

## **Gender Forum on Women in Agribusiness**

**Synthesis Summary of Proceedings of the Multi-stakeholder Technical  
Workshop and Public Forum**

**30<sup>th</sup> April, 2015**

**Nairobi Safari Club (Lillian Towers),**

**Nairobi, KENYA**



## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Gender Forum on Women in Agribusiness was held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at the Nairobi Safari Club, Nairobi. The Forum was organized in two components. The first component involved a Multi-stakeholder technical workshop starting in the morning to mid-afternoon bringing together selected experts and practitioners from different stakeholder groups to identify promising financing and entrepreneurial capacities interventions for empowering women in agribusiness. The second component of the Forum involved an open public discussions held in the evening from 1600hrs to 2000hrs, bringing together the general public and the media to interact with a panel of representatives from the research community, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Kenya Government, the African Women in Agribusiness Network (AWAN), a Parliamentarian from the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), and an official from the Common Market for East & Southern Africa (COMESA).

The Women in Agribusiness Forum was convened by Dr. Rahma Adam, a World Bank Group Fellow based at the Kenya, Rwanda and Eritrea Country Department. It was hosted and sponsored by the Heinrich Boll Stiftung (Hbs), which is affiliated to the green political movement in Germany, whose main tenets are ecology and sustainability, Gender democracy and human rights, self-determination and justice. Additional support was provided by the African Union Commission (AUC) and process facilitation by the Institute for People, Innovation and Change in Organisation (PICO-East Africa). This summary report provided a synthesis of the proceedings of the Forum. A detailed report of the proceedings is available separately.

The Forum was held as part of a process towards promoting equitable participation and opportunities for African women in development, particularly in agriculture and agribusiness, where women remain largely marginalized. There is now an increased emphasis by both public and private institutions towards more focus on women empowerment in the agricultural sector. The African Union's June 2014 Malabo Declaration on *"Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation"* for example, includes a commitment to reduce poverty in Africa by 50% by the year 2025, through among other measures, supporting and facilitating the preferential entry and participation of women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities. Moreover, the African Union at its 24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in January 2015 also chose the theme of *"Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa Agenda 2063"* as the theme of the year 2015 increasing political attention to women in development, including in the agricultural sector.

## THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON WOMEN IN AGRIBUSINESS

The half a day multi-stakeholder technical workshop on Women in Agribusiness was held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at the Nairobi Safari Club (Lilian Towers) and brought together a total of 68 participants drawn from the key stakeholder groups, including farmers organisations and networks, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), representative of commercial banks, private sector, development partners, research community, The government of Kenya (Ministry of Agriculture), East Africa Legislative Assembly, and COMESA. The objective of the workshop was to enable selected representatives of key stakeholders to share experiences and best practices (including tools, approaches and case studies),

facilitate mutual learning, and identify gaps and priority interventions for implementation focusing on two main themes; a) financing options, and b) entrepreneurial capacities for women farmers and entrepreneurs in agricultural value chains. The workshop discussions also addressed knowledge management and policy issues as cross cutting themes.

### **Workshop Process and Key Outcomes**

The workshop started by welcome remarks by Ms. Joan Birika, the Gender Co-ordinator at the Hbs, followed by two opening keynote statements on; *“Women empowerment in the Emerging Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”* by Ms. Maria-Threase Keating, the Kenya Country Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kenya and, *“Women empowerment in Agriculture: World Bank Experience on Best Practices”* by Dr. G. N. V. Ramana, the Lead Health Specialist & Program Leader for the Kenya, Rwanda and Eritrea at the World Bank.



**Ms. Maria-Threase Keating**, the, Kenya Country Director of the UNDP on the right and **Dr. G.N.V. Ramana**, the Lead Health Specialist & Program Leader for the Kenya, Rwanda and Eritrea at the World Bank on the left giving the opening remarks.

