

GENDER ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Supporting a Funding Proposal

Programme Title:

**Scaling-Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall
(SURAGGWA)**

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Part One

I. Executive Summary

Women in the Sahel are disproportionately affected by increasing food insecurity, protracted crises, dire socio-economic status in the region and deteriorating climate changes and shocks. Women provide 80% of agricultural labour force in the Sahel and, at the same time, they continue to have most of the responsibilities at home and perform most of the unpaid work. African women in the Sahel contribute from 60% to 80% of the food production, mostly working in informal jobs and subsistence farming in comparison to men.

Discrimination and Inequality: The key gender indicators in the Sahel region show that the discrimination against women within the family ranged from 45% to 88%, based on factors such as legal frameworks for violence against women, the sex ratio at birth and reproductive rights. Socio-economic factors show several gender inequalities in the region, such as low mean age for first marriage, female genital mutilation has a high prevalence, education gap and low representation in decision making and leadership. This suggests a lack of law enforcement, and how customary frameworks can dictate people's behaviour. There is also a significant gender gap in terms of education, indicating the disadvantage women face relative to men for learning opportunities. These inequalities have repercussions on health, nutrition, economic opportunities and independence, decisions making and development among other issues.

Representation and Decision-Making Power: Women continue to have a minor representation in of decision-making and leadership positions in the West Africa region. The lack of women's representation in government has negative impacts not only on policies and programs in place at the national level, but also on changes in societal perceptions. When women are underrepresented in political spheres and decision-making levels, the root causes of gender inequality, which are the social norms and rules that govern the country, cannot be challenged.

Access to Resources: Women face the greatest challenges in accessing productive resources although they play an important role in agriculture in the region. Women and specifically rural women face tremendous inequalities in terms of access to and ownership of land; access to inputs, extension services; financial services; technologies, trainings, and information. Also, women dominate employment in off-farm segments. Yet, they rarely have access to the resources needed to develop their activities. These challenges are some of the main drivers that exacerbate gender inequality and disempowering women to improving their livelihoods. Furthermore, the economies of the region and the region's agriculture production is harmed, and women's fair and profitable involvement in intra-African agrarian commerce, regional, and international agricultural value chains is hampered.

Legal Frameworks and Enabling Environment: There has been an improvement in conditions over time regarding the legal and policy frameworks conditions for women, some countries made more progress than other in the region. Despite these legal improvements, women in the Sahel region continue to face significant challenges, particularly in rural areas where traditional practices and beliefs often limit their freedom and opportunities. In many cases, customary law is recognized by national legal systems and can be used to resolve disputes where there is no formal law in place. However, customary laws can also perpetuate discrimination against women.

Vulnerability to Climate and Gender-Specific Climate Impacts: The vulnerable climatic nature of Sahel region has gender implications that exacerbate women's vulnerability and have consequences not only in women's livelihoods but on food security, malnutrition, weakened adaptive tools, work burden and poverty in rural communities. The extreme weather events can cause extensive crop damage and affect more severely female farmers who are usually deprived of several adaptation mechanisms. An essential factor for adaptability to climate change shocks is the time available. Women tend to balance reproductive roles such as cooking, cleaning, and childrearing in addition to agricultural responsibilities. Rural households may shift labor patterns in response to heat stress in ways that increase women's work burden, i.e. women farmers suffer disproportionately from weather-related shocks by maintaining working levels despite heat events. The time constraints women have can limit their ability to engage and participate in decision-making processes and other activities related to climate change adaptation. Also, it may be possible that women's lack of knowledge on climate change is influenced by gender norms that prevent them from engaging in training where men are the main trainers. Climate-induced migration in rural areas often affects women disproportionately and their ability to cope with climate change shocks. Women farmers are more likely to be left behind and struggle to manage agricultural activities independently.

All of the above circumstances hinder women's ability to invest in sustainable agricultural practices, diversify their income, and build resilience to climate shocks. The limited access to agricultural services also makes women more likely to rely on rain-fed agriculture, particularly vulnerable to droughts and other climate-related hazards.

Women and girls bear a disproportionate brunt of the impacts when land is depleted and limited in availability. This is because of their significant involvement in agriculture and food production, reliance on forests, susceptibility to poverty, lack of education, and lower legal protections and social status. Despite of the recognition and acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between agricultural production, poverty reduction, land preservation, and gender integration, the gender aspect is frequently disregarded in the execution of land-restoration initiatives. As a result, gender aspects are either overlooked or neglected in restoration practice.

Including women in land restoration processes implies taking into consideration their limitations in terms of extension services and institutional credit, and barriers related to land tenure. As in much of low-income countries, women's ability to own, control, benefit from and access land in the Sahel region is significantly more limited than their male counterparts. Although evidence is still limited, available data

from the World Bank show that percentage of land owned by women is always smaller than men in the same countries. On average, the land women own, or control tends to be smaller and lower quality. In many countries, women's access to, use and control of land depends on their relations to male relatives as wives, mothers, or daughters. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of men and women, along with power relations in land management, is a primary requirement to achieving effective outcomes when combating land degradation and implementing gender-responsive and sustainable land-restoration initiatives.

II. SURAGGWA Overview

The eight countries of the Great Green Wall (GGW) are among the world's poorest and most vulnerable to climate change, with women and girls often disproportionately affected. These countries ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index in 2020, and a large majority of their population lacks access to employment, basic health care, education, or access to natural resources. Agriculture, livestock, and forestry activities form the basis of their economies, with over 70% of rural communities, including many women-led households, depending on rainfed agriculture. The Sahel has experienced some of the most extreme climate events on earth in the 20th century. Long-term climate change trends show higher temperatures, uncertain precipitation, prolonged drought, increased winds, and more frequent extreme events. The degradation of ecosystems and depletion of vegetation and biodiversity has undermined livelihoods, disproportionately affecting women, and increased vulnerability. This has severely impacted the Sahelian agro-silvo-pastoral landscapes, exacerbating food and nutrition insecurity and compromising the sustainability of livelihoods.

The Scaling-Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA) programme aims to advance the objectives of the GGW, an African-led initiative to protect the continent from desertification by restoring natural vegetation across an 8000 km area and a 15 km belt. The programme has evolved to focus not only on tree planting but also on holistic development in the area, addressing the unique needs and opportunities of women and girls. SURAGGWA will facilitate a major paradigm shift by building ecological and climate resilience in eight Sahel countries recognized as the most vulnerable to climate change in Africa, including Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. Additionally, the programme will build capacities for coordination, planning, monitoring, mobilization of financial resources, and knowledge management. SURAGGWA builds on FAO's previous support to Sahelian countries through the Action Against Desertification (AAD) initiative, the GEF/World Bank, African Development Bank, and FAO's Operation Acacia.

SURAGGWA proposes three key interventions designed to address the technical, organizational, and financial barriers to alleviate climate change impacts and heighten resilience of local communities, including women and girls:

- **Develop a programme to scale-up successful restoration practices**, promote biodiversity, regenerate native species, and sequester carbon, with inclusion of gender-responsive activities.

- **Support the development of climate-resilient, low emission non-timber forest product value chains** benefiting vulnerable communities' livelihoods, with inclusion of women's economic empowerment, and food and nutrition security.
- **Strengthening the Great Green Wall's regional and national institutions** to secure the sustainability of interventions and scale up successful practices, with inclusion of gender-responsive policies and programs.

**For a full programme description, please refer to the Funding Proposal document.*

The programme will work with community organizations to build ownership and sustainability, while strengthening community awareness and capacity in understanding ecological elements of their environment. It will emphasize women's participation and leadership, including training and building awareness on addressing climate change and land degradation issues. By connecting with existing financial institutions and addressing the specific bottlenecks faced by the target groups, including women, in the GGW area, the program will establish linkages with existing providers, create innovative models of value chain financing, and de-risk lending to smallholders in the region.

The transformational activities of SURAGGWA will support the implementation of the GGW initiative led by the African Union, aiming to transform landscapes by restoring 100 million hectares, creating 10 million jobs, and sequestering 250 million tons CO₂ by 2030. The SURAGGWA multi-country programme will make a direct contribution to the GGW targets through the Green Climate Fund's pledge at the One Planet Summit (January 2021) and catalyze changes needed to achieve these ambitious targets. The proposed program will restore approximately 1.334 million ha of degraded drylands, benefiting 7.6 million vulnerable people, including women and girls, in the GGW area, while sequestering 22.4 million tons of CO₂ over 10 years and 65 million tons of CO₂ over the programme lifespan (20 years). The program will make a significant contribution to: (i) the countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to climate change adaptation and mitigation; (ii) the Bonn Challenge and associated African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) in committed countries; (iii) the concerted UN system Action plan in support of the GGW; (iv) the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) with GGW as one of its flagship programmes/projects, as well as associated Sustainable Development Goals, including No Poverty (SDG 1), Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Climate Action (SDG 13), Life on Land (SDG 15), and Partnerships (SDG 17). This document and the accompanying Gender Action Plan ensure that women and girls are empowered and benefit equitably from the climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts through the programme.

III. Objectives of the gender assessment

Gender equality is a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable development and climate resilience. Climate change affects women and men differently due to differences in gender roles, responsibilities, and access to resources. Women often face higher risks and greater burdens, particularly in areas like agriculture and water. In addition, for conflict areas like the Sahel, women-led households – which are common – are particularly vulnerable because of this lack of customary rights to land, wells, and livestock.^{1,2} Understanding existing gender disparities is vital for effective climate policies.^{3,4} The SURAGGWA programme will address these disparities and provide empowerment opportunities for women to enable communities in the Sahel to sustainably adapt to the challenges posed by climate change.

The GCF recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in addressing climate change. As a result, GCF has integrated gender perspectives into its operations, funding, and decision-making processes. The FAO also shares the same view and commitments, as indicated in FAO's Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030, which states that, *“all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services”*.⁵ This assessment is designed to align with FAO's Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030 and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Gender Policy⁶, which mandates the integration of gender considerations into all GCF-funded programmes and projects to promote equal access to resources, benefits, and decision-making opportunities. The GCF Gender Policy emphasizes the need for programmes and projects to be gender-responsive, acknowledging that climate change disproportionately affects women and marginalized groups due to existing social and economic inequalities.⁷

This Gender Analysis/Assessment for the GCF programme, *“Scaling Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA)”* initiative aims to identify and address gender-specific barriers and opportunities in the agriculture and rural development sectors within the target countries: **Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal**. This document, alongside the country-level assessments, provide the foundation for effective gender mainstreaming, providing an overview of the status of gender equality across the eight Sahelian countries covered by the SURAGGWA programme. The following chapters examine gender roles and responsibilities in land restoration and climate change adaptation (Component 1) and in agricultural value chains, especially related to Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), where data are available (Component 2). The assessment concludes with recommendations for mainstreaming gender within the programme design and during implementation, via the Gender Action

¹ McOmber, C. (2020), “Women and Climate Change in the Sahel”, West African Papers, No. 27, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<https://doi.org/10.1787/e31c77ad-en>

² Omolo, N.A. (2010), “Gender and climate change-induced conflict in pastoral communities: Case study of Turkana in northwestern Kenya”, African Journals Online, Vol. 10 No. 2, <https://doi.org/10.4314/ajcr.v10i2.63312>

³ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/women-and-climate-change-in-the-sahel_e31c77ad-en

⁴ <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajcr/article/view/63312>

⁵ FAO (2021). FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020-2030. Rome.

