



Institute of Policy Analysis  
and Research - Rwanda



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# **EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: A PREREQUISITE TO SECURING FAMILY LIVELIHOODS AND ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**BY EUGENE RUTABAGAYA, UN WOMEN.  
IPAR'S 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE**



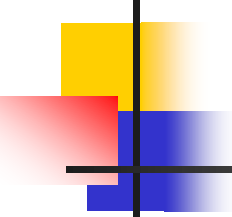
# 1. What does women's empowerment entail?

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According to UN Women, empowering women to participate fully in economic life is essential to:

- Build strong economies;
- Establish more stable and just societies;
- Achieve internationally-agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights;
- Improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities.

# What does women's empowerment entail?



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In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, utilizing all social and economic **assets** is crucial for success. Yet, despite progress, women continue to confront discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, even though equality between men and women stands as a universal international precept – a fundamental and inviolable human right.

## 2. Why focusing on empowering women in agriculture?

Women's access to, use of and control over productive resources in agriculture are essential to ensuring their rights to an adequate standard of living. These resources help to ensure that women are able to provide for their day-to-day needs and those of their families.



## Why focusing on ... (C'td)

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Women's access to land and other productive resources is integrally linked to discussions around global food security, sustainable economic development, as well as the pressing fight against the HIV epidemic and prevention of and responses to gender-based violence.



# Why focusing on ... (C'td)

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The obstacles which prevent women from effectively enjoying these rights often include **inadequate legal standards** and/or **ineffective implementation** at national and local levels, as well as **discriminatory cultural attitudes and practices** at the institutional and community level.



## Why focusing on ... (C'td)

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In general, gender disparities with regard to productive resources are linked to assumptions that women are not good in managing productive resources effectively, and that men will always provide for women's financial security. Challenging these **stereotypes** is critical.



## 3. Statements and Facts

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- **When women farmers are not meaningfully included in agricultural development opportunities**, they don't receive critical knowledge, skills, and assets that contribute to increasing their household productivity. As a result, households are less productive as a whole.



## Statements and Facts (c'td)

- Statistics show that women farmers contribute up to 60 percent of labor on farms in sub-Saharan Africa. If women farmers across the developing world had the same access to productive inputs (such as labor, fertilizer, and seeds) as male farmers, yields would increase as much as 30 percent per household. As a result, countries could see an increase of 2.5 to 4 percent in agricultural

# Statements and Facts (c'td)



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- **When women don't have access to education or information**, they cannot influence research agendas to get what they want. As a result, they are less likely to adopt new practices and technologies. Evidences in Ghana point to a significant difference between men and women in the adoption of improved varieties: only 39 percent of female farmers adopted improved varieties, compared to 59 percent of men. Adoption differences are largely explained by women's unequal access to land, labor, and education, which reduces the likelihood of women's awareness of new technology or practices, and limits women's resources for obtaining them.

# Statements and Facts (c'td)



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- **When women don't have control over resources and income,** their households may suffer from malnutrition. Men are less likely than women to reinvest their income in the health of the family. This is a simple but powerful and true reality across the developing world: increases in women's income influence household expenditures and translate into more household investment in childhood nutrition.

# Statements and Facts (c'td)



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- Evidence from Brazil shows that maternal income exerts a larger effect on children's nutritional outcome indicators than paternal income.
- In Rwanda and Malawi, children from women headed households were healthier than children from male-headed households—even when the male-headed households had higher incomes (World Bank, 2012).

## 4. Case study: UN Women focus on women's empowerment in Agriculture in Rwanda



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- Since 2010, UN Women Rwanda is implementing a programme on “Empowering rural women through better access to agricultural services” in collaboration with MINAGRI and the GMO, with the aim to ensure that agricultural services reach women farmers as much as men; and support innovations that improve women farmers’ access to agricultural services.

# Case study (C'td)



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- The Programme focuses on building the capacity of national stakeholders in gender and agriculture.
- Support gender mainstreaming into planning and budgeting frameworks
- Technical support to pilot districts to engender the district's "Imihigo".
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Farmer Field Schools (FFS)
- Empower women to play a key role in cooperative decision-making committees.

# Conclusion



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In Conclusion, we believe that we must be responsive to both women's and men's roles, responsibilities, and priorities to effect sustainable change for small farming families. By working together to be responsive to gender in our programs, we have the opportunity to improve the lives of millions of farming households in Rwanda and in the developing world.



# Policy recommendations

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- Allocate more funds to implement programs aimed at empowering women in Agriculture
- Avail gender disaggregated data at all levels to inform the planning and monitoring processes
- Continued capacity building programmes.





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