



# GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

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NASC Complex, New Delhi, India

## Synthesis Report

### Organizers

**Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**  
**Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)**  
with support from **GFAR** under Gender in Agriculture Partnership (**GAP**)

### Co-Sponsors



# **Global Conference on Women in Agriculture (GCWA)**

## **Synthesis Report**

***“In order to awaken the people, it is the women who have to be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves.”***

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the First Prime Minister of India

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# Executive Summary

## **Empowering women in agriculture: rethinking agricultural needs and actions through the eyes of women**

The First Global Conference on Women in Agriculture (GCWA) held in New Delhi (13-15 March 2012) was organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), and was supported by the multi-stakeholder Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) through a new mechanism “Gender in Agriculture Partnership (GAP)”.

This landmark event was built on two years of intensive partnerships among many organizations within GFAR including the CGIAR, several UN agencies, and the Regional Fora. The Conference was attended by 760 participants from 50 countries, including Government Ministers, World Food Prize laureates, representatives of institutions in agricultural research, extension and education, gender experts, non-governmental organizations and farmers’ groups. These groups responded to the call for collective action and investment to put the needs of women producers and consumers, and as householders, at the centre of agricultural thinking and practice.

Despite women making up nearly half of the world’s agricultural workforce, they continue to be unrecognized as farmers, fishers or livestock producers and face widespread constraints to decision making on basic resources for production, notably regarding land, and access to productivity-enhancing inputs including credit, fertilizer, seeds, veterinary drugs and extension. Furthermore, women often lack control over their produce. Their ability to produce enough food is further hampered by the physically exhausting labour and drudgery associated with agricultural practices and the additional weight of their domestic and reproductive work that are basic to the viability of household consumption and health. Moreover, women’s contribution to child health and nutrition is vitally important and yet often not included in agricultural considerations.

By failing to close the gender gap, the world is paying dearly. According to a recent FAO report<sup>1</sup>, if women had the same access to productive resources as men they could increase their yields by 20-30 per cent. This would raise total agricultural yields in developing countries between 2.5-4 per cent and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 100-150 million.

Participants at the GCWA recognized that, 17 years after the adoption of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action identifying key obstacles to the advancement of women in the world, gross inequalities still persist<sup>2</sup>, with the declaration’s targets still unmet even today. National mechanisms for gender equality continue to face major challenges in implementing their mandates, particularly due to the lack of political will, political marginalization of their activities, inadequate resources, and a weak evidence base and limited capacities for coordination, monitoring, accountability and insensitivity of agricultural service systems to gender issues. The time for radical action, through concerted efforts to meet the needs of women, is long overdue. This conference discussed some of these issues and suggested action

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/regional\\_review.html](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/regional_review.html)

points. The detailed Conference Proceedings are recorded in a complementary document to this overall synthesis.

The Conference was organized into three main components; a policy forum to identify the gap between policy reforms aimed at empowering women in agriculture and institutional changes for capacity building and partnership; six parallel sessions focused on the topics related to women in agriculture; and three working groups on extension, education and research priorities to make recommendations for gender sensitive agenda. In addition, poster presentations were made on diverse topics under thematic areas and the results and innovations were displayed by stakeholders particularly the women. The conference also organized an innovation market place event, showcasing agriculture and rural innovations and women entrepreneurship. The event also depicted technology-led innovations to reduce drudgery.

The opening sessions of the Conference on high-level policy issues highlighted the need for policy reforms, institutional changes and capacity building to empower women in agriculture. Such changes are urgently needed to address gender inequalities in the household, in the ways in which markets (participation and service delivery) and institutions (formal and informal) work for men and women, in social and cultural norms, and the way these forces interact with each other and result in the underperformance of women in agriculture. There was a view that it is insufficient to perceive women's roles in terms of agricultural production alone but considerations of agricultural systems and needs should also be extended and re-framed to include issues particularly relevant to rural women: household food and nutrition security (particularly child nutrition), education particularly at school level, health, value-addition through on-farm and off-farm activities, improved storage, and increasing efficiencies and product quality across the value chain (including reduced post-harvest losses). In addition, the time constraints faced by women across all these activities are common, as some of the difficulties are associated with land tenure and titling.

Deliberately linking women, agriculture and nutrition requires multi-sectoral thinking and action to address major nutritional deficiencies that continue to hamper children's development around the world. Concurrently, it requires institutionalization of research and extension through joint decision making that involves women themselves in participatory approaches. This needs to be incorporated during the initial design which needs to be flexible so that it can be adapted to build on or address unintended agricultural consequences (positive or negative). It is complex to intervene in a number of policy areas simultaneously and actions need to be coherent at local, national, regional and global levels. Understanding how policies contribute (how are they working and why) requires evidence to share lessons and to learn about their effectiveness in different contexts. The efforts to monitor and track these impacts must be accompanied by appropriate indicators.

The six thematic sessions focused on: assessing women's empowerment; agricultural innovations for reducing drudgery; linking women to markets; women's roles in household food security and nutrition; access to productive and household assets, resources and knowledge, policies and services; and climate change - related risks and uncertainties. The presentations and discussion in these sessions helped to identify and set practical contexts and priorities for action for the key areas in which change is required, collectively highlighting the need for a fundamental rethinking of agricultural systems, with the needs of rural women producers and householders at their centre.



Three Working Group sessions identified the new roles required of agricultural research, extension, and education to respond to women's needs in agriculture, and to actively involve rural women's representatives in such work.

A number of cross-cutting priorities were identified by the participants across the themes as initial building blocks for developing a framework for action. Given that gender inequalities run right through agricultural systems, action is required at all levels from household and community up to national, regional and international scales.

Priorities identified through these discussions were:

- Collective advocacy to raise awareness of women's needs in agriculture and ensure their visibility in terms of their contributions
- Generating the information and evidence base to show the economic and social impacts and value of addressing women's needs in agriculture
- Encouraging collective action and leadership among women to develop programmes that directly meet women's needs and to make the agricultural support systems gender sensitive
- Addressing discrimination through appropriate policies, legislation and enforcement mechanisms and establishing women's rights (e.g. access to markets, ownership of land)
- Ensuring that institutions and support mechanisms promote women's ownership and control of resources (e.g. land, bank accounts, policy changes) and social change enabling participation in household decision making

These priorities were put forward as the basis for collective action through the GAP — the first multi-layered global mechanism embracing all the actors involved in addressing gender-related issues in agriculture. Partners included in this initiative include UN Agencies, the CGIAR, Regional Fora and national public institutions. Also included are women's producer organizations, foundations, universities and NGOs which will drive change in local actions on the ground. The Government of India publicly pledged its commitment to host and facilitate this global partnership, with the expectation that it will inspire other governments to follow.

Participants agreed that there was real value and excitement in this gathering and proposed that this conference should be repeated in 3 years' time to determine and demonstrate the progress. The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) has offered to host the next global conference in 2015 in Africa. In the interim, much needs to take place at all levels from community to national, regional and international.

When formally closing the Conference, the President of India, H. E. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil observed that "***There is a deep inter-linkage between women and agriculture, the development of both being essential for the progress of every nation.***"

# 1 Introduction

The First Global Conference on Women in Agriculture (GCWA) was held in New Delhi from 13-15 March 2012 to address a critical gap identified in the GCARD Roadmap (2010): *the neglect of women in agriculture*. The Theme for the Conference was '**Empowering Women for Inclusive Growth in Agriculture**'. Following the GCARD and two years of intensive partnerships among many organizations involved in GFAR, including APAARI, ICAR, CGIAR, the Regional Fora, and several UN agencies, the commitment for GCWA was created. The Conference was attended by the President of India, who gave the valedictory address, Ministers, World Food Prize laureates, policy makers, representatives of agricultural research, extension and education institutions, gender experts, non-governmental organizations and rural producers and marketing associations. In total 760 participants from 50 countries responded to the call for collective action and investment to put the needs of women farmers, fishers, livestock producers and traders at the centre of the agricultural agenda.