⁶ GCF (2019). Green Climate Fund (GCF) Gender Policy.

⁷ GCF (2019). Green Climate Fund (GCF) Gender Policy.

Plan (GAP). The GAP details specific activities to address gender inequalities in the region and empower women and ensures that all activities across the three components reach specific gender targets.

The primary objectives of this Gender Assessment are to:

1. **Identify gender disparities** in climate resilience, agriculture, and rural livelihoods, highlighting the unique challenges faced by women, men, and vulnerable groups in the Great Green Wall region.
2. **Assess institutional and policy frameworks** that support or hinder gender equality in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.
3. **Provide actionable recommendations** to ensure the SURAGGWA programme integrates gender-responsive strategies that enhance women's empowerment and equitable participation in climate resilience initiatives.
4. **Align with international commitments** such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Action Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 5 & 13), reinforcing the role of gender equality in climate adaptation efforts.⁸

Methodology

This Gender Assessment is based on a multi-dimensional approach, drawing from:

- (i) **Desk review of:**
 - a. **Relevant literature on gender, forestry, and climate change** in GGW countries (e.g. existing research, reports, and data sources from the United Nations, World Bank, NGOs, and other development agencies addressing gender equality and climate resilience in the GGW region), particularly eight country-specific gender profiles prepared collaboratively by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)⁹;
 - b. **National policies and legal frameworks** on gender, agriculture, and climate adaptation in the target countries;
- (ii) **Primary data collected through field-level consultations.** Field-level consultations supporting this analysis and the related GAP were held with a variety of stakeholders, including women in local communities; women's associations; civil society organizations; representatives from relevant technical departments of counterpart ministries; the GGW Agency; the National Designated Authority of the GGW; ethnic minority groups (including women from those groups); and other programme teams operating in the area. These consultations (detailed in Annex 7 – Stakeholder Engagement Plan), coupled with the desk review, deepened understanding of the role of women in the GGW area and the constraints women face. The consultations and review helped to identify key gender issues, vulnerabilities, and capacities within the context of land restoration and climate adaptation, as they relate to programme components and activities.

⁸ UNFCCC (2020). UNFCCC Gender Action Plan.

⁹ Please refer to the eight supplementary country-level gender profiles submitted, prepared by FAO between 2018-2022.

Based on the findings from this gender assessment, a set of recommendations were developed to mainstream gender into the activities in the SURAGGWA programme in a way that responds to gender-specific needs, priorities, and capacities. By conducting this Gender Assessment and developing the related GAP, the SURAGGWA programme will ensure the implementation of gender-transformative strategies, helping bridge gender gaps in agriculture, enhance women's participation in decision-making, and build climate resilience across communities in the Great Green Wall region.

IV. Regional overview of gender inequalities and the status of women in the Sahel

The Sahel region is a vast semi-arid strip of land that stretched across several countries in West and Central Africa. According to recent estimates the region has a total population of approximately 300 million people, with a slightly higher proportion of men than women. Despite high mortality rates of children under five, the Sahel have some the fastest growth rates (between 2.6% and 3.8%) and it predicted to doubled its population by 2050¹⁰. The Sahel region has a relatively young population, with a 64.5% of individuals under the age of 25. However, there are some variations between countries and regions within the Sahel with implications on gender. For instance, in areas where there are more girls than boys in the youngest age groups, the maternal mortality rate are higher due to a high prevalence of early marriages coupled with low access to maternal and reproductive health care. In Niger, about 76% of girls are married before the age of 18 and female genital mutilation remains recurrent with prevalence rates of up to 9 out of 10 excised women¹¹.

Regarding the **socio-economic situation**, countries in the Sahel region share common economic characteristics, yet their national economies vary in size. According to the World Bank classification, the programme countries range from low-income economies to lower-middle income economies, with of the former being among the least developed countries in the world¹². Agriculture represents the main sector of the regional economy, in terms of employment and value addition, contributing to an estimated 35% of the regional gross domestic product (GDP).

Women in the Sahel are more affected by this socio-economic status due to their engagements in informal and subsistence farming in comparison to men who are more likely to be engaged in wage labor and other formal sector activities. According to reports, women provide 80% of agricultural labour force in the Sahel¹³, and at the same time, they continue to have most of the responsibilities at home and perform most of the unpaid work, creating the well-known double burden of work of women. Women are estimated to spend at least three time as many hours as men on household-related activities. In addition, African women in the Sahel contribute from 60% to 80% of the food production. Nonetheless, while being a well-known issue, women face the greatest challenges in accessing productive resources (Njobe & Kaaria). Low production and yields are two of the region's most pressing agricultural challenges. It is recorded by the FAO that women's restricted access to production means and inability to leverage prospects in agriculture is to blame for the sector's poor performance in low and middle-income economies (Njobe & Kaaria). Restricted access in this respect, is faced more exceedingly by women than the men, indicating a strong gender gap. As a result, the region's production is harmed, and women's fair

¹⁰ The World Bank, "Population, total – Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, The, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal | Data," 2021. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=BF-CM-TD-GM-GN-ML-MRNE-NG-SN&most_recent_value_desc=false (accessed Sep. 20, 2021).

¹¹ Alliance Sahel. (2021). "Gender equality and women's empowerment: a unique opportunity for the Sahel". Accessed March 2023: <https://www.alliance-sahel.org/en/news/gender-equality-sahel/>

¹² Large parts of the Sahelian populations live below 1,90 US dollar a day

¹³ Alliance Sahel (2021). "Gender equality and women's empowerment: a unique opportunity for the Sahel". Accessed March 2023: <https://www.alliance-sahel.org/en/news/gender-equality-sahel/>

and profitable involvement in intra-African agrarian commerce, regional, and international agricultural value chains is hampered (Njobe & Kaaria).

Despite their distinctive role in productive, generative, and communal management actions, women continue to have a minor representation in decision-making and leadership positions. Laws and policies that regulate formal institutions, as well as gender and cultural norms continue to prevent women to actively participate in the economic and political scene. This is often related to women's lack of education and literacy but also to gender-based violence at home including forced marriages and sexual exploitation (UNDP, 2022)

Women's participation in climate effort both at the regional and national levels is also very limited (Dankelman, 2010). Climate change can thwart progress towards gender equality by exacerbating poverty, reinforcing traditional patterns of discrimination, and directly disturbing gender-defined livelihoods. This is particularly acute in the Sahel due to its high dependence on rain-fed agriculture and therefore vulnerable to climate change. Farmers face growing challenges in maintaining subsistence agriculture due to recurring periods of droughts, desertification and floods. These extreme weather events can cause extensive crop damage and affect more severely female farmers who are usually deprived of several adaptation mechanisms (UNHCR14).

While local **food production** available for consumption has increased, it remains insufficient in a number of countries and rates of undernourishment and malnutrition remain very high. At the end of 2022, provisional Cadre Harmonisé analyses indicate that 28.9 million people are in need of immediate food assistance in the Sahel and in West Africa. Acute malnutrition among children exceeds the emergency threshold (15%) in Senegal, Mauritania, Niger and northeastern Nigeria. Moreover, in this subregion of West Africa, the obesity prevalence rates in 2014 were 5 percent among men and 15 percent among women (adults) (IFPRI, 2015 cited in FAO, 2017). In nearly all countries in the subregion, the prevalence of obesity increased between 2014 and 2017, leading to elevated risks of diabetes, heart disease and hypertension among men and women alike. Security tensions and violence, inflation, extreme poverty, the widespread surge in cereal and fertilizer prices are exacerbating the food and nutrition crisis. Particularly in Central Sahel countries, the food security and nutrition status of women and children is severely compromised and worsening amid colliding crisis of conflict, climate change, and COVID-19.

Despite all the difficult conditions described above, women continue to play a decisive role in household food security, food diversification and the nutritional status and health of children. In nearly all West African countries, women prepare most of the meals consumed in the household, hence their central role in ensuring a healthy and balanced diet for family members, especially in families living in coastal communities.

14 <https://www.unhcr.org/61a49df44.pdf>

Key gender inequalities in the Sahel region

Like many other African countries, gender equality remains a significant issue in the countries of the Sahel region. To gain a better understanding of the situation faced by women in the region, various gender indicators are used. One such indicator is the Social Institutions Gender Index (SIGI) from OECD Stats portal, which assesses the level of discrimination against women in each country. According to the SIGI 2019 report, all Sahel countries had high or medium SIGI values. Mauritania and Niger have a "very high" level of gender-based discrimination across all four areas measured by the SIGI, with particularly high scores for discrimination in the family and restricted access to productive and financial resources. Senegal has a relatively low overall SIGI score of 37 percent, with higher scores for discrimination in the family, which is also high for all the programme countries. Nigeria and Mali have highest overall scores. And Burkina Faso has the lowest overall SIGI score of 32 percent, indicating lower gender-based discrimination compared to other countries. Djibouti has no data available, but its score for discrimination in the family is high. The discrimination against women within the family ranged from 45% to 88%, based on factors such as legal frameworks for violence against women, the sex ratio at birth, and reproductive rights. For instance, Nigeria, with a SIGI value of 46 percent (high), exhibits a 1.5 female-to-male ratio for time spent on unpaid care work, while 90% of landholders and 66% of bank account holders are male.

Another significant gender indicator is the Global Gender Gap Index, which benchmarks gender parity across four dimensions: economic participation, educational attainment, health, and political empowerment. Table 1 provides rankings for seven out of the eight countries targeted. Chad and Mali have the largest gender gaps in the Sahel region ranking 141st and 142nd, out of 146 countries, globally (World Economic Forum (2022)).¹⁵

Table 1: SIGI Index and Global Gender Gap for Sahel region

Sahel region	SIGI 2019*			Global Gender Gap**	
	SIGI Value	Discrimination in the family	Restricted civil liberties	Global Gender Gap Index 2022	Position out of 146 countries
Burkina Faso	32% Medium	45%	14%	0.659	115
Chad	45% High	56%	27%	0.579	142
Djibouti	na	73%	na	na	na
Mali	46% High	64%	29%	0.601	141
Mauritania	<i>Very high*</i>	88%	52%	0.606	146
Niger	<i>Very high*</i>	84%	26%	0.635	128
Nigeria	46% High	55%	54%	0.639	123
Senegal	37% Medium	65%	4%	0.668	112

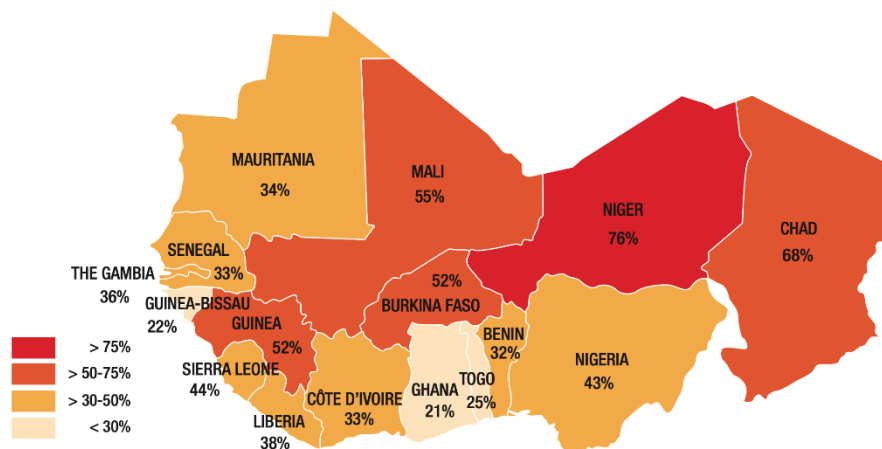
Note: *OECD (2019). Social Institutions & Gender Index. Available at : <https://www.genderindex.org/>.

