



AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT, GENDER  
AND LAND IN AFRICA:  
TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EQUITABLE AND SOCIALLY  
RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

CONFERENCE REPORT 2014  
RUTH HALL & MARTHA OSORIO



African Union



African Development Bank



Economic Commission  
for Africa



## AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT, GENDER AND LAND IN AFRICA

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University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa

Tel: +27 (0)21 959 3733. Fax: +27 (0)21 959 3732  
E-mail: [info@plaas.org.za](mailto:info@plaas.org.za)  
Website: [www.plaas.org.za](http://www.plaas.org.za)

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Compiled and written by: Ruth Hall and Martha Osorio  
Copy editing and proofreading: Liz Sparg  
Photographs: Yasser Booley and Reza Kasu  
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reviewing abstracts and presentations and identifying relevant stakeholders; bringing together about 140 representatives of a wide range of sectors from ten African countries.

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We are grateful to the speakers for setting a tone of intellectual rigour and practical analysis during the opening session. We warmly acknowledge Honourable Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania, who is also the first President of the Pan African Parliament, for her inspiring keynote address. In addition, we thank Honourable Allan Chiyembekeza of the Pan African Parliament; Abebe Haile Gabriel (Director

of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture in the African Union Commission); Andries du Toit (Director of PLAAS); and Tobias Takavarasha (FAO representative in South Africa).

To participants from government, business enterprises, producers' organisations, civil society, intergovernmental organisations, donors and academic institutions: thank you for openly sharing your perspectives, experiences and ideas and actively and constructively participating in the discussions and working groups. Our especial thanks go to all presenters, session chairs and discussants for contributing your time, expertise and dedication.

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All these people, working together, have created a coherent document that we believe will be useful to a wide range of stakeholders.

We sincerely thank everyone for ensuring the success of the 2014 Multi-Stakeholder Regional Conference on Agricultural Investment, Gender and Land in Africa in Cape Town.

### **Organising Committee Coordinators and Report Authors**

Martha Osorio, FAO Gender and Rural Development Officer  
Ruth Hall, PLAAS

### **Organising Committee Members**

Anna Rappazzo (FAO consultant)  
Clara Park (FAO consultant)  
Emmanuel Sulle (PLAAS)  
Ilario Rea (FAO consultant)  
Sue Mbaya (LPI senior consultant)





Nancy Kachingwe  
ActionAid, Malawi



## INTRODUCTION

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The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations; the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa; the Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC); and the Land Policy Initiative (LPI) of the African Union; the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), co-hosted a multi-stakeholder conference in Cape Town, South Africa, 5–7 March 2014. The conference was attended by representatives of governments, the private sector, civil society, producer organisations, development partners, donors and academics from the following countries: Ghana, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi,

Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Italy, Uganda, Canada, United States and the United Kingdom.

The conference was a forum for in-depth discussions and sharing of experiences on land-related agricultural investments. Participants deliberated on which approaches to agricultural investments can benefit African states and their citizens. Presenters shared qualitative and quantitative evidence on investments, along with country-based case studies, and the conference culminated in recommendations by sectoral and multi-sectoral working groups on actions required to promote inclusive, equitable and socially responsible investments in Africa.



The conference was a forum for in-depth discussions and the sharing of experiences.





Cyriaque Hakizimana  
PLAAS



## CONTEXT

## CONTEXT

The last few years have witnessed a dramatically renewed interest in Africa's farmland, and the role of agricultural development has become more prominent in national and international agendas. As a result, many developing countries are making vigorous efforts to attract and facilitate foreign and domestic private investment in agriculture, with the expectation that such investment will contribute to production growth, poverty reduction and food security, while at the same time providing developmental benefits through technology transfer, employment creation, access to markets and infrastructure development.

However, recent research has highlighted that investment does not necessarily produce positive outcomes. Rather, the outcomes depend on many factors, including the prevailing agricultural and rural development model; the institutional, policy and regulatory framework in place; the type and degree of inclusiveness of the business models adopted; and the extent to which social relations and gender equity issues are considered, among others.

Research shows that certain types of investment, in particular large-scale land acquisitions<sup>1</sup>, have led to negative effects on host countries, such as displacing small farmers, loss of incomes from farming, loss of access to water and other common property resources, undermining or negating existing rights, increasing corruption, reducing food security, increasing livelihood vulnerability, aggravating gender and social inequalities, and environmental degradation. Conversely, investments in farmers themselves (most of whom are women), and investments adopting inclusive business models and respecting rural populations' rights, including land and labour rights, seem to be more beneficial for small farmers and workers.