The workshop included a scene setting presentation on *“Why do we need this workshop and what will be different?”* by Dr. Rahma Adam, the workshop Convener & World Bank Group Fellow and two thematic input presentations on finance and entrepreneurship respectively. The former covered the topic *“Financing women in Agribusiness – innovative approaches to empower women agri-entrepreneurs”* by the Prof. Atieno A. Ndede-Amadi, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Country Business Incubator (KeKoBI) and Professor at the Technical University of Kenya (TUK) and the latter on *“Building business and entrepreneurial capacities and skills for women agri-entrepreneurs”* by Prof. Henry Bwisa of Mukmik Consultants and Professor at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (JKUAT). The thematic presentations outlined what we know and the existing gaps and were followed by moderated parallel break-out sessions on the two workshop themes to identify other gaps, alternative models, and promising interventions/models to be implemented. The break-out session on financing was moderated by Ms. Betty Kibaara, Project Co-ordinator at the Rockefeller Foundation, and the break-out on entrepreneurship by Dr. Aissetou Yaye, the Executive Secretary of the African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE)



**Dr. Rahma Adam**, World Bank Group Fellow and the convener of the Women in Agribusiness providing remarks that set the stage for the workshop.

On **Financing Options**, the workshop noted that most of the approaches/models adopted have been successful but gaps exist due to the limitation of two factors;

- a. The use of intermediaries (thus raising transaction costs which are ultimately transferred to the fund recipients and borrowers)
- b. The high cost of credit. The promising models identified include, for credit, the use of moveable assets as collateral, and models – examples of which have been successfully implemented in Tanzania - that enable access to funding without collateral, which should be considered as a last resort. The use of collateral can be reduced, through among others, Contract farming, Behavior change, Capacity building on enterprise management, and encouraging savings, through table banking and Revolving funds, for example.



**Professor Atieno A. Ndede-Amadi** from the Technical University of Kenya on the right presenting on financing options for women in agribusiness and **Ms. Betty Kibaara** project coordinator at the Rockefeller Foundation facilitating the financing options break out discussion.

On **Entrepreneurship Capacities**, the workshop discussed and appreciated the gains and achievements made through the different models, including the Classroom type approach, Voucher training, Extension worker approach, Business incubation, and the cluster approach, but also assessed and appreciated the strengths and weaknesses of each approach/model. The major gaps were identified in three critical areas. These include;

- a. Production capacity, in terms of access to seeds, choice of crops suitable for specific agro-ecosystems, and the limited, poor or lack of weather and climate information systems to farmers;
- b. Markets limitations, especially for women smallholders whose subsistence production orientation limits their market competitiveness, hence the need for provision of training and development of policies and interventions to promote market access, including support for value addition, establishment of systems for quality monitoring of agro-food products, and the strengthening of policy lobbying capacity through civil society programmes; and
- c. The poor linkages between farmers and researchers/scientists and extension agents, which calls for more participatory research processes based on identified needs, and packaging of research results in user friendly formats/media to farmers and agro-entrepreneurs.



**Professor Henry Bwisa** from the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology on the left giving a presentation on building business and entrepreneurial capacities and skills for women agri-entrepreneurs. **Mr. Peter D. M. Mburu** a member of the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) Kenya on the right hand sharing the recommendations and ideas that came out of the stakeholders' discussions.



*Mr. Alessio Colussi, Head of Crops and Agribusiness sector in Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Kenya office on the left and Dr. Aissetouèou Dramé Yayé an Executive Secretary of the African Network for Agriculture Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE) participating and facilitating the entrepreneurship capacities group break out session.*



*From the right, Mr. Fredrick Njau Programme Coordinator Environment at HBS, Ms. Joan Birika Programme Coordinator Gender at HBS, Mr. Mark Onzae and Ms. Clarise Aduma both from the Kenya Commercial Bank and Dr. Evelyn Namubiru-Mwaura, Policy Officer, Land and Environment at Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) seen discussing and pondering on women and agribusiness issues at the multi-stakeholder meeting.*

The proposed action areas for the workshop themes of finance and entrepreneurship are presented in the table below.

