State of Food and Agriculture, p.5. <https://www.fao.org/4/i2050e/i2050e01.pdf>

Introduction



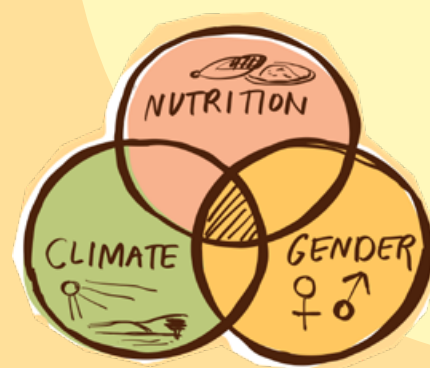
Participants from 17 countries participated at the conference.

The Conference *Together: Strengthening Women's Voices for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems*, held from 18th to 20th of February 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, brought together more than 80 participants from diverse sectors, including civil society, academia, farmers' organisations, research, and government, with a strong focus on local actors from 17 countries in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Mali) and other regions (Germany, India, Italy, USA). It was organised by the the Feminist Approaches to Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems (FemHub) project, with the goal of fostering inclusive and equitable agriculture and food systems. The conference provided a platform to discuss how to strengthen women to achieve full, equal, and meaningful participation in policy, programming, and decision-making processes within AFS.

The three-day program blended **high-level panels, interactive formats such as workshops, market-places and participatory theater** to bridge policy discourse with on-the-ground realities. Key themes included:



- Policy-Level of Gender Equality
- Civil Society as Drivers of Change
- The Climate-Nutrition-Gender Nexus
- Intergenerational Leadership
- Market Systems & Economic Justice
- Innovative Approaches to Work Toward Gender Equality

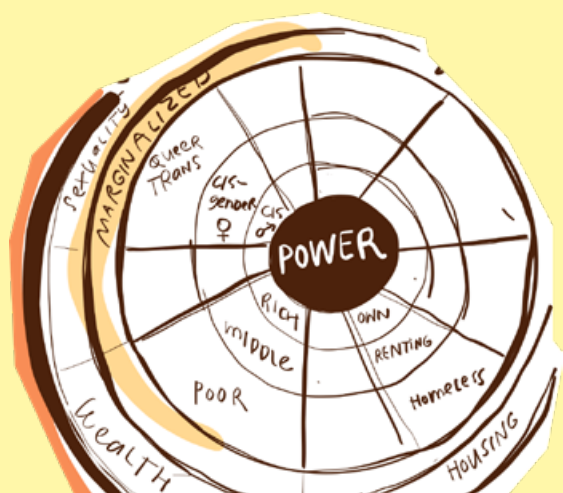


Throughout the three days, a recurring message was clear: true representation goes beyond mere presence. Participants emphasized that inclusive food systems require more than filling gender quotas – they demand meaningful participation, where women actively shape policies and practices. Across panels and workshops, many reflected on the persistent gap between participation and power. In decision-making spaces such as farmers’ unions or policy bodies, women are often present, yet rarely hold influential roles. One case from Malawi, for example, revealed that while women made up nearly half the union’s membership, they held fewer than 15% of executive positions – what a participant aptly described as “representation without representation.”



Barriers to effective participation are multifaceted: deeply rooted gender norms, structural inequalities, and the triple burden of productive, reproductive and community work continue to limit women’s ability to engage fully in governance. As one Nigerian farmer remarked, “You can’t focus on policy meetings when you’re worried about your children’s next meal.”

These reflections highlight a key takeaway of the conference: without addressing the structural and social barriers that limit women’s voice and leadership, efforts toward inclusive food systems will fall short.



I. Towards gender just agriculture and foods systems – from policy to transformation



1. Global and regional commitments to gender equality in AFS

Global efforts to create more inclusive, sustainable AFS led to the development of several overarching policy frameworks. These processes work toward integrating gender equality, support representation, and provide resources for women into agricultural policies and practices. As part of the ongoing global dialogue on AFS, these frameworks contribute to the broader vision of sustainable agriculture and food security while amplifying women's voices, particularly in areas that have traditionally marginalized them.



a. CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (CFS VG GEWE)

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS), through its [Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Food Security and Nutrition \(CFS VG GEWE\)](#), provides a critical framework for addressing gender disparities in AFS.

