Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition

A Scoping Paper – September 2020

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"Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to achieving the CFS vision to achieve food security for all, by raising levels of nutrition, improving agricultural productivity and natural resource management, and improving the lives of people in rural areas with full and equitable participation in decision-making. Without gender equality and rural women's economic, social and political empowerment, food security will not be achieved."

CFS Forum on Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition, Rome, 2017 (CFS 2017/Inf 21)

Introduction

The purpose of this Scoping Paper, among other things, is to contribute to a preliminary discussion on the development of Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition. Development of such Guidelines is anticipated under the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) 2020-23 Multi-Year Programme of Work. This paper presents a conceptual summary of the subject and a framework through which challenges can be identified. Evidence of the main links between gender equality, women's empowerment, and food security and nutrition is then presented. The Paper categorizes constraints to progress and scopes main elements of an enabling environment to propel change. The Paper then outlines potential policy directions and provides recommendations for consideration by CFS stakeholders in the development of Voluntary Guidelines.

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The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CFS or other institutions involved.

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Abbreviations

CFS	*Committee on World Food Security*
GBV	*Gender-Based Violence*
GDP	*Gross Domestic Product*
GTA	*Gender Transformative Approach*
HLPE	*High Level Panel of Experts*
NGO	*Non-governmental Organization*
SDG	*Sustainable Development Goal*
SIGI	*Social Institutions and Gender Index*
WEAI	*Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*

Executive summary

1. Despite the significant roles and responsibilities that women assume and are ascribed in food systems, often unpaid, and in ensuring food security and nutrition at household, community, national and transnational levels, they face systemic disadvantage in accessing productive resources, services and information. Transformative approaches by all actors are thus required if we are to meet SDG2, the achievement of food security and improved nutrition and, SDG5, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Despite progress in some sectors, gender inequalities and the social norms and structures that support them, specifically in food systems, underpin persistent food and nutrition insecurity and require greater policy attention. However, gender equality can make a substantial contribution to a country's economic growth and is the single most important determinant of food security. Expanding opportunities for women and girls is also an international rights obligation and is essential to women and girls realizing their right to food.

2. A framework, informed by the agency, structures and relations that occupy women's lives, assists in understanding the rationale and need for transformative approaches. By building agency (confidence, self-esteem, knowledge, skills and capabilities), changing relations (the power relations through which people live their lives through intimate relations and social networks and through group membership, activism, and market negotiations) and, transforming structures (the discriminatory social norms, customs, values and exclusionary practices, laws, policies, procedures and services), progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment can be made.

3. Transforming structures represents a response to the deep and stubborn structural barriers that women face in food systems and demands gender-transformative approaches (GTAs). These approaches interpret gender as an issue of social relations as opposed to focusing solely on gender roles. This interpretation, which considers that women and men experience different levels of vulnerability for different reasons, implies that solutions cannot simply target women and ignore more complex and intimate relations and socio-political dynamics. In the realm of food security and nutrition, GTAs open opportunities to tackle bias, discrimination and injustice in more impactful ways than in the past. Because they engage with both women and men to transform the social relations of gender (for example in decision-making, or regarding access to resources) to be more equitable, the potential to accelerate progress towards food security and nutrition is significant.

4. There is overwhelming evidence that gender-based discrimination, or the denial of women's human rights, is one of the major causes of poverty and food and nutrition insecurity.[1] When women are empowered and have the same access as men to productive and financial resources, income opportunities, education and services, there is a consequent increase in agricultural output and a significant reduction in the number of poor and hungry people. An empowered woman can influence the extent to which resources, specifically food, are allocated in the household, benefiting the health and nutrition of the entire family.

5. Though technical, political, financial and other challenges to equality are many and varied, the literature and evidence illustrate that social norms and structural barriers are the primary barriers to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment within the food security and nutrition sphere. Discriminatory social norms, practices and roles shape the gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work; limit women's access to assets, productive resources and

[1] FAO, 2019, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World

markets; and undermine the self-confidence and leadership potential of women.[2] They can also facilitate exploitation and violence.

6. But the denial of rights and entitlements, through formal and informal institutions and laws, is also central to the problem. The widespread and systematic institutional discrimination and bias against women in access to assets, services and information such as – land, credit, education, training and extension, employment opportunities, mobility, climate and market information, and agricultural inputs and technologies – can thus be attributed to the dual challenges of harmful socio-cultural norms and practices and rights denial. The amplifying threat of Covid-19 and its differential impact on women from a food security and nutrition perspective is exacerbating an already alarming situation.

7. This situation sees food-insecure households at higher risk of undernutrition, particularly adolescent girls, women of reproductive age and young children and infants. Lack of access to resources, limited decision-making power, lower educational status and restricted mobility of many women and girls make it difficult for them to meet their nutritional needs, receive adequate nutrition education or access health services. Further, when women lack time for childcare and breastfeeding, due to gendered division of labour or social norms, child undernutrition can result.

8. Healthy enabling environments can accelerate progress significantly. Confronting and changing social norms, capturing more and better gender-related data, reforming and implementing laws, upholding rights and, establishing inclusive multi-stakeholder processes are among the areas where change can be enabled. Transparent, accountable and responsive legal and regulatory mechanisms and governance institutions, that are mandated and inclusive, are fundamental to progress, and the inclusion of women's voice at all levels of decision-making should be an immediate goal.

9. What emerges from this scoping exercise is a need to move beyond the treatment of gender as an issue between women and men, to address gender as relational, and therefore, dynamic and something that can be transformed. Gender relations and the structures that underpin these, can adjust in response to changes in policy contexts, in labour market signals, in inter- and intra-household understanding, and in household- and community-level needs. Moreover, gender relations involve the exercise of agency, and this tells us that we should focus much more on analysis of contextual factors that mediate gender relations and food and nutrition security.

[2] CFS, 2017, Forum on Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition

Section One

Framing the issues

1.1 The case for gender equality[3] and women's empowerment[4] in the quest for food security[5] and nutrition

10. It is understood that gender inequality is both a cause and a consequence of food insecurity. Evidence demonstrates that gender-based discrimination, or the denial of women's rights, is one of the major causes of poverty and food and nutrition insecurity.[6,7] Women are more vulnerable both to chronic food and nutrition insecurity and to food insecurity caused by shocks (illness, disasters or food price rises).[8] In 2019, across all continents, the prevalence of food insecurity was higher for women than for men.[9] But while we have evidence that gender inequality causes food insecurity (levels of hunger are higher in countries with a lower degree of gender equality),[10] we also have evidence that increasing gender equality and the empowerment of women results in improved food security and nutrition.

11. The economic case for closing the gender gap is compelling because gender inequalities limit agricultural productivity and efficiency and, in so doing, undermine development.[11] Increases in GDP and crop production, as well as accelerated poverty alleviation associated with closing the gender gap, are accompanied by other social and economic benefits. Women spend a larger share of their income on children's nutrition, health and education than men, for example.[12] A scope of evidence produces examples of impact that demonstrate a strong case for policy support for, and investment in, gender equality and women's empowerment in order to achieve SDG2:

- The agricultural productivity of women has direct implications on income as well as on the food security of their households. Increased income for women is associated with greater food consumption and improved nutritional status of household members.[13]
- A cluster-randomized controlled trial conducted in Burkina Faso on the effect of women's empowerment on reducing wasting and improving anemia among children 3-12 months, showed that interventions, particularly spousal communication, contributed to reductions in stunting.[14]
- Women's empowerment is a pathway to improved nutrition due to positive links between women's empowerment and child and maternal health.[15] A study in Nepal, measuring outcomes against three of the 10 Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) indicators, found significant associations between women's empowerment and increased child nutrition.[16]
- Women gaining equal access to land, technology, financial services, education and markets in rural areas leads to increases in agricultural production and improved food security.[17]
- Inclusive engagement and education of women and men in sustainable and nutrition-sensitive agriculture improves household nutrition by increasing access to diverse, nutrient-rich diets.[18]

[3] Gender equality refers to the equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys and men and other genders of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. A key aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on balancing power. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male.
[4] Women's empowerment is the process by which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices and decisions in and for their lives. It is the combined effect of changes in a woman's own knowledge, skills and abilities (agency) as well as in relationships through which she negotiates her path (relations), and the societal norms, customs, institutions and policies that shape her choices and life (structures). (CARE, 2019).
[5] Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit, 1996).
[6] FAO, 2019, State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World
[7] FAO, 2011, The State of Food and Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development
[8] WFP, 2020, The power of gender equality for food security: Closing another gender data gap with a new quantitative measure
[9] FAO, 2019, The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World
[10] IDS, 2014, Gender and Food Security: Towards Gender-Just Food Security and Nutrition
[11] World Bank, FAO, IFAD, 2014, The State of Food Insecurity in the World -- Strengthening the enabling environment for food security and nutrition
[12] UN Women, World Bank, UNEP and UNDP, 2015, The Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda. See also WFP, 2020, op cit
[13] FAO, 2019, The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World
[14] Heckert, J., et al, 2019, Is women's empowerment a pathway to improving child nutrition outcomes in a nutrition-sensitive agriculture program? Evidence from a randomized controlled trial in Burkina Faso
[15] Malapit, H., et al., 2015, cited in CGIAR, 2017, CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems, 2017, Gender Strategy
[16] Cunningham, K., et al, 2015, Women's empowerment in agriculture and child nutritional status in rural Nepal
[17] FAO, 2011, op cit
[18] FAO, 2017, Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems in practice. Options for intervention

- Because women spend on food and education, the enhancement of women's control over production and income strengthens food security.[19,20]
- Equitable engagement of women and men in adaptation to climate change and natural resource governance enhances environmental outcomes, soil and water conservation, and productivity.[21]
- Women's land ownership is linked to income growth, greater bargaining power within their households, better child nutrition and higher educational attainment for girls.[22]
- Biodiversity and conservation interventions that adopt gender and social inclusion strategies are associated with increases in dietary diversity.[23]

Box 1. *Food systems narratives*

Recent attention to food systems approaches offers opportunity to re-frame food security and nutrition considering gender equality and women's empowerment.[24,25] The HLPE defines food systems as including all elements and activities related to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food; the market and institutional networks for their governance; and the socio-economic and environmental outcomes of these activities.[26] But as with other paradigms and narratives, there is evidence of default to traditional approaches which are not transformative and fail to address gender equality as a central issue. While some food systems and 'future of food' models, metrics and guidance address gender, not all do and in some it is peripheral.[27,28,29,30] Approaches to the sustainability, resilience and transformation of food systems vary, and critics argue that equity and rights are secondary or ignored in food systems discourse.[31] Definitions of food systems differ with respect to their views on components, boundaries, and interactions, which has wide implications for the scope of food systems analyses for addressing global challenges in the fields of hunger, climate change and inequality.[32] These differences surround the causes and consequences of food system performance and the political opportunities for influencing food systems governance.[33] Considering that the prevalence and nature of food insecurity and poor nutrition differ across countries, types of households and within households, between women and men, old and young, the case for attention to equity in food systems is strong.[34,35]

1.2 Gender equality and women's empowerment – a framework for transformation

12. Gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition comprises a complex set of issues and dynamics. This complexity, however, is no reason to avoid the challenges, given obligations and expectations for the achievement of both SDG2 and SDG5. There are huge opportunities to advance both gender equality and the empowerment of women in the quest for the elimination of hunger and malnutrition. It is important to be clear that gender equality is a human right, enshrined in international law.[36] The right to food is also a human right. Realizing both requires concomitant resources and support. But the right to food will not be fully realized without parallel progress regarding women's rights and rights to equality, as there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between gender equality and food security.