Socio-economic indicators

In terms of the mean age for first marriage in the target countries, the percentage of young women (20-24 years) married before age 18 years old varies considerably, ranging from a very high 76% in Niger to a lower 33% in Senegal. For instance in Niger the mean age for first marriage 17 years old, despite of the legal framework which specifies that the minimum age for marriage is 21 years old (Civil Code, Art. 144, 148 and 158). This is because in many cases the people are unaware of the regulations in force, and the customary and religious laws for marriage prevail.

Figure 1: Percentage of young women (20-24 years) married before age 18 years old

Percentage of young women (20-24 years) married before age 18



Source: [OECD](#)

Furthermore, female genital mutilation has a high prevalence among countries in Sahel region. In Djibouti it is a common practice in despite of government's efforts to combat the practice. In fact, in the eight countries female genital mutilation is considered a criminal offense but only in Niger is the percentage of prevalence below five percent. This suggests a lack of law enforcement, and how customary frameworks can dictate people's behaviour. In addition, the adolescent fertility rate is another important concern of the situation of women in the region. In countries such as Mali, there are 162 births per 1,000 adolescent women, having important repercussions on women's health and further on poverty and food security.

There is also a significant gender gap in terms of education. The literacy gender parity index is less than one in all cases, which shows the disadvantage women face relative to men for learning opportunities. Gender gaps in education have repercussions on health, nutrition and the education of other household

members. It is also one of the main barriers rural women face in accessing extension services and financial services that are crucial to improving their livelihoods.

Table 2: Status of women in Sahel region: socio-economic indicators

Sahel region	Social Protection	Health/physical integrity		Education	Leadership
	Mean age first marriage	Female genital mutilation prevalence (%)	Adolescent fertility rate (Women ages 15-19) is this births per 1 000 women in that age bracket? Pls explain	Literacy rate youth, gender parity index (15-24)	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)
Burkina Faso	20	76%	97	0.96	11%
Chad	18	34%	151	0.71	17%
Djibouti	30	95%	17	na	18%
Mali	18	89%	162	0.7	13%
Mauritania	21	64%	67	0.96	23%
Niger	17	2%	177	0.72	16%
Nigeria	21	19%	102	0.84	6%
Senegal	22	25%	67	0.91	43%

Note: [Gender Data Portal of World Bank](#). Data corresponds to most recent year available. The mean age at marriage, female shows the average length of marriage for women between 15 to 54 years old. Literacy rate is the ratio of female to male ages who can both read and write.

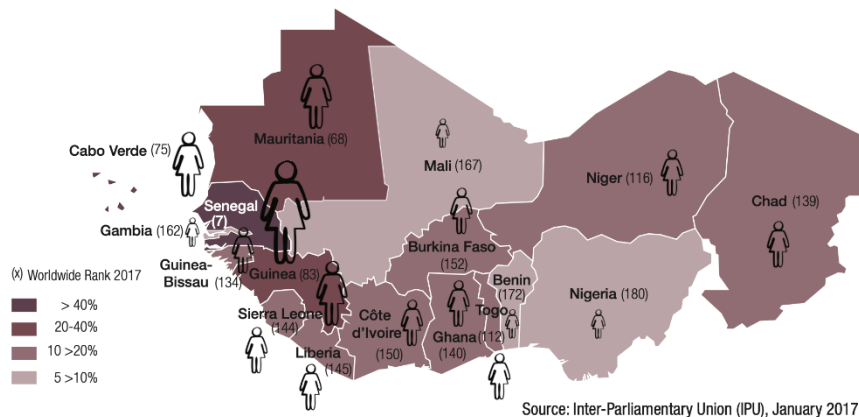
Women's participation in politics and leadership

Women in West Africa remain underrepresented in the political sphere (Figure 2). Women occupy only 421 seats in West African parliaments, representing 16.1% of all lawmakers. In West Africa, 12 out of 17 countries have averages that are below the world average of 23.3%. Senegal is a notable exception. With women making up 42.7% of its parliament, it ranks as number seven, just behind Sweden. Women occupy on average less than 20% of ministerial posts, and, of those, they are mostly clustered in the ministries covering women's affairs and social issues. Men also outnumber women within ministerial administrations, while women generally occupy secretarial, accounting, human resources and other administrative positions, men hold most technical and managerial positions. To encourage more women to participate in politics, the region adopted the ECOWAS Gender and Election Strategic Framework (GESF) and Action Plan in December 2016. This was followed in February 2017, by a series of recommendations to update the "Supplementary Act relating to Equality of Rights between Men and Women for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region". In terms of top leadership position, the Commission of the African

Union is setting a good example. Its newly elected commission maintains the proper gender balance-four out of eight elected commissioners are women. The previous commission was chaired by Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the first woman to lead the continent-wide organization. Also, the election of the first female head of State in Africa in 2006, the Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, inspired many African nations to sought to achieve gender equality and increase women's participation in decision-making and expand women's economic opportunities.¹⁶

Figure 2: Women in Parliament in West Africa

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT: SENEGAL RANKS 7TH WORLDWIDE BUT WEST AFRICAN WOMEN REMAIN UNDER-REPRESENTED



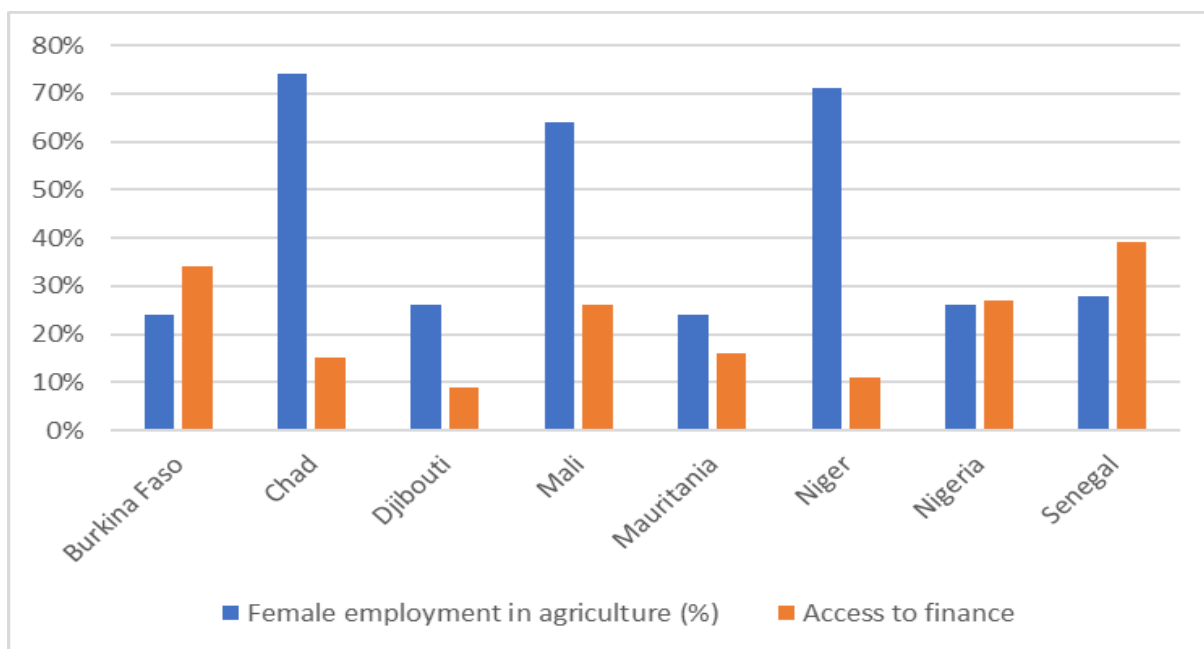
Source: [OECD](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/west-african-papers_24142026)

Figure 2 shows the national seats held by women in each country of this programme, and the differences between the countries, for example in Nigeria only 6% of seats in the parliaments are held by women in comparison with 43% in Senegal. The lack of women's representation in government has negative impacts not only on policies and programs in place at the national level, but also on changes in societal perceptions. When women are underrepresented, the root causes of gender inequality, which are the social norms and rules that govern the country, cannot be challenged.

Female employment and financial inclusion

Figure 3: Female employment in agriculture and access to finance resources

¹⁶ https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/west-african-papers_24142026



Note: [Gender Data Portal of World Bank](https://data.worldbank.org/indicators?locations=SA). Data corresponds to most recent year available. Access to finance is measure as percentage of women with account ownership at financial institutions.

As mentioned above, women play an important role in agriculture in the region. However, there are significant disparities from one country to another. For example, in Chad, women account for 74% of employment in agriculture, while in Burkina Faso and Mauritania they account for 24%. And despite women's role in agriculture, very few can access resources such as a bank account in their own name. Interestingly, figure 3 shows that precisely in countries where women's participation in agriculture is higher, the percentage of women who can access a bank account is low. In Mali, for example, women account for 64% of agricultural labor, but only 26% have access to a bank account. This situation jeopardizes women's ability to receive and manage their income.