Financing models	Entrepreneurship capacities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure devolution of services by financial providers and capacity building organisations to the “County” level to support farmers and women agri-entrepreneurs locally.</li> <li>2. Adopt and tailor financial service approaches/models that embed sustainability strategies to function beyond exit of partners, for example, through organizing farmers into co-operatives.</li> <li>3. Employ an all-inclusive model, which targets both men <b>and</b> women.</li> <li>4. Promote and encourage financing through lead-entrepreneur model, alongside training to demystify bad experiences and encourage good use of credit.</li> <li>5. Agri-business financing banks, most which prefer up-scaling viable businesses and develop products based on risks accessed.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with the media (radio, print and online) to create awareness and profile success stories in local languages.</li> <li>2. Provide information to women farmers and entrepreneurs on existing opportunities</li> <li>3. Initiate projects in each County that focus on the comparative value chain commodities identified in the CIDP (County Integrated Development Plans) to be implemented through multi-sector and stakeholder partnerships (farmers, private sector, government, and donors).</li> <li>4. Sensitize young people, especially women on the opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness.</li> <li>5. Promote entrepreneurship education for different groups; a) Train ECD (early childhood development) teachers to nurture entrepreneurial skills an interest in agriculture among children; b) Provide training to women farmers and agri-entrepreneurs to equip them with both technical and soft skills (i.e. in costing, production management, planning, quality control, understanding markets, value addition, negotiation skills etc.)</li> <li>6. Facilitate local farmers to create their own platforms in the same clusters.</li> <li>7. Disseminate information on the existing women capacity-building initiatives and opportunities in agribusiness.</li> <li>8. Strengthen agricultural extension services targeting rural women farmers.</li> <li>9. Strengthen farmer organizations and agribusiness groups to be able to access extension information and put it in the language women farmers can understand.</li> </ol>

The proposed action areas for the cross-cutting themes of knowledge management and policy themes are presented in the table below.

Policy action areas	Knowledge Management action areas
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote widespread awareness of promising models.</li> <li>2. Work and liaise with government at both the County and National levels in the agri-food sector</li> <li>3. Inclusion of women in policy organs and structures and processes in the agricultural and associated sectors.</li> <li>4. The Government should review the approach of using Intermediaries for the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF); Intermediaries increase the interest rates to the borrowers to recover the associated transaction costs.</li> <li>5. Develop institutional support infrastructure to ease credit provision and access by both the lenders and borrowers.</li> <li>6. Tailor the interventions and programmatic support to meet the specific and unique challenges faced by the different categories of women farmers (e.g. smallholders vs. large scale) and entrepreneurs, (small, medium and large enterprises in different commodity value chains).</li> <li>7. Develop a communication strategy targets to the policy makers (Parliamentarians and Executive) at all levels of governance; Counties, national, and regional governance structures.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Capacity building of fund managers and entrepreneurs.</li> <li>2. Consolidate credit information and devolve information provision services to the local (county) levels.</li> <li>3. Support the use of multiple information dissemination tools, including Community coaches, radio and new media tools (e.g. ICTs).</li> <li>4. Ensure quality control in information services, to avoid misinformation spreading to farmers and agri-entrepreneurs.</li> <li>5. Educate the borrowers to risks and the various alternative financing options.</li> </ol>

During the workshop, participants also made institutional and individual commitments to implement specific actions to advance the empowerment of women in agribusiness. The commitments broadly covered the following action areas;

- a. Capacity building support to private and public institutions at the County level, including County governments, women owned small and medium enterprises, farmers networks, rural co-operatives and civil society organizations for effective implementation of policies and programmes in the agriculture sector which is a devolved function under the Kenya Constitution 2010.
- b. Sensitization and policy awareness of legislation and programmes at County, National and Regional levels. Commitments focused on increasing attention and capacity building to enable women benefit from the affirmative action of 30% allocation of government tenders, and on legislations affecting agriculture, which is now a devolved function; specifically creation of awareness on the Crops Act (2013) which was a controversial topic of the discussions during the workshop, as well as cereals, soil fertility and livestock feeds policy which are under preparation.



- c. Increased focus to expanding business opportunities across all value chain stages, particularly value addition in the upstream stages, including storage, processing, and packaging to improve post-harvest management of agricultural products.
- d. Documentation of best practices and profiling of successful women agribusiness entrepreneurs through different media.
- e. Agribusiness education programmes (including curricula development) targeting all levels of education, including primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
- f. Banks and financial institutions made commitments to create awareness on existing products and to develop new products tailor made for different categories of women in agribusiness
- g. Action research on women in agribusiness including focus on technologies, institutions, markets and policies.
- h. Commitment to a regional approach through regional institutions. These include engagement with the East African Community through the East African Legislative Assembly to harmonize legislation, and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) to increase regional trade through elimination of barriers
- i. Increased support for the provision of weather information services to rural smallholders, including women farmers.