The guidelines recognize women's vital contribution to food security and nutrition and call for the protection of their rights, particularly regarding access to land, resources, and services. They emphasize women's participation in decision-making at household, community, and governance levels, guiding actors on integrating gender approaches into agricultural and food systems policies. However, as discussed during the conference, the CFS VG GEWE remain underutilized: existing guidelines are often not translated into concrete policies, and where they are, implementation frequently falls short.



b. United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS)

The United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), in 2021 marked a pivotal moment for rethinking global food systems and recognizing the essential role of women in ensuring food security and sustainable agriculture. A key outcome was the recognition of gender equality as a foundational element for building sustainable and inclusive food systems. The summit underscored the need for gender-responsive policies and greater investment in women's leadership across areas such as food production, nutrition, and climate-resilient agriculture.

Empowering women in agriculture was highlighted not only as a matter of human rights, but also as critical to tackling global challenges like food insecurity, malnutrition, climate change, and poverty. By fostering women's leadership, the summit called for environments in which women actively participate in shaping the policies and practices that affect them and the broader food system.

c. Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Kampala Agenda

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), established by the African Union, aims to support African countries in advancing inclusive, sustainable agricultural development that fosters food security, economic growth, and resilience. Gender equality is a key component of this continental initiative. [The Kampala Agenda](#) specifically recognizes the importance of gender-responsive policies in addressing the challenges faced by women farmers, from access to productive resources to decision-making power. These

frameworks ensure that women's rights to land ownership, financial services, and equal access to technology and education are protected, thus strengthening their ability to contribute to sustainable agricultural development.

d. Other relevant frameworks

In addition to the aforementioned frameworks, other global and regional policy processes further contribute to gender equality in agriculture.

The [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa \(Maputo Protocol\)](#) is a landmark legal framework adopted by the African Union in 2003 to advance women's rights across the continent. In the context of AFS, it has helped push for legal reforms and advocacy that improve women's access to land, resources, and decision-making power – key levers for gender equality and sustainable development in African AFS.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995), adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women, continues to influence gender policies worldwide, advocating for women's economic empowerment, participation in decision-making, and access to resources.

The [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), adopted by the UN in 1979, requires state parties to eliminate discrimination and promote equality across all areas of life – including education, employment, and political participation. In AFS, CEDAW has been instrumental in shaping legal and policy frameworks that promote equal access to land, productive resources, credit, training, and rural development services with

Article 14 highlighting the rights of rural women, recognizing their crucial role in food security and calling for their full participation in development planning and implementation. Likewise, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly [Goal 5 \(Gender Equality\)](#) and [Goal 2 \(Zero Hunger\)](#) emphasize women's critical role in sustainable AFS.

Each of these overarching transformation processes serves to address the deep-rooted gender inequalities within AFS.

Policies play a crucial role in addressing structural inequalities and securing women's rights to land, finance, and agricultural resources. Well-crafted policies improve women's situation, ultimately strengthening agrifood systems as a whole.

While recognizing these frameworks' value, participants rightfully remarked that, even though best-practice examples exist, policies without funding are ineffective with most frameworks lacking enforcement mechanisms. Often, policies are poorly implemented, and global frameworks, when ratified, are not translated into national policies. This was emphasized at different levels: panel 1, Land rights workshop with the case of Cameroon and to further support this, in the Next-Gen Leaders workshop, participants stressed: "Stop having new policies" but rather "Move to action". We must fund projects, implement solutions, and hold stakeholders accountable. Laws exist but customary practices still deny women access to productive resources. And even if related indicators exist, they often focus on participation counts, not decision-making power, masking tokenistic inclusion.

Thus, advocacy efforts, informed by data, ensure these policies are reviewed, while continued stakeholder engagement guarantees their proper implementation. Once in place, these policies serve as a foundation for institutionalizing gender equality cross AFS.