In response to these findings and varied experiences, efforts have been made to foster international and regional frameworks that promote more responsible and inclusive public and private investment in agriculture. Such efforts include the African Union's *Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa* adopted in 2009; the FAO's *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*, endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2012 and the current CFS-led process to define principles for responsible agricultural investment (CFS-RAI).

Despite the progress with international, regional and national frameworks that has been made to date, there has been limited focus on how agricultural investments affect differently women and men from various social groups. Yet recent studies have shown clearly that agricultural investments operated under diverse business models (including plantations, contract farming, outgrower schemes or joint ventures) create gender-differentiated labour and income-generating opportunities for local farmers, agricultural workers and the rest of the rural population.

Research also illustrates differences in access, use and control of land among different social categories of rural people, and highlights the need to involve producers' organisations and cooperatives, both in the investment process and in shaping an enabling environment, to ensure gender-equitable and socially responsible public and private agricultural investments.

<sup>1</sup> These are also known, approvingly, as "large-scale land-based investments" (LSLBI) and, pejoratively, as "land grabs." Here we use the more neutral term "large-scale land acquisitions" which includes those instances where land is grabbed or voluntarily transacted, and those acquisitions that lead to investment as well as those that do not.



## CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

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The conference was intended to promote an open exchange of experiences and evidence-based knowledge on the implications of agricultural investments for rural livelihoods, gender relations and social differentiation. The purpose was to build a common understanding of why it is important to take gender into account when dealing with agricultural investments, what this means, and which are critical criteria in terms of investment initiatives, practices, business models and policies and laws that need to be put in place. All this knowledge is needed if actors are to foster inclusive and socially responsible investment that respects the rights of local communities and promotes economic growth within a framework of social and gender equality.

The conference featured research findings by a range of institutions and networks and represented practitioners' experiences from various sectors and countries; documenting and analysing diverse land-based investments, related business models and investment partnerships, as well as differentiated impacts on women and men and community responses. It was expected that participants would have the opportunity to learn about options, good practices and promising approaches that can be replicated, up-scaled and adapted to different contexts, and that they would also identify challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome so that agricultural investments are inclusive and gender equitable.

Micro-level case studies and other inputs enabled participants to share experiences and draw out lessons to inform recommendations by stakeholder working groups: government, private sector and civil society, including producers' organisations and academia. The conference included plenary and parallel sessions, on the following thematic areas:

### Thematic areas

1. **Primary agricultural investments implemented under different business models and the implications for the livelihoods of rural women and men**
  - Value-chain participation and small-scale farmer development
  - Technology transfer and skills development
  - Opportunities and challenges for decent employment creation and income generation
  - Changes in land access, use and control
  - Free, prior and informed consent
  - Changes in intra-household decision-making and resource control
  - Infrastructure development and provision of social goods.
2. **Enabling environment, strategies and approaches for responsible, inclusive and gender-equitable agricultural investments**
  - Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks, including national land tenure, agricultural development, trade regulation and investment policy, legislation and related institutions
  - Agriculture-related partnerships
  - Civil societies and producers' organisations' best practice, roles and responses
  - Private sector's best practice, corporate social responsibility and self-regulation.

Jomo Ntuli  
Department of Rural Development  
and Land Reform, SA





“When women control additional income, they spend more than men on food, health, clothing and education for children. This has positive implications for immediate wellbeing and long term economic growth.”  
~ Tobias Takavarasha, FAO

Eunice Adhiambo  
Ujamaa Centre, Kenya



## OPENING SESSION

## OPENING PLENARY



**Honourable Allan Chiyembekeza** (photo left) of the Pan African Parliament<sup>2</sup> congratulated the organisers for bringing together such a diverse group of stakeholders and views, and appealed for frank dialogue on the topic of land investments and gender. **Jomo Ntuli** (photo page 9) of South Africa’s Department of Rural Development and Land Reform welcomed the timing of this conference in the context of current policy development in South Africa on land tenure in rural areas.



**Tobias Takavarasha** (photo left), head of FAO in South Africa, described the organisation’s role in facilitating dialogue between governments, civil society, and the private sector, pointing out that inclusive growth is critical to reducing poverty reduction and this requires accountability, transparency and efficiency through partnerships among different stakeholders. Given that most African farmers are women, investment in partnerships with African farmers must promote gender equality, and would have a knock-on effect of alleviating household poverty.



**Dr Abebe Haile Gabriel**, Director of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture in the African Union Commission, in a message read out on his behalf by **Sue Mbaya** (photo left), acknowledged both the central role of women in agriculture in Africa and their marginalisation in relation to land ownership, decision-making and access to services and opportunities. The AU recognises the potential of land-related investments, but also their propensity to exacerbate existing gender inequalities if women are not central to the process and design. The quest to improve women’s land rights still faces many challenges: discriminatory land tenure systems, policy gaps, lack of rigorous and effective implementation of progressive provisions already adopted, and a lack of awareness by most women of their rights. A recent study on how to strengthen women’s land rights conducted under the auspices of the AU’s Land Policy Initiative has provided valuable information on the status of women’s land rights, and points to the need for benchmarks and indicators to track progress.