[19] Agarwal, B., 2018, Gender equality, food security and the sustainable development goals (child survival, nutrition and health are notably better if the mother has assets and income, than if the father alone has the same)
[20] FAO, 2011, op cit
[21] CARE, 2019, Gender-Transformative Adaptation: From Good Practice to better policy
[22] Markham, S., 2015, The Four Things You Need to Know about Women's Land Rights
[23] Skinner, A., et al, 2019, Social Outcomes of the CARE-WWF Alliance in Mozambique: Research Findings from a Decade of Integrated Conservation and Development Programming
[24] Whitfield, S., et al, 2018, Frontiers in Climate Smart Food Systems: Outlining the Research Space
[25] Malapit, H., et al, 2020, in: Women: Transforming food systems for empowerment and equity, Global Food Policy Report, IFPRI.
[26] HLPE, 2017, Nutrition and Food Systems. A Report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security
[27] WEF, 2020, Incentivizing Food Systems Transformation
[28] UN Environment, 2019, Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation
[29] Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development and Global Alliance for the Future of Food, 2019, Beacons of Hope: Accelerating Transformations to Sustainable Food Systems
[30] World Bank, 2018, Future of Food, Maximizing Finance for Development in Agricultural Value Chains
[31] Vermeulen, S., et al, 2019, Changing diets and transforming food systems
[32] Brouwer, I., et al, 2020, Food systems everywhere: Improving relevance in practice
[33] Brouwer, I., et al, 2020, ibid
[34] Blythe, J., et al, 2018, The Dark Side of Transformation; Latent Risks in Contemporary Sustainability Discourse
[35] Rawe T., et al, 2019, Transforming food systems under climate change: Local to global policy as a catalyst for change, CCAFS.
[36] UN General Assembly, 1979, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

13. Rigid gender norms limit human development by creating and reinforcing assumptions and systems of privilege (sometimes codified in laws and policies) about people's recognition in society and the range of roles and opportunities open to them. These norms and hierarchies are constructed by people, are embedded in structures, and systematically privilege some groups over others. This recognition is key to a paradigm shift in the way gender inequality is addressed and therefore in delivering improved food security and nutrition. The shift involves confronting social norms and practices inherent within individuals and confronting the structural barriers within institutions and policies, with the aim of achieving lasting change in the power and choices women have over their own lives, rather than just temporary increases in opportunities. To describe the links and scope the challenges and opportunities, a framework for gender equality and women's empowerment will help.

Box 2. *Social norms*

Social norms are behavioral rules constructed and shared by a group and are different from individually held beliefs or attitudes. A social norm comprises one's beliefs about what others do, and one's beliefs about what others think one should do. Norm-breakers may face social backlash, which usually entails losing or conferring power and status in a community.[37] Discrimination against women is pervasive and can emanate from laws that are themselves discriminatory – or the absence of laws. More often, however, it is the result of social norms or customs,[38] linked to stereotypes about gender roles; unequal access to productive resources such as land, and to economic opportunities such as wage employment; unequal bargaining positions within the household; gendered division of labour within households, that results both in time poverty for women and in lower levels of education; and women's marginalization from decision-making spheres at all levels.[39] Discriminatory practices and attitudes against girls, such as early marriage or pregnancy, genital mutilation, distribution of domestic responsibilities, taboos surrounding menstruation, etc., can reduce women's average years of schooling and compromise their life opportunities. Social norms affect women's own attitudes and agency. There can be social pressure for women to take less or poorer quality food. These pressures may cause women to make consumption choices that are nutritionally harmful for them and that may increase the risk of nutritionally negative birth outcomes. Men are frequently isolated because of this socially constructed and systemic inequality and can feel disempowered or threatened.[40] They may control household resources, but social norms often exclude them from caregiving responsibilities and nutrition information, leading to sub-optimal health and feeding practices. There is opportunity in understanding masculinities (how men are socialized) and the roles and responsibilities that men and boys assume or are ascribed in securing household food security, and to work with them to transform the relations that may be impairing their lives and the lives of their family members.

14. To illustrate this framework, we should assume that actively challenging existing gender norms; promoting positions of social and political influence for women; and addressing power inequalities at all levels are pre-requisites to success. The literature on gender and power tells us that addressing personal, situational and sociocultural factors can deliver change.[41] To bring this about in the food security and nutrition arena, action in the following domains is key:

- address women's agency (capacities, skills, confidence),
- the relationships of power that affect their choices (particularly household relationships and community groups), and,
- the structures (such as agriculture and market institutions, land policies, social norms) that govern their lives and choices.
- The aim, thus, is to build agency of people, change relations between them, and transform structures in order that they realise their full potential in their public and private lives and are able to contribute equally to, and benefit equally from, social, political and economic development.

15. This framework – and others like it[42] – has resulted in the development and application of transformative models and approaches. Gender-transformative approaches create opportunities for individuals to actively challenge existing gender norms, promote positions of social and political influence for women, and address power inequalities. They thus seek change in individual capacities, the gendered expectations within social relations in different institutions (e.g., household, community), and institutional rules and practices.[43] Transformative approaches acknowledge the limits of an exclusive focus on women's empowerment, which is limiting when women are understood as a homogenous category and the focus is only on women's agency, with no account taken of the gender relations that women and men experience. Erroneous interpretation of women's agency as meaning 'untapped resource' leads to instrumentalising this agency and missing opportunity for real change. This instrumentalism emphasizes targeting of individual women for economic development, avoids the political processes of mobilization of women, and sidelines the feminist values of building women's awareness and capacities to challenge patriarchal structures and relations on their own terms.

16. In the realm of food security and nutrition, this transformation means addressing gender regimes that regulate access to, use of and control over resources, especially those defining land distribution, labour division and decision-making power.[46] Addressing issues such as mobility, men's and women's attitudes towards equitable roles in family life, women's participation in public life, and men's participation in domestic tasks along with changes in women's productivity, incomes, and access to markets and services become important. The risks and costs of not addressing gender inequality through such a holistic framework are significant, as evidence demonstrates that focus on one domain risks reversibility and harm if it fails to engage the other domains.[47] Sustainable outcomes cannot be secured as power imbalances eventually negate short-term gains. The failure, for example, to identify barriers (people, laws or institutions) simply sustains existing inequalities such as in land tenure or resource-use rights. More serious risks of ignoring all three domains are increased marginalisation, or that unintended consequences place women at risk of exploitation or violence.

17. Transformation thinking vis a vis gender and food security challenges gender integration practice and the exclusive focus of gender analysis on gaps, in terms of roles of women and men and their differential access to resources. Gender transformation thus deliberately drives at structural

[37] CARE, 2017, Applying Theory to Practice: CARE's Journey Piloting Social Norms Measures for Gender Programming
[38] De Schutter, O., 2012, Women's rights and the right to food, UN Human Rights Council
[39] De Schutter, O., 2012, ibid
[40] Meinzen-Dick, R., et al, 2019, Women's Empowerment in Agriculture: Lessons from Qualitative Research
[41] Heise, L., 1998, Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework.
[42] Various frameworks are based on domains of individual agency, organisations/structures and enabling environment. See for example, IFAD, 2014, A Field Practitioner's Guide: Institutional and organizational analysis and capacity strengthening; Wong, et al, 2019, Implementing Gender-Transformative Approaches in Agricultural Development or Farnworth and Colverson, 2015, Building a gender- transformative extension and advisory facilitation system in sub-Saharan Africa.
[43] Wong, F., et al, 2019, Implementing Gender Transformative Approaches in Agricultural Development

change and enables communities to understand and challenge the social norms that create inequalities between men and women and can either help or hinder an individual's capacity to take advantage of opportunities. Gender norms are often resistant to change, partly because they are widely held and practised in daily life (because they benefit the gender that already holds the balance of social and economic power). For example, family members, particularly spouses, can facilitate or constrain the expansion of women's agricultural opportunities, depending on their willingness to share domestic work and free women's time for new value chain activities, while community leaders and local service providers, including agricultural extension agents, can uphold norms and attitudes that limit women's access to market opportunities, information and technologies.[48]

18. Gender-transformative approaches challenge development actors to avoid exclusive focus on the self-improvement of individual women, and rather to transform power dynamics and structures that reinforce inequality. When applied to food security and nutrition and considering the roles and responsibilities that women and men are ascribed or assume, the potential for change is significant. These approaches create discomfort. They challenge each of us to internalize our interpretations of privilege and power, and they require bold leadership and investment decisions.

Impact case 1. ***Gender-transformative approaches for women and men's empowerment***

Gender-transformative approaches include actions that explore underlying causes of inequality and build consciousness, social capital and solidarity between women and men. A project in Burundi examined how such actions improve gender equality and how a focus on power relations impacts food security and nutrition. The project tested a model ('EKATA') against a conventional gender approach ('Gender Light'). The Gender Light model is premised on the capacity of women to take individual actions, without addressing key consciousness-raising and collective action, considered crucial to transformation of social norms and unequal power relations. EKATA, on the other hand, aimed at transforming power relations by fully engaging men in sharing caregiving responsibilities and enabling women to gain control over productive assets and to participate in household decisions. A benefit-cost ratio for EKATA was calculated at 5:1 as opposed to 3:1 for the Gender Light model.[49] There was improved participation of women and men in community activities, and women had higher levels of satisfaction with their lives, were more confident speaking in public, and experienced less gender-based violence (and when they did, they had more options for reporting outside of their families). EKATA group members reported shorter periods of food deficit during lean seasons, and women reported greater satisfaction with division of both domestic and agricultural tasks and with access to extension services and inputs. All the women in the EKATA groups considered themselves leaders and rated spousal support as significant.[50] Research in Tanzania supports this evidence and makes the case that participatory gender analysis and integration, that builds empowerment pathways from the bottom up – while simultaneously working to influence the social environment in which movement along those pathways can be realized – is the route to impact.[51]

[44] Wong, F., et al, 2019, ibid
[45] Hillenbrand, E., cited in Wong, F., et al, ibid
[46] Jerneck, A., 2017, Taking gender seriously in climate change adaptation and sustainability science research: views from feminist debates and sub-Saharan small-scale agriculture
[47] Hillenbrand, E., et al, 2015, Measuring gender-transformative change. A review of literature and promising practices
[48] Njuki, J., et al, 2016, Transforming gender and food security in the Global South
[49] Africa Centre for Gender, Social Research and Impact Assessment, pending, Costs and benefits of applying a gender-transformative approach in agriculture programming: Evaluation of the EKATA model in Burundi
[50] Africa Centre for Gender, Social Research and Impact Assessment, 2018, Qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of gender-transformative programming on changing gender and social norms and women's empowerment
[51] Galiè, A. and Kantor, P., in Njuki, J., et al, 2016, Transforming gender and food security in the Global South

Section Two

The challenges at the gender, food security and nutrition nexus

2.1 Gender inequality as a determinant of food insecurity and poor nutrition

19. Gender inequality is a pervasive threat to sustainable development and a cause of poor nutrition for women, infants and children. The nutrition status of pregnant and lactating mothers has direct impact on that of their children. Stunting early in a child's life can cause irreversible damage to cognitive development and has educational, income, and productivity consequences that reach into adulthood. Micronutrient malnutrition early in life, such as iron deficiency anemia, can have lifelong consequences even if corrected.[52] Similarly, wasting during childhood can affect many aspects of child development,[53] and childhood obesity begins a process leading to chronic and non-communicable disease in adulthood.[54] There is increased likelihood of being overweight and developing associated chronic diseases. The economic costs of undernutrition, in terms of lost national productivity and economic growth, are significant, reaching 11% of GDP in some countries in Africa and Asia.[56]

20. Women make up 43% of the agricultural labour force in the developing world,[57] with the share rising to 50% in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Their work in agriculture is precarious; they are over-represented in seasonal, part-time and low-wage work, and the informal sector constitutes their primary source of employment.[58] Yet 60% of the world's chronically hungry people are women and girls.[59] Though women in urban areas also face greater food insecurity than men, challenges are compounded in rural areas by a 'triple burden' as their time is constrained by productive, reproductive and community roles. Because their ability to dedicate time to paid agricultural activities is limited, they often engage in informal work to balance paid and unpaid responsibilities. The female burden of unpaid care work is exacerbated by reduced access to services and deeply embedded social expectations of female reproductive roles.[60]

21. In some societies, women are not recognized as farmers, so services and technologies are not designed to meet their needs and they have little time to expand their income generation activities, to seek further education, or to participate in decision-making processes.[61] They tend to be more dependent on the products of their local production systems for their food security and fuel and are thus more vulnerable to the local-scale effects of climate change.[62] Despite this higher dependency, they face discrimination in access to climate services and information.[63] When food is scarce, in times of crisis or lean seasons, women and girls are less likely, or the last

[52] Lozoff, B., et al, 1991, Long-Term Developmental Outcome of Infants with Iron Deficiency
[53] Grantham-Mcgregor, S. M., 2000, Nutritional deficiencies and later behavioral development
[54] Daniels, S., 2006, The Consequences of Childhood Overweight and Obesity
[55] Smith, L., and Haddad, L., 2015, Reducing Child Undernutrition: Past Drivers and Priorities for the Post-MDG Era
[56] World Bank, 2019, Nutrition Overview
[57] FAO, 2014, The State of Food and Agriculture
[58] OECD, 2019, SIGI Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities, Social Institutions and Gender Index
[59] WFP, 2015, Gender Policy 2015-2020
[60] WFP, 2015, Gender Policy
[61] Rawe, T., et al, Transforming food systems under climate change: Local to global policy as a catalyst for change
[62] FAO, 2017, Big Roles, little powers: the reality of women in agriculture in ECOWAS region.
[63] Simelton E., and Ostwald, 2019, Multifunctional land uses in Africa. Sustainable Food Security Solutions

of the family, to eat.[64,65] Yet, research confirms that when women control an increase in family income, children's health and nutrition improves, with a 43 percent reduction in child malnutrition over time.[66,67] Statistical analysis of historical national successes in reducing malnutrition and improving diets indicates that the most significant factor has been women's education, which is even more important than household income.[68]