#### THE GENDER FORUM ON WOMEN IN AGRIBUSINESS

The open public Gender Public on women in agribusiness was held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at the Nairobi Safari Club (Lilian Towers) and brought together over 200 participants. The purpose for the interactive forum was to provide an opportunity for the general public to engage with leading experts and practitioners in gender and agribusiness as part of expanding the public discourse on the issue. The forum started with introductory remarks by the Ms. Joan Birika, from the Hbs who welcomed the attendees and highlighted the purpose of the event. This was followed by a panel discussion that was moderated by Dr. Evelyne Namubiru-Mwaura, the Policy Officer, Land and Environment, at the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The panel consisted of the following five experts and practitioner;

1. Ms. Taluma Irene Banda, Social Development Expert, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat.
2. Dr. Jemimah Njuki, Senior Program Officer, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
3. Honorable Judith Pareno, Member, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and Member of the Committee on Agriculture, Natural Resources and Tourism.
4. Dr Isaiah Okeyo, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Government of Kenya.
5. Ms. Elizabeth Thande, Chairperson, African Women Agribusiness Network (Kenya) and Managing Director, PJ Farm Limited.



*The panelists of the forum, from the right is **Ms. Elizabeth Thande**, Chairperson of African Women Agribusiness Network-Kenya, **Honorable Judith Pareno**, Member of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and **Dr. Isaiah Okeyo**, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Government of Kenya.*



*The forum panelists sharing their ideas and answering questions from the participants. On the right is **Ms. Taluma Irene Banda**, Social Development Expert, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat and on the left **Dr. Jemimah Njuki**, Senior Program Officer, International Development Research Centre (IDRC).*

## Highlights of Key Issues emerging from the Discussions

The discussions centered on questions to the panel by the moderator and from the audience. Some of the key issues and recommendations that emerged from the discussions included the following;

### *Post-harvest handling and management*

- 1) Although women are actively engaged in agricultural production, their engagement diminishes in the post-production stages of the agricultural supply chain where women have reduced activity and visibility. Interventions to redress this imbalance should focus on both women and men for mutual benefit of both genders.
- 2) Interventions to support women in agribusiness should be implemented with a focus on the entire supply/value chain. In the past, there was too much focus on inputs, but a shift is needed to equally focus on the output side – the market, through targeted partnerships, for example, with financial and microcredit institutions to develop the right products and financial services for women agro-entrepreneurs.

### *Policies*

- 3) There is an urgent need to provide information and support to smallholders and women owned micro-enterprises to access opportunities provided by and to benefit from existing affirmative action policies and programmes. The Kenya government for example, is implementing an affirmative action policy to preferentially award 30% of tenders in each government ministry to women owned businesses. This policy was supposed to empower women across all categories, but so far, smallholder women farmers and women owned micro-enterprises (*'mama mboga'*) have not taken advantage of it, with opportunities going only to women with appropriate information.
- 4) The fertilizer subsidy programme in Kenya is only a short-term and temporary measure because subsidies are not sustainable. To address the challenge of high costs of fertilizer, the government of Kenya is supporting the construction of a fertilizer blending factory in Eldoret.
- 5) Agriculture is a devolved function to County governments under the 4<sup>th</sup> schedule of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution. Aspects of agriculture development such as extension services and farmer training are now the responsibility of the County governments but very few are doing it. The role of the national government now is to develop a framework while the action is at the county government level. There are however some aspects such as the custody on fertilizers and seed through the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) which are still managed by the national government.

### *Regional and international trade*

- 6) Gender mainstreaming in all organs and across all programs of the East African Community (EAC) is key and anchored in the EAC constitution. The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) is working towards ending the existing bias on issues that concern women, and ensure gender parity with close to half of the Assembly membership consisting of women.