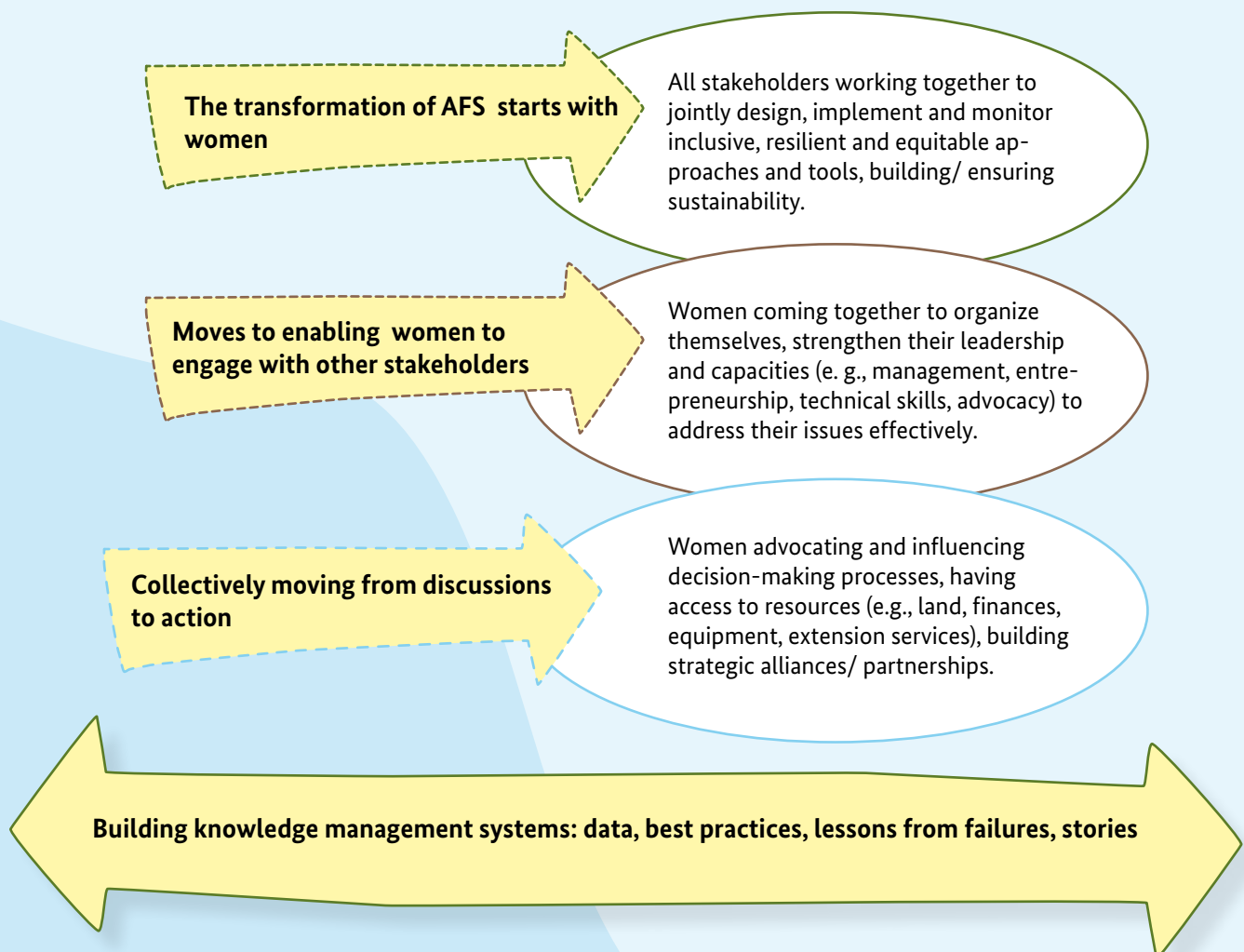


2. Driving change from ground up: An AFS transformation model

The following approach was developed by the conference's facilitation team STRATEGIES! building on collaborative inputs, discussions, and group work during the conference. It aims to crystallize what **Dr. Eileen Nchanji on panel 1** called "*a shared vision for transformation grounded in women's realities.*" The approach unfolds in three **interdependent** stages, with knowledge management systems ensuring sustainability:

The approach assumes that the transformation of AFS starts with women empowering themselves, as they are the backbone of agriculture in many regions.

Recognizing their rights as human rights, women actively organise, build networks, and engage with diverse stakeholders to advocate for systemic change. Through collective action, they contribute to inclusive and equitable approaches and drive transformation within their communities and sectors. Discussions further emphasised the role of governments in establishing strong knowledge management systems and fostering collaboration with development partners, researchers, and civil society. This ensures that efforts are informed by lived experiences and data, enabling adaptable and scalable solutions that support long-term impact.