Women dominate employment in off-farm segments, including food-away-from-home, food processing and food marketing. Yet, they rarely have access to the resources needed to develop their activities. An analysis of the rice sector in Benin, Niger and Nigeria highlights existing gender disparities in trade networks (SWAC/OECD, 2019). Women face a series of obstacles limiting their participation in trade: poorer access to information and markets, male-dominated distribution networks, time and mobility constraints, lower education levels, greater difficulties in complying with regulatory and procedural requirements, etc. Women are thus less likely to hold strategic positions and are less well-connected to central actors within value chains. Supporting employment in food value chains can offer immense opportunities to women and young people. However, more evidence, strategic thinking and integrated approaches are needed for more effective policies.¹⁷

¹⁷ https://www.oecd.org/swac/maps/Food-systems-Sahel-West-Africa-2021_EN.pdf

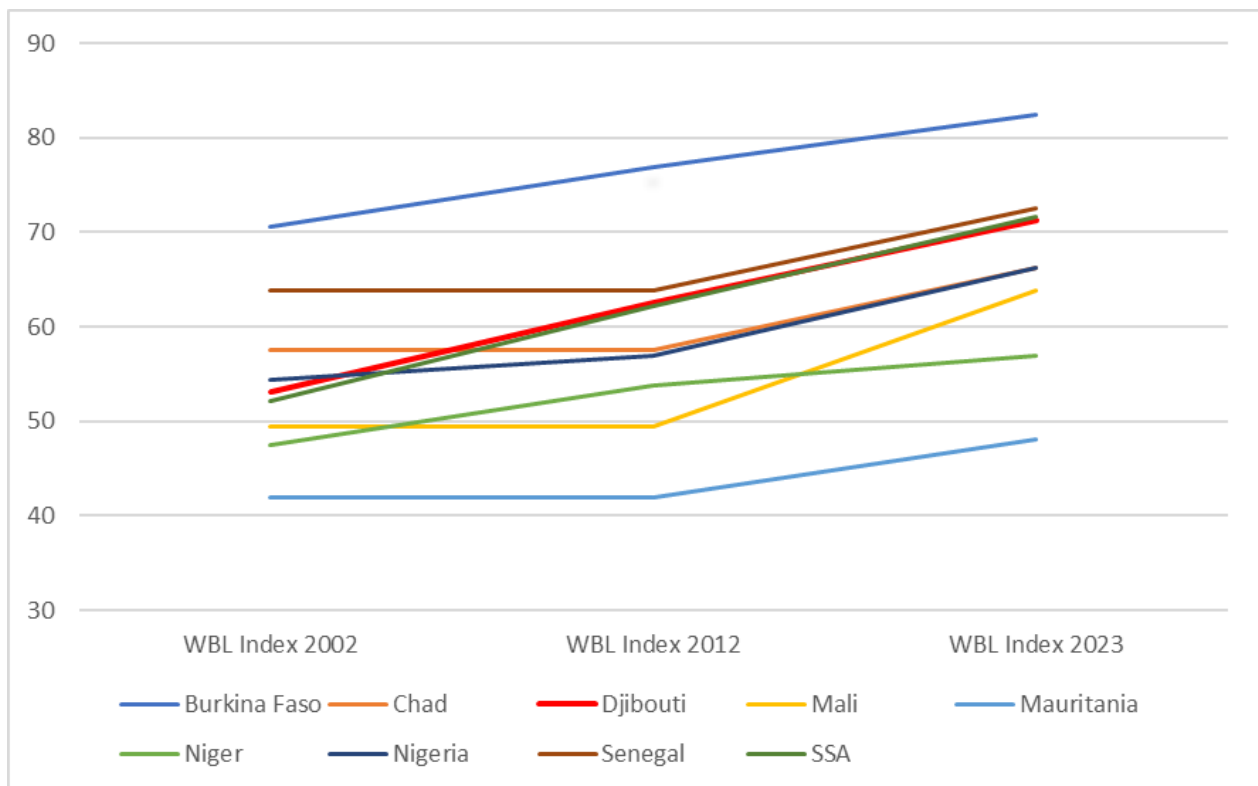
Legal status of women

Policy and legal frameworks that incorporate gender considerations in the design and implementation are fundamental for closing the gender gap in low- and middle-income countries. Evidence suggests that there have been improvements in gender responsiveness in national policies. The Women, Business, and the Law database of the World Bank (WBL) is an indicator for global progress in terms of policy and legal frameworks towards gender equality. This indicator analyzes laws regarding mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets and pension.

In all the countries of the region, there has been an improvement in conditions over time (**Figure 4**), with the sole exception of Niger. In Niger, there are serious areas for improvement in terms of the legal status of women. For example, to improve on the property indicator, this country could consider granting spouses equal rights to real property, equal inheritance rights for heirs, rights to real property, equalized inheritance rights of sons and daughters, equalized inheritance rights of surviving spouses of male and female surviving spouses, grant spouses equal administrative authority over the property during marriage, and recognize the value of non-monetary contributions.

It is important to highlight the score of Burkina Faso and Senegal, who are the two economies of Sahel with better policy framework conditions for women than the mean of SSA. In Burkina Faso, when it comes to laws affecting women's decisions to work, gender differences in property and inheritance and women's pensions, the improvements have been notable. However, some aspects such as freedom to movements are still affecting gender equality.

Figure 4: Women, Business and Law Indicator for Sahel countries across time



Note: Women, Business and the Law, World Bank Database. Available at: <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/all-topics>

Despite some positive development, women in the Sahel region continue to face significant challenges, particularly in rural areas where traditional practices and beliefs often limit their freedom and opportunities. In many cases, customary law is recognized by national legal systems and can be used to resolve disputes where there is no formal law in place. However, customary laws can also perpetuate discrimination against women. As mentioned before, many customary laws contribute to continue practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, even though those are considered criminal offenses by the legal statutory systems in the country.

Gender and Climate Adaptation

Climate change is exacerbating gender inequalities.

Gender roles and responsibilities influence the extent to which men and women are affected by climate shocks and stressors. Gender inequality is a critical factor in understanding vulnerability and resilience efforts concerning climate change. Gender differences depend on several factors, such as responsibilities and cultural norms. The Sahel region, characterized by arid and semi-arid conditions, is prone to climate shocks such as droughts, desertification and land degradation. There are important gender implications of these shocks that exacerbate women's vulnerability and have consequences not only in women's livelihoods but in food security, malnutrition and poverty in rural communities. Moreover, social and political factors such as migration, and political instability, present foundational stressors on the region that may intensify due to climate change.

First, since women are often responsible for collecting water and firewood, climate-related shocks resulting in reduced water sources and increased desertification may force women to travel further to collect water. This situation of needing to travel longer distances for water and firewood increases the exposure of women and girls to risks of violence and exploitation, in addition to reducing their time for education, income-generating activities, and caring for their families.

Second, climate shocks such as drought and floods are unfavorable more for women farmers (women in the Sahel region are responsible for 60-80% of food production), who are more likely to grow crops highly vulnerable to climate change. Women's crop failure is expected to result in food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty for rural households. In addition, recent evidence for Africa suggests that rural households may shift labor patterns in response to heat stress in ways that increase women's work burden, i.e. women farmers suffer disproportionately from weather-related shocks by maintaining working levels despite heat events¹⁸.

Third, as in several African countries, rural women have limited access to agricultural resources and services such as inputs, financial resources, extension services, markets, and land. Likewise, women often hold different roles and responsibilities within the household. Women tend to balance reproductive roles such as cooking, cleaning, and childrearing in addition to agricultural responsibilities. These limitations hinder women's ability to invest in sustainable agricultural practices, diversify their income and build resilience to climate shocks. The limited access to agricultural services also makes women more likely to rely on rain-fed agriculture, particularly vulnerable to droughts and other climate-related hazards.

Moreover, data on mortality and violence following extreme weather events and natural disasters also pointed out that women are more likely to suffer from domestic violence in contexts affected by climate shocks. As climate change exacerbates poverty and food insecurity, it can increase competition over

¹⁸ Azzarri, C., & Nico, G. (2022). "Sex-disaggregated agricultural extension and weather variability in Africa south of the Sahara". *World Development*, 155, 105897

scarce resources, fueling conflicts and violence, including gender-based violence. This can include cases where women are subjected to violence when they attempt to access natural resources, such as water, or when they engage in agricultural activities that are traditionally seen as male domains.

Women's adaptive capacity

Adapting to climate change depends on people's resilience or adaptive capacities, which are driven by factors such as access to and control over economic and natural resources as well as access to information, education, skills and technologies. As mentioned before, women farmers are more likely to have limited access to these resources than their male counterparts. For instance, women's lack of knowledge about climate change may be due to gender norms that prevent them to engage in training where men are the main trainers.

Another essential factor for adaptability to climate change shocks is the time available. Traditional gender roles and norms often assign women the responsibility for household chores and childcare, limiting their ability to engage and participate in decision-making processes and other activities related to climate change adaptation.

In addition, climate-induced migration in rural areas often affects women disproportionately and their ability to cope with climate change shocks. Women farmers are more likely to be left behind and struggle to manage agricultural activities independently, given the limitations they face due to the factors mentioned above. This has consequences on agricultural productivity and food security. Finally, women are less represented in decision-making within the household and at the community levels. This limits women's ability to advocate for their needs and influence policies affecting their livelihoods.

Several stakeholders have turned their focus to improving gender equality as a central intervention to build climate resilience in the Sahel. **A gendered approach to resilience building focuses on the underlying structural inequalities that make women more vulnerable to climate crises.** Because deeply embedded structural and normative codes of exclusion shape gender inequalities, development institutions are beginning to adopt an approach called gender transformation¹⁹. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to promote gender-sensitive policies and programs that address the underlying causes of gender inequality in the agricultural sector. This includes **gender transformative approaches that increase women's access to resources and services, promote gender-responsive agricultural practices, and enhance women's participation in decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation.**

Women and land restoration in Sahel region

¹⁹ McOmber, C. (2020), "Women and Climate Change in the Sahel", West African Papers, No. 27, OECD Publishing, Paris.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/e31c77ad-en>

As mentioned in the previous section, the Sahel is characterized by several vulnerabilities to climate shocks. In response to these challenges, women can play a central role in programmes that aim to restore degraded land. While in the long run the most cost-effective approach to reducing land degradation is to prevent it from occurring, recent findings show that the world is falling short of its targets to combat land degradation and biodiversity loss. Land restoration has been proposed as an important measure since it also contributes to food, and water security. Since women are often responsible for the collection of firewood, water and other natural resources, thus they have a deep understanding of the local environment and the challenges facing it.²⁰

Land-restoration programmes or initiatives should not be assumed to be gender-neutral. They should, whether new or old be screened for possible gender-differentiated impacts using sex-disaggregated data. Given the complexity of restoration programmes and projects, their successful implementation requires careful planning and implementation involving all relevant stakeholders²¹.

Women and girls bear a disproportionate impact when land is depleted and limited in availability. This is because of their significant involvement in agriculture and food production, reliance on forests, susceptibility to poverty, lack of education, and lower legal protections and social status. Despite of the recognition and acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between agricultural production, poverty reduction, land preservation, and gender integration, the gender aspect is frequently disregarded in the execution of land-restoration initiatives. As a result, gender aspects are either overlooked or neglected in restoration practice.

Including women in land restoration processes implies taking into consideration their limitations in terms of extension services and institutional credit, and barriers related to land tenure. As in much of low-income countries, women's ability to own, control, benefit from and access land in the Sahel region is significantly more limited than their male counterparts. Although evidence is still limited, available data from the World Bank show that percentage of land owned by women is always smaller than men in the same countries (Figure 5). On average, the land women own, or control tends to be smaller and lower quality. In many countries, women's access to, use and control of land depends on their relations to male relatives as wives, mothers, or daughters²². Understanding the roles and responsibilities of men and women, along with power relations in land management, is a primary requirement to achieving effective outcomes when combating land degradation and implementing gender-responsive and sustainable land-restoration initiatives.

In addition, customary systems in many societies may prevent women's participation. For example, in some contexts women are denied the right to plant trees, control soil degradation and take measures to improve soil fertility.

²⁰ Namubiru-Mwaura, E. (2021). "Gender and Land Restoration". UNCCD Global Land Outlook Working Paper. Bonn.