The Gender in Agriculture Partnership (GAP) launched at the Conference was inaugurated with a distinct set of objectives and priorities identified from the Conference as part of a program of action moving forward, to be delivered collectively through a combination of existing initiatives and new programmes (see Sections 3 & 4). The GAP also attracted the Government of India's pledge of facilitation, support and participation in this global partnership, with the expectation that this pledge will inspire other governments to follow.

## 1.1 Scope of the Conference

### ***Goal and objectives of the Conference***

To further its overarching goal '**Empowering Women for Inclusive Growth in Agriculture**', the major objectives of the Conference were:

- To take stock of evidence on women's contribution to agricultural value chains from production to postharvest and marketing, their current constraints, and gender-related issues in agriculture, food and nutrition systems, in order to identify policy, institutional and R&D transformations required to ensure real change in women's lives, sustainable livelihoods and household food and nutrition security,
- To identify ways to strengthen women's roles in agriculture, including their central involvement in setting the agenda for agricultural innovation and knowledge sharing and successful mechanisms and approaches at local (community), regional or national levels to address women's roles in the sector, give them full voice, and help them to benefit from new technologies and market opportunities, and
- To contribute to developing a Framework for Action to take forward the emerging GAP following the 2010 Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) to inform key events in the future such as Rio+20, G20, GCARD II and subsequent GCWAs.

### ***Why was the Conference necessary?***

The Conference played a unique and very timely role in (i) drawing attention to the huge costs of neglecting women in agriculture, (ii) showing that current scattered efforts to help women will remain marginal without policy commitment at the highest levels, adequate investments, coordinated action across all stakeholders, and monitoring and accountability, and (iii) identifying ways to address widespread gender inequalities that bring the highest payoffs for women, their families and their nations. While the Conference was able to directly influence participants, including the senior Indian policy makers present, it had a much wider influence through the excellent coverage of the issues discussed and outcomes through national and international media. Furthermore, the opportunity the Conference provided for face-to-face networking among participants from different regions of the world and different professional disciplines was invaluable for sharing insights and laying the foundation for common approaches and collaborative work for the future.

Several recent landmark studies, drawing on new, sex-disaggregated data relating to the agricultural sector, have made a significant contribution to this paradigm shift in agricultural thinking, and have underlined the need for broad-based policy changes to remove gender inequalities in many sectors that are inter-linked with agriculture, such as education, health, women related activities, justice, trade, industrial development, transportation and infrastructure, and to ensure adequate financial resources from Ministries of Finance. However, to influence the government's decision to take action, there is a need for simultaneous action on multiple fronts.

The agricultural landscape and the gender-related constraints vary considerably between and within regions and countries. The Conference host country, India, illustrated the complexity of the problems and solutions even within a single country. Recognizing that women perform 43 per cent of farming operations worldwide<sup>3</sup> and contribute substantially to fisheries and animal husbandry, India has taken a worldwide lead in institutionalizing research on women in agriculture by establishing the Directorate of Research on Women in Agriculture (DRWA), a dedicated institution within the ICAR. In 2010, the Government of India initiated a scheme on Women Farmers' Empowerment, "***Mahila Kisan Sasaktikaran Pariyojana***" to help women farmers gain control over their production resources and access to inputs and services. Thus, India's pioneering work to empower women engaged in agriculture not only added value to the Conference discussions and experiences shared by other participants from other countries but also served to reinforce the political commitment at the highest levels, to continue to give priority to rural women's empowerment.

Although women make up nearly half of the world's agricultural workforce, their roles in production, processing and marketing are often still not recognized. Disadvantaged by gender asymmetries in rights, they face widespread constraints in access to productive resources (e.g. land, water) and productivity-enhancing inputs, (credit, fertilizer, seeds, veterinary drugs) as well as access to research, education and extension. Women often have a little, if any, control over the products of their labour, income from sales or even their own wages. Women's ability to engage in productive activities is further disadvantaged by their caring responsibilities and the physically exhausting labour and drudgery associated with domestic and field-based work. By

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<sup>3</sup> FAO (2011) The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture. FAO, pp147



failing to close these gender inequalities, the world is paying a very high price. According to a recent FAO State of Food and Agriculture report<sup>4</sup>, reducing the gender gap in men and women farmers' access to productive resources could raise yields on women's farms by 20-30 per cent. This would raise total agricultural yields in developing countries by 2.5-4 per cent and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 100 -150 million.

The figures illustrate that the serious neglect of women results in huge penalties in terms of lost production in crops, fisheries and livestock and in post-production/capture, processing and storage. These have led to a paradigm shift in thinking about the role of women in agriculture. Without clear innovation focus to meet their needs, women are confined to traditional practices and tools that lock them into a cycle of low productivity, drudgery, high losses and poor quality or even contaminated food. The penalty for child health and nutrition is also worrying: A large body of compelling evidence shows that increasing women's income leads to much larger improvements in child health and nutrition than does increasing men's incomes.

### ***The structure of the Conference***

GCWA was opened by Ms. Sheila Dixit, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi State followed by an address by Ms. Margaret Alva, Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand State and Chairperson. Several key individuals including Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Member of Parliament, Dr Monty Jones (GFAR), Dr. Raj Paroda (APAARI), Dr S. Ayyappan, and Dr K.D. Kokate (ICAR) also addressed the audience after a video message of Dr. Michelle Bachelet (Head, UN Women) that was introduced by Dr Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett.

The high-level Policy Forum 1, moderated by Dr Uma Lele, and the Policy Forum 2, moderated by Dr Mark Holderness, provided the opportunity for in-depth discussions on policy reforms needed to empower women in agriculture and ways of strengthening rural women's capacities through effective institutional changes at all levels. These policy fora framed the issues that were addressed throughout the Conference in subsequent plenary, parallel, and working group discussions.

These issues were discussed in greater depth in six thematic parallel sessions which focused on major challenges, effective strategies to address these, the most critical success factors and priorities for future action. These six sessions covered the following topics:

1. Assessing women's empowerment;
2. Agricultural innovations for reducing drudgery;
3. Linking women to markets;
4. Role of women in household food security and nutrition;
5. Access to assets, resources and knowledge, policies and services; and
6. Climate change, related risks and uncertainties.

Three working groups then examined the current status of and need for new engendered approaches in agricultural research, extension and education in order to respond more effectively to rural women's needs.

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<sup>4</sup> FAO (2011) The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture. FAO, pp147 <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/>

The conclusions and recommendations of all these sessions reaffirmed the need for a fundamental rethinking of agricultural systems, and are presented in the Conference Proceedings.

An Innovation Market Place was organized to showcase women's successful entrepreneurial activities based on farm and non-farm resources and give them an opportunity to share their experiences and create an understanding of the value chain process among the stakeholders. The institutional technology-led innovations/good practices developed to provide tools, technologies and training to the farm women to reduce drudgery and link them with markets leading to their improved livelihood and empowerment were highlighted.

The final plenary session included presentations by Chairpersons of the parallel sessions and working groups of the main outcomes of each session. A brief summary of the key cross-cutting issues and areas for future action was presented by Dr Uma Lele on behalf of the synthesis team. This summary is further elaborated in this synthesis report of the GCWA.

In the Valedictory Session, Dr Raj Paroda presented the outcomes of the Conference, before its official closure by the President of India H.E. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil in the presence of Mr. Sharad Pawar, Union Minister and Dr Charan Das Mahant, Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Processing Industry.