- 7) The process to expand regional trade is being accelerated by the regional economic blocks, and this will benefit women by expanding trade and market opportunities within the region due to the faster movements of goods and people. Within the EAC, the Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) Bill has been developed and is ready for approval by the Heads of State. The Bill includes penalties against the member states for non-compliance. Similarly, infrastructure legislation in the region has allowed development to go on as is necessary without hampering any country's national plans. Some project such as the LAPSETT does not involve all the EAC countries but others, such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) involves all EAC countries.
- 8) Fair trade is taking root in East African and is driven by traceability. The external markets require information about the produce, including labelling on the origins from the farm to the table. Critical details and necessary requirements for Fairtrade include information on the use of child labour, fair wages for workers, adherence to labour laws, and environmental standards.
- 9) Africa has developed a common agricultural programme – the Comprehensive African Agricultural Programme (CAADP), which requires member countries to allocated 10% of national budget to agriculture as contained in the Maputo declaration. What constitutes expenditure in agriculture is still being contested – whether the 10% investment represent a cumulative response through all ministries that deal with and support agriculture ( e.g. the infrastructure through the roads, tariffs on agricultural products and other enabling activities) or does if it represent an investment in the agriculture ministry alone. If one considers the cumulative allocation, then Kenya has surpassed the 10% target, however, if only the investment to the Ministry of Agriculture is considered, then Kenya is currently investing 5%.

#### *Technologies*

- 10) Continuous dissemination of information and education to women and smallholder farmers using various technologies should be explored because a huge majority of smallholder farmers cannot read. Experiments with interactive radio programs supported by IDRC to enable small holder farmers to learn about interventions that are going on through radio programs are proving to be successful. Already Radio listening groups for women have been formed in some areas such as Kakamega with great success.
- 11) The debate on the role of genetically modified (GM) technologies in agriculture in Kenya is still ongoing. There has been a ban by the Kenya Government on importation of GMO food stuff since 2012.

#### *Attracting the next generation to agribusiness*

- 12) A mentoring forum to build sustainable farming business would go a long way in encouraging more and new generation, including women to take up farming. The 4K Club movement is an initiative that was very successful in attracting primary school pupils to agriculture and should be revived. Given that agriculture is a devolved function, County Governors should be approached to support the revival of the 4K clubs. Furthermore, the 4K clubs can be adopted as a 'best practice' to be shared within the East African Community to encourage young people to appreciate agriculture.

Currently, the regional governments are working with the EAC on standardizing certification and harmonization of curricula, and the 4K club approach can then be integrated into the curricular

- 13) ICT also provides platforms for attracting youth into agriculture and agribusiness as shown by Facebook groups such as *Mkulima Young* and the YFARM which are attracting young people to farming and supporting them to register their farms and to practice farming as a business.

#### *Land and water for agriculture*

- 14) The issue of 'land grabs' and that of agricultural land conversion to nonagricultural uses such as real estates in the per-urban areas is of concern. In Kenya, this is being addressed through the National Land Use Master Plan which currently under preparation. At the regional level, within the EAC, the EALA has formulated guidelines that stipulates that investments on agricultural and non-agricultural land particularly by foreigners are allowed but the land must be managed in a way that allows citizens to also benefit. Across the genders, it was stated that both men and women are entitled to legal land rights. Where they have jointly invested, productivity increases. Land is in many cases an automatic insurance policy especially as collateral for loans to grow a business, which is common in many parts of Africa, where one cannot get a loan without using land as a collateral
- 15) The Kenya government has initiated a one million (1,000,000) acre irrigation project through which it makes available more resources and training to farmers during implementation. Kenya, however, is a water deficit country and the water resources should be properly allocated to the different competing uses, including to determine how much should go for irrigation. Promoting effective water use for agriculture is therefore critical and should also include water harvesting, runoff harvesting and other technologies that also protect soil.

Organizations that were represented at this event include: Heinrich Boll Stiftung; World Bank, UN Women, United Nations Development Program, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Common Market for East & Southern Africa, East African Legislative Assembly, Ministry of Agriculture of the Kenya Government, Rockefeller Foundation, International Development Research Centre, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, United States Agency for International Development, Swedish International Development Cooperation, the African Network for Agriculture Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education, International Livestock Research Institute, International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology, African Women in Agricultural Research and Development, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology, Technical University of Kenya, Grow Africa, World Vision, CARE-Kenya, African Women in Agribusiness Network-Kenya(AWAN-Kenya), Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)-Kenya, East African Farmers Federation, NGOMA, Management Systems International (MSI), Kenyan Commercial Bank, Equity Bank, Chase Bank, ANAN Kenya, Groots Kenya, Audren Farm, World March of Women, Saint Pauls University, Bamch Press, Ideas Unplugged, Ecofinder Kenya, Intasave, Lydia Dola, Center for Advocacy and Gender Equity, SIDAI Youth Initiative, AWANKE, Society for International Development (SID), Kenyatta University, IDRC and Pico-team East Africa.