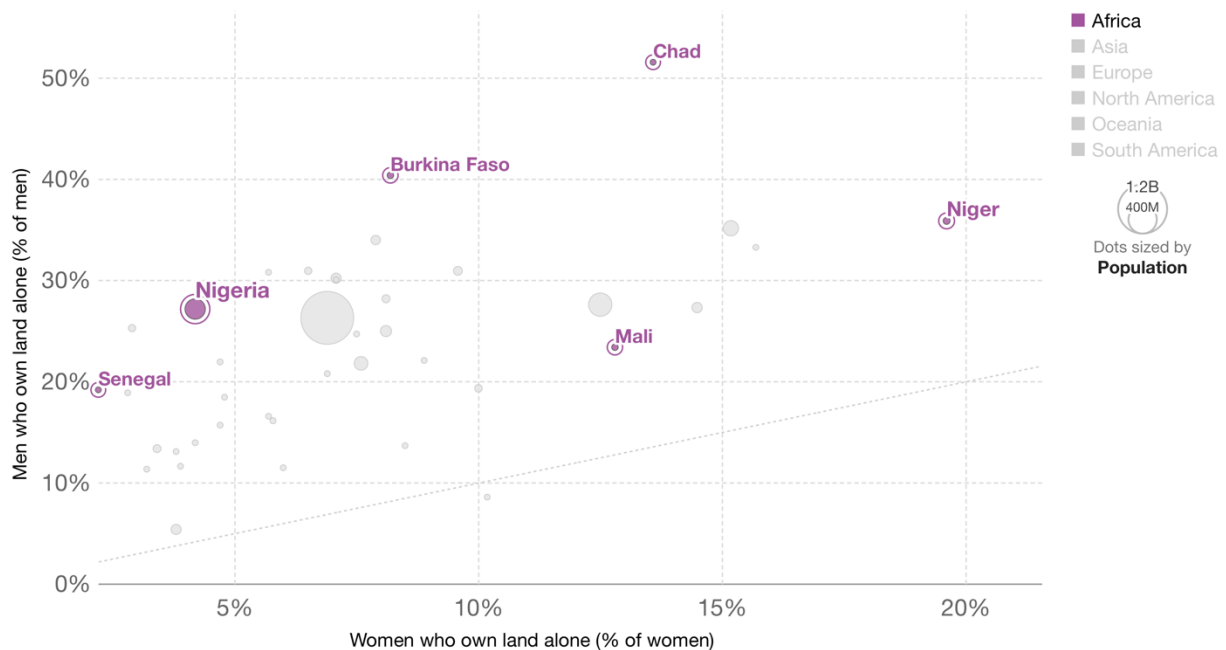
²¹ UNEP (2019). "Women in the Sahel lead on the frontlines of climate change"

²² SIDA (2015). "Women and Land Rights Brief". Accessed March 2023: <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/-women-and-land-rights.pdf>

Figure 5: Land Ownership, men vs women

Land ownership, men vs women, 2020

Percentage of men and women (age 15-49) who solely own a land which is legally registered with their name or cannot be sold without their signature. Colors represent world regions. Bubble sizes are proportional to the population of the country.



Source: World Bank, Gender Statistics (based on multiple sources)

OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender • CC BY

Note: World Bank Database. Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/land-ownership-men-vs-women?zoomToSelection=true&country=BFA~TCD~MLI~NER~NGA~SEN>

V. Country Profiles

a) Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is a low-income, agricultural-based country with a high illiteracy rate and poor housing conditions, ranking low on the Human Development Index, the Institutions Index and Gender, and the Global Innovation Index. There are deep inequalities between men and women, and social institutions discriminate against women. However, the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) adopted in 2016 aims to reduce social inequalities and increase the number of women entrepreneurs. The Presidential Program also emphasizes the promotion and involvement of women in economic, social, and political life.

Burkina Faso has ratified various international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Sustainable Development Goals. The national legal framework prohibits discrimination and establishes equal rights for women, but customary law often

prevails, which is less favorable to women. The country has a policy framework for gender mainstreaming in agricultural policies, including the National Gender Strategy for 2020-2024, and various gender and agriculture action plans. However, gender issues are not adequately integrated into agricultural policies and programmes, budgeting, and indicators.

The Rural Sector Development Strategy (2016-2025) is an exception, which includes a guiding principle on gender and several priority actions for the agriculture sector. However, other sectoral policies, such as the National Rural Land Security Policy incorporates gender and women's rights, including quota measures to promote women's access to irrigated land, and mentions the participation of women's organizations in local processes. The water policy also includes principles of equality and gender but does not sufficiently analyze the relationships between men, women, and water.

Women play a vital role in agriculture, food security, and employment, but they face significant inequalities and disparities. They have less access to natural resources, means of production, and new technologies. They also have a higher illiteracy rate, and female-headed households have limited access to water and energy resources. Women primarily engage in cash crops, livestock breeding, and non-timber forest product development, and they are responsible for the majority of household work.

Livestock is another important sector of the economy in Burkina Faso and is a significant source of income for households, especially for women. Women are mainly engaged in raising pigs, cattle, and goats, and they hold the bulk of the pig herd at the national level. Women also contribute significantly to feeding animals, but their contribution is less on surveillance and veterinary care activities. Women's involvement in livestock activities varies across regions, with some regions having a higher proportion of women in the labor force than others. Livestock breeding is predominantly male, with men owning a larger proportion of livestock than women.

Women also play a significant role in the exploitation of non-timber forest products from communal forests, which are crucial for their income and family needs. However, they are underrepresented in productive aspects of arboriculture due to difficult access to land ownership. Most female-headed households still use solid fuels for cooking, indicating poverty, while the preservation of the environment involves the use of non-solid fuels that are more expensive. The National Action Program to Combat Desertification pays particular attention to gender issues, but land restoration programs assume access to lands is secured, which is a crucial issue for women. The Forest Code recognizes different regimes for forest domains, and the development of local land charters is supposed to contribute to the empowerment and participation of local populations in the management of land and natural resources, but there is no specificity about the inclusion of women.

Household survey from 2014 suggests that access to formal financial services such as bank accounts and credit remains low for households in the lower quintiles (poor households), with only 2% of adults having a bank account. Women tend to save more in small structures or rely on other people, while men borrow more frequently. Lack of supply and credit structures, as well as the complexity of procedures for obtaining credit, are the main constraints to accessing agricultural credit, particularly for women. Credit

organizations are often inaccessible to women due to the requirements for guarantees or goods, low literacy, and their sector of activity being considered at risk. While there are credit institutions specific to women and NGOs that can help, they often provide loans that are too small to meet their agriculture investment needs. Such credit institutions are also located far from the poor rural areas where the supply of credit remains insufficient.

Despite the challenges, several good practices and initiatives promote women empowerment, such as school canteens, shea sector development, and credit warrantee programs. Efforts in land tenure have also recognized women's property and use rights, advocating the participation of women's associations. Promising sectors, such as the agrifood sector, are getting organized, with the consideration of gender within the *“Confédération paysanne”* and the *“laboratoires de savoirs locaux”*.

Burkina Faso has taken several measures to address these issues and advance gender equality and empower women, including the creation of a Ministry in charge of the Advancement of Women and Gender and a National Council for the Promotion of Gender. Gender units have also been established in all ministries and public institutions. However, financial and technical resources remain insufficient, and women are underrepresented at higher levels of government and within the agricultural sector.

Overall, while there have been efforts to advance gender equality and empower women in Burkina Faso, there is still much work to be done to address the inequalities and disparities they face, particularly in the agricultural sector. Additional financial and technical resources, as well as greater representation of women in decision-making positions, are crucial to achieving gender equality and promoting sustainable development in the country.

b) Chad

Chad's political, legal, and socio-economic environment is evolving in line with international, regional, and national human rights and gender commitments. The country is committed to promoting gender and women's empowerment through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with mixed results in reducing social inequalities. In fact, the National Gender Policy (PNG) envisions Chad to be free from all forms of inequality and gender inequities by 2063. Sectoral programs and strategies also provide opportunities to address social and gender inequality in rural development through various interventions. Legal frameworks prohibiting child marriage and protecting women's rights further support gender equality.

However, institutional challenges remain, as the Ministry of Women struggles to systematize gender integration across agricultural sub-sectors. Performance indicators in social sectors reveal significant challenges in promoting gender equality in agriculture and rural development. Gender analysis of agricultural policy reveals weaknesses in promoting gender equality and empowering women. Issues include a lack of gender-sensitive planning, inadequate accountability mechanisms, and insufficient collaboration between the Ministry of Women and rural development stakeholders.

Overall, Chad still faces significant gender inequality, ranking 165th out of 191 countries in the 2021 GII. Socio-economic disparities affect various aspects of life, including health, education, and employment.

The country has one of the highest adolescent fertility rates globally and limited access to health services, leading to high infant mortality rates. Educational disparities persist, with lower literacy and schooling rates for women, particularly in rural areas. In employment, women earn less than men and are underrepresented in non-agricultural sectors and political representation.

In addition, Chad faces food and nutrition security challenges due to population growth, conflicts, and climate change. Roughly 47% of the population living below the poverty line, with poverty being more prevalent in rural areas. Food availability and consumption are also affected by climatic shocks, resulting in persistent food insecurity and malnutrition. The education level of mothers greatly impacts child nutrition, with children of uneducated mothers experiencing higher rates of chronic malnutrition. The country also struggles to support displaced populations and refugees, putting pressure on resources such as water and land.

The agriculture sector employs 65% of the working population in Chad, with cereals being the primary food source. Oilseed production, dominated by groundnuts and sesame, serves as cash crops, while legumes, root crops, and tubers contribute to household food security. Women play a crucial role in agricultural production and livestock farming, but their contributions are often undervalued. Women's associations and groups demonstrate their efforts in the field, but women do not fully benefit from the outcomes of their work.

Livestock also contributes significantly to the country's economy, representing 53% of rural sector GDP and supporting 40% of the rural population. The sector generates substantial revenue and is a major component of Chad's exports. However, there is an imbalance in the distribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women in livestock farming. Men primarily tend to large livestock, while women manage small ruminants and poultry and perform tasks like milking and selling milk. Despite their involvement, women often don't control the income generated from these activities.

In fisheries and aquaculture sector, many fishermen are involved, contributing to the country's food supply. However, the sector is also marked by gender inequality, with men dominating fishing activities and controlling the resources generated from sales. Women are mainly involved in the processing, conservation, and marketing of fish products. Access to these resources can be a source of conflict, and women may face obstacles in the post-harvest phase due to poor application of regulations and conservation measures.

The forestry sector is also important in Chad, with forests covering around 12 million hectares and providing essential resources for rural communities. Access to these resources, such as wood products and non-timber species, varies depending on the agro-ecological zone and socio-cultural context. While both men and women have traditional rights of use, women are primarily responsible for supplying households with wood for cooking. However, government bans on logging - and abuses by enforcement agents - can limit women's access to these resources, affecting their livelihoods. Non-timber resources, like shea, can serve as a source of income, with women being particularly involved in harvesting, processing, and marketing.

In agricultural value chains overall, women's participation is characterized by traditional and artisanal methods, informal channels, and low added value. They are mostly involved in sectors such as peanuts, sesame, fishing, vegetables, milk and dairy products, shea, and gum arabic. In the Sahelian zone, women are primarily responsible for collecting gum arabic, but they have limited representation in marketing. In the Sudanian zone, women collectors of shea nuts have formed associations, strengthening their position in the value chain.

In conclusion, while agriculture and rural development are priority sectors in Chad, social inequality remains a challenge. Interventions targeting women exist and should be sustained, with a focus on equal access to resources and reducing social inequalities in agro-sylvo-pastoral sub-sectors.

c) Djibouti

With a population consisting of 46.21% women, Djibouti experiences gender disparities in urban and rural settings, with more women (51.2%) constituting rural populations. Unemployment affects more women than men, with 70.1% of urban and 64.6% of rural unemployed being women. Differences in access to resources, services, and activities contribute to these disparities, leading to a commitment to equity by public authorities.

Djibouti has established a regulatory and legislative system to promote women's empowerment, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2004-2006), the National Initiative for Social Development (2008-2012), the Government Action Plan (2009-2011), and the "Vision Djibouti 2035" strategy. There is also the National Gender Policy (2011-2021) which aims to eliminate gender gaps and establish sustainable development by eradicating gender inequalities. In addition, the country is a party to several international treaties and conventions on gender.

However, women's access to resources and assets remains limited, despite their significant role in creating national wealth. Improved access to production factors would increase women's productivity and contribute to national growth. But the lack of reliable statistical data could hinder the monitoring of gender indicators in the development and implementation of gender-promotion strategies, policies, and programs.

These inequalities are affecting food security in the country, with the country ranking 90th out of 121 on the Global Hunger Index. In Djibouti, 14.5% of households are food insecure, with significant regional differences. Rural areas have higher rates of food insecurity compared to urban areas. While households headed by men in rural areas are more vulnerable to food insecurity, severe food insecurity affects more women-led households. Malnutrition is another significant issue among women of reproductive age, with 14.3% suffering from wasting. Anemia also remains prevalent among women, while overweight and obesity rates are increasing. The main causes of food insecurity in Djibouti include poverty at the household level, weak redistribution, and difficulty accessing basic social services. Women play a crucial

role in household food and nutrition security, because they are responsible for domestic tasks related to food preparation and care of children.

Agricultural production in Djibouti is limited due to geo-climatic reasons, and it is a male-dominated sector. The last agricultural census in 1995 revealed only 5% of farms managed by women. Women mostly engage in support tasks, market gardening, and poultry and small ruminant farming, but face challenges in yield, transport, marketing, and access to resources, with a recent trend towards responsibility in market gardening and agricultural by-product marketing.

The country's agricultural potential relies on oasis agriculture, with only 10% of the 10,000 hectares of cultivable land can be cultivated and easily irrigated. Oasis agriculture is practiced by 1,700 smallholders in Djibouti, using crop association and traditional wells. Agricultural land management varies between pastoral, peri-urban, and pilot community perimeters, with the latter set up by the state for former pastoralists. Rural areas lack industrial equipment and transportation means but have more agricultural land and livestock compared to urban areas.

On livestock, Djibouti has a pastoral tradition with 90% of farms being extensive and itinerant. Sedentary livestock farming, practiced in oases or near cities, is more profitable but faces fodder shortages. A recent survey identified 244 dairy farmers, with 22-48% being women. Among the agricultural households surveyed, 42% practice livestock farming (predominantly goats), with women comprising 40% of these farmers. Among these livestock farmers, 52% say women are responsible for the animals' care, while 37% say it's the husband's duty, 8% attribute it to children, and 4% to a third person.

In fisheries, Djibouti's underused fishing potential is expected to contribute to food security and job creation for youth and women. The government, with FAO's assistance, is working to improve fisheries governance and develop marine aquaculture. Men mostly handle production, while women are responsible for marketing fish. The government aims to settle coastal families to encourage women's income-generating activities and strengthen their commercial capacities.

On the other hand, Djibouti has limited and ecologically fragile forest areas, with 70,000 ha of wooded land, including 22,000 ha of forest formations and 48,000 ha of steppe, tree, and shrub formations. Degradation of these areas is due to natural and anthropogenic factors. The forestry sector contributes to livelihoods and economic development, providing resources such as pasture, fodder, food, medicines, and building materials. Women collect firewood, while charcoal production is a male activity. Data on women's participation in the forestry sector is currently limited, making it difficult to assess their needs, concerns, advantages, and constraints.

Addressing gender inequalities in agricultural value chains is important for three reasons: (i) business opportunities are missed when women's roles are not recognized, (ii) social justice requires equal benefits for men and women from development activities, and (iii) women are crucial for achieving poverty reduction objectives. In Djibouti, the agricultural sector is inefficient, weakly integrated into markets, and offers little local processing, with women producers economically disadvantaged. Agricultural value chains

can improve this situation, and efforts have been made to develop promising subsectors, including meat and derivatives, fishery product exports, and date palm cultivation.

d) **Mali**

Most of Mali's population works in agriculture, mainly family and rural farming, involving socio-economic entities with family relationships. Family members pool their knowledge, skills, and resources to prioritize household needs and produce wealth through surplus marketing. This differs from private agricultural companies that prioritize wealth generation for promoters.

The Malian government recognizes the importance of this agriculture sector and aims to increase production, productivity, and diversification. To support the sector, the government encourages private sector involvement and secure land tenure. Various policies and strategies have been implemented, such as the Development Policy (PDA), National Investment Plan for Agriculture (PNISA), and sub-sectoral policies.

Mali has initiated actions to support women's rights, including legislative, regulatory, and administrative measures that promote gender equality. The country is a stakeholder in ECOWAS instruments on gender equality and women's empowerment. Existing reforms include public finance, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, and sector-specific gender policies. A support Fund for the Empowerment of Women and the Development of Children (FAFE) was also created to finance female entrepreneurship in Mali. Furthermore, the country has been party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1985 and ratified its additional Protocol in 2000.

However, Malian women still face discrimination due to poverty and cultural and religious traditions. Mali ranks low in human development, and Islam dominates its religious landscape, with around 90% of the population being Muslim. Authorities often use religion and customs to justify the lack of reforms to end gender discrimination, particularly in agriculture.

Both men and women contribute significantly to agriculture and rural enterprises. Women also play a crucial role in fighting rural food insecurities as they are primarily responsible for food selection, preparation, and childcare. However, women still face discrimination in land management, often due to socio-cultural factors, as they cannot inherit land in many communities. This hinders their fight against food insecurity. Despite being present throughout the agricultural chain, women lack the necessary resources to increase production and productivity. Their involvement in food production and access to land is essential for tackling food security challenges.

Mali's land policies have continued to evolve, with the adoption of the new agricultural land policy (PFA) in 2014. However, despite a National Water Policy, access to drinking water remains a challenge, particularly for women and girls, who bear the brunt of water-related chores. Efforts to improve women's access to and control of water points are essential for gender equality in the country.

Malian women encounter challenges in accessing land, leading to their involvement mainly in groundnut and rice production. Factors contributing to this discrimination include traditional customs, household duties, and low-income levels. Although some initiatives have aimed to improve women's access to resources and land, their access to motorized equipment, credit, and agricultural extension services remains limited. The policy developments witnessed in the country since 2015, such as the Agricultural Land Law (“Loi fonciere agricole”), aim to promote women and youth access to land and resources.

Furthermore, access to agricultural equipment has a significant impact on productivity and production in Mali, but fewer women own equipment due to their lower income and limited access to agricultural credit. Women's farms are often under-equipped compared to those of men, which can cause delays in their cropping schedule and lower their productivity. The use of inputs like fertilizers is also essential for increasing productivity, but women often use less input than men. In cotton-growing areas, women also benefit less from equipment as they are less represented in this activity. However, collective activities or joint ventures can improve their access to inputs and other materials.

For livestock, the involvement of different social groups is often influenced by ethnicity, with the possession of animals seen as a source of prestige for some ethnic groups, such as the Fulani. Animal care and veterinary follow-up are typically considered male tasks, while women are more involved in the breeding of small ruminants such as sheep and goats. Women also play a role in the sale of livestock products such as milk, and the breeding of pigs is increasingly popular among women due to the low input required and high reproduction rate.

In terms of inland fisheries, it is important to note that Mali is the third largest producer of freshwater fish in Africa and fishing plays an important role in the country's economy, with 3.6% of the rural population engaged in fishing activities. Men are typically responsible for catching fish while women handle processing and marketing. However, aquaculture remains relatively inexperienced in Mali, with the first aquaculture development plan being funded by USAID in the early 1980s to introduce farmers to fish farming due to deficits in fish production caused by persistent drought.

Finally, forest resources, such as fruits, leaves, and firewood, are another important natural resource, particularly for women and young people who supply families with these products and carry out income-generating activities using forest by-products. The management and conservation of natural resources and the environment are enshrined in the Malian Constitution, but the participation of women in reforestation programs remains low. Factors contributing to this include socio-cultural factors, lack of knowledge of land use rights, limitations on female mobility and communication with male technicians, illiteracy, and low levels of schooling for girls, and a lack of interest or inability of technical supervision staff to address women directly and understand their practices. Efforts have been made to involve women in forestry management, such as through support for women's groups and collective tree plantations, but further action is needed to achieve gender equality in the sector.

e) Mauritania

The latest census of Mauritania in 2013 revealed that the country's population is characterized by a significant proportion of women, with a percentage of 50.8, but they remain marginalized in the rural sector, particularly in terms of access to land. This situation is due to the patriarchal culture that exists in the country and the residues of its matrilineal/matriarchal culture, which causes confusion about gender-specific relations in society.

Women in rural areas struggle to reconstitute themselves in labor in the various sectors of agriculture, trade, and fishing, which leads to their limited participation in decision-making in family and community. Moreover, women in Mauritania remain marginalized in several socio-economic areas, particularly in rural areas. For instance, in Brakna (southern Mauritania), women represent at most 30 percent of landholders, and only 2.6 percent in Trarza, while men represent on average more than 95 percent of title holders in the valley area. Additionally, women landowners usually hold provisional concessions, as land titles as legal acts are rare in the country.

However, agriculture is the main economic activity for rural women in Mauritania, employing more than 90 percent of working women in rural areas. Women participate in all phases of the agricultural cycle, but their contribution to agricultural production, processing, and preservation does not guarantee their food and nutrition security, with women and children being more likely to face malnutrition. Again this is all attributed to the patriarchal nature of rural societies, land insecurity, and limited involvement of women in decision-making. All of this limits women's participation in the fight against food insecurity in the poorest households and regions.

Women also play a significant role in all activities related to livestock, including traditional transhumance activities, dairy product processing, and small stockbreeding. In fact, women make up over 60% of members in local pastoral cooperative associations and lead some associations. However, men mostly hold leadership positions in these organizations.

Another important economic activity for rural women in Mauritania is the marine and inland fisheries. They play a significant role in the value chain that starts from fishing and ends with the sale of fish in the market. While women do not participate in “actual” fishing activities, they are involved in fish landing ports, processing, and sale of fish. However, women face various challenges, including limited access to resources, training, and markets, which could limit the growth and potential of the sector.

In the forestry and environmental sector, women are involved in activities such as picking fruits and leaves but are often excluded from reforestation programmes and projects. Rural women are also vulnerable to environmental degradation and natural disasters but have been historically sidelined in decision-making processes related to climate change.

Finally, the lack of access to credit, training, basic social services, and financial resources further exacerbates the situation for rural women. The limited access to credit, in particular, leads to their inability to use and conserve plots of land. Despite their efforts to derive income from the land, rural women in

Mauritania have limited participation in decision-making, and they face constraints to full involvement in agro-sylvo-pastoral activities.

To address these issues, Mauritania has developed various policies and plans broadly aimed at improving agriculture, rural conditions, and food security, including the National Agricultural Development Plan (2015-2025), Rural Sector Development Strategy for 2025, National Livestock Development Program (2018-2025), and Agropastoral Orientation Law. These policies attempt to integrate the gender aspect, but they are generally not based on prior gender analyses.

f) Niger

According to the gender assessment of the agriculture and rural development sectors in Niger – a 2022 study conducted by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the ECOWAS Commission – the country has made significant efforts to promote gender equality and combat discrimination through the adoption of various national and international policies and conventions. However, empirical observations and evaluation studies reveal persistent gender inequalities, with the country's Gender Inequality Index (GII) higher than the sub-Saharan Africa average.

Despite the stated commitment to gender equality in public policies, integrating a gender perspective remains inadequate in agricultural and rural development programs, such as the “*Initiative les Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens*” (I3N) and “*Programme National d’Investissements Agricoles*” (PNIA). Gender-disaggregated data remains scarcely considered in the design of agricultural policies. In addition, social, customary, and religious norms often establish and perpetuate gender differences, with men typically considered the head of the household and the family breadwinner. These norms can hinder women's access to land and other resources. While the Ministry of Agriculture has established a Gender Unit, its activities have been largely stagnant due to a lack of training and sensitization on gender issues among ministry officials.

A deep dive in the agriculture sector showed that gender plays a significant role in food and nutrition security, with women often being marginalized in agricultural production due to limited access to resources like land. Despite this, women still contribute significantly to food security by providing for their families when common resources are depleted. Female-headed households, however, face higher rates of food insecurity due to factors like lower income, limited access to resources, and family responsibilities. Cultural practices can also disadvantage women in terms of food consumption and health.

Gender disparity in agriculture is evident in Niger, where women's involvement has dropped from 40% to 11%, largely due to unequal land distribution. The primary crops grown are identical regardless of the household head's gender, with millet being the most important for both. In general, men own more individual agricultural plots than women – an important factor in the choice of cultivated crops. And they are also more involved horticultural and tree production. Post-harvest management practices vary, with women typically managing their production stock. However, social norms limit women's ability to sell their agricultural stock outside their village, which can impact profitability and reinforce male control over

resources. Women's groups and structured agricultural value chains at the local level can help support female producers in selling their harvest.

On livestock, Niger has the largest number of livestock among Sahelian countries, with over 40 million animals. Men own 72% of the livestock, while women own 28%, reflecting inequality similar to that in agriculture. However, women dominate goat farming, owning 54.5% of goats, as it requires less maintenance than cattle farming. Development partners are emphasizing livestock to reduce women's poverty, and programs have positively impacted women's ownership of animals. Inclusion of livestock in agricultural programmes and projects would help fight poverty and support rural household economies in Niger. On the other hand, the fishing and aquaculture sector has not been developed as a specific policy until 2007. This sector, mostly artisanal, directly affects 70,000 people and has an economic potential, despite limited support from PNIA. The sector is however dominated by men in terms of fish capture, while women are more involved in processing and selling, especially in large cities.

In forestry sector, due to poverty and limited access to agricultural land, both men and women increasingly rely on forest resources. Over 90% of Nigerien households rely on wood for energy, leading to a deficit in forest regeneration and fuelwood consumption. Men typically cut tree trunks and branches while women gather dead wood and smaller branches for household use. Nigeriens also utilize gum arabic, doum products, and rônier trees for additional income and subsistence, with men dominating the harvesting and wholesale trade and women focusing on processing and retail marketing.

Overall, women are often less integrated into agricultural value chains than men due to social norms, limited education, lack of working capital, and land issues. They typically participate in lower-value activities, such as collection and primary processing, while men dominate high-value tasks. Efforts are being made to organize women's groups and integrate them into each stage of the value chain, such as the milk chain in Douthi. The Regional Agricultural Investment Program (PRIA) also emphasizes a gender approach in its interventions. But there remains a need for stronger commitment to integrating gender perspectives in agricultural and rural development programs.

g) Nigeria

In low and middle-income countries, including Nigeria, the gender gap in agriculture remains a persistent issue. Women and men exhibit significant differences in vital development indicators such as education, employment, and health. Despite constituting 60 to 70 percent of the rural workforce, women encounter substantial obstacles in formalizing and expanding their businesses. For example, 80-90% of street food vendors in Nigeria are estimated to be women (Nordhagen, 2020). In addition, Nigerian women face numerous challenges, such as low school attendance rates in rural areas, particularly among vulnerable groups, which leads to higher dropout rates for girls nearing the end of primary school. Additionally, Nigeria has the second-highest infant and maternal mortality rates globally, with less than 20 percent of health facilities providing emergency obstetric care and 58 percent of HIV-positive individuals being women (FAO, 2018).

In Nigeria, male farmers still dominate land ownership and control regarding average land size for farming activities, with significant disparities across communities and states. Women's access to land is particularly limited in the Southeast and South regions, where cultural norms and traditions forbid women from owning land. Although the Nigerian Land Use Act of 1978 specified a collectivist framework for property rights systems, women's land tenure concerns persist. Although women inherit land through lease or purchase and sometimes in regions of the country where religion apportions 50 percent of everything men inherit to women, their land rights are still fragile and highly dependent on age and marital status.

Regarding agriculture markets and value chains, FAO's gender country assessment found that women increasingly supply national and international markets with traditional and high-value produce in Nigeria, however men typically control the trade of agricultural products and receive the revenue. This imbalance can be attributed to women's lack of access to and control over critical resources such as land, training, inputs and technologies, equipment, water, and health facilities (FAO Gender Land Database, 2023). Complementary policies must address these challenges and provide women access to essential agricultural resources such as financial markets and information.

Moreover, NTFPs in the country represents an important alternative for seasonal agriculture. However, the collection, processing and marketing of these products is realized informally by member of the family (usually women) and their work is unrecognized.

h) Senegal

In its gender-based analysis of the agriculture and rural development sectors in Senegal, FAO and the ECOWAS Commission (2018) highlighted that Senegal has implemented several strategies and policies to reduce gender inequalities in accessing resources, knowledge, opportunities, and markets.

Senegal has signed and ratified international, continental, and regional conventions promoting women's rights, such as CEDAW, the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Supplementary Act on the Rights of Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS region. It has also adopted the Strategy for Equity and Equality of Gender (SNEEG) to eliminate gender inequalities and guarantee women's rights and participation in development.

Gender mainstreaming has been initiated in rural development sectoral policy letters and monitoring instruments. Consequently, Senegal has seen improvements in institutional, macro, and sectoral indicators and gender consideration in policies. Poverty incidence has decreased, and the Human Development Index (HDI) has increased between 2011 and 2014, although the country's ranking has dropped. The Multidimensional Poverty Index and gender inequality index have also decreased.

However, there are still room for improvements and gender disparities persist in terms of resource access and economic participation. In agriculture, which employs roughly 30% of the work force in Senegal, women mostly hold smaller areas than men, and they engage mostly in rainfed rice farming, whereas men dominate in more profitable crops. Also, men primarily care for cattle, sheep, and goats which are working animals, while women focus on traditional poultry and small ruminant breeding. Furthermore, women

face challenges in accessing inputs (such as seeds and organic and mineral manure) and using modern production technologies and working animals. With regards to income-generating activities, between 2011 and 2013, women mainly derive their income from millet milling, market gardening, agricultural intensification and arboriculture, while men are more involved in beekeeping. Women are also involved in the traditional processing and conservation of fishery products and environmentally friendly income-generating activities in the forestry sector. However, women face supply difficulties in processing due to unfair competition and national export development policy.

These gender roles in agriculture and forestry contribute to food security and nutrition differences in rural Senegal, with female-headed households (roughly 20% of rural smallholder farms) facing higher food insecurity rates. Women's limited access to factors of production and financing results in less integration and less qualified roles in agricultural value chains. Men, on the other hand, dominate in activities generating higher added value, such as processing and marketing, because of their high purchasing power.

VI. Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH)

Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) are critical issues affecting women and girls globally, including in the SURAGGWA programme countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. SEAH encompasses various forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual violence, exploitation, and harassment, perpetrated in both private and public spheres.

Global and Regional Context

Globally, approximately 35% of women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Additionally, 7% of women worldwide have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner. In some countries, violence against women is estimated to cost up to 3.7% of their GDP, highlighting the significant economic impact of GBV.²³ The economic impact of GBV is profound, and this includes costs related to healthcare, legal services, and lost productivity.^{24,25}

In sub-Saharan Africa, where the GGW countries are located, the prevalence of GBV is notably high. For instance, UNICEF reports that in certain regions, up to 50% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence. Moreover, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) remain prevalent, with significant variations across countries²⁶.

Country-Specific Insights

The following table (Table 3) is meant to provide a snapshot of SEAH-related concerns within the SURAGGWA programme countries as they pertain to agriculture/land restoration/NTFP value chains, albeit not exhaustive. It is a starting point, with the understanding that the National Safeguards Specialist will conduct SEAH screening for country-specific (and site-specific information) during implementation.

Table 3: Snapshot of SEAH Across SURAGGWA Countries

Country	SEAH snapshot relating to agriculture/land restoration/NTFP value chains
Burkina Faso	In Burkina Faso, human trafficking remains a significant issue, with children and women subjected to forced labor and prostitution. Victims often work in agriculture, mining, and domestic services. The government has identified and assisted numerous child-trafficking victims, highlighting the need for continued vigilance in sectors like agriculture and land restoration.
Chad	Specific reports on SEAH within Chad's agricultural and land restoration sectors are scarce. However, the prevalence of human trafficking and forced labor in the region

²³ World Bank (2019). Brief: Gender-Based Violence (Violence Against Women and Girls). URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>

²⁴ Idem.