## **2 Outcomes of the Conference: Five Priority Action Areas**

Recognizing the need to harness women's potential in agriculture, and reinforce their role in the nexus of agriculture and food and nutrition security, the GCWA generated three days of dynamic and exciting discussion populated with new data and lessons learned and shared. Highlighted were the huge socio-institutional barriers to be dismantled in order to address the constraints facing women, the most pervasive of which are socio-cultural norms and practices. These are often reinforced by laws that restrict women's rights to own or inherit land and other productive resources. In addition, women's lack of control over their own labour and incomes, their inability to play equal decision-making roles within the household, community, and agricultural professional and labour organizations, their lack of freedom to express their views in national policy fora, and derogatory attitudes towards women's indigenous knowledge, were underlined.

Participants agreed that a radical transformation of agricultural and food policies, institutions, and research and development (R&D) programmes was essential. But alongside, a complementary transformation of related policies, laws and administrative measures that currently marginalize women was also identified as a key factor to be addressed. Political will and adequate financial and human resources are critical to achieve a successful transformation as well as collective action by civil society and other stakeholders. It will also be essential to track and monitor these reforms to ensure that decision-makers are held accountable and to develop a deeper understanding of what can work better in dynamic agricultural systems.

These transformations cannot succeed if conceived and implemented in a top-down manner. While governments and other actors need to provide the enabling policies and laws that legitimize women's rights, **building women's awareness of their rights and helping them organize and exert these rights, require the central engagement of rural women themselves. Women will need to take ownership of this transformative process, with**

support from rural men, to create solidarity for social change. Women need to negotiate the changes and trade-offs between the risks of what they might lose and the incentives to improve their conditions, and accept that such emancipation brings new rights but also new responsibilities. Although gender roles need to be negotiated within a family context, this is often easier if women enjoy group solidarity – whether in mixed agricultural organizations, labour unions, women’s associations or even in global institutions – since unity brings the strength and confidence to engage.

To succeed, women in agriculture need to recognize and respond, in a flexible way, to the ongoing dramatic changes that agriculture is undergoing worldwide, fuelled by increasing incomes and changing food habits and supply and demand patterns. Increasingly globalized markets, with vertical and horizontal integration of agricultural value chains and food systems is often dominated by powerful multinational and national companies and retail giants. Innovations in agricultural and information technologies, the feminization of agriculture spurred by male out-migration to better paid non-farm work, and stricter product quality and safety standards, etc. contribute to the uncertainty and unpredictable nature of the system. Although these bring new opportunities to many rural men and women, there may be gender-specific negative impacts, often reinforced by other trends. Climate change, population growth, increasing urbanization, industrialization and tourism are intensifying risks by increasing pressure on natural resources and polluting land, water and coastal fisheries resources. The diversion of cropland to biofuel production, rising energy prices, and price volatility also contribute their share of uncertainty.

More positively the growth of civil society is increasing accountability, voice and pushing for changes in norms, policies and institutions. Increasing public-private-civil society partnerships are also leading to new synergies, opportunities and benefits.

Among the many areas where such transformative change to empower women in agriculture is needed, the Conference identified **five priority action areas** which embrace the outcomes and recommendations of the specific sessions of the Conference. These include:

1. Making women/gender aspects in agriculture more visible and recognized
2. Strengthening evidence and knowledge to address gender/women’s issues in agriculture
3. Promoting collective action and leadership of rural women in order to take advantage of opportunities and address discrimination.
4. Establishing globally women’s rights at large
5. Promoting women’s ownership and ensuring availability of capital resources

The Conference Proceedings contain a full record of each of the Policy and Technical Sessions of GCWA and are available on the website ([www.gcwa.in](http://www.gcwa.in)). The five issues above that cross-cut the individual sessions and where transformative change is urgently required are elaborated below in this synthesis.

## 2.1 Ensuring greater visibility of gender in agriculture

### **Issues**

Despite growing evidence of the substantial role of women in agriculture and household food and nutritional security, many policy makers and agricultural scientists and development professionals have yet to take account of this evidence and its implications for their work. As a result, agricultural policies and R&D programmes in many countries continue to be gender-blind, ignoring the importance of women's work, and the complexity and sensitivity of many of the barriers that constrain women's abilities to take control of their own development and contribute effectively to that of their families and the wider society. Ironically, many rural women are themselves not conscious of the economic and social importance of their work to their nations and communities, and are so focused on providing food and basic necessities for their children that they hesitate to challenge the *status quo*, and demand recognition, their rights and help in their work. Such attitudes are compounded by women's weak leadership roles in agricultural producer, trader or worker organizations, which have kept them out of national or regional policy fora where they might have been able to advocate for women's needs.

Rural women's invisibility has in turn contributed to neglect by agricultural policy makers and professionals of the agricultural work in which women predominate – especially processing/preservation and value addition in crops, horticulture, fish and livestock products as well as the marketing of these products. Much of this work is done in or near the home, and undiscerning professionals tend to assume it as part of women's unpaid domestic work, even though many of these products are meant for the market, as well as for family consumption. This invisibility has very substantial costs to society and individual families, as it is a major causal factor in the under-performance of the agricultural sector in many countries, resulting in huge losses of women's potential in terms of production, value addition, income, and household food and nutrition security.

### **Action areas**

The Conference identified a variety of complementary strategies and mechanisms that can help to increase women's visibility;

(a) Through agricultural value chains (crops, horticulture, livestock, forestry, fisheries), as workers, entrepreneurs and employers, unpaid family workers or wage labourers in family enterprises, plantations or factories,

(b) Within the household, particularly with regard to food, nutrition and health security, and

(c) As professionals in research, education, extension and policy making jobs. Conference participants highlighted the importance of scaling up:

- High-profile research based on sound quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate the value of women's contributions and the social and economic losses that result from their invisibility and consequent exclusion
- Effective evidence-based advocacy campaigns to bring gender issues into mainstream development policy and practice, at national, regional and global levels. Civil society

actors, the media and the international community have a critical role to play in this regard.

- More integrated policy and programmatic responses across traditional boundaries, linking agriculture to health and nutrition, sanitation and clean water, education, the justice system, industry, infrastructure and transportation.
- Practical mechanisms to bring the voice of women involved in different types of agricultural value chains into decision-making at various levels, particularly through promoting women's leadership roles in representative agricultural organizations.
- Innovative programmes for women agricultural professionals, such as the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) which uses creative methods to build the technical and leadership expertise of women scientists.

## **2.2 The role of evidence and knowledge in shaping women oriented issues in agriculture.**

### ***Issues***

The role of evidence to support women's role in agriculture must, therefore, be understood within the context of prevailing structural incentives and disincentives. Currently, the place of agricultural development in national priorities emerges from a multi-sectoral competition for budgets within a framework of economic incentives that frequently prioritizes rapid economic growth over other social and developmental outcomes. Furthermore, policy processes, characterized by lobbying at least as much by evidence, typically favor more influential groups who are able to shape both national policy formulation and market development. Similar issues affect organizations involved in research, education and extension, where prevailing biases and practices tend to hinder a more concerted engagement with gender issues. Consequently, such issues continue to remain poorly understood and neglected, even in the work of international development agencies and world-class agricultural research institutes.

More specifically, the issue of women's roles in both agriculture and food and nutritional security represents a complex problem for policy-makers and practitioners that cuts across traditional disciplinary, sectoral and organizational divides. It also entails a degree of context-specificity and nuance that is often difficult for policy-makers to take on board and mobilize effectively in the policy-making space where there is frequently a desire for solutions that can be readily scaled up. Given that addressing women's role in agriculture entails dealing with cultural, legal, political, technological, economic and ecological factors in an integrated manner across globalized value chains, while simultaneously negotiating the multiple trade-offs and competing pressures inherent to the sector, simple solutions are hard to come by.