STEP 1:**The transformation starts with women**

True transformation begins when women recognize their individual and collective power. This foundational stage, emphasised throughout the conference, involves much more than simple training programmes.

The panel on “Gender Change Agents in Civil Society” highlighted with women’s stories how these programmes helped them understand that farming the land should also mean owning it.

**UGANDA**

The experience in UGANDA illustrated the importance of collective organising, capacity building, and mentorship to empower women to influence policy in strategic sectors like fisheries. Women have increasingly entered the traditionally male-dominated fishery sector, recognizing it as a key source of income. However, a recent government policy removed a specific fish species from the market – a move that disproportionately affected women, as it was their main source of livelihood.

Supported by the Eastern Africa Women and Youth in Fisheries and Aquaculture Network (AWFISHNET EA), women are organised to strengthen their advocacy efforts: including technical and entrepreneurial training, through which they have gained the confidence and skills needed to engage in policy dialogue.

Although the policy change was enacted, women are now mobilizing to push for new reforms that will restore their economic opportunities and ensure that future decisions are more inclusive.

STEP 2:**Enabling women to engage with other stakeholders**

With strengthened capacities, women's groups are increasingly moving from localised initiatives to engaging directly with power structures and decision-making spaces. This critical bridging phase – moving from empowerment to influence – was illustrated through different examples.

Both examples underline that strategic engagement is not accidental; it is enabled by capacity building, alliance creation, and access to resources and technical support. As emphasised in several parallel workshops, this phase of transformation requires building bridges between grassroots action and formal institutions, ensuring that women's voices are not just heard but actively shape policy and resource flows.

**BURKINA FASO**

The Association des Femmes 2000 in BURKINA FASO demonstrated how grassroots women's groups can overcome financial exclusion by strategically engaging with banks and microfinance institutions. Through persistent dialogue and partnership-building, they secured credit access for women previously excluded from formal financial systems. This not only improved livelihoods but also enhanced women's collective bargaining power with local institutions – a powerful example of how building strategic alliances can unlock new opportunities.

Similarly, the experience from Uganda's fisheries sector showed how women, after being economically affected by a government-imposed fishing ban on the use of the "hurry up" fishing method used for silver fish, organised themselves to advocate for policy change. Supported by development partners such as GIZ, and through the coordination of the Eastern Africa Women and Youth in Fisheries and Aquaculture Network (AWFISHNET EA), these women launched advocacy actions targeting national policymakers. Their organised efforts included awareness campaigns, policy dialogues, and strategic networking; demonstrating how structured advocacy, grounded in local realities and backed by technical and legal support, can shift policy outcomes.

STEP 3:**All together – Moving to collective action**

The final step in the transformation approach involves all stakeholders working together to move from discussions and isolated actions to collective action. This collaborative effort includes all stakeholders coming together to jointly design, implement and monitor inclusive, resilient and equitable approaches and tools. This phase emphasises the importance of collective action, shared responsibility and accountability in achieving long-term success and as highlighted in different panels and parallel workshops we need to integrate youth, develop climate-friendly approaches and work toward strong governance systems in our countries.

Throughout the transformation process, strengthening knowledge management is a key aspect. This implies for example:

→ Grounding transformation in data and indicators: effective transformation requires solid foundations. Collecting and monitoring gender-disaggregated data and relevant indicators; both quantitative (e.g. land titles issued) and qualitative (e.g. shifts in social norms) is a crucial tool for change. Data informs advocacy by identifying needs, challenges, and gaps while shaping key messages and target audiences. This will help track progress, inform decisions and ensure interventions remain inclusive and evidence-based.

→ Turning data into stories that inspire action: beyond numbers, storytelling plays a powerful role in driving change. Qualitative insights about women's lived experiences are vital, noting that "women's issues are qualitative; about emotions, perceptions, and lived experiences." Documenting success stories of groups/ networks or of individual women's leadership journey, would help make invisible contributions visible. It also highlights both achievements and failures, fueling continuous learning and improvement.

→ Building knowledge management systems for continuity and scale. This could enable stakeholders to document, adapt and scale successful approaches. By capturing a range of experiences, these systems strengthen resilience and ensure that the transformation process remains adaptive and sustainable.

→ Transformation efforts must be expanded and institutionalised to achieve long-term impact. Proven strategies for empowering women, improving access to resources, and advocating for equitable practices must be documented and replicated, allowing for continuous learning and adaptation. The scaling process ensures that successes are not isolated but are expanded to benefit broader communities and future generations. Some best practices were showcased during the conference in the workshops. For example: the Nigeria advocacy training, Kenya's Haki Ardhi initiative, Association des femmes 2000 on access to funds, Kenya paralegal training, etc.



3. Key recommendations

The following recommendations were developed:

POLICY-LEVEL GENDER EQUALITY

- Uptake and implementation of the VG GEWE in the context of food security and nutrition.
- Strengthening women's representation in policy-making related to AFS.
- Harmonising land rights policies across sectors and borders and reviewing customary practices in collaboration with community or civil society leaders.
- Developing legal empowerment manuals to educate women on agricultural contracts and land agreements.

CIVIL SOCIETY AS DRIVERS OF CHANGE

- Legal empowerment and paralegal training for marginalised groups in order to enforce land, labour or resource entitlements on their own behalf.
- Foster community led networks and campaigns that amplify local voices, influence policy agendas, and hold duty bearers to account.
- Design and deploy inclusive strategies, e.g. ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities, addressing age and ethnic discrimination, to remove intersecting obstacles to participation.
- Going beyond representation; ensuring women move from the margins to the center of decision-making, this means talking with and listening to women and stop seeing them as beneficiaries but as partners.
- Providing organisational support to women-led organisations and strengthening their advocacy skills.



TOGETHER

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S VOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE and FOOD SYSTEMS

PANEL WITH GENDER CHANGE AGENTS in CIVIL SOCIETY

PANELISTS: KOBUSINGYE LOVIN (UGANDA NATIONAL WOMEN'S FISH ORG.), SHELWITH MARANYA (AMKA AFRICA JUSTICE INITIATIVE), JENICE ACHIENG AUDI (YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT), NKWAH ELIZABETH NDIBABONGA (DALE WOMEN'S UNION OF FISHING GROUPS), FANJA RAHANTAMALALA (PNFODSA)

LEGAL EMPOWERMENT FOR INCLUSIVITY

"WHICH WORDS REPRESENT THE MOVEMENT FOR YOU?"

PASSION
RESPONSIBLE
TRANSFORM

COURAGE
TOGETHERNESS
RESISTANCE

GO-GETTER
EAGER TO LEARN
KIND

KEEP PUSHING FOR CHANGE

KEEP RESISTING



TRAIN YOUTH IN LEGAL MATTERS
EMPOWER WOMEN WITH LEGAL SKILLS
OFFER PARALEGAL SERVICES
TRAIN WOMEN ON LAWMAKING AND ENABLE THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS
USE RADIO AND DIGITAL MEDIA TO INCREASE AWARENESS
SIMPLIFY LEGAL MATERIAL & MAKE IT EASIER TO CONSUME

TRAIN WOMEN ON ACCESSIBLE AGRI-METHODS > GARDEN < FARMING
STRENGTHEN TRADITIONAL FARMING METHODS
TRAIN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP
STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S KNOWLEDGE
GIVE CERTIFICATIONS
SCALE UP THE PROGRAM

ENCOURAGE/ALLOW USE OF "GRANDMA'S SEEDS"

STAND UP FOR CAMEROON MOTHERS OF A NATION
BEEN CREATING & SELLING ORGANIC FERTILIZER

FIND ALTERNATIVES TO BANKING - INTEREST RATES ARE HIGH

LOBBY FOR RIGHTS & PROTEST FOR PEACE IN CAMEROON

I'VE SEEN THAT MY MOTHER CANNOT MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT LAND WITHOUT MY DAD

YOUNG REPRESENTATION IN FARMERS ORG
GROWN YOUTH WING OF FARMERS ORG
CONNECT YOUTH SO THEY CAN SCALE UP & FIND NEW OPPORTUNITIES
STRENGTHEN YOUTH CAPACITY, PROVIDE MENTORSHIP

HARD FOR A WOMAN TO GET CAPITAL/FUNDING
NEED FOR BETTER FARMERIAN MECHANISMS

CAPACITY BUILDING
KNOWLEDGE SHARING
MENTORING
CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY WOMEN FARMERS

WE CREATED A STRATEGIC PLAN
485 GROUPS OF WOMEN IN UGANDA BECAME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ORG
CREATED A PROFESSIONAL NATIONAL ORG. TO HELP WOMEN BE TAKEN MORE SERIOUSLY

CREATED A FISH INNOVATION CENTER
TRAINING REGIONALLY

SHARING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

GOVERNMENT IS SHARING LOCAL FISHING TO PROMOTE EXPORT FISH - POLITICAL BARRIERS
RAISE AWARENESS ON THE DISCRIMINATING IMPACT OF THE RAIN

HOW CAN WE IMPLEMENT?

WORK TOGETHER TO PUSH FOR CHANGE - YOU MAY NEVER SEE THE CHANGE IN YOUR OWN LIFETIME

YOUTH NEED SUPPORT, YOUTH STRATEGY SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED

CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR ALLIES

ADVOCATE FOR MORE RESOURCES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING
INCLUDING HUSBANDS

THERE IS NEED FOR DATA FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING
- GENERATE MORE EVIDENCE BASED DATA TO COMMUNICATE & ADVOCATE WITH

WE NEED INCLUSIVE INTERSECTIONALITIES



INNOVATIVE FUNDRAISING METHODS NEEDED

MORE WOMEN LEADERS IN GOVERNING ROLES

REDUCE THE CONFERENCE & GO IN TO ACTION
-> GO IN TO THE FARMS



WE HOPE FOR:

EMPOWERED WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

INTER-SECTIONALITY

CAPACITY BUILDING

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

INNOVATE FUNDRAISING METHODS

WORK TOGETHER

WE ARE SAYING NO!



THE CLIMATE-NUTRITION-GENDER NEXUS

- Integrating climate, nutrition, and gender into unified national policies and pooled funding streams.
- Implement cross sectoral programming underpinned by an M&E framework that uses disaggregated indicators covering all nexus dimensions.
- Investing in interdisciplinary research and disaggregated data systems to fill evidence gaps on how gender dynamics shape climate and nutrition outcomes, guiding adaptive policies and programmes.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

- Community-led, participatory approaches, such as the participatory theater, to spark collective reflection and accelerate sustainable social change.
- Bridging the gender digital divide with affordable access and tailored digital literacy to strengthen women and marginalised groups to leverage critical information and technology for greater agency in AFS forming coalitions with male allies through structured engagement to reconfigure power dynamics and ensures men become active proponents of gender justice.

THE SCARF MODEL



The SCARF model outlines five dimensions of social experience that influence human behaviour. It is based on two central assumptions: first, that people are fundamentally motivated to seek rewards and avoid threats; and second, that the brain processes social needs with a similar level of urgency as basic physical needs like food and water.

The model utilises five social drivers of human behaviour. The first initial of each category makes up the S, C, A, R and F of the SCARF model.

- **Status:** How you see yourself and how others see you.
- **Certainty:** How confident you can be of the future.
- **Autonomy:** How much control you have over your life.
- **Relatedness:** How connected you feel to others.
- **Fairness:** How reasonable you feel decisions involving you have been.

The SCARF Model allows us to classify and understand the social triggers that drive our behaviour.



- Implementing awareness campaigns on structural barriers for women's, such as access to land rights.
- Building media coalitions for advocacy, strengthening continental women's platforms, and aligning CSOs messaging.
- Engaging men allies by using proven models like SCARF and working at multiple levels: individual, relational, and cultural (Bridging the Gap workshop).

INTERGENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Implement structured youth mentorship programmes with targeted agribusiness training to develop the next generation of leaders.
- Establish clear pathways and sponsorship programmes within farmer organisations to fast track talented women into governance roles, building a robust leadership pipeline.
- Embed indigenous agricultural wisdom alongside modern techniques in leadership curricula and training modules to create culturally resonant models that drive inclusive change.