²⁵ World Bank (2024). Addressing Gender-Based Violence: 16 Days of Activism. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/brief/addressing-gender-based-violence>

²⁶ UNICEF (2014). A Statistical Snapshot of Violence Against Adolescent Girls. UNICEF, New York.

	suggests potential risks in these industries, necessitating proactive measures to protect vulnerable populations.
Djibouti	While direct data on SEAH in Djibouti's land restoration and agricultural sectors is limited, the country's strategic location as a transit point for migrants increases the risk of exploitation. Implementing robust safeguarding policies in these sectors is essential to mitigate potential SEAH risks.
Mali	Mali faces challenges related to human trafficking, with children and women subjected to forced labor and sexual exploitation. The agricultural sector, being a significant part of the economy, is susceptible to such abuses, underscoring the importance of integrating SEAH prevention strategies in land restoration and NTFP initiatives.
Mauritania	Mauritania has a history of hereditary slavery practices, affecting marginalized communities. These practices can intersect with land-based industries, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to prevent SEAH in agricultural and land restoration programmes and projects.
Niger	In Niger, human trafficking persists, with children and women exploited in various sectors, including agriculture. The existence of caste-based slavery practices further exacerbates vulnerabilities, making it crucial to address SEAH risks in land restoration and NTFP value chains.
Nigeria	Nigeria's recent World-Bank supported Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) Project acknowledges the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) associated with project activities, and highlights the following: <i>"While gender inequitable norms prevail throughout the country, these vary by region and interact with other structural, community, and individual factors exposing women, girls, and boys to some forms of gender-based violence (GBV) more than others."</i> ²⁷
Senegal	Specific data on SEAH within Senegal's land restoration and agricultural sectors is limited. However, the country's commitment to sustainable development necessitates the integration of SEAH prevention measures in these industries to protect vulnerable populations.

Challenges in Data Collection and Reporting

Accurate data on SEAH is often limited due to underreporting, cultural stigmas, and inadequate reporting mechanisms. Victims may fear retaliation or social ostracism, leading to a lack of comprehensive data. For instance, in displacement settings, women may be reluctant to report exploitation due to fear of retribution or lack of trust in reporting systems²⁸.

²⁷ World Bank (2021). Nigeria Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) Project.

²⁸ Associated Press (2024). They fled war in Sudan. Now, women in refugee camps say they're being forced to have sex to survive. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/chad-sudan-war-refugees-sexual-exploitation-49b3d344da3573d4abe06bb7c3be965e>

SEAH Considerations in SURAGGWA: SEAH remains a pervasive issue in the GGW countries, influenced by cultural, economic, and social factors. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies, including strengthening legal frameworks, enhancing support services for survivors, and promoting societal change to eliminate harmful practices and norms. For SURAGGWA's approach to addressing SEAH, please refer to Part 2 of this assessment, as well as the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (GRM Chapter) and Chapter 4 of the ESMF.

A note on SEAH-related grievance management and GBV referral pathways: FAO ensures that the programme personnel and the EEs will be trained on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment to achieve maximum prevention of SEAH and GBV. Sensitization campaigns will be carried out to support and catalyze community-driven support measures against SEAH. The programme's Grievance Redress Mechanism will be reinforced to deal effectively with SEAH and GBV incidents (including the development of a procedure to accompany the GRM on SEAH to ensure survivor-centered mechanisms that are gender-responsive and ensure confidentiality, and sensitive and ethical complaint and grievance handling). Referral pathways for GBV will be established and professionals trained for their operationalization, while the FAO E&S and Gender specialist will be engaged in monitoring the process. All SEAH and GBV activities will be inclusive, survivor-centered, and gender-responsive. In case of SEAH/GBV incidents, the services for survivors will be carefully considered during the implementation.

VII. Recommendations

Focusing on Gender-Transformative Approaches: Many stakeholders are now recognizing that improving gender equality is a central intervention to build climate resilience in the Sahel. A gendered approach to resilience-building requires focusing on the underlying structural inequalities that make women more vulnerable to climate crises. Overcoming these challenges requires the promotion of gender-sensitive policies and programmes that address those underlying causes of gender inequality within the agricultural sector. This includes gender transformative approaches that increase women's access to resources and services, promote gender-responsive agricultural practices, and enhance women's participation in decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation. It is because of how deeply embedded structural and normative codes of exclusion shape gender inequalities that development institutions are beginning to adopt the approach called gender transformation²⁹.

For SURAGGWA, this means:

- ➔ Making clear that any policies, reports, or activities under Component 3 (focused on institutional strengthening) are gender-sensitive, and that women are engaged within management committees/steering committees/leadership groups/etc.

Time-Savings and Land Use Benefits: Land restoration has been proposed as an important measure since it also contributes to food and water security. Women are often responsible for the collection of firewood,

²⁹ McOmber, C (2020), "Women and Climate Change in the Sahel", West African Papers, No. 27, OECD Publishing, Paris.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/e31c77ad-en>

water, and other natural resources, and they have a deep understanding of the local environment and the challenges facing it. Land-restoration programmes or initiatives should not be assumed to be gender-neutral. They should, whether new or old, be screened for possible gender-differentiated impacts using sex-disaggregated data. Women and girls bear a disproportionate impact when land is depleted and limited in availability. This is because of their significant involvement in agriculture and food production, reliance on forests, susceptibility to poverty, limited access to/lack of education, and lower legal protections and social status. Despite the recognition and acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between agricultural production, poverty reduction, land preservation, and gender integration, gender aspects are frequently disregarded and overlooked in the execution of land-restoration initiatives. Given the complexity of restoration programmes and projects, their successful implementation requires careful planning and implementation involving all relevant stakeholders³⁰.

Including women in land restoration processes implies taking into consideration their limitations in terms of extension services and institutional credit, barriers related to land tenure, and constraints in terms of time poverty. As in much of low-income countries, women's ability to own, control, benefit from and access land in the Sahel region is significantly more limited than their male counterparts. Although evidence is still limited, available data from the World Bank show that percentage of land owned by women is always smaller than men in the same countries (see *Figure 5: Land Ownership* in this report). On average, the land women own, or control tends to be smaller and lower quality. In many countries, women's access to, use and control of land depends on their relations to male relatives as wives, mothers, or daughters³¹. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of men and women, along with power relations in land management, is a primary requirement to achieving effective outcomes when combating land degradation and implementing gender-responsive and sustainable land-restoration initiatives.

For SURAGGWA, this means:

- ➔ Extensive consultation during design (refer to SEP for further details) to better align programme activities;
- ➔ Iterative consultation and engagement via the national-level safeguards specialists (and delegated implementation teams, for more day-to-day feedback) to ensure the localized gender context is accounted for in all programme activities;
- ➔ Prioritizing land restoration activities and approaches under Components 1 and 2 which increase women's time savings (ability to spend time on activities *other* than land preparation/etc.) and improve their ability to productively use land in a sustainable way;
- ➔ Engaging and providing training to women-heavy/women-led community groups (particularly under Component 2), and supporting their involvement and voice within decision-making entities (be those community-level groups or higher-level institutions);
- ➔ Focusing on NTFP value chains and areas in which women are highly engaged/reap most benefits from in terms of their livelihoods and wellbeing (Component 2).

³⁰ UN Environment Programme (2019). "Women in the Sahel lead on the frontlines of climate change".

³¹ Sida (2015). "Women and Land Rights Brief". Accessed March 2023: <https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/-women-and-land-rights.pdf>

Part Two

Approach to Gender Based Violence and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Whilst Gender Based Violence and Sexual Exploitation and/or Abuse are not expected to increase because of the programme's activities, they are inherent risks within the SURAGGWA countries. Given this, the programme will address issues through (i) sensitization and consultation; (ii) clear codes of conduct for all involved with the programme; (iii) SEAH screening, based on the GCF SEAH risk screening guidance, for each country (this will be done at a broader country level within the country-specific Gender Action Plans); and (iv) a specialized procedure for handling sensitive SEAH cases in instances of a grievance (for full details on SEAH grievance redress, please refer to the GRM chapter of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan). A short overview of how SEA grievances will be managed is as follows:

- All grievances of misconduct (such as allegations of fraud or other corrupt practices, harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse) by FAO programme or country office employees, and/or by others as a result of the programme's activities, are to be submitted directly to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) by: (i) the complainant via the OIG hotline; or (ii) if someone from the office happens to find out about a case (including the PSEA focal point), that person will contact OIG immediately. OIG is responsible for investigating allegations of misconduct.³² In case of a sexual exploitation and abuse grievance, OIG is responsible for referring the survivor to relevant services (medical, psychological, social, legal, etc.). SEA grievances are handled in a prompt and strictly confidential manner.

Gender Action Plan (GAP)

Programme-level GAP: Based on the findings and recommendations of this Gender Assessment, the SURAGGWA Gender Action Plan was prepared. The GAP provides specific actions/targets under each component to assist women in building their resilience to climate change and how to enhance their livelihoods opportunities in the face of climate risks. Gender considerations have been mainstreamed into the SURAGGWA programme, particularly with the focus on women-dominated NTFP value chains and land-restoration techniques intended to reduce women's time poverty, and these are highlighted throughout the GAP via targets around (i) women's participation; (ii) women's time savings; (iii) gender-sensitivity of reports/policies/governance actions, and more. The SURAGGWA programme and related GAP have been designed to ensure that equitable participation and benefits from the programme investment accrue for women. Please refer to the Excel file (Gender Action Plan) in the Annex 8 Folder for full details.

Country-level GAP: To account for different country contexts, a country-level GAP will be prepared by the National Social Safeguards Specialist within the first six months of their onboarding. The document will be aligned with the programme-level GAP and further refine targets at country-level based on the local

³² Ensure to inform programme stakeholders that to report possible fraud and unacceptable behaviour including sexual exploitation and abuse, they can contact OIG by confidential hotline (online form & by phone): fao.ethicspoint.com, or by e-mail: investigations-hotline@fao.org

situation. The country-level GAP will include (but not be limited to): (i) details on SEAH and related grievance redress within the country (utilizing the SEAH screening form guidance of GCF, and in alignment with FAO policies on SEAH and grievance redress); (ii) intersectionality/overlap of ethnic minority groups and women within the given country, highlighting any differentiated needs; (iii) country-specific targets (based on the programme-level GAP and local country context); and (iv) monitoring and implementation timeline for the country-level GAP (including more specific annual/biannual associated milestones to facilitate the tracking of progress towards the gender related targets and goals). Please note that country level GAPs will include targets that are set for female headed households, IP women, youth, and other traditionally marginalized groups.

GAP Budget: For GAP-specific budget (and budget related to gender activities mainstreamed into programme components), please see the following table:

	Burkina Faso	Chad	Djibouti	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Nigeria	Senegal	Regional	Total
Component/output	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)	Annual (USD)
Gender and safeguards related documents and implementation	295,000	295,000	275,000	370,000	295,000	410,000	410,000	295,000	160,000	2,650,000
Social Safeguards Specialist (shared between comp 1 and comp 2)	270,000	324,000	234,000	198,000	270,000	198,000	270,000	243,000	570,000	2,577,000
	565,000	619,000	509,000	453,000	565,000	568,000	680,000	538,000	730,000	5,227,000

In total, the programme has allocated approximately 5.23 million for gender/SEAH related safeguards activities (covering development of the country-specific plans and their implementation), 3.5% of which comes from GCF financing. Budget for development and implementation of country-level GAPs can be found in the overall programme budget under Components 1 and 2 (particularly under activities 1.1.2.5 and 2.1.1.1, for ease of reference), but the issue of gender has also been mainstreamed throughout).

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In addition to the above, references include the eight country-specific gender profiles (submitted to complement this summary assessment).