As noted in the preceding section, while there is a growing base of evidence and knowledge regarding women's role in agriculture and food and nutritional security, it remains underutilized and patchy. There is, for example, a paucity of gender disaggregation in national datasets pertaining to the agricultural sector, with women's roles in agriculture and household often unrecognized and unaccounted. Where evidence has been generated, it has already started to expose discriminatory legislation and practices, and violations of rural women's and girls' rights, demonstrating, for example, that:

- a) Food insecurity is worse in countries with a high gender inequality gap; social norms and low female status also often result in women eating last and less in quantity and quality than other family members, especially men.
- b) Increased production and availability of food does not necessarily advance the right to food or lead to improved nutritional outcomes, especially for women and children.
- c) Paradoxically, increased enjoyment of their rights to education and women's higher educational levels do not necessarily increase women's voice in decision-making, even at the household level.
- d) Higher female earnings controlled by women themselves tend to improve their status and decision-making power within the community and household.

Such evidence is generating awareness of the widespread injustices faced by women, and the penalties to the nation, community and family in terms of lost production and consumption of safe food by failing to redress these gender inequities. This has led to some, usually fragmented, efforts to change laws, administrative procedures and attitudes. However, much more needs to be done, particularly in terms of producing more contextual data and analysis and country- or region-specific responses.

Clearly, however, evidence is not only a matter of concern for policy-makers but is equally important for the variety of practitioners involved in addressing women's issues in agriculture including both public research, education and extension agencies and non-state actors such as civil society organisations and the private sector. The translation of evidence into knowledge to inform development practice – from technology development to policy advocacy – is, consequently, a vital component of any coherent effort to effect change. It is clear here that in generating actionable knowledge to support change there is a need for the creation and multiplication of platforms for horizontal and vertical knowledge exchange that can be accessed and utilised by a wide range of actors.

### **Action areas**

There are a number of emerging priority areas for enhancing women's role in agriculture through strengthening both the quality of evidence and its role in informing about the policy and practice. These should build on existing initiatives and also go beyond them, more particularly,

- a) **Gender disaggregated data on agricultural production** and processing – going **beyond crops** to include livestock, horticulture, fisheries and other farm-based commodities along the length of the value chain – should be developed and instituted by national statistical agencies;
- b) **More and better quality data** should be gathered, analysed and disseminated to understand the *costs* to society of the failure to ensure gender equality in rights to agricultural productive resources, education, employment and control over household income. Such work needs to build on a number of important recent reports<sup>5</sup>;

<sup>5</sup> FAO 2011. State of Food and Agriculture. *Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development*. Rome.

World Bank 2011. World Development Report 2012. Gender Equality and Development. Washington DC.

World Bank, FAO and WorldFish Center, 2010. The Hidden Harvests: the global contribution of capture fisheries. World Bank, Washington DC.

FAO. 2010. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010. Rome.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2011. *Girls Grow: A Vital Force in Rural Economies*. Chicago.



- c) **A process should be initiated to identify the critical questions that should drive the research agenda** at the global, regional, national and local levels in order to address women's roles in agriculture and food and nutritional security. Such questions will be of particular relevance to policy-makers, development practitioners and those directly involved in agriculture, particularly the women. Appropriate consultation of relevant actors should be carried out to achieve this.
- d) **Context-specific, inter-disciplinary research should be conducted in priority areas** (identified as suggested above) related to women's role in agriculture, to identify what works, how and why in empowering women to achieve positive outcomes at the individual, family and societal levels. This will require overcoming prevailing institutional silos and disincentives. Appropriate mechanisms to address this should be created through a combination of advocacy, collective partnership actions and the allocation of funds for research of this nature. It will also demand the creation of new tools, methods and approaches that are capable of grappling with the measurement of multi-dimensional issues such as women's empowerment and cultural change. An example of this is the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) released in early 2012<sup>6</sup> and reported at the Conference, which still needs to be tested in more contexts and broadened to include additional indicators; also there is a need for looking at the measures to improve effectiveness of legal, social and entrepreneurial options for empowerment of women.
- e) **More effective mechanisms should be established for knowledge creation and for learning from successes** that have been realised either on a small scale or by non-state actors. The purpose is not to simply scale-up existing efforts but to understand what works, how and why in different contexts and to disseminate this evidence and knowledge to inform policy advocacy and support better practice. This should include the creation of diverse and interconnected platforms that can be used by a variety of actors to record share and exchange knowledge and evidence.

## 2.3 Promoting collective action and leadership of women in order to take advantage of opportunities and address discrimination

### *Issues*

While some of the changes required to strengthen women's roles in agriculture and nutrition security are outside the direct control of public institutions, many respond directly or indirectly to some form of public engagement and collective action. Collective action provides unique possibilities for mobilizing Public-Private Partnerships for achieving common, joint or linked goals, particularly where these involve challenging established power relations, transforming social and cultural norms, holding service providers accountable, advocating for legal and administrative reforms, reducing market barriers (including transaction costs and promoting economies of scale), negotiating decent labour conditions and wage rates, and securing and managing access to common resources (land, water, forests, pastures, fish resources).

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Levine, R., C. Lloyd, M. Greene and C. Grown 2009. Girls Count. A Global Investment & Action Agenda. Center for Global Development, Washington DC.

<sup>6</sup> USAID, IFPRI and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) 2012. *Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*. IFPRI, Washington DC.

The last two decades have seen a worldwide proliferation of various forms of agricultural producer organizations and cooperatives, professional associations, trade unions and employers' organizations, community-based organizations, self-help groups, networks, federations and movements. Although there has been significant increase in women's membership in producer organizations and agricultural and savings and credit co-operatives, these have generally remained male dominated, reflecting broader societal norms. However, progressive change is being made, often fueled by support from NGOs and social movements, with women joining in leadership of such organizations, women's chapters emerging within such organizations, as well as dedicated women's organizations for technical, economic, policy and advocacy objectives.

The importance, capacity and effectiveness of women's membership in these organizations vary tremendously across regions and even within countries. Women face a wide range of barriers in both formal and informal contexts that undermine their ability to take leadership positions. Although agricultural membership-based organizations can be effective in voicing and championing women's interests at national level, many have fragile financial and human resources and have not found ways to collaborate around key issues at national, regional and international level to maximize their impact and influence. In contrast, community-based organizations and self-help groups often provide effective mechanisms for involving women in new agricultural development opportunities at local level but they have relatively limited reach to the regional and national level.

### ***Action areas***

The Conference identified the following priority action areas:

- **Foster changes in perception of the different types of roles, purposes and action areas of collective organizations**, of government, R&D agencies, the private sector and international organizations, encourage dialogue and cooperation. This is necessary for social movements and campaigns. Such an attitude change will open the way for
  - Governments to provide appropriate enabling policy and legal frameworks;
  - NGOs and other actors to provide policy, legal and technical support, including help for organizing women into cooperatives or other collective action groups and facilitating their legal registration, leadership and managerial training for women (including basic literacy, accounting and IT skills), and
  - The private sector to establish partnerships with producer and other agricultural organizations to facilitate market access, provide technical training for financial viability and tailored services, such as climate insurance for crops, to further strengthen such groups and generate incentives for membership.
- **For governments and other actors who sponsor collective action, acknowledge, engage and work with existing women's initiatives** rather than creating parallel ones and respect independent processes to establish goals, expectations and priorities. This should also entail building capacity for organizational entrepreneurship and managing group actions. It is important for all, to think beyond locally-based organizations to include wider networks, movements, and apex organizations with more influence nationally.

- **Encourage women agro-processing workers**, provide women leadership training and, impart skills, etc.
- **Sponsor capacity building of women leaders**, at local level and in societies where women are most marginalised, and encourage men to work with women in constructive ways to bring social change to address the gender issues.
- Provide services to support the technical work of collective organizations to promote women's access to gender sensitive agricultural extension systems, veterinary services, technology and skills (ICT), to improve technical skills, product quality and value addition, and direct payment to women e.g. Mama Cards in Papua New Guinea

## 2.4 Establishing women's rights at a larger scale

### *Issues*

In the opening session, Michelle Bachelet (UN Women) highlighted gender equality and rights. The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other UN Conventions emphasize that equality in land rights is a fundamental precondition for empowering women. The point was highlighted by a poor Indian woman farmer cited in the Conference who stated that: ***if land is registered in her husband's name, then she is just a worker; but if the land is in her name, then she has a position in society.*** Although in India, the Hindu Succession Act 2005 provides land rights to daughters, however, legal or customary rights alone are insufficient, because women's rights are often not enforced.

However, legal rights alone are insufficient, because women's rights are often not enforced and sometimes involve high transaction cost of enforcement. Among the many reasons, some of the most difficult to address are the social norms and attitudes that are discriminatory to women and which are internalized by girls and boys from birth. The inter-relationships between agricultural development and household food security and women's rights and empowerment, are highly complex and context-specific, and need much deeper research and analysis. This should lead to new efforts to change laws, administrative procedures and attitudes.

Increasing evidence of discriminatory practices, and violations of rural women's and girls' rights, show that gender equality in rights is not just an issue of justice but also a precondition for the growth of agricultural production, value addition, incomes, and food and nutrition security. Available evidence demonstrates, for example, that:

- a) **Household Food insecurity is worse in countries with a high gender inequality gap.** Social norms<sup>7</sup> and low female status also often result in women eating last and less in quantity and quality than other family members, especially men.

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<sup>7</sup> Global Hunger Index von Grebmer, K., et. al. 2009 *Global Hunger Index: The challenge of hunger: Focus on financial crisis and gender inequality*. Bonn . Washington, D.C., and Dublin: Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German AgroAction), International Food Policy Research Institute, and Concern Worldwide, and Smith, L. C., and L. Haddad. 2000. *Explaining child malnutrition in developing countries: A cross-country analysis*. Research Report 111. Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute.

- b) **Increased production and availability of food does not necessarily advance the right to food or lead to improved nutritional outcomes**, especially for women and children, in situations of gross gender inequalities.
- c) Women's success in becoming educated and **higher educational levels do not necessarily increase women's voice in decision-making**, even at the household level.
- d) **Higher female earnings**, provided they are controlled by women, **tend to improve their status and decision-making power** within the community and household.

Such evidence is context-specific, and indicates the need for more contextual data and analysis and country or region-specific responses. Nonetheless, such data are fuelling the growing awareness of the widespread injustices faced by women, and the penalties to the nation, community and family in terms of lost production and consumption of safe food, and adversely affecting family welfare by failing to redress these gender inequities.

### ***Action areas***

The Conference identified the following key elements of a rights-based framework for women's empowerment to advance agriculture, livelihoods, and food and nutrition security :

- a) **Raising awareness of governments, the private sector, civil society, and rural women** and men, of the need for gender equality in property rights, from the perspective of justice and equity, and the huge penalties communities are paying by neglecting women's rights in terms of lost production, household income, national GDP, and child malnutrition and mortality, and overall social welfare.
- b) **Convincing governments to promulgate gender equality in property rights laws**, repeal discriminatory laws, and ensure enforcement in a transparent manner, with incentives and watchdog and accountability mechanisms. Civil society, the media and UN human rights bodies have an important advocacy and monitoring role to play in this respect.
- c) **Contributing to changing social norms and attitudes** that underpin discriminatory laws, customs and practices or prevent the implementation of women's legal, customary and moral rights requires concerted action on all fronts. Governments, the law courts and traditional customary tribunals have a central role in enforcing anti-discriminatory legislation, while civil society and the media can help change attitudes and discriminatory practices.
- d) **Ensuring equality in education for girls and boys** (with incentives to send girls to school), including revision of curricula to enable both girls and boys to study the same subjects and break down stereotypes that denigrate girls to an inferior status at a young and impressionable age.
- e) **Helping rural women to claim their rights and organize** from local to international levels, to give them voice, self-confidence and self-respect, in a constructive way that earns men's support.
- f) **Promoting gender equality issues in corporate social responsibility, fair trade movements and employer organizations** to ensure the enforcement of national and

international labour standards with particular attention to women's rights to equal pay for work of comparable value, to maternity leave and benefits, and child care facilities.

## 2.5 Promoting women's ownership and control

### *Issues*

Repeatedly throughout the Conference attention was drawn to gender inequalities worldwide in **ownership or rights** to productive resources, particularly natural resources (such as land, water, livestock, fish resources, forests and pastures), **but also physical assets** (such as boats and fishing gear, processing equipment, carts, bicycles, trucks, refrigeration and cooling facilities), **financial assets** and **women's rights to their own labour**.

Participants underlined that strengthening women's ownership and use of rights, although vital, are not enough – for often men control women's agricultural property as well as the products of women's work, much of which is carried out as unpaid family labour. If the products of women's labour are sold, household men often control the income. Nonetheless, there are significant differences between and within regions and countries that vary also with socio-economic class and cultural values.

*Why does this matter?*

- a) Secure **individual or collective rights to land, or joint titling** with spouses, allow women incentives to invest in the land and adopt sustainable production practices. They may also take advantage of more remunerative opportunities offered by contract farming. They can no longer be evicted should they lose their husbands and can continue productive lives providing livelihood for their families and avoiding a slide into the poverty trap.
- b) Added efficiency **in their labour** output (including the product and/or income from the sales of agricultural produce or their wages), would act as an incentive to women to enhance productivity, even if this demands more work.
- c) With full **control over the income from their labour**, women may purchase or take (and repay) credit to invest in productivity-enhancing or labour-saving technologies to save time, pay for veterinary services and drugs, or start up new agricultural value addition enterprises including value-addition. This may stimulate spin-offs by promoting the establishment or expansion of (local) private enterprises that manufacture tools, machinery and inputs (such as feed and fertilizers), including at village level, bringing greater wealth to the community through employment for rural landless workers.

Some countries are adopting legal reforms and/or gender-sensitive administrative measures that put productive resources and credit, or child allowances, in women's hands or fix quotas for women in organizations such as water user groups, local government, cooperatives, and marketing boards. However, such "enabling" measures just create the rights, and the space, for women to take responsibility in the process of acquiring effective ownership rights and control over agricultural productive resources and the resulting product and income. More support is needed to help women organize for change. Organizations such as the Self-Employed

Women's Association (SEWA) in India are playing a very important role in helping women organize themselves.

### **Action areas**

Although little is happening in many countries to improve women's conditions, promising efforts with potentially high payoffs – were flagged by different stakeholders at the Conference:

- a) **Advocacy** by international, regional and national agricultural producer, processor, trader and worker organizations, organizations/agencies involved in gender in agriculture, women's movements, UN organizations, GFAR and the Regional Fora.
- b) **Legal reform**, particularly to give women land rights and inheritance rights to family property wherever not given and also, own individual bank accounts, equal wages for work of comparable value.
- c) **Group approaches**, often supported by NGOs/CSOs, donors and the research community, so that women's groups can rent (or buy), for example, land, fish ponds, grain mills, trucks, and operating these jointly. Encouragement and support for women to join cooperatives which also provide excellent opportunities for women to benefit from economies of scale in production, value addition, access to inputs, extension, market information, and greater bargaining power in the market.
- d) **Financial reforms**, for example, developing more suitable financial products for women, mobile banking services and the use of mobile phones for banking transactions, and promoting women's Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) and other self-help savings and credit groups
- e) **Agricultural and marketing information**: innovative methods such as producer-to-producer meetings, exchange visits, theatre, radio, videos, and mobile phones for accessing market information.

The major gaps flagged in the Conference were:

- a) **The issue of women's rights to own land** and other productive resources is given lip service in most countries, and a few governments e.g. India have had the political courage to promulgate legal reforms to guarantee women such rights.
- b) **Legal and administrative reforms that benefit rural women** are often not implemented – especially if they conflict with customary practices and prevailing social norms and gender stereotypes. Equal pay legislation and the application of labour laws and standards are often circumvented by employers, in order to keep costs down and enhance profits.
- c) **More innovative ways are needed to win over the men and the society at large**, so that they see the benefits of such reforms and thus support rather than thwart women's ownership and control in agriculture. Support from national, community and religious leaders is often the key to success.
- d) **Weak women's movements and weak leadership roles of women** in mixed agricultural and worker organizations.



With regard to these gaps, more investigation is needed to identify what good practices exist, the conditions for their scaling up or out, and what policy, financial, institutional and technical support might be needed from governments, donors and international and NGO technical support organizations.

Some reforms and strategies need to come from outside the rural communities – such as legal reform and/or gender-sensitive administrative measures that put productive resources and credit, or child allowances, in women's hands or fix quotas for women in organizations such as water user groups, local government, cooperatives, and marketing boards.

Thus, key strategies for policy makers, development practitioners and researchers are to provide: information (e.g. on rights, markets) so women can act themselves on the basis of knowledge, as well as technical assistance, leadership and management training for women leaders, literacy and numeracy training for women group members, exchange visits to learn from women leaders' successes in other countries/regions within a country, public information campaigns to publicize the work of successful women to create role models to boost girls' self-esteem and encourage them to realise their own capabilities, prizes for outstanding women agriculturalists or entrepreneurs, and so on. At the same time, there is a need to address social norms and gender stereotypes that start at birth and are often reinforced in schools, and in later life, by measures such as school curricula reform to treat girls and boys equally, and labour market reforms to eliminate gender discrimination in agricultural employment.

Governments need to provide the policy and legal enabling environment, the administrative structures, financial resources (including investment in agriculture-related infrastructure), oversight and accountability for implementation.

International organizations and the research community need to play a role in collecting, analyzing and disseminating data on these ownership and control issues, in advocacy and in providing technical assistance to agricultural producer/processor and worker organizations to help them exercise their rights of ownership and control and benefit from new opportunities.

Civil society and agricultural producer/processor and worker organizations need to raise awareness among rural women about their rights and potential to improve their agricultural production and incomes including developing value-addition enterprises, and to help women negotiate better work conditions and wages with employers, and more favourable product and input prices with market players.

Women's organizations, and gender-sensitive men and women in mixed organizations, need to play a more active role to defend women's ownership and control rights and to sensitize men in local communities to the benefits that women's empowerment and higher agricultural production and incomes will bring them and their families.

### **3 Priorities in moving forward the Gender in Agriculture Partnership (2012 - 2015)**

Conference general discussions and consideration of the five Priority Actions Areas demonstrate the absolute importance of women in agriculture, food and social welfare. The Conference's outcomes on women in food and agriculture highlights that most of the

impoverished, hungry and malnourished remain in rural areas, where women are particularly affected and where such poverty has profound, direct effects on the future through their children, households, families and communities.

The overall context for women is dramatic: inequalities in property rights, employment, education, health, financial resources, information and other areas have direct, negative impacts on their well being as well as pervasive ones on economy and society. There is heightened awareness at global level, in particular since the Beijing Conference in 1995, with the progressive creation of associations focused on women's rights and conditions, and the emergence of specialized multilateral bodies, notably United Nations Women in 2010. Clearly, improvements in the overall context for women, recognizing their multiple roles, supporting their rights and unleashing their social and economic potential are fundamental. However, a worldwide movement to address these needs must build up from actions and success at the local and national level.

Requirements for moving forward:

- a) **A consensus on priority needs to enhance gender equity/women's empowerment in agriculture and food.**
  - i. Include trade-offs and actual, potential, positive and negative impacts for different sub-sectors, socio-economic and gender-differentiated population groups.
  - ii. Devise ways of supporting rural women (and men) to exploit opportunities in the agricultural and related sectors or opt out of agriculture to engage in more remunerative or secure non-agricultural work.
- b) **A flexible yet robust mechanism to work together**, combining resources and learning for maximum impact whilst reducing inefficiency. The mechanism must be inclusive, work at multiple levels and mobilize multiple stakeholders through the commitment of individuals and institutions at all levels.
- c) **A common framework to plan, initiate, catalyze and coordinate action at different levels in this global partnership**, with an associated monitoring and evaluation system, appropriate indicators and feedback mechanisms. There is scope for stimulating pilot actions as well as international sharing of good practices with direct connection to priorities, programmes and projects.

These priorities were strongly welcomed by the GCWA participants, who recognized the essential need for collective actions to lift and advocate the agenda above that of individual institutions and projects. The GCWA brought together many of the organizations active in gender and agriculture, creating a committed cadre of actors for partnerships around the world. The priority action areas for the Gender in Agriculture Partnership are framed by the GCWA and enabled by the open and multi-stakeholder nature of GFAR, fully recognizing that each of these areas are being actively addressed at different levels and by a range of actors. For example, women's rights are addressed globally by UN Women, agricultural and nutritional dimensions by FAO, international research by the CGIAR, regional coordination and learning by the Regional Fora, while local and national

actions delivering change on the ground are addressed by a multitude of actors according to the context concerned.

In framing the collective actions of greatest value to be taken forward at different levels via the Gender in Agriculture Partnership, the Conference thus identified:

1. **Gender disaggregated information and analysis for advocacy**
2. **Women-centred innovations in agriculture, food and nutrition**
3. **Learning, sharing and knowledge management**

### **3.1 Gender disaggregated information and analysis**

Those responsible for information generation, sharing, effective communication and programmatic activities at national, regional and international level should ensure that data are disaggregated by gender and that appropriate questions, targets and indicators that highlight gender disparities are included. The information, supported by multi-disciplinary qualitative and quantitative research at intra-household and community levels, will help to contextualize and interpret other quantitative and macro-level data. It is important that cost effective strategies be pursued as data collection is an expensive process. Disaggregated data should become an inherent feature of all rural development initiatives, policies and programmes.

The use of specific targets and indicators may comprise one of the initial, priority thrusts of the GAP work programme. Such work could address ways and means of:

- **Promoting the adoption of common methods** for different surveys for comparative analysis across and within regions and countries.
- **Improving analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated** data including census and surveys on production, employment, income/wage data, particularly in those agricultural sub-sectors where quantitative and qualitative information is scarce (livestock, fisheries/aquaculture and forestry systems, and post-harvest crop processing and storage).
- Developing targets and indicators to assess
  - i. **Representation of women in agricultural services** especially in public and private sector services (research, education, extension, financial services, veterinary services, pests and disease control programmes, and management, leadership, technical skills and entrepreneurship);
  - ii. **Representation of women in membership or leadership roles** in membership-based agricultural organizations (women's associations, cooperatives, etc);
  - iii. **Proportion of total budgets spent on programmes directly benefitting women,**

- iv. **Outcomes as a result of increased female representation** in terms of production, added value, incomes, food and nutrition security, and decision-making at household, community, national and international levels.
- **Collecting (comparable) sex-disaggregated data** on
  - i. **Ownership of productive assets**, (share in family income, consumption behaviour and women’s roles in decision-making on production, consumption and other related household decisions);
  - ii. **Impacts of gender-transformative policies, legislation, and administrative and development interventions** (increased production, value-added, control over income, food and nutrition security, reduction of agricultural and food losses and waste, and women’s empowerment).
- **Collecting, analyzing and disseminating data to assess the lost potential** in terms of production and food and nutrition security of a failure to address gender inequalities in agriculture by sub-sector.
- **Building the evidence base** to guide policy within and across sectors (agriculture, health, nutrition etc) and informing practice in research, education and extension through **new advocacy platforms, mechanisms, tools and approaches that highlight women.**

### 3.2 Innovations centered on women’s needs

*“Innovation is the process by which individuals or organizations master and implement the design and production of goods and services that are new to them”<sup>8</sup>.* It increasingly encompasses changes in organisations and institutions involved in producing or providing goods, services and practices adopted by farmers in different contexts. More broadly, innovation can comprise both **technological** and **institutional** components. These components sit within a rapidly evolving agricultural sector with new challenges and opportunities and vary by gender, socio-economic class, region etc. Innovation needs to keep up continuously with these changes.

1. Empirical evidence is challenging the view that women for societal/cultural reasons are less involved in agricultural production. This is in particular true given women’s important roles in processing, storage, marketing, household nutrition and rural activities such as providing domestic wood and water. Technology generation and dissemination in agriculture is often gender blind, not addressing their specific needs and constraints. The result has been an appreciation of the **growing gap between the potential outcomes that could be achieved if women's issues in agriculture were to be more adequately addressed.**

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<sup>8</sup> Source World Bank 2006

2. **Women are central providers of food and nutrition security.** Their ability to secure the health of their children and households relies on access to and control over land and resources, purchasing power, services, products and markets. Technical innovations have focused on national agricultural productivity growth as an adequate measure of progress and neglected opportunities where food and nutritional security can be sustainably ensured. Focus has been on cereal crops important for national food security, rather than on crops for which women play greater role or livestock which play a key role in household nutrition security. Similarly, public institutions are focused more on field production than on post-harvest loss reduction, value addition and food processing where women could often benefit more directly and have disconnected agricultural institutions and thinking from a focus on nutrition and food. Designing gender sensitive development interventions and pursuing both technological and institutional innovations to address women's needs in agricultural research for development programs are essential.
3. **Research, education and extension fail to either respond to women's issues or have food and nutritional security built into the core of their agenda.** Some of the technological innovations for women suffer because of weak research-extension linkages and gender insensitivities of technology and associated service delivery systems.
4. **Innovation is dynamic and iterative.** There are differing agenda, and levels of influence both on supply and demand sides. **Unless innovation sensitively responds to the constraints faced by women, success may remain limited for women.** Women and men must be equitably educated and resourced to intervene. Historically, women have not been equipped to engage in innovation development process. Mechanisms for enabling women and women's collectives to exert influence over the setting of agenda in the innovation process are, consequently, of crucial importance.
5. Women's roles in post-harvest/capture processing/storage and marketing (and losses) are areas that **are increasingly important in tying production to nutrition and income generating outcomes.** For example, in the dairy sector, innovations can bring refrigerated trucks, cooling tanks for safe storage, as well as equipment for value added products such as yoghurt, ghee, cheese.

All of the above require a rethinking of agriculture and food systems, of trends and of women's engagement in these sectors. Systems have to be considered in more inclusive and holistic ways, covering the broad range of issues relevant to women in innovation for rural development. These include women's roles in the household, in particular for child nutrition, patterns of household food security and consumption, and contributions to rural incomes. Changes in rural-urban dynamics are crucial, given the impacts of seasonal and long term migration, remittances and the growth of peri-urban and urban agriculture.

The systematic and meaningful involvement of women in knowledge generation and innovations systems is essential, so that innovations produced adequately reflect their needs. This implies that organizations, enterprises and individuals that conceptualize, invent or adapt new products, services, technologies, and tools should involve women in priority setting across the entire agricultural value chain.

At the same time, biological and cultural factors can put women and girls at particular risk of under-nutrition, malnutrition, and poor health, especially during their reproductive period. Good agriculture, nutrition, and health programs must therefore account for gender issues at all stages making women both actors and beneficiaries of new, effective policies and investments.

All new interventions should include tools to address:

- **A gender analysis** of needs and risks to men and women in agriculture;
- **Building capacity of women and girls** – literacy, secondary and tertiary education;
- **Fostering women's participation, influence and benefit** from existing innovation programmes;
- **Empowering women through increased access to assets** (credit, banking, information and communication technology, etc);
- **Equitable intra-household food allocation and consumption** for all members; and,
- **Ensuring gender-friendly technology and delivery systems.**

All of these points call for a new agenda for innovation and priority setting for AR4D. The new gender sensitive-agenda across agricultural research, education and extension/advisory services and enterprise, as well as the broader policy landscape for related domains (such as nutrition, women's rights, etc.) should:

- a) **Pursue sustainable agricultural intensification in a gender-sensitive manner**, using both natural and social sciences to contribute key goals of food and nutritional security and poverty reduction.
- b) **Undertake research to meet women's challenges** – designing mechanisms to identify and meeting their knowledge needs and address particular constraints of time, drudgery, and labour.
- c) **Foster long-term local and national public/private partnerships** for both technological and institutional innovation involving civil society organizations and producer organizations to ensure that agriculture, nutrition, and health are integrated and delivered at community level in a way that is responsive to women's and the communities needs.

Achieving these requires action by individuals and institutions and mobilizing the value of collective actions to bring mutual support and empower real change. Without these, institutional inertia from established systems and social attitudes will continue to reinforce gender divides and disadvantage women.

### **3.3 Learning, sharing and knowledge management**

GCWA is a bold step towards a meaningful agenda for transforming the way that women's roles in agriculture can be understood, encouraged and improved. Context-specific changes across the globe, cutting across different levels, institutions, organizations and cultures involve wide arrays of different stakeholders with different interests and mandates. The changes sought are



ambitious in changing entrenched cultural norms, attitudes, tradition, well-established formal institutions and the incentive structures that characterise them.

Supporting learning and sharing about how best to achieve change across disciplinary, professional, cultural and geographical boundaries will be critical to build on women's contributions in the agricultural, food and nutritional sectors. Such mechanisms operate at the individual, organizational and institutional levels, with relevance to a wide variety of actors including governments, international organizations and bodies, NGOs, policy-makers, women and men farmers and their associations, women's movements, researchers, extensionists and entrepreneurs. These mechanisms constitute a global learning architecture for women in agriculture, enabling clusters of actors in different contexts to capture, share and learn about what works, what doesn't, how it is working and why. A global learning architecture would encounter the obvious challenge of linking context-specific case studies and learning meaningfully to global processes and policy-making.

Developing an appropriate mechanism for coordinated action, dialogue, and interaction at various scales and ensuring that they are appropriately linked with each other will be crucial.

The key components of such a learning architecture would include:

- **A series of global, regional and national and sub-national conferences/workshops on gender in agriculture** to be attended by representatives of all concerned actors for the purpose of sharing research, defining issues and priorities and developing coordinated action plans for providing the required support.
- **Mechanisms for a suitable mix of representatives** at different levels to attend these conferences at different levels and in different geographies to facilitate networking and cross-sectoral learning.
- **A global web-based platform organized among GFAR constituencies according to regions and themes** enabling practitioners (researchers, policy-makers, development professionals, activists, etc.) to contribute research findings, case studies, lessons learned, etc., as well as to participate in online discussion and debate on key issues and solutions in their respective contexts.
- **Cross-context, multi-scale inter-disciplinary action research projects** oriented around specific thematic areas/change agenda emerging from the conferences/workshops at different levels, and setting-up an advisory group to guide and facilitate the global and regional research initiatives.
- **Use of Social Media and Information Technology** to create dynamic change, tailored to the needs, constraints and opportunities for women in agriculture, food and nutrition with particular attention to use of local languages and functional literacy.

## 4 Institutional process to move forward

To carry a dynamic thematic agenda towards action and build on key action points that emerged from GCWA, a global institutional architecture and common identity of purpose will be required to connect different actors at different levels in an open and inclusive manner, from the local to the global. Some initial thinking moving forward is outlined below.

- The processes of increasing awareness, building support and delivering results for women in agriculture must build on and add the value of true partnership to existing networks, partnerships or other arrangements already addressing these issues, whether at or between local, national, regional or global levels.



- The processes will build up from local and national level, putting women producers, including landless workers and householders and their organizations at the centre. These processes will need to engage public, private and civil society organizations. Actions will involve piloting new ways of working, drawing conclusions from local experiences, sharing the results and advocating practical changes and innovations to empower women in their communities.
- Regional Fora and other regional bodies have a vital

role in sharing of information and experiences on policies, institutions and incentive structures, stimulating regional programmes of action and fostering emulation of change in comparable socio-cultural circumstances.

- The multilateral agencies each bring vital knowledge and technical capabilities. UN Women provides overall strategic guidance on gender-related issues. FAO is the lead technical agency on women in food and agriculture at the behest of UN Women. IFAD offers appropriate financial mechanisms to support change. WFP plays its role in nutrition and crises and the ILO on labour and drudgery. The CGIAR plays multiple roles in putting women's needs at the centre of research, influencing change in others and engendering their own research processes.
- At the global level, key institutional partnerships (GFAR and Regional Fora, FAO, CGIAR, IFAD, WB, WFP, ILO, UN-WOMEN, donors and foundations, INGOs, women

organizations, UNCSW) engaged in agriculture have endorsed the GAP principles as a collective action and will play a central role in anchoring the overall set of priorities and the institutional set-up of GAP.

- The GFAR mechanism, enabling partnerships and collective actions between diverse sectors around the world, has a unique role in fostering such change. The GFAR Secretariat facilitates and champions implementation, through GFAR's open and inclusive structure and mandate and ability for international operation, with actions delivered through regional and sectoral partners.
- Given the widely divergent regional needs and perspectives, the GAP will operate at a different pace in each region and on different paths. Coordinated actions on the ground will require resourcing and institutionalization. For example, the Government of India's commitment to GAP principles, made during the Conference, offers real hope of changing the situation for women in India and, by being shared and extending influence elsewhere, of fostering change in other countries of the region and beyond. Indian institutions allied with institutions in other countries would promote changes and provide support for programmes building on robust national examples.
- As the GAP takes on more substance over the months ahead, it will require appropriate oversight by representative individuals from different sectors and regions and a light governance structure at each level of operation to manage the generation and disbursement of programmatic funds at different levels, working through existing mechanisms wherever feasible. This should enable decentralized operation, with national and regional bodies responsible and accountable for mobilizing and using funds to achieve change and impacts on the ground and multilateral agencies supporting the processes of change among countries. Through subsidiarity, global functions should primarily be of advocacy on gender needs, coordination and supporting change, with functional delivery on the ground by national and local bodies and inter-regional learning across comparable circumstances and shared values.
- Agenda cannot be static and must evolve in response to ongoing actions and changing contexts involved and the information and evidence generated and analyzed through collective actions. Operational networks at different levels will enable new actors to readily engage and activities to remain responsive to evolving local concerns.
- While there is much demand for a common cross-institutional agenda and associated common-branded identity as an open and collective partnership, the specific organization, coordination and facilitation of these arrangements remain to be articulated. Developing a global institutional architecture and operational basis for taking forward GAP actions will require a participatory multi-stakeholder process. This should involve mapping and engaging key actors at various levels active across sectors (crops, livestock, fisheries, land, forestry, household/nutrition, agro-processing, etc.) across public, private and civil society organizations

In agricultural innovation, institutional change and knowledge use, the GAP will contribute to achieving the multi-sectoral objectives of the GCARD Road Map, and specifically contribute to the forthcoming GCARD2, in which gender issues in agriculture will be highlighted as a key area for action. This will involve some pre-consultations among relevant actors across regions,

themes and sectors, but GCARD2 will not mark the end of the consultation process and ongoing consultations will feed into the emerging GAP.

The institutional framework outlined above, and in the preceding sections of this report, formulates the underlying architecture for the GAP. The GAP cannot be a stand-alone institution, but provide a unifying coherent structure and approach, and common purpose, to enable and foster collective actions at different levels. As the consultations proceed and the details of the organizational structures for coordination and facilitation of the GAP are established, arrangements at various levels will be made operational, refining the agenda and building local and national ownership.

As illustrated in the diagram, the entire framework will be driven in reference to the end users and principal beneficiaries: women in agriculture and food. The thrust will be those women most in need of improvements in access and control of resources to successfully fulfill their vital roles as producers, householders and consumers. The GAP will capture priorities expressed at local level through national partners, to share experiences, provide advice and leverage changes through mutually reinforcing national and regional processes.

Evidently, it is important to inspire change in regional, and global, agricultural development policies and practices by robust examples from country level and, in turn, influence the national level by feedback loops. The GAP will look at business models explicitly aimed at documenting baselines, sharply defining activities, and describing (and subsequently) monitoring change in clear qualitative and quantitative terms.

Given the complex and often politically challenging nature of the changes set out in the preceding sections of this document, it is essential to ensure that discrimination based on approach or ideology is not practiced. Thus, for example, social movements working on land rights or women's rights must not be excluded simply because they are challenging entrenched political, economic or social interests or norms. By the same token, the private sector and its contribution should not be excluded given focus on profit.

The institutional process can capitalize on considerable experience, models and arrangements of the partners and on comparable challenges for human development. There are a number of critical lessons to be learned from other global program partnerships or collective action mechanisms to pursue common goals<sup>9</sup>. Systemic change in collective management of socially and culturally sensitive global challenges requires a complex and delicate approach to leadership and governance. This following merit consideration:

- a. Avoid placing emphasis on the partnership as an end in itself diverting attention from the objectives and expected outcomes – the focus should be on *“how will this partnership contribute to the projected impacts and achieving the objectives at local, national, regional and global levels?”*;

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<sup>9</sup><http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=stewardship%20of%20the%20sun%20movement%3A%20taking%20sun%20to%20the%20next%20level&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.scalingupnutrition.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2011%2F09%2F111006-ENGLISH-SUN-Progress-Report-ROME-VERSION.pdf&ei=VjOMT-8Ho388QOv1JHOCQ&usq=AFQjCNHO1caU-T4mlGK9ZxbLc8VLgkKJ4A>

- b. Clear and achievable strategies<sup>10</sup> are an essential requirement of good governance and baselines should be established to measure partnership performance in different contexts;
- c. Whilst partnerships are based on shared purposes, they need to acknowledge and accommodate divergent interests and there are trade-offs between inclusiveness and effectiveness;
- d. Without adequate and predictable funding and dedication of human resources there is a trade-off between performance and the time spent on mobilizing resources;
- e. Oversight at different levels is most effective where relying on boards comprising individuals serving in their personal capacities; these have provided better governance practice such as transparency in decision making, performance reporting and systems for accountability.

## 5 Next Steps

1. This synthesis report will be posted on the websites of GFAR, GCWA, APAARI and the other Regional Fora by the end of May 2012. There will be links through the other institutional partners of the Conference including UN Women, IFAD and the World Bank.
2. Between 1 May 2012 and October 2012, (before GCARD2), a participatory multi-stakeholder process will be facilitated by GFAR at national, regional and international levels to develop GAP. The aim will be to consult with organizations not present at GCWA, highlight further priority areas for action where there is strong demand. Development and implementation of GAP will be a rolling process that will be regularly updated.
3. The process will capitalize and build upon existing mechanisms, conferences and consultations of the partners and other institutions including women's organizations.
4. A draft proposal for GAP will be presented at GCARD2 for further discussion and resource mobilization. To foster and demonstrate change, further GCWAs should be held at three year intervals, building in part on the results from Regional Fora. The next will be held in Africa in 2015 and will be hosted by FARA . At this time it will be possible to review progress and the implementation of GAP by:
  - Assessing the effectiveness of the GAP mechanism for mobilizing and supporting an inclusive collective platform of credible players and institutions that maximizes their comparative strengths and facilitates coordinated and synergistic action towards large-scale transformation of gender-equitable agricultural, food and nutrition security systems in priority areas.
5. Cycles of learning from the GCWA should then feed directly into the GCARD cycles for transforming and strengthening agricultural research for development.

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<sup>10</sup> Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound objectives are key.

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