MARKET SYSTEMS & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

- Develop inclusive value chains that address structural gender inequalities and enhance women's economic agency.
- Expand certification schemes and equitable market access tailored to women-led enterprises and cooperatives.
- Promote gender-equitable financial services, including group-based lending, savings mechanisms, and alternative credit models.

- Developing strong governance structures and ensuring market linkages (Women in Leadership workshop).

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

For the transformation of AFS to be truly inclusive and sustainable, several crosscutting issues must be systematically embedded throughout the process. These issues ensure that the recommended interventions address the structural inequalities and barriers women face while fostering a resilient and equitable food system. Topics that emerged from the conference as crosscutting issues are:

- **Intersectionality and inclusion** meaning that solutions must be inclusive of race, class, ethnicity, disability, and rural realities - one-size-fits-all does not work.
- **Climate resilience and sustainability** reinforce the long-term viability of these efforts. All actions should be climate-sensitive, integrating mitigation and adaptation strategies to safeguard livelihoods and natural resources.
- **Amplifying voices and storytelling** ensure that women's contributions and challenges are visible, acknowledged and taken into account. Women's stories of leadership, innovation, and resilience help challenge norms, inspire action, and inform policy with lived realities.

The transformation of AFS requires an integrated approach that connects structured interventions with crosscutting considerations to ensure long-term impact. The interconnected nature of data, advocacy, policy development, and scaling ensure that these efforts remain relevant and effective. Moving forward, stakeholders must work collaboratively to implement these pillars while ensuring that crosscutting issues remain central to all actions, making the transformation truly inclusive, sustainable, and impactful.

II. Way forward

Following the successful conclusion of the conference **“Together: Strengthening Women’s Voices for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems,”** the next step is to translate the discussions, insights, and commitments into concrete actions that will drive lasting change. To achieve this, the conference also served as a kickstart for the Community of Practice (CoP) **“Together cultivating gender justice: Transforming agri-food systems”**. The official opening took place at the end of the conference in Nairobi and will be followed by bi-monthly virtual community sessions. These sessions will serve as platforms for continued dialogue, learning and strategy development, as well as action-oriented steps toward gender justice in AFS.

The CoP will bring together approximately 40 participants from 13 countries across Africa, Europe and Asia, representing a diverse mix of stakeholders, including government officials, CSOs, farmers’ representatives, and development agencies. This diverse composition will ensure that a wide range of perspectives and expertise are integrated into the discussions and subsequent actions.

The key objective of the CoP is to create a sustainable, collaborative platform where participants can share knowledge, identify best practices, and define collective strategies for advancing feminist approaches in AFS. By fostering deep connections with like-minded actors across various sectors, the CoP will help generate meaningful change that is inclusive and impactful.



During the CoP meeting in Nairobi, and through a needs assessment filled out by community members, several key topics that are of interest to participants emerged from discussion. These topics are critical to driving gender equity in AFS, and they will be explored in greater depth in the CoP discussions. The sessions will be prepared by the community members themselves. The first four topics out of seven virtual sessions will be:

- **Approaches for gender-transformative capacity building:** This topic will focus on how to design and implement capacity-building programmes that transform gender relations in agriculture. It will examine how training and development initiatives can challenge traditional gender roles and empower women to take on leadership positions within agricultural value chains and food systems.
- **Gender-related Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL):** Developing gender-transformative MEAL systems will be central to ensuring that agricultural and food systems programmes are truly meeting the needs of women. The CoP will explore strategies for measuring gender impacts effectively and holding actors accountable for their commitments to gender justice.

→ **Development of gender strategies for AFS:** Participants will collaborate to create gender-transformative strategies that integrate gender considerations into food systems planning, implementation, and evaluation. This will help ensure that food systems policies not only address the practical needs of women but also promote their strategic empowerment in agricultural development.

→ **Engaging men and boys in strengthening women's voices in AFS:** To create a truly transformative and inclusive environment, it is essential to engage men and boys in challenging gender norms and supporting women's leadership in food systems. The CoP will explore how to design effective strategies for engaging men and boys in fostering gender equity in agricultural processes.

Moving forward, teams will work on each of the above topics to streamline them, ensuring they are not too broad to ensure results from the CoP sessions are actionable, focused strategies that can be directly implemented within the context of AFS. The community is linked to the broader [Partners for Change \(P4C\)](#) - Network through P4C Ambassadors.