2.2 Participation in decision-making and leadership

22. Food insecurity is often attributed to poverty, which itself is created and sustained through unequal power relations and unjust distribution of resources and opportunities, which has disproportionate effects on women and girls. Underlying this unjust distribution of power and resources are both social norms and poor governance – both manifested in the marginalization of women from decision-making roles. Despite the labour burden that they assume or are ascribed, their spaces for influence are restricted.[69,70] In the private sphere, some laws and social norms still subordinate women's status to their husband's authority. Forty one countries solely recognise a man as the head of household.[71] In the public sphere, the largest gender disparity in the global gender gap indices is the political empowerment gap.[72] Social expectations on gender roles stigmatize working mothers and women in politics, restricting their economic and political leadership and compromising the representation of the interests of women.[73] This is despite evidence that women's participation in local government contributes to improved food intake and wider development.[74]

23. FAO and IFAD describe the consequences of the representation gap with reference to agricultural producer groups:

- Limited presence and voice of women in public affairs means policies, investments and frameworks are less sensitive to their needs and constraints.
- Women are often excluded from, or underrepresented in, decision-making processes in rural collectives. There are few women members in leadership positions, and even fewer as organizations progress from local to regional and national levels.
- This absence hinders women's access to the benefits provided by collectives, such as knowledge, agricultural inputs and better links to markets and government authorities – all of which would improve productivity, self-esteem and confidence.
- In intra-household decision-making, women often have little or no control over the incomes derived from their work and can be excluded or marginalized from decisions on spending priorities and constrained in their asset accumulation.[75]

24. There is thus a dramatic imbalance between rural women's voices and decision-making power and their contribution to agricultural marketing, production and livelihoods. Time poverty also restricts access to leadership spaces. Promoting women's leadership is particularly challenging in rural areas, where customary laws or social norms determine whether, when and how women should exercise authority. In these contexts, stereotypical roles and patriarchal norms relegate women to the private sphere and place restrictions on their mobility and economic opportunities – for example, through engaging in markets or having control over income.[76] Worse, there is constant risk of backlash at household, community and other public levels, in response to women moving into public spaces. This can manifest itself in many ways, including through violence. Within campaigning there is alarming evidence that the safety of women activists, such as in land rights, for example, are at increasing risk,[77] implying that the autonomy and safety of social movements requires protection.

[64] Ringler, C., et al, 2014, Enhancing women's assets to manage risk under climate change: Potential for group-based approaches
[65] FAO, 2011, Committee on Food Security. Policy Roundtable: Gender, Food Security and Nutrition. CFS2011/5.
[66] FAO, 2011, State of Food and Agriculture
[67] Smith, L., and Haddad, L., 2000, Explaining child malnutrition in developing countries: a cross-country analysis
[68] Smith, L., and Haddad, L., 2000, ibid
[69] Kaaria, S., and Osorio, M., 2014, Women's participation in rural organizations: Why is it important for improving livelihoods and sustainable management of natural resources?
[70] Vorley, B., et al, 2012, Tipping the Balance. Policies to Shape Agricultural Investments and Markets in favour of small-scale farmers
[71] OECD, 2019, op cit
[72] World Economic Forum, 2020, Global Gender Gap Report
[73] FAO and IFAD, 2015, Promoting the leadership of women in producers' organizations: Lessons from the experiences of FAO and IFAD
[74] Chattopadhyay and Duflo, cited in Rao, N., 2020, The achievement of food and nutrition security in South Asia is deeply gendered
[75] Chattopadhyay and Duflo, ibid
[76] FAO and IFAD, 2015, op cit
CFS, 2017, op cit
[77] CFS, 2017, op cit

2.3 Access to and control of natural and productive resources and services

25. The gender dimensions of access to and control over resources and services for food security and nutrition are extensive. These are categorized in many ways but generally encompass land, water and forest resources and the ecosystem services they provide; inputs such finance, seeds and equipment, and information and extension and advisory services, training and veterinary support. Despite the productive roles they play, women are restricted in their access to these resources and services, due to the same discriminatory socio-economic and political marginalisation described above. A key element explaining the productivity gap is lower returns to agricultural advisory services and information for women. The information that women farmers receive is often less beneficial for increasing productivity than the information obtained by men.[78] This link between denial of access and productivity deficit was made forcefully a decade ago by demonstrating that providing women with equal access to these resources could increase production by at least 20%.[79]

26. Yet discriminatory inheritance practices and restricted access to land and non-land productive assets or financial services continue. Women farmers receive only 5% of all agricultural extension services, which is paradoxical given the level of engagement in agricultural value chains among women. They contribute an average of 40% of crop production labour across six sub-Saharan African countries, and more than 50% in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda, for example. Yet they produce significantly less than men per hectare, ranging from 23% less in Tanzania to 66% less in Niger.[80] This limited access to extension services has huge economic consequences. The reduced agricultural productivity of women due to gender-based inequalities in access to and control of productive and financial resources costs Malawi USD 100 million, Tanzania USD 105 million and Uganda USD 67 million every year. Closing this gender gap could lift as many as 238,000 people out of poverty in Malawi, 119,000 people in Uganda and 80,000 people in Tanzania every year.[81]

27. **Land.** To fulfil gendered productive responsibilities and obligations, women may have an interest in, depend on and manage natural resources while neither enjoying the right to nor being entitled to control these same resources.[82] For rural women, access to land in conditions that ensure security of tenure is the single most important condition for economic empowerment. This is because access to most other productive resources is conditional on land ownership, and because land is often a condition for social inclusion.[83] But the most pervasive and detrimental denial of resource access is regarding land, where both statutory and customary law is often at odds with human rights law and gender equality goals. As many as 29 countries deny female surviving spouses and daughters the same rights as their male counterparts to inherit land and non-land assets.[84] This denial is so serious that, among the SDGs, 13 Goals and 59 targets are unlikely to be met without progress towards securing and protecting women's land rights.[85] This is particularly concerning given strong evidence on the positive relationship between women's land rights and bargaining power and decision-making on consumption.[86] The children of women who own land are less likely to be underweight,[87] and there is a high level of agreement on the relationship between women's land rights and natural resource management, empowerment and domestic violence, and food security.[88]

28. Improvements in the governance of tenure and addressing the bundle of rights (use, control and ownership) thus represents a critical pathway in determining how women realise these

[78] FAO, 2015, Enhancing the potential of family farming for poverty reduction and food security through gender sensitive rural advisory services
[79] FAO, 2011, The State of Food and Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development
[80] World Bank and UN Women, 2015, Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda
[81] UN Women and World Bank, 2015, The cost of the gender gap in agricultural productivity
[82] Jerneck, A., 2017, op cit
[83] IDLO, 2016, Women, Food, Land: Exploring Rule of Law Linkages
[84] OECD, 2019, op cit
[85] OECD 2019, ibid
[86] Meinzen-Dick, R., et al, 2019, Women's land rights as a pathway to poverty reduction: Framework and review of available evidence
[87] Allendorf, K., 2007, Do Women's Land Rights Promote Empowerment and Child Health in Nepal?
[88] Meinzen-Dick, R., et al, 2019, op cit

rights to use, control and own land. Poor governance of tenure adversely affects social stability, environmental sustainability and economic growth,[89] and loss of tenure security and associated loss of human habitat, land, fisheries and forests results in poverty, food insecurity and violence.[90] Responsible governance of tenure conversely promotes sustainable social and economic development that can reduce poverty and food insecurity. Women's land rights, when supported with other, gender-related programmes, can support empowerment, especially regarding control over decisions that impact food availability, improved income-generation opportunities and nutrition.[91]

29. Despite representing 43% of the global agricultural labour force, women represent 15% of agricultural landholders.[92] The persistent categorization of women farmers as 'smallholders', implying the holding of title deeds or tenure security, impedes an advance in policy discourse to tackle restrictive customary practices and donor investment decisions (despite the contribution made by women to food crop production, just 9% of agricultural development aid is focused on women[93]). While 164 countries recognise women's rights to own, use, make decisions and use land as collateral on equal terms with men, only 52 guarantee these rights both in law and practice because of discriminatory customary laws.[94] Women tend to have limited knowledge of their statutory rights and, under customary and traditional inheritance systems, are often required to cede their rights to male relatives if divorced, widowed or orphaned. This lack of awareness of rights, and denial of ownership, creates immediate power imbalance and exposes women to sexual exploitation and abuse, as evident in the trade of sex for food – and even for land. [95]

30. **Other productive natural resources.** In addition to land, natural resources such as forests, fisheries, pasture and rangeland, water, biological diversity and seeds are key for food security and nutrition, and the degradation of these resources represents a significant challenge to food security nutrition and livelihoods.[96] The gendered aspects of natural resource use and access are extensively documented[97,98], and the roles of women and girls are significant through, for example, livestock keeping and by-product marketing; harvesting of forest products, especially food, firewood and fodder and; the capture, processing and marketing of fish. Firewood remains the single most important cooking fuel in many countries, and adequate cooking energy is essential for food security. Given both extensive energy poverty and environmental degradation, ensuring access by women to sustainable forest resources and clean energy is critical. While men prioritize commercial value in biodiversity conservation, women do so for nutrition purposes and value nutritional, cultural and social aspects of natural ecosystems. Gender-responsive options are available, however; the reduction of forest degradation through biogas replacement of fuelwood, for example, not only reduces women's workload and time poverty, but also increases dietary diversity.[100]

31. The SDGs are inconsistent on the issue of access to productive natural resources for women. SDG5, for example, lacks explicit reference to forests and fisheries, which are critical sectors for food security. Indicators do not encompass natural resources,[101] and extension and advisory services are not addressed. SDG13, on climate change, pays no attention to the needs of women farmers and there is no explicit attention to access to sustainable irrigation, a key input for resource poor women farmers, in any indicator. Given the differential impact of climate change on women and men[102-103], these are serious gaps that require policy responses by governments. Reversing weak donor commitment to gender equality within climate change investments,[104]

[89] FAO, 2012, Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
[90] FAO, 2012, ibid
[91] IDLO, 2016, Women, Food, Land: Exploring Rule of Law Linkages
[92] FAO, 2011, cited in OECD, 2019, op cit
[93] OECD, 2016, Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
[94] OECD, 2019, op cit
[95] Fiorella, K., et al, 2019, A review of transactional sex for natural resources: Under-researched, overstated, or unique to fishing economies?
[96] IPBES, 2019, Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
[97] Asian Development Bank, 2013, Gender Equality and Food Security: Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger
[98] Forsythe, L., et al, 2015, Achieving dryland women's empowerment: environmental resilience and social transformation imperatives
[99] UN Environment, 2016, Global Gender and Environment Outlook
[100] Anderman, T.L., et al, 2015, Biogas cook stoves for healthy and sustainable diets? a case study in southern India
[101] Agarwal, B., 2018, op cit
[102] Pionetti, C., 2016, Filling Buckets Fuelling change – ensuring gender responsive climate change adaptation
[103] Mbow, C., et al, 2019, Food Security. In: Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems

offers opportunity in this regard.

32. **Technologies and information.** Lack of labour- and time-saving technologies restrict women's ability to earn income and reduce their time poverty, which would improve their nutritional status and that of their children.[105] Water sourcing impacts women and girls disproportionately; in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, they assume 71% of this burden.[106] When labour-saving technology is introduced, it is often appropriated by men,[107] and men assume control of related income use decisions.[108] Though digital technology is frequently cited as a solution to unequal access to information, the digital divide can itself reinforce discriminatory norms. Women and girls have less access to information technology than men and boys in developing countries because of technological, skill and content inequalities. On average, they are 26% less likely than men to have a smartphone and access mobile internet, a percentage that rises to 70% in South Asia.[109] Conservative gender roles become even more entrenched due to lack of exposure to alternative perspectives and women become increasingly marginalised.