PLAAS Director **Prof Andries du Toit** (photo left), welcomed delegates on behalf of PLAAS and also Future Agricultures Consortium<sup>3</sup>, stressing that agro-food investment in Africa is about change and politics, people and power, and that decisions need to be made and implemented by the people of Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Honourable Chiyembekeza of Malawi was chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economy and Natural Resources in the Pan African Parliament and is now Minister of Agriculture, Malawi.

<sup>3</sup> PLAAS is a partner of Future Agricultures Consortium and hosts its Southern Africa Regional Hub.



## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

In an inspiring keynote address, **Honourable Gertrude Mongella** of Tanzania, also the first President of the Pan African Parliament, posed the question: “If you look at Africa, where does agrarian poverty come from?”

She argued that *“The land is the key to dignity, development and investment. We cannot deal with development and gender separately. Gender means men and women – their existence and the way the world is organised. Most men in Africa who are here went to school because their mothers were farmers. Those women have maintained this continent”*.

Honourable Mongella called for a review of the whole system of land management in Africa:

*“How can you make a decision on land you don’t own? We are departing from customary laws and traditions and moving to a point where even the men are being marginalised. Men of Africa, if you are not careful we are all going to be in the same landless basket of labourers in Africa. Land distribution must deal with equality between groups and users.*

*If the key labourers are not part of the process of investment, is this not a new colonisation? History is repeating itself but in a very different way – this comes to politics, which also affects land and equality issues. What type of democracy is it without women? Leadership in political parties is largely men – we don’t say they are bad, but African women were at the forefront after we crossed the river. And we got swallowed up by crocodiles.*

*How can we ensure that women are the centre of the agricultural revolution in Africa? How can we deal with the question of discrimination in ownership of land?”*



**“Gender means men and women – their existence and the way the world is organised. Most men in Africa who are here went to school because their mothers were farmers. Those women have maintained this continent.”**

**~ Honourable Gertrude Mongella, Tanzania**

## DEFINING THE BIG QUESTIONS

**Martha Osorio**, Gender and Rural Development Officer in the Gender, Equity and Rural Development Division of the FAO, outlined the conference objectives, invited contributions and raised the following questions:

- What do gender-inclusive and gender-equitable agricultural business models and partnerships look like? Which measures need to be put in place so that rural women and men alike can benefit from investment opportunities?
- What kind of enabling environment is needed to promote inclusive, gender-equitable and responsible agricultural investments?
- What kind of inclusive business models and contractual arrangements take into account and value gender-differentiated roles in the supply chain, and ensure that women participate and benefit?
- What good practices and promising approaches exist that can be replicated, scaled up and adapted to different contexts?
- What challenges and obstacles need to be overcome to promote inclusive and gender-equitable agricultural investments?
- How can we coordinate the many initiatives around agricultural investments, gender and land so that we pull in the same direction?



Martha Osorio  
FAO Gender and Rural Development Officer





Alhaji Sulemana Mahama  
Government of Ghana



## TRENDS AND RESPONSES

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**Nidhi Tandon** (Network Intelligence for Development and Oxfam Canada) opened this plenary session, sharing her experience of hearing the voices of community members on the ground across sub-Saharan Africa who speak of the impact of land investments and corporate occupation of land. She pointed out that investor interests and competition over land, water and natural resources are “as old as humanity”, but stressed the urgency of addressing this latest “tsunami wave” of commercial investments, as it threatens the dignity, lives and livelihoods of the people who produce the food that we eat.

### Land Policy Initiative guiding principles on large-scale, land-based investments in Africa

Improving land governance is about giving due recognition and protection to the land rights of local communities in land laws and facilitating security of all bundles of land rights, interests and claims, especially for women and other marginalised groups. Improving land governance is also about strengthening those institutions and processes involved in the implementation and oversight of land policy and administration. Since the adoption of the *Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa*, the AU has sought to advance the land governance agenda through the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), established in 2006 by the AU, African Development Bank and UNECA.

**Sue Mbaya** (LPI) outlined the context and process for development of the *Guiding Principles on Large-Scale Land-Based Investments in Africa*, based on the following core principles:

- Investments are informed by and contribute to development strategies and priorities of states;
- Investments are desirable and feasible, based on holistic assessment;

- Land policies and other legal and institutional arrangements engