

Gender Perspectives on Biodiversity

Gender considerations are relevant to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in multi-faceted ways. Pervasive inequalities shape policies, plans, actions, values, and attitudes related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, and can be an influential factor in decision-making around access and the sharing of benefits derived. The 2015–2020 Gender Plan of Action provides a mandate to address gender considerations, emphasizing the importance of compiling knowledge and building capacity to identify the impact of conservation and sustainable use policies and programs on relations between men and women and to reduce gender inequalities.

This fact sheet highlights relevant gender issues for three key sectors related to biodiversity – agriculture, forestry and fisheries, to promote dialogue and action on gender and biodiversity interlinkages.

45%
of the world's
population
depends on

Agriculture



Forestry



Fishing



OR

Hunting



for their
livelihoods¹



Women's roles in agriculture vary across regions – including as farmers, workers and entrepreneurs. Yet women continue to face gender-specific constraints that lower their productivity and limit their contributions to agricultural production, economic growth and the well-being of their families, communities and countries.²

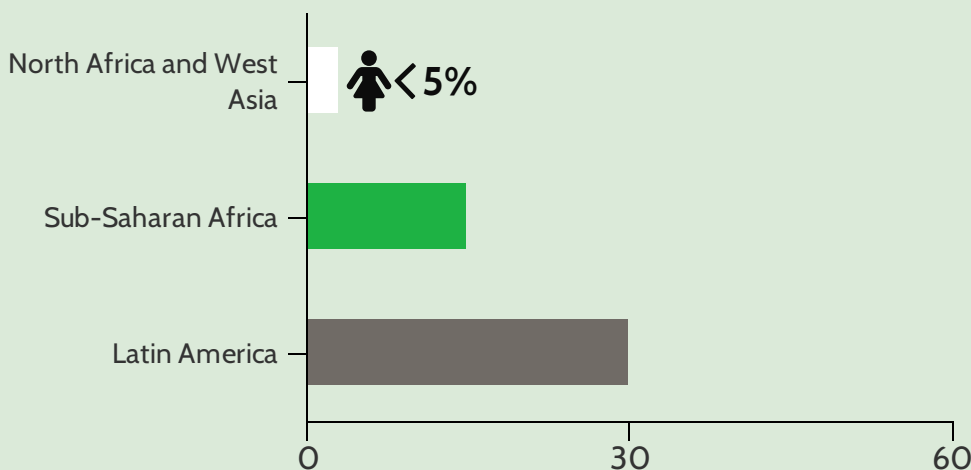
Women constitute **43%** of the total agricultural labour force in developing countries and produce a large portion of the world's food crops³

Women typically produce food crops for household use, while men are responsible for crops that are marketed or sold.⁵



Some agricultural tasks are “feminized”, such as weeding, poultry processing and flower packing, while men's tasks generally are to run equipment and handle tools, jobs that usually require training and offer higher wages.⁶

Share of female agricultural holders in developing countries



Studies confirm that male controlled land holdings are generally larger than female-controlled holdings.⁴



Flower Packing
Weeding
Poultry Processing



Training
Handle tools
Higher wages
Run Equipment

¹ (FAO, 2011) ⁵ (World Bank, FAO, IFAD, 2009)

² Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Enabling women to access productive resources to the same extent as men would have many positive impacts⁷

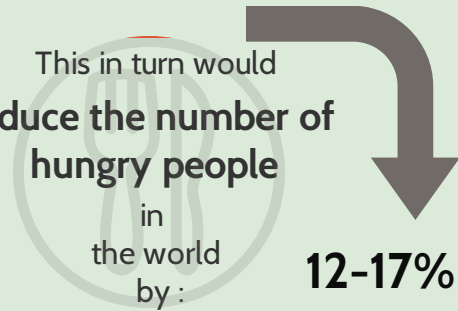
Increase in yields
on women's farms by:
20-30%



Could raise **total agricultural output**
in developing countries by:
2.5 - 4%

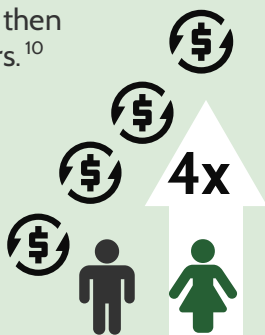


This in turn would
**reduce the number of
hungry people**
in
the world
by : **12-17%**



Men and women tend to rely on different forest products, and their knowledge reflects their different responsibilities in the household and community. Women's knowledge may be linked more directly to household food and nutrition needs, as well as health and culture, with a preference for multipurpose species for subsistence use. Comparatively, men's interests are more connected to commercial use.⁸

Female household
members generated
about 4 times more
forest income than
male members.¹⁰



Compared with men, women were able to
identify a broader range of plant species
(trees, vegetables, vines, bushes and herbs)
and usable plant parts (fruit, bark, leaves,
seeds and roots).⁹



**Various
studies have
found**

Women are generally
underrepresented in forest
user groups such as village
forest committees and
community forest
associations.¹¹



Gender - balanced community
forest groups perform
consistently better in all forestry
functions (the protection of
plantings, forest regeneration,
biodiversity and watersheds and
the allocation of forest - use
permits).¹²



Greater involvement of women
in forest governance may
support forest policy and
planning that is more responsive
to the food security needs of
communities.¹³

7 (FAO, 2011)

8 (FAO, 2013)

9 (Shanley & Gaia, 2001)

10 (Asfaw, Lemenih, Kassa, & Ewnetu, 2013)

11 (Agarwal, 2001, Agarwal, 2010)

12 (FAO, 2013)

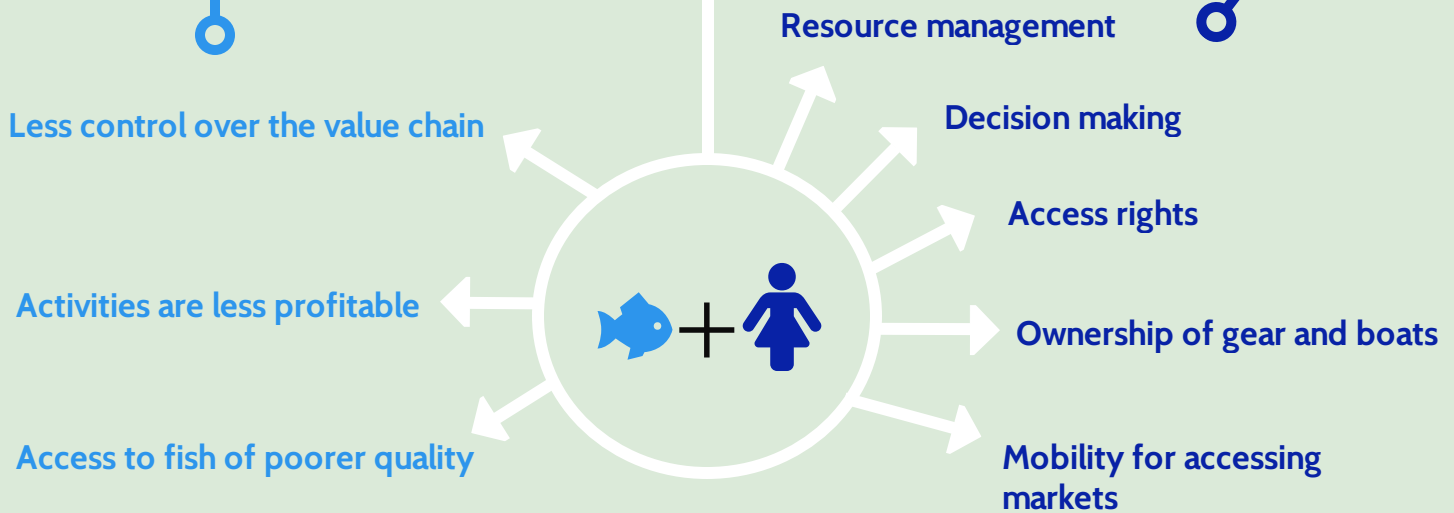
13 Ibid.



Roles in the fisheries sector are often divided along gender lines. Fishing is typically seen as a male occupation, with women involved predominantly in post capture activities such as sorting landed catch, processing or marketing, as well as subsistence harvesting.¹⁴

Many women face a variety of limitations in the fisheries sector¹⁵

Compared to men women are more absent in areas of :¹⁶

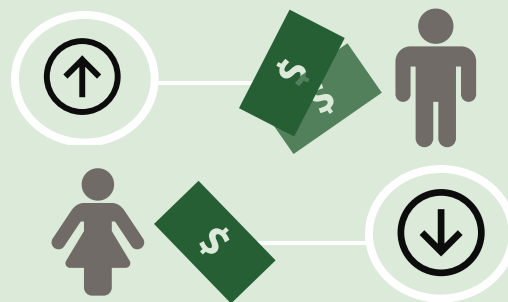


In small-scale aquaculture systems women are seldom categorized as hired labour and contribute mostly in the form of family labour.¹⁷



These areas are most relevant to women's empowerment

Women typically earn less than the men engaged in this industry, and often experience difficult working conditions.¹⁸



14 (Gopal, 2015)

15 (USAID, 2006)

16 (FAO, 2015)

17 (Gopal, 2015)

18 Ibid.

References

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For more information on the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) visit our website

Gender Mainstreaming at the CBD
www.cbd.int/gender/about.shtml

2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action
www.cbd.int/gender/action-plan/default.shtml

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