33. Technology design and outreach often does not actually consider what women do or what they need. Subsistence farming, home food production and wild food collection (areas heavily dominated by women) are not sufficiently valued in national and global data sets, or by research and extension services, despite the fact that they contribute more to household food security and gender equality than the production of commodity crops.[110] There is imbalance across sectors, including in education, that underpin this inequality in technology and information access. In a sample of 37 Sub-Saharan African countries, 22% of agricultural researchers were women, reducing to 10% or fewer in West Africa, Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[111] Though biotechnology in food and nutrition security has seen development, there is evidence of farmers having converted from chemical-intensive farming to agroecology, with resulting improvement in food security and sovereignty for both genders.[112] This can result from increased household income, but more importantly it derives from increased crop diversity, which provides a wider range of food over longer periods. Because food diversity provides improved nutritional value, putting farmers, particularly women, at the centre of production and marketing decisions is a key benefit of both agroecology and food sovereignty.[113] In this regard, leveraging collectives for technology dissemination has positive impacts as it leads to increases in women's assets relative to men,[114] and supporting biocultural heritage and indigenous knowledge[115] can bring food security and nutrition benefits.[116]

Box 3. *Intersectional vulnerability and discrimination*

Understanding diverse forms of marginalization, or 'intersectionality', is important if policies are to address women facing cumulative discrimination. Intersectional or compound discrimination arises from a failure to consider the important differences between women, who are not a homogenous group, in laws, policies and other programmes. Along with gender, characteristics such as socioeconomic status; disability; age; sexual orientation; and migrant, minority or indigenous status may give rise to distinct forms of disadvantage that must be specifically identified and overcome in order to achieve gender equality.[117] Age-related and intergenerational dynamics often play a role in marginalizing young women and men from assuming productive roles and economic independence, for example. Continued feminization of agriculture will exacerbate this intersectional vulnerability as the need to adapt to production challenges falls increasingly on women. Adaptation to climate change, for example, could lead to the adoption of less labour-intensive but also less nutritious crops even as the importance

[104] Harmeling, S., 2018, Punching below their weight: Monitoring the G7 support for adaptation and gender equality
[105] IFPRI, 2003, The Importance of women's status for child nutrition in developing countries.
[106] UN Women, 2015, Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
[107] Quisumbing, A., and Kumar, N., 2011, Does social capital build women's assets? The long-term impacts of group based and individual dissemination of agricultural technology in Bangladesh
[108] Theis, S., et al, 2018, What happens after technology adoption? Gendered aspects of small-scale irrigation in Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania
[109] OECD, 2019, SIGI Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities, Social Institutions and Gender Index
[110] UN Environment, 2016, Global Gender and Environment Outlook
[111] UN Environment, 2016, ibid
[112] De Schutter, O., 2014, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. Final report: The Transformative Potential of the Right to Food
[113] UN Environment, 2016, op cit
[114] Quisumbing, A., and Kumar, N., 2011, op cit
[115] Swiderska, K., et al, 2016, SDG2: achieving food security, sustainability and resilience using genetic diversity and indigenous knowledge
[116] Kimani, A., et al, 2020, Putting indigenous foods and food systems at the heart of sustainable food and nutrition security in Uganda
[117] United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2010, General Recommendation no. 28

of nutrition-sensitive agriculture is evident.[118] Intersectional vulnerability applies to access to natural and productive resources. Indigenous women, for example, suffer inherently from multi-dimensional discrimination, due to inequitable access to resources and infrastructure.[119] This inequity has detrimental impacts on dietary diversity and therefore on nutrition among indigenous people, 60 million of whom are almost wholly forest dependent.[120]

34. **Finance and income.** Financial exclusion is a glaring indicator of gender-based inequality, which directly impacts food security and nutrition. Nearly 1 billion women are unbanked,[121] and the global level of discrimination for women's access to formal financial services is at 13%.[122] Women are disadvantaged in accessing credit,[123] and there are still 72 countries where at least some women from specific social groups are denied the right to open a bank account or obtain credit.[124] Limited access to credit is one of three criteria identified as limiting factors to women's empowerment (together with workload and lack of participation in collective action).[125] Because of the tenure insecurity described above, even when women are applying their unpaid labour on the land, they are denied access to formal financial institutions or credit. They often lack official documentation and for one in four women who do not have a bank account, the main reason is lack of proof of identity,[126] which directly restricts access to financial services. Restrictions around decision-making and mobility, and limitations such as banking fees, transport costs, availability of services and literacy are also barriers.[127]

Impact case 2. ***Government policy empowering women***

Savings groups can provide pathways to economic empowerment and are one of the few group-based models that both focus primarily on women and addresses them as economic actors. More than 14 million people in 75 countries are members of savings groups.[128] Globally, 80% of savings group members are women, and many groups are made up entirely of women.[129] Savings groups enable women to increase purchasing power, engage in collective bargaining, access markets, and claim leadership and influencing space.[130] They also function as safety nets, especially for women, as social capital through the routine of saving money in a social fund leads to better preparedness to shocks, which contributes to community resilience, solidarity and food security,[131] critical where women are excluded from formal social protection. There is evidence that women have more control over income that they themselves earn than over household income, and groups also have positive outcomes regarding decision-making and financial and asset control.[132] In a project in Ghana, the number of households where women could make equal financial decisions more than quadrupled,[133] and a project in Mali saw women's ability to influence household decisions about assets increase by 37%.[134] In Niger, the ministry for the Promotion of Women and Children has integrated savings groups in its National Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment, with strategic intent extending beyond women's economic security. Under Pillar 2, savings groups are promoted to achieve women's economic empowerment and 'contribute to equality in rights and opportunities between women and men'. The Uganda National Financial Inclusion Strategy recognizes underlying constraints to women's empowerment and integrates savings groups as a response. Pillar 5 of the strategy commits stakeholders to work with groups to better understand societal barriers to women's financial inclusion, increase women's property rights, increase women's

[118] Agarwal, B., 2018, op cit
[119] OECD, 2019, op cit
[120] Agarwal, B., 2018, op cit
[121] World Bank, 2018, The Global Findex Database 2017: Measuring financial inclusion and the fintech revolution
[122] OECD, 2019, op cit
[123] Fletschner, D., 2009, Rural Women's Access to Credit: Market Imperfections and Intrahousehold Dynamics
[124] OECD, 2019, op cit
[125] Bosc, P-M., 2018, Empowering through collective action. IFAD
[126] OECD, 2019, op cit
[127] Hernandez, E., et al, 2018, Female Smallholders in the Financial Inclusion Agenda
[128] Ledgerwood, J., 2020, A Market Systems Approach to Savings Groups. Seep Network.
[129] Rickard, K., and Johnsson, A., 2018, Women's Empowerment and Savings Groups: What Do We Know? Seep Network
[130] FAO, 2019, Dimitra Clubs in Action
[131] Janoch, E., and McElvaine, K., 2019, Curiosity Collective: Evidence of social changes for women in savings groups
[132] Meinzen-Dick, R., et al, 2019, Women's Empowerment in Agriculture: Lessons from Qualitative Research. Discussion Paper.
[133] Janoch, E., and McElvaine, K., 2019, op cit
[134] Brown, V., Bower, T., Sutter, T., 2016, Pathways Final Evaluation: Global Report

control over assets, and increase women's decision-making power. 'Expanding savings through savings groups' is one of six priorities in Malawi's National Strategy for Financial Inclusion, and objectives include enhanced participation by women, men and youth; delivery of business training; promotion of group product development and links to formal financial services; and the development of a supportive policy environment.[135]

35. A central concern for women's economic empowerment is women's control over incomes. Even when women generate income, they may still lack control over that income.[136] When women control incomes, they tend to invest in better nutrition, education and health, compared to men.[137] Income allocation and intra-household dynamics affect household food security because men and women make different investment choices. Because women's empowerment within the household is essential to improving intra-household resource allocation, in many contexts, this means that development programmes support women to increase their production and ability to control income independently of men. However, while enhancing agricultural productivity is critical, encouraging collaboration between women and men results in joint decision-making in the interests of the household.[138]

2.4 Access to markets

36. In food systems across the world, the roles and rules in producing, processing (including meal preparation) and marketing food are often strictly divided along gender lines. Though calculation of women's labour productivity in agriculture is challenging,[139] policy often underestimates the issue and technical guidance that ascribes the work of 'farming' to certain production activities sidelines the important roles that women play in food production. Service providers often fail to recognize women as legitimate clients, and they are underserved by advice and extension [140] such as animal health services.[141]

Box 4. *Recognition*

Despite their contribution, women fish processors and traders remain marginalized in the institutional decision-making processes that develop the policies under which they work. Women who process fish are often not recognized as fishers and therefore not consulted. Lack of access to credit, low levels of literacy, low bargaining power due partly to weak organization, and little access to management of fishery resources and benefits are consequences of this marginalization.[142] For example, seafood contributes substantially to nutrition.[143] A billion people depend on seafood as their primary source of protein, and 25% of the world's total animal protein comes from fisheries. Although women constitute 46% of workers in small-scale fisheries and 54% in inland fisheries, marine products are harvested mainly by men, with women recognized as only 12% of all fishers and fish farmers globally.[144] Increasing support to women in the management and use of forest, rangeland and fisheries requires recognizing and valuing their roles and contributions to food security and tackling the norms, structures and policies that prevent this recognition. Lack of recognition of value addition prevents equitable benefit sharing from production, markets and wage labour. Assessment of women's roles in crop and livestock production, processing and marketing through participatory, community-based methodologies can help communities and policy makers understand the actual costs and benefits of women's engagement in the sector. This requires an analysis and understanding of local patterns of food availability, of migration, of labour and market systems and of social norms and customs.

[135] Jarden, F., and Rahamatali, A., 2018, State of Practice: Savings Groups and the Role of Government in Sub-Saharan Africa
[136] Forsythe, L., et al, 2015, Achieving dryland women's empowerment: environmental resilience and social transformation imperatives
[137] World Bank, 2011, World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development
[138] Kiewisch, E., 2015, Looking within the household: a study on gender, food security, and resilience in cocoa-growing communities
[139] Doss, C., and FAO, 2011, The role of women in agriculture
[140] Petrics, H., et al, 2015, Enhancing the potential of family farming for poverty reduction and food security through gender-sensitive rural advisory services
[141] Forsythe, L., et al, 2015, op cit
[142] CFS, 2017, op cit
[143] FAO, 2015, Fish for Nutrition
[144] Agarwal, B., 2018, op cit

37. Market systems play a critical role in ensuring local and national food security and nutrition, as they empower producers to generate income. But markets are often fragmented, poorly regulated and based on unfair terms of trade and poor returns for primary producers. Information flow on price and production trends, demand levels and transaction costs are inaccessible to women as these markets are also shaped by gender inequalities.[145] Challenges are more acute for women due to workload and restrictions on participation in higher-value market opportunities. While women mostly produce food for consumption within the household or perishable produce of lower value (legumes, roots and tubers, fruits, forest products or medicinal plants), men tend to engage in commercial farming targeted at markets and control high-value, high-volume crops.[146] While women often complement incomes with other activities, their aggregate agricultural income is lower than men's throughout all household wealth levels, which is consistent with the gender gap in agricultural productivity described above.[147]

38. **Remuneration, value chains and labour.** While women engage in productive and reproductive and community work, they are generally underpaid or not paid at all.[148,149] They are generally paid less than men in their wage labour engagement in off-farm and non-farm activities,[150] and when formally employed, they are disproportionately concentrated in poor-quality, low-skilled jobs that pay less and provide fewer benefits.[151] Segregation and the temporary nature of contracts limit women's opportunities to acquire new technical and entrepreneurial skills, increasing the risk of redundancy.[152] In modern value chains, men are concentrated in higher status, more remunerative contract farming since they generally control household land and labour. Women workers are generally segregated in certain nodes of the chain (processing and packaging or catering or food vending in urban and peri-urban contexts) that require unskilled labour, reflecting cultural stereotypes on gender roles and abilities. Though not universal, this gender-biased segregation is often used to legitimize lower wage payment. Women's wages are 50% of men's wages in Pakistan in sugarcane production, for example.

39. Gender bias also exists in small and medium enterprise and entrepreneurship where structural and attitudinal barriers make it more difficult for women to secure social and financial capital, such as networks that provide access to information, referrals, resources, and contacts.[153] Reducing gender gaps in entrepreneurship and employment in value chains results in greater income for women and their families, which reinforces arguments that gender equality is a key contributor to growing and strengthening national and regional economies.[154] Indeed, women's engagement in the informal trade of food is fundamental to local, national and regional economies and food security. For Rwanda, for example, it was found that informal cross-border exports of agricultural produce with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda are higher than formal exports. 74% of informal small traders are women, and revenue generated is mostly spent on basic needs, such as food and schooling, demonstrating women's contribution to food and nutrition security as well as economic growth.[155]

40. Value chain integration and market inclusion can lead to economic empowerment of women, where policies and projects systematically integrate and address gender considerations,[156] but when they do not, women are frequently excluded from commercial activities, tending to focus their time on traditional gender roles in kitchen garden crops and household activities. Further, where commercial agriculture is focused on larger-scale, industrial models based on extractive or unsustainable models of production, there is concern for women working in such contexts, related to conditions or risk of violence.[157]

[145] Pionetti, C., 2016, op cit
[146] CFS, 2017, op cit
[147] Hernandez, E., et al, 2018, op cit
[148] FAO, IFAD and ILO, 2010, Gender Dimensions of Agriculture and Rural Employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty: status, trends and gaps.
[149] FAO, 2016, Meeting our Goals. FAO's Programme for Gender Equality in Agriculture and Rural Development
[150] FAO, IFAD, 2010 op cit
[151] FAO, 2016, Meeting our Goals, op cit
[152] FAO, IFAD, World Bank, 2010, Agricultural value chain development: Threat or opportunity for women's employment?
[153] Henry, C., et al, 2018, Women's entrepreneurship policy: A 13-nation cross-country comparison
[154] CGIAR, 2017, world fish, op cit
[155] USAID, Enabling Agricultural Trade, 2013, Rwanda Agricultural Cross Border Trade Analysis
[156] Osorio, M., et al, 2019. Changing the terms of women's engagement in cocoa and coffee supply chains
[157] CFS, 2017, op cit

41. **Collectives.** Exclusion from social and economic processes and institutions deprives many women of access to public goods and services, as well as to economic opportunities. There is widespread discrimination in terms of access to decision-making on social and economic issues, and being rural and unorganized means that individual response to challenges is unlikely to have impact.[158] Typical constraints faced by women include low volume and quality of production; inadequate business skills; insufficient market information or transport; social barriers placed by men on women's engagement in markets or in collective action; and lack of time.[159] Formal and informal collectives such as producer groups, cooperatives or savings groups and related social and vocational learning platforms such as field schools have, however, been effective in increasing women's empowerment and their control over resources and agricultural value chains.[160,161,162] Sustainable management of common property resources is also facilitated by collective decision-making that is mediated by institutions – either formal or informal.[163] Community-led collective action in natural resource management and governance, for example, can bring socio-economic and environmental returns while delivering food and nutrition security outcomes.[164] Cooperatives can empower members economically and socially and create sustainable employment through equitable and inclusive business models that are resilient to shocks[165] and bring benefit to small-scale producers.[166] Despite underrepresentation of women in cooperative leadership, evidence from Paraguay,[167] Ethiopia,[168] and India,[169] demonstrates that they can facilitate the inclusion of women in the labour force and formal economy and support food security.

2.5 Access to food and nutrition

42. **Child nutrition.** Gender equality and women's empowerment are widely recognized as important determinants of child undernutrition – whether stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiency, or overweight/obesity – through their impact on such factors as women's control of their time and household income and on their mental health, confidence and self-esteem. A key determinant of children's nutritional wellbeing is care and support during pregnancy and lactation. Women are the main caretakers of children after birth, and to provide quality care they need adequate nutrition and health care, rest and protection of their mental health, such as from abuse.[170] In a seminal study, indicators of women's education and the degree of gender equality were applied to understand the quality of care for mothers and children. The educational attainment of women has positive impacts on the quality of care they themselves receive during pregnancy and post-partum and on the quality of care for their children post-partum, ranging from duration of breastfeeding to seeking health care during illness. The study affirmed that improvements in gender equality and women's empowerment reduces child stunting.[171]

Impact case 3. *Women's empowerment and a rights-based approach reduces child stunting*

In a project in Bangladesh, a significant impact on stunting among children 6 to 23 months old (4.5 percentage point reduction per year) was achieved. This was because, consistent with a rights-based, livelihoods approach, it relied on both direct nutrition interventions and those that addressed underlying structural causes, including poor sanitation, poverty and deeply entrenched inequalities in power between women and men.[172] Women's empowerment interventions were found to have a strong independent impact on stunting, and the sanitation, women's empowerment, and one poverty alleviation intervention were found to have synergistic impacts with direct nutrition interventions. These findings affirm that activities addressing structural causes contribute to reduction in malnutrition and, more generally, that the use

[158] Bosc, P-M., 2018, op cit
[159] Baden, S., cited in Bosc, P-M., 2018, op cit
[160] FAO, 2016, Farmer Field Schools and Empowerment
[161] FAO and CARE, 2019, Good Practices for Integrating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Climate-Smart Agriculture Programmes
[162] Tripathi, R., et al, 2012, What Works for Women. Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security
[163] Ostrom, E., 2009, A general framework for analysing sustainability of social-ecological systems
[164] Skinner, A., et al, 2019, op cit
[165] FAO, 2012, Agricultural cooperatives and gender equality
[166] Bosc, P-M., 2018, op cit
[167] Clugston, C., 2014, The Business Case for Women's Participation in Agricultural Cooperatives: A Case Study of the Manduvira Sugar Cane Cooperative, Paraguay
[168] Ahmed, M., 2017, The impact of agricultural cooperatives membership on the wellbeing of smallholder farmers: empirical evidence from eastern Ethiopia
[169] Srivastava, S., 2017, Role of Women in Indian Agriculture – Issues and Challenges
[170] Smith, L., and Haddad, L., 2000, op cit
[171] Smith, L., and Haddad, L., 2000, ibid

of a rights-based, livelihoods approach is instrumental in delivering this.[173] Other research has indicated that reducing gender inequality leads to reductions in low birth weight, child malnutrition and mortality. Independent of national wealth, tackling women's disempowerment relative to men can reduce low birth weight and promote child nutritional status and survival.[174, 175]

43. **Women's nutrition.** The most direct impact of women's status on nutrition is concerned with the nutritional status of women themselves. While women's caloric requirements tend to be lower than men's, they have higher requirements for several micronutrients due to demands imposed by pregnancy, lactation and menstruation. Yet social norms and household dynamics interfere with women's access to nutritious food, leaving them unable to meet these requirements. Inability to participate in household production decisions, for example, may mean women cannot produce the foods they would prefer for their own nutrition. Women tend to produce vegetables and legumes while men tend to produce staple crops, and women tend to produce small livestock that are easier to incorporate into consumption patterns in the absence of refrigeration (e.g., poultry for women vs. cattle for men). However, markets for women's produce tend to be less developed, and neither their production nor sale is prioritized in the household farming system. This results in less availability for home consumption, and less availability from the market.

44. The positive association between household budgetary share committed to food purchase and women's income is well-documented,[176] but there is also evidence that women's empowerment has been associated with increased production diversity,[177] suggesting a pathway to improved nutrition through changes in women's production roles and more decision-making autonomy. The influence of social norms concerning women's status on the distribution of food within the household is also significant. Women tend to receive an inequitable share of household food, receiving 'what's left' when others have eaten, whether social norms deny her a fair share, or compel her to deny herself the same. The consequences of this nutrient deprivation for women are especially impactful during pregnancy and lactation, when need for energy, vitamin and mineral intake is higher. Further, less nutritious food provided to girls due to male preference also limits physical development. Due to poor growth in childhood and/or limited growth during adolescence, girls may fail to achieve their full linear growth potential. The short stature that results is associated with poorer cognitive, educational,[178] and earning potential,[179] as well as with narrowed pelvic capacity, which in turn contributes to inter-generational effects of stunting through small birth size[180] affecting both girls and boys in the next generation. Breaking this intergenerational cycle requires diets that allow girls to reach their full height potential.

45. Globally, women undertake 75% of unpaid care and domestic work,[181] and women in rural communities and low-income countries spend up to 14 hours a day on care work.[182] Patriarchal attitudes underpin the undervaluation of care and domestic work.[183] The distribution of household labour strongly impacts the nutrition of women and children. It is generally women and girls who source the water and fuel, for example, and for this reason engaging men and boys in balancing domestic labour distribution is fundamental to food security and nutrition. Labour-saving technologies and public sector service provision such as water, sanitation and energy also become important supports for women's empowerment and better nutrition. Productive work, while unpaid, contributes to household income, so it also may contribute to improved nutrition

[173] Smith, L., et al, 2011, ibid
[174] Marphatia, A., 2016, Associations of gender inequality with child malnutrition and mortality across 96 countries
[175] Starbird E., et al, 2016. Investing in family planning: key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
[176] Hoddinott, J., & Haddad, L., 1995, Does Female Income Share Influence Household Expenditures? Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire
[177] Malapit, H., et al, 2013, Women's Empowerment in Agriculture, Production Diversity, and Nutrition: Evidence from Nepal
[178] Dewey, K., and Begum, K., 2011, Long-term consequences of stunting in early life.
[179] Hoddinott, J., et al, 2013, Adult consequences of growth failure in early childhood
[180] Ramakrishnan, U., et al, 1999, Role of Intergenerational Effects on Linear Growth
[181] Addati, L., et al, 2018, Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work
[182] OECD, 2019, op cit
[183] Oxfam, 2020, Unlocking sustainable development in Africa by addressing unpaid care and domestic work

for women and children through income pathways. Similarly, paid work contributes to household income and may also contribute to improved nutrition.

46. The problem arises, however, when productive and paid work interfere with the care and feeding of children. While care work is not limited to the care and feeding of infants and children, the time and effort given to care and feeding has direct consequences for nutrition. The preparation of appropriate complementary foods requires time, as does responsive feeding. Time pressures can be a major impediment to successful exclusive breastfeeding, and, even for older infants and children, can prevent optimal frequency of breastfeeding or reduce the length of individual feeding sessions to the point that children do not receive nutrient-dense hindmilk released by emptying the breast. Most evidence suggests, however, that given workloads, most women in low-resource settings are unable to devote adequate time to optimal childcare and feeding, needing to relegate it to a 'secondary' activity performed with some other 'primary' activity, or to delegate care and feeding responsibility to another household member who may not be able to provide appropriate food or responsive feeding practices.

47. The solution to this conundrum is often 'time stretching',[184] where women simply reduce their sleep or time for restorative rest. Without adequate sleep or rest, women's own health and nutrition status deteriorate, and they are less able to meet the needs of their children. This raises the question about why women must assume responsibility for so much household labour if this inequitable distribution exhausts them, harms their own health and nutrition, and prevents adequate care and nutrition of children. In all regions of the world, women face the highest levels of discrimination in their own households, especially concerning caring and domestic responsibilities within the family.[185] Changes in social norms that prevent more equitable labour distribution - and better performance and accountability of public policies and services that reduce domestic work - are thus imperative. Social protection has a role to play, for example; fewer than 16% of mothers with new-borns in Africa receive a maternity benefit.[186] Policies also do not tend to prioritise the engagement of men and boys in assuming more domestic care work.

Box 5. ***Unpaid work, labour burden and time poverty***

Globally, daily, the equivalent of 2 billion people work eight hours per day with no remuneration.[187] Unequal distribution of this work is linked to discriminatory social norms and institutions. Gender inequality in unpaid care work is directly linked to unequal labour force participation, the pay gap, and the poor quality and informality of women's jobs. While tackling entrenched gender norms can redistribute responsibilities for care and domestic work, national policies that recognise care work and provide support structures allow women to enter the paid workforce. Care work is commonly the exclusive province of women in the household. Although it provides benefits to the entire household and is essential to the health and nutrition of children, it rarely if ever is compensated or appreciated for its economic value. The care work burden alone can be substantial, even overwhelming. A study in Zimbabwe showed that 75% of observed time spent by mothers on childcare activities was a secondary activity, with negative consequences for the quality of childcare.[188] Further, women's time spent in care work and economic activity can have an impact on child well-being. Excess workloads thus call into question whether trade-offs are required for women to engage in economic activities – such as whether participation in such activities limits time available for child and self-care, whether care work prevents women from fully engaging in economic activities as men would, or even whether both the quality of care and the quality of economic activity suffer due to an excess

[184] Chopra, D., and Zambelli, E., 2017, No Time to Rest: Women's Lived Experiences of Balancing Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work
[185] OECD, 2019, op cit
[186] OECD, 2019, ibid
[187] Addati, L., et al, op cit
[188] Matare, C., and CARE, 2017, Women's Time Use in Rural Zambia

labour burden. Findings from a multi-country study[189] suggest that the answers to these questions vary by country context, and by household wealth status. The amount of time women spend in economic activity (agriculture in this case) does not consistently benefit women's and children's diets, although the effect varies based on economic status. Increased time in agricultural work is associated with more diverse diets among the poor, while the opposite is true among the nonpoor – suggesting that agriculture plays a more important role in access to diverse foods among poorer households. Moreover, greater time spent in food preparation was associated with greater dietary diversity among poorer households in several countries, but poorer women tended to decrease time spent in food preparation as they increased time on agricultural work. This study highlights the need for labour-saving technologies and distribution of care work within the household to reduce women's labour burden. Importantly, however, it also highlights the importance of women's returns on time investment in agriculture activities being great enough to offset potential impacts on women's and children's nutrition caused by increased time spent in those activities.

2.6 Social protection

48. Though formal and informal social protection and safety nets can increase financial security for women, even here there is inherent bias. Exclusion is often systematic, as women experience lower coverage rates and substantially lower benefit levels, including maternity and pension benefits, the denial of which impacts food security. In northern African countries, for example, only 8% of elderly women receive an old-age pension, compared with 64% of men,[190] and as noted above, maternity benefit coverage in Africa is at 16%. Financial and other livelihood shocks affect women's access to finance more because they have lower job security and fewer assets against which to borrow.

49. Covid-19, for example, is causing serious disruption of women's informal safety nets. In Palestine, 1 in 2 women has lost all income because of the pandemic, compared with 1 in 3 men. In East Africa, women began feeling economic losses and food insecurity early, as 74% of working women are in the informal economy.[191] As markets close and cross-border trade deteriorates, women struggle to access inputs.[192] When input prices rise, women – already on lower incomes – are priced out of markets before men, pointing to a need to support safety net schemes and protect supply chains. In all safety net or social protection programming, there are risks. While cash transfers to households via women enables them to repay debts and achieve greater economic independence, the power shift can also increase tension and abuse within both communities and households,[193] highlighting the importance of contextual analysis of gender issues and associated risks, which is rarely done.[194] The exposure of women engaged in migrant and seasonal labour in food systems to risks (abuse or exploitation, loss of income, sudden redundancy) is another area where social protection schemes can be adapted to provide safety nets. Affordable childcare, maternity and child benefits and other social protection instruments, when planned with women's welfare goals, can have positive impacts on women's economic inclusion, household food security and nutrition, and national productivity and growth.

Box 6. *Gender-based violence and food security and nutrition*

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females.[195] Rooted

[189] Komatsu, H., et al, 2018, Does women's time in domestic work and agriculture affect women's and children's dietary diversity? Evidence from Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Ghana and Mozambique
[190] ILO, 2014, cited in OECD, op cit
[191] CARE, 2020, Rapid Gender Analysis: East Central and Southern Africa
[192] Fuhrman, S., et al, 2020, Left Out and Left Behind: Ignoring Women Will Prevent Us from Solving the Hunger Crisis
[193] Lafrenière, J., et al, 2019, Introduction: gender, humanitarian action and crisis response
[194] CaLP, 2020, State of the World's Cash 2020
[195] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015, Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery

in structural gender inequality and power imbalance, GBV is both caused and exacerbated by exploiting societal gender norms and roles.[196,197] It is a widespread international public health and human rights concern, and it is prevalent in the realm of food security and nutrition. It constrains engagement in agricultural labour markets and restricts mobility along value chains. In countries where gender-based discrimination is deeply rooted in patriarchal systems and in social norms, GBV becomes a way to control and extend the status quo. Existing legal barriers in access to resources is correlated with domestic violence, suggesting that the combination of harmful legal norms and economic obstacles can reinforce perceptions of control men have over women.[198] GBV is both a symptom of gender inequality and a tool to reinforce this inequality, including maintaining or restricting control over natural resources, further entrenching gender inequality.[199] There are many causes of GBV and they can be categorized into the three levels of societal (e.g., economic, social and gender inequalities or weak judicial systems); community (e.g., community or leadership acceptance of violence); and individual/household (e.g., social norms and practices).[200] In efforts to improve food security and nutrition, the economic empowerment of women can have unintended consequences for women if male or other female household members perceive changes in power dynamics.[201] Violence against women is a structural barrier to the attainment of food and nutrition security via a range of pathways: withholding food or restricting funds to purchase food; controlling when and how women eat; pushing women into high-risk behavior to secure money for food or; the normalization of physical violence related to the non-performance of food-related work (food production, cooking). Women refrain from even inquiring about income and expenditures due to fear of being beaten.[202] Whereas food deprivation itself is a form of violence, it can at the same time aggravate other forms of violence, including early marriage and trafficking of young girls or intimate partner violence. The overlap of violence and poor nutrition has implications for birth weight, stunting and wasting of children under 5 years of age. Amongst the Scheduled Tribes and Castes in India, for example, more than 2 in 5 children are stunted and 1 in 5 is wasted and of low birth weight, versus 1 in 5 stunted children amongst higher wealth quintiles. Nutritional surveys among tribal groups in India point to decline in dietary diversity that is associated with persistent structural violence against these communities.[203] GBV also has huge social and economic costs as it leads to women being isolated and unable to work, indicating that well-functioning legal and regulatory frameworks to mitigate and eradicate GBV are imperative. Beyond the human capital detriment to societies, the cost of violence against women amounts to around 2% of global GDP.[204]

2.7 Fragile contexts, complex crises and the Covid-19 Pandemic

50. During and after crises, pre-existing gender inequality creates particular challenges for women and girls (including increased insecurity, restricted mobility, sexual exploitation and abuse, and GBV).[205] Women's livelihoods are disproportionally affected,[206] such as we are seeing across the world as a result of Covid-19.[207] However the link between gendered needs in crises, and the underlying gender inequality they arise from, is still poorly understood by many policymakers and practitioners and in most humanitarian responses, even basic gender mainstreaming – let alone gender-transformative programming – is inadequate.[208] Conflict, for example, has significant gendered impacts on food security as violence can directly harm women and reduce their capacity to provide for their families. Conflict related displacement is also a driver of food insecurity and affects women and children disproportionately.[209] Climate-related shocks, created and exacerbated by unsustainable development, are becoming more intense and frequent,

[196] Castañeda Camey, I., et al, 2020, Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality.
[197] van Eerdewijk, A., et al, 2018, The State of African Women report
[198] Castañeda Camey, I., et al, 2020, op cit
[199] Castañeda Camey, I., et al, 2020, ibid
[200] IASC, 2015, op cit
[201] Rao, N., 2020, The achievement of food and nutrition security in South Asia is deeply gendered
[202] Meinzen-Dick, R., 2019, Women's Empowerment in Agriculture: Lessons from Qualitative Research
[203] Rao, N., 2020, op cit
[204] UN Women, 2016, The economic costs of violence against women
[205] ICRC, 2018, Addressing Internal Displacement in Times of Armed Conflict and Other Violence
[206] CARE International 2017, Suffering in Silence – The ten most under-reported humanitarian crises
[207] Fuhrman, S., et al, 2020, op cit
[208] Lafrenière, J., 2019, et al, op cit
[209] FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2017, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017

and women are at higher risk. Further to production shocks for women dependent on rain-fed systems, food stresses are linked to prices and access to markets.[210]

51. As in other crises, the differentiated impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men varies, depending on the roles assigned to women and men by society and the nature and severity of structural discrimination against women, which limits their ability to cope.[211] In the current crisis, women's ability to work is also reduced by increased care demands caused by school closures and lockdowns. Women's lost income heightens their vulnerability to poverty and negatively impacts the food security and nutrition of their families.[212] The number of people facing food crisis will likely double as a result of the pandemic,[213] and women-headed households are most likely to experience food insecurity.[214] A combination of disrupted markets, lack of regional and international trade, and mobility restrictions will impact women's ability to grow, buy, sell, or prepare food. The unprecedented burden Covid-19 is putting on women and rising rates of GBV (particularly domestic and intimate partner violence,[215]), mean the potential impacts are staggering.[216]

Box 7. ***Real impacts of Covid-19 on food security and nutrition of women***

Context-specific analysis of the crisis in 5 regions and 64 countries and engaging 4,500 women reveals that immediate priorities for women are food, income, and rights, including concerns around GBV and mobility.[217] In Northeast Nigeria, women cannot access the cash for work programmes that allowed them to buy inputs and grow crops; in Mali, women cannot access their fields because curfews prevent movement when women would normally farm; in Nepal, families have had to eat the seeds that they would have planted for next year's crop, foreshadowing drops in food production; in Vietnam, women say they have enough rice but can only buy meat and vegetables for their children – not for the family – because of food price inflation; and in Iraq, 74% of people are already eating less food and less nutritious food than they were before the pandemic.[218]

52. Despite increasing work burdens in this crisis, women report denial of access to decision-making processes. This denial is reflected in global responses to Covid-19 and related food insecurity as women are either ignored or treated as victims who have no role in addressing the problems they face. Analysis of 73 global reports proposing solutions to the hunger pandemic demonstrates that nearly half (46% of reports) do not refer to women and girls at all. None of the reports consistently analyse or reflect the gendered effects of the pandemic and hunger crisis, and only 5 reports propose concrete actions to resolve the gender inequalities crippling food systems. The rest overlook or ignore women and girls.[219]

53. Gender and age matter in terms of how people experience crisis. Evidence clearly and overwhelmingly reflects that there are often significant differences in experiences of humanitarian crises in terms of access to essential, life-saving services based on a person's gender and age. When agencies fail to use sex- and age-disaggregated data, or gender and generational analyses, their interventions can be misguided, fail or put vulnerable groups at risk.[220] The gendered nature of the crisis has gained unprecedented media attention in some parts of the world and research has demonstrated that women leaders have been more successful than their male counterparts at reducing Covid-19 transmission.[221] Countries that have more women in lead-

[210] Oxfam, 2019, Gender Inequalities and Food Insecurity.
[211] Ten years after the food price crisis, why are women farmers still food-insecure?
[212] IDLO and CFS, 2020, ibid
[213] WFP, 2020, https://www.wfp.org/news/covid-19-will-double-number-people-facing-food-crises-unless-swift-action-taken
[214] FSIN, 2020, Global Report on Food Crises. Joint Analysis for better decisions
[215] UN Women, April 2020, Violence Against Women and Girls: The Shadow Pandemic
[216] CARE, 2020, Gender Implications of Covid-19 outbreaks in development and humanitarian settings
[217] Fuhrman, S., et al, 2020, Left Out and Left Behind: Ignoring Women Will Prevent Us from Solving the Hunger Crisis
[218] Fuhrman, S., et al, 2020, ibid
[219] Fuhrman, S., et al, 2020, ibid
[220] Mazurana, D., et al, 2011, Sex and Age Matter: Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies
[221] Fioramonti, L., et al., Women in Power: It's a Matter of Life and Death

ership, as measured by the Council on Foreign Relations Women's Power Index, are more likely to deliver Covid-19 responses that consider the effects of the crisis on women and girls. On average, the higher the country's score on the index, the more likely it was to have a gendered response.[222]

[222] CARE, 2020, Where are the Women? The Conspicuous Absence of Women in COVID-19 Response Teams and Plans, and Why We Need Them

Section Three

Challenges and opportunities

54. At its root, poverty is caused by unequal power relations that result in the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities between women and men, between powerholders and marginalised communities, and between countries. Food and nutrition insecurity is one of the many unacceptable faces of this poverty, which cannot be overcome without addressing those underlying power imbalances. The lack of progress on realization of the right to adequate food for all – and thus on achieving SDG2 by 2030 – can be attributed somewhat to policy choices that have failed to address gender inequality. There are extensive and significant opportunities for progress however, both in the short and medium term. This scoping exercise allows us to categorize the challenges, identify opportunities, and then propose policy directions and provide practical, actionable recommendations.

3.1 Challenges – the key areas requiring action

55. **Discriminatory social norms.** Most forms of gender inequality are rooted in social norms. The causes of gender inequalities lie in deep-rooted social and cultural biases and are often poorly understood, dismissed or underestimated. Patriarchy, and the deeply entrenched rules and customs, both overt and covert, that sustain and emanate from this are related challenges. Threats to prevailing norms can risk increasing the incidence of GBV. This is a fundamental impediment to achieving SDG2.

56. **Structural barriers**. Often supported by discriminatory norms, structural barriers represent a collection of challenges for SDG2. Formal and informal structures, institutions and processes, including statutory or customary laws that are biased or discriminatory are persistent barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment. Unfair and exclusive structures, institutions and processes are often then underpinned by genderblind development plans and strategies. This is effectively poor governance.

57. **Policy incoherence.** At all levels, including among the SDGs, the two policy domains of food security and nutrition, and gender equality are disconnected. Food security and nutrition concerns are rarely reflected in gender-related policies, and gender concerns are often missing in food security and nutrition policies. This incoherence is manifested in the absence of commitments to gender equality in sectoral strategies and plans, or through duplication or contradictory efforts by different actors.

58. **Lack of recognition of women** as food producers or as agents of economic and social change is a challenge. Failure to design food security and nutrition policy or interventions with gender in mind informs how clients are defined, and perceptions of who should receive services and whether women are entitled to support. Women are often simply defined as a 'vulnerable group' without agency or capacity. Segregation and wage labour discrimination along value chains is one of many results.

59. **Underestimation of threats to livelihoods from inequality.** Food system transformation that does not address unfair terms of trade or unequal access to resources for women risks reinforc-

ing and deepening inequalities and sustaining rights denial. Small-scale, women food producers contribute to economies but bias in delivery and male capture of resources and services precludes them from achieving their potential both for themselves and the broader community.

60. **Inadequacy or absence of data.** The absence of consistency in the capture, analysis and publication of accurate data on the gender-based dimensions of food security and nutrition is a huge system weakness. Global responses perpetuate this by releasing genderblind data about food security crises and development, and humanitarian actors persist in underestimating the issue. A major challenge is the limited collection of sufficiently detailed financial, social, environmental and programmatic data to use in cost benefit and social return analyses and impact assessment.

61. **The diagnosis is wrong.** Weak or no analysis of gender dynamics (a consequence of the data challenge above) means that partial, apolitical and genderblind diagnoses of food and nutrition insecurity lead to inadequate policies, and, ultimately, the failure of people's entitlement to food.[223] Creating policy or guidance that does not thoroughly investigate and analyse power and privilege between women and men and other intersectional vulnerabilities is a major barrier to progress.

62. **Power imbalances.** The imbalance in power, often underpinned by imbalance in capacities and resources, between development agents, governments, social movements, communities and academia – in and between the global north and the global south – is a challenge. The proliferation of platforms, alliances, initiatives, dialogues, roundtables, frameworks and summits – often inaccessible to southern actors and often disjointed – that neglect gender equality and women's empowerment is a microcosm of this challenge. Virtual engagement and decision-making offers opportunity to address this challenge.

63. **Bias or inadequacy in the design and delivery of services and resources.** Whether intended or not, power dynamics, social norms and structural barriers often dictate that men have greater access to services and resources than women. No intervention is gender neutral, and access by women can either increase or decrease or an imbalanced status quo can be maintained. Genderblind interventions often benefit men more than women, and key labour and time burden challenges are often neglected. Failure to engage men and boys for gender transformation is a cause of this problem.

64. Failure to uphold rights, whether through a lack of or limited understanding of women's rights, or unwillingness or inability to address rights and obligations specifically outlined in voluntary or legally binding international agreements. This failure can be related to limited awareness among policymakers of the relevance of gender equality for achieving food security and nutrition. Misperception that change can come by targeting women within existing social and economic structures without challenging the rights-based barriers within that context, or seeing these barriers as objects for action, is also a problem.

65. **Lack of capacity.** Lack of technical capacity or resources to design, implement and monitor national action plans on gender equality and women's empowerment, is a further challenge. This is reflected in limited engagement of ministries on gender in food security and nutrition policy processes or in ineffective and outdated technology and knowledge transfer. At institutional levels, the factors that impede the implementation of relevant international treaties include genderblind or discriminatory organizational culture, which results in biased decision-making, targeting, recruitment and service delivery modalities and content.[224]

[223] IDS, 2014, Gender and Food Security: Towards Gender-Just Food and Nutrition Security
[224] Petrics, H., et al, 2015, op cit

66. **Lack of accountability.** Approaches that are top-down and fail to engage with all relevant stakeholders struggle with accountability, credibility and effectiveness. Failure to recognize multiple sources of knowledge through, for example, social accountability tools; failure to link farmers, researchers and extension agents, and; failure to hold private, public and voluntary sector bodies accountable to women and men at every level of the food system are related challenges.

67. **Lack of voice and low representation of women** in decision-making positions in relevant institutions such as agriculture-related ministries, research and extension services, producer organisations, national farmers' unions or parliamentary committees. When women cannot articulate their demands through membership-based institutions, then their collective voice and potential to drive change is hampered. Weak civil society or restricted civic space in support of women claiming their rights exacerbates this challenge.

68. **Lack of time, mobility and visibility for women.** The gendered division of labour and the huge burden of unpaid care work allocated to women limits their time for education, productive work, off-farm paid work, leadership participation and leisure. This inequality in unpaid care work is directly linked to unequal labour force participation, the pay gap and the poor quality and informality of women's jobs. Social protection or cash or voucher schemes do not work for women if these women are not visible, registered or consulted, or if their mobility is restricted.

69. **Low levels of education and literacy.** Low levels of literacy are associated with higher levels of food and nutrition insecurity. Lack of functional literacy and numeracy restricts women's confidence and their ability to engage in commercial activities and marketing. Over half of all poor rural women lack basic literacy,[225] and this compromises income-generation potential. High domestic care and agricultural productive work burdens or food stress often mean that girls' education is limited as they are ascribed more work at home. Extreme food insecurity can lead to early marriage and premature termination of girls' education.

70. **Inconsistency in framing and in standards.** Frameworks and guidance in current food systems transformation discourse (and in other paradigms in food and agriculture) are inconsistent on gender equality and women's empowerment. Voluntary Sustainability Standards and principles within Responsible Investment Frameworks also vary in treatment of gender equality.[226] There is scope within the Committee on Food Security (CFS) and within wider food systems debates to prioritize gender and women's empowerment within strategies, guidance and programmes.

71. **Inadequate organizational culture.** There is variation among institutions working on food security and nutrition in their understanding of and approach to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Organisational culture, expressed through values, beliefs, practices and principles, affects investment decisions and strategic choices. Employee perceptions of gender roles in their work is central but perception bias continues, impacting recruitment, research, decision-making, targeting, service delivery and much more. Institutional failure to acknowledge and challenge bias is a central challenge.

Impact case 4. ***Government-led cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder action reduces malnutrition***

The experience of Peru in reducing child stunting demonstrates the value and potential impact of multi-sectoral, multi-level policy planning and implementation. After nearly a decade of little

[225] UN Women, 2018, Learn the Facts: Rural Women and Girls
[226] Sexsmith, K., et al, 2017, How to Improve Gender Equality in Agriculture. IISD

to no progress, between 2005 and 2010, child stunting in Peru was reduced by 5 percentage points overall and a remarkable 10 percentage points in rural areas. The specialized literature has acknowledged the critical role that immediate (e.g. increasing breastfeeding promotion) and underlying (e.g., investments to improve household food security) interventions played in reducing stunting, as well as the contributing role of enabling factors related to economic performance.[227] The critical factors in Peru's success under its coordinated National Strategy for Combating Poverty and Chronic Child Malnutrition, CRECER, included 1) the high-level leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister, 2) horizontal coordination across numerous ministries and alignment of social programmes with the national nutrition strategy, 3) the vertical integration of national, regional and municipal government efforts, and 4) donor support and civil society advocacy on the first three factors.[228]

3.2 Opportunities for policy change

72. Based on the challenges identified above, we identify the characteristics of an enabling environment and list the key issues that policy mechanisms should address to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition. Such an enabling environment can be defined as the laws, norms and regulatory mechanisms coupled with the capacity of institutions and communities to implement them. It thus includes the legal, institutional and market constraints to the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment within food systems. There are different roles and responsibilities in creating and managing this environment and, given the complexity in food systems, success can only come from interaction between multiple players. In addition to transparent and responsive legal and regulatory mechanisms, multi-stakeholder partnerships and processes, that are mandated, inclusive and accessible, represent a critical basis of an enabling environment. Based on our scoping we list key elements of an enabling environment that can support gender equality and women's empowerment in food security and nutrition:

73. **Norms.** Social and cultural norms and the behaviors, attitudes and practices that accompany them are the most significant element of the enabling environment regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women in food security and nutrition. This scoping paper has addressed the norms surrounding men's and women's roles and responsibilities at intra-household and community levels. Unless policy addresses these, the underlying inequality dynamics cannot be overturned.

74. **Laws.** A country's laws deeply impact not only an individual woman's trajectory in a food system, but entire systems as legal constructs carry heavy normative structures. There are still countries that have laws that restrict women's ability to even participate in agricultural activities.[229] Mapping the legal gender gap in agriculture exposes solutions through three related areas of property, labour and finance. Reducing gender-based legal restrictions in these areas will improve the enabling environment for women and ensure that they can participate in food systems on equal terms and without fear.

75. **Human rights and women's rights.** Women's ability to participate on equal terms in food systems has preconditions. Globally, women face enormous gender gaps in literacy, labour, nutrition, healthcare, inheritance and other areas where rights are protected. These disadvantages are manifested in women's inability to engage fully with food systems. The gender gap in pri-

[227] Mejia-Acosta, A., and Haddad, L., 2013, The politics of success in the fight against malnutrition in Peru
[228] Mejia-Acosta, 2011, Analysing success in the fight against malnutrition in Peru
[229] World Bank, 2018, Mapping the legal gender gap in Agriculture

mary health and nutrition at young ages, as illustrated above, can impact women's life-long mobility, productivity and income. Regardless of empowerment narratives, women's rights exist to be respected, protected and fulfilled.

76. **Education.** The educational attainment of women has positive impacts on the quality of care they themselves receive at ante- and post-natal stages and on the quality of care for their children after they are born, ranging from duration of breastfeeding to health care seeking during illness. Education for women and girls, both formal and informal, and their inclusion in the research community are key enablers, and traditional, indigenous and innovative social learning approaches all have a role to play.

77. **Financial inclusion.** Rural women's access to finance is a critical for growing economic potential and improving food security and nutrition. Access to financial services allows women to procure the inputs, labour and equipment they need for farm or off-farm activities and is associated with increased confidence and entrepreneurship. Fostering cooperation between private and public actors, including different types of rural finance providers, can help remove constraints. Women's own capacity to save and lend can be supported with policy as it leads to economic and social empowerment.

78. **Land rights and property.** Property and inheritance laws and reforms ensure that women can access land and tenure security, and this brings multiple development outcomes. Improving women's knowledge of their statutory rights and tackling barriers in customary and traditional inheritance systems is critical. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, represents a key instrument for the improvement of the enabling environment in this area.

79. **The Right to Food.** The right to food protects the right of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Evidence shows that when women are empowered through education, economic opportunities, access to justice and political participation, they are better able to claim their right to food. Cross-ministerial and multi-stakeholder action towards removing the factors determining vulnerability, particularly access to land and related productive resources, are paramount in an enabling environment for the realization of the right to food.

80. **Participation and power.** Empowerment is not a bestowal, and no one can empower another. Systems, processes, norms or even laws that exclude or stifle women's participation or voice in decision-making cripple their potential and productivity in food systems. Institutions should support processes of self-empowerment of individuals or groups and measures should facilitate women's articulation of their needs and priorities and their active role in promoting these interests. Amplifying voice will increase political representation and drive more responsive governance and accountability.

81. **Social movement and localization.** Collective action by women demanding change within political processes and institutions improves the responsiveness of duty bearers and service providers. Development actors should cede power to those movements seeking gender equality and the empowerment of women in food security and nutrition. Local, national and global social movements require space and resources and localizing control of food systems – a principle of food sovereignty – and supporting the localization of leadership, are key areas of an enabling environment for progress.

82. **Understanding and valuing diversity.** Understanding the heterogeneity of ecosystems, of social status and associated livelihoods, of constraints and access to public services and goods, and of the nature of food systems and structural transformation, is central to enabling progress. Diversity of identity and needs among pastoralists, farmers, fishers and forest-dependent people and the workers and traders in food value chains implies a differentiated approach to policy. Because women and men experience and respond to food and nutrition insecurity in different ways, household analysis and methodologies are key.

83. **Cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder action.** Food systems policy cuts across sectors, implying the need for whole-of-government approaches. Engaging relevant ministries in coordinated policy making supports more effective budgeting and management of trade-offs between and a shared sense of goals and awareness of each ministry's contribution. Budgeting is more synergistic, and inefficiencies and duplication avoided. This fosters greater policy coherence and ensures mutually reinforcing measures that can advance both the gender equality and the food security and nutrition agendas.[230]

84. **Political will and leadership.** Commitment and leadership from senior politicians and parliamentary bodies helps policy gain support at national and sub-national levels. Where deeply rooted social norms and barriers are concerned, principled positions taken by heads of state, opposition leaders, senior religious or traditional leaders, or academic or private sector figures make a difference. Leadership of women and women's movements is critical, and when male leaders support female leaders and women's movements, there is added scope for changing attitudes among other males.

85. **SDGs and sustainability standards.** Global commitment to food security and nutrition in SDG2 and to women's equality in SDG5 reflects collective commitment, but more leverage of other SDGs can help drive policy coherence. Addressing issues surrounding labour, climate change, social protection, ecosystems and health, as they relate to food security and nutrition, for example, can accelerate progress. Voluntary sustainability standards and responsible investment frameworks should be more coherent and consistent in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in food systems.

86. **Normative policy.** Other policy frameworks at international level promote gender equality and women's empowerment, including legally binding international human rights treaties and conventions that states should uphold. States that ratify these treaties assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, protect and fulfil human rights as they relate to gender equality. Adjusting regulatory frameworks to comply with these treaties (e.g., removing practices and measures from domestic policies and laws that are inconsistent with treaty objectives, and/or taking positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights),[231] will improve the enabling environment.

87. **Accurate and relevant data.** Accurate household-level measures and data that do not obscure gender gaps and differential vulnerabilities regarding food security and nutrition are key to an enabling environment for change. Data on women's presence in agricultural production, as actors in food value chains and markets, as users of agricultural inputs, as adopters of technologies, as managers of natural resources, as domestic carers, etc., should be collected systematically. This is imperative to address the challenge of misdiagnosis of underlying causes of food insecurity and to enable planning for success.

[230] FAO, 2017, Strengthening sector policies for better food security and nutrition results
[231] CFS, 2017, op cit

88. **Internalising and institutionalising gender equality.** Transformation requires that individuals and institutions are aware of their own gender bias. This means addressing organizational cultures and strategies and supporting public, private and voluntary sector actors to do so through assessment, ethical review, mutual accountability and public transparency. Genuine transformation requires greater commitment than some food systems transformation frameworks are prepared to acknowledge. Transformative change has far-reaching implications for how development is done, as it requires analysis and reflection, and a recognition that norms are not exogenous or subjective and beyond the responsibility of NGOs or government or the private sector. Norms are subsumed in, and reproduced by, all development actors. [232]

Box 8. ***Data and indices to support enabling environment and policy***

There are many indices tracking how policies, institutions, norms etc., impact gender equality and empowerment in food security and nutrition. Accurate indices are entry points for reform and allow for transparency and accountability; for policy actions and institutional changes to have analytical basis; and for better information exchange and knowledge management. Scoping produced this non-exhaustive list.

The World Bank's Women Business and the Law covers 189 economies and measures gender inequality in the law, identifying barriers to women's economic participation.

The OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) has four dimensions spanning socio-economic areas that affect the life course of women and girls: discrimination in the family, restricted physical integrity, restricted access to productive and financial resources, and restricted civil liberties.

The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report tracks inequality and parity. The 2020 report benchmarks 153 countries on progress towards gender parity in four dimensions: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and, political empowerment.

UNDP Gender Inequality Index captures inequalities in reproductive health, measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates; empowerment, measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women and proportion of women and men with at least some secondary education; and economic status, expressed as labour market participation of women and men.

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index measures the empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector. It defines five domains of empowerment in agriculture: decisions about agricultural production; access to and decision-making power about productive resources; control of use of income; leadership in the community; and time allocation.

3.3 Concluding remark

89. There is compelling evidence that reducing gender-based inequalities significantly contributes to achieving food security and nutrition. From a policy perspective, it is therefore essential that women's contribution to food security and nutrition is acknowledged, and barriers to gender equality are tackled through an enabling policy and legal environment. If we are to achieve SDG2 by advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, then policy must both a) remove barriers and b) provide incentives. Removing barriers will involve redress of all those laws and social norms and barriers that restrict women in food systems and deny the realization of rights. Providing incentives will involve the introduction of new policy, or the reform of existing policy, to change behaviors, attitudes and practices (including investment decisions) among

[232] F., et al, 2019, op cit

people and institutions. Policy for transformation should ensure inclusivity and facilitate equitable access to resources, while ensuring transparency and accountability. It should also mobilize and direct resources, both private and public, to priority areas in an equitable way and in coherence with expectations under SDG2 and SDG5.

90. This policy for transformation is needed beyond the productive sectors, as food systems are complex and extensive. Policies on climate change and environment, food loss and waste, business and finance, health, education and social protection, for example, play a critical role in shaping food systems and the diversity and equity within these systems. Subnational plans and the resources to implement them are needed to address local challenges, catalyze citizen action, and demonstrate the potential for scaling out good practice. Without effective coordination, communication, and collaboration, the multiple scales and actors that shape food systems policy can lead to conflicting approaches, elite capture of benefits, and an entrenchment of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.[233]

91. A common theme across this paper, is the importance ascribed to the agency of women through household decision-making autonomy and leadership skills and the centrality of women's capacities and knowledge. Active identification and preparation of women for roles as community leaders, extensionists, trainers and advocates will strengthen capacities, voice and social capital. Engaging women in production that they can control, in crops or livestock that they value for family nutrition, and in livelihoods that allow them to gain economic empowerment, drives self-esteem, confidence and individual agency.

92. The paper also demonstrates that engagement with local and national governance structures is fundamental. Disrupting established and inherently biased processes and norms can drive transformative change. Securing access to resources and services, particularly land, requires transforming the formal and informal structures and processes that underpin economic power. This means invoking rights and having inclusive governance and accountability processes. It means creating spaces and processes that allow women to express their needs, confront discrimination and make demands of duty bearers.

93. Finally, gender and power relations can only be tackled through the proactive and voluntary engagement of men and power holders. Changes in labour burden distribution, household decision-making and control of income and expenditure are possible if strategies are planned and resourced adequately to include this dimension. Successful approaches are those that engage men and women as equals and that aim to build the confidence of women while increasing the agency and self-esteem of men at the same time. Entry points such as childcare, household nutrition, or natural resource management allow projects to work with men as agents of change in power relations. Such approaches result in men taking more responsibility in domestic activities and embracing joint decision-making.

3.4 Recommendations

94. The following recommendations draw on evidence presented above. The recommendations are constructed under ideal future states,[234] to contribute to discussion on Voluntary Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition.

Future state 1: ***Women have access to decent work and markets and productive resources and services***

1.1 Increase financial inclusion of women through both agricultural credit and credit for small businesses and entrepreneurs, and by widening options for women's access to savings in group-based models

[233] Rawe, et al, 2019, op cit

[234] This structure draws on and adapts a typology developed for a food systems dialogue on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Food and Nutrition Security hosted by the FAO north America office in June, 2020

1.2 Develop policy (including macro-economic policy) that aims to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work and ensure that public services are resourced for this purpose
1.3 Reform and resource research, extension and advisory services to ensure that they are responsive and accountable to the needs and interests of women and men, including through the recruitment and training of female extension and advisory agents
1.4 Ensure technology design and scale out, for all stages of production, is based on thorough research and analysis of the differential needs of women and men in food systems
1.5 Develop policies and legislation that support women's access to and ownership over productive resources and that guarantee access to public goods and services – such as biodiversity, water and sanitation, and public health – to advance food security and nutrition
1.6 Promote climate-resilient and nutrition-sensitive agriculture and natural resource management and protect rights to save, exchange and sell seeds, including indigenous seeds, upon which women depend
1.7 Enact legislation to ensure access to transport, safe employment, decent wages, care services and other public services for women, including seasonal, migrant and informal workers in food systems

Future state 2: ***Gender-transformative approaches are central in food security and nutrition policies***

2.1 Establish multi-stakeholder task forces on social norm change to carry out national assessment of social norms within all sectors relevant to food security and nutrition and to develop cross-sectoral response strategies with clear indicators and targets
2.2 Recruit and resource expertise to build the capacity of public, private and voluntary sector partners on how to achieve social norm change at household, community, institutional and policy levels
2.3 Include tools and models to engage men and boys in all relevant protocols and interventions in the food security and nutrition sphere to enhance male responsibility in sharing production and reproduction burdens and to advance the elimination of discrimination and violence
2.4 Develop campaigns that challenge masculinities within food systems by engaging male champions of gender equality at all levels, and through youth, traditional and religious leadership; civil society; the private sector; and research and government partners who are brokers and role models
2.5 Acknowledge and respond to diversity and heterogeneity in food systems, including the recognition of women and men as agents of change, and stop describing women or indigenous women exclusively as vulnerable populations or victims

Future state 3: ***The rights and entitlements of women in food systems are upheld and respected***

3.1 Increase investment in public information and awareness campaigns for women and men about their rights and entitlements in the context of food security and nutrition
3.2 Ensure international convention and treaty obligations related to gender and food security and nutrition are enshrined in national legal frameworks and that mechanisms for application of the law or dispute settlement are functioning, accountable and accessible to women
3.3 Build capacities and provide tools to enable the implementation of relevant international and policies by national actors and the implementation of national policy by sub-national actors
3.4 Remove barriers to women's ownership of and control over assets through rights-based approaches and other instruments such as social and environmental standards and responsible investment frameworks – and demand accountability from all partners on progress towards the realization of rights
3.5 Develop or reform land tenure and ownership legislation (including through harmonization of customary laws with statutory laws or through changes to inheritance laws or harmful customary laws or practices) to ensure that women's rights are upheld, and voluntary guidelines promoted

Future state 4: ***More women in food systems are empowered, and are engaged in decision-making and leadership***

4.1 Take affirmative action at organizational, policy and legislative levels to promote women's leadership, to ensure women's participation and representation, and to allow women's voices to be heard at local, national and international levels within the food security and nutrition sphere

4.2 Provide non-conditional financial and capacity-building support to women's organizations, social movements, networks and women's collective action, including legal and negotiation training skills

4.3 Introduce incentives and policy reform to protect and promote women-led small and medium enterprise, self-help groups, cooperatives and producer organisations in local food systems

4.4 Invest in building the production, leadership, business and marketing skills and capacities of women small-scale food producers through farmer/pastoralist field schools and other social learning models

4.5 Increase the number of women researchers in food security and nutrition and establish national-level research, knowledge and learning platforms on gender equality in food and nutrition security

Future state 5: ***Gender-based violence is eliminated as a threat to the rights and productivity of women and men in food systems, including in fragile and conflict settings***

5.1 Mandate the capture and analysis of sex- and age-related and differential vulnerability data in food and nutrition programming, in both humanitarian and development contexts[235]

5.2 Make this data available to all stakeholders for accountability, design and monitoring purposes and publish progress in the public domain with independent and parliamentary scrutiny

5.3 Develop common indicators to support food system actors in assessing GBV as a potential unintended consequence of interventions

5.4 Build capacity for the use of gender markers or other self-assessment tools in the design and implementation of food system activities to drive accountability for gender equality minimum standards

5.5 Introduce mechanisms for GBV risk mitigation to prevent sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, which include awareness raising and training. [GBV prevention is a responsibility of all actors in food security and nutrition and implies action to stop GBV from first occurring].

Future state 6: ***Investment in gender equality and women's empowerment for food security and nutrition has increased***

6.1 Develop a funding tracking system and target investment levels to support greater accountability for and mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout food systems activities and interventions

6.2 Incentivize more private sector and donor investment and action in gender equality and women's empowerment, including through the establishment of pooled funds and adoption of standards and good practices for advancing women's participation and leadership in food systems

6.3 Increase on-budget financing of social protection programmes for women and use cash-based interventions to protect incomes and household nutrition, facilitate risk management and foster economic inclusion for women

6.4 Adopt an all-of government approach by ensuring health, education, climate and environment, social development, local government and other relevant ministry budgets are planning for, and in coherence with, gender equality investments and plans in food security and nutrition

Future state 7: ***Understanding of, and capacities and expertise on, gender equality and women's empowerment in food and nutrition security have increased***

[235] Analysis of GBV risk, and consequent responses, in food security and nutrition interventions are essential. In humanitarian crises, Rapid Gender Analysis is a methodology recommended by the Interagency Standing Committee. In the wider development sphere, there are many social analysis and action tools.

7.1 Invest in systematic research of gender and diversity within food systems, including the capture of both qualitative and quantitative data, and ensuring that data for cost benefit analysis includes valuing non-market benefits and social and environmental returns

7.2 Support and develop national research capacity and invest in projects that carry out research for, with and by women, particularly indigenous women who face higher compound discrimination

7.3 Incorporate the social construction of knowledge, including on issues such as adaptive capacities, coping strategies, indigenous practices and customs, biodiversity and common pool resources, that support food security and nutrition

7.4 Promote the application of social learning and accountability tools, household methodologies and other participatory methodologies that enable household and community members to collaborate to build agency, change structures and transform relations and to self-assess progress and success

7.5 Invest in applied research and learning on how the process of gender-transformative change within food security and nutrition unfolds and establish cross-sector research projects to drive wider understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of the issues

Future state 8: ***Leaders, institutions and policies prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment for food security and nutrition, and are accountable***

8.1 Stand and speak together as leaders (parliamentary and government, private sector, voluntary sector, academia, media and civil society) and declare commitment to the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment as key to food security and nutrition

8.2 Drive policy transformation in food systems through small-scale producers in support of their sustainable and diversified forms of production, generation of employment, contribution to resilience, potential to increase the empowerment of women and, role in and local and regional economies

8.3 Establish cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder and multi-level coordination mechanisms, engaging all relevant service providers, and guarantee cross-ministerial commitment at sub-national and local levels (horizontal and vertical coordination). Host such mechanisms within the highest offices of the state.

8.4 Enact and resource independent national accountability and monitoring mechanisms to establish goals and indicators, to track the gender gap, to ensure that policies are responsive, and to hold decision makers accountable

8.5 Include women in these accountability processes and in consultations, grievance mechanisms, community engagement strategies and all other mechanisms through which investors or development partners interact in the food security and nutrition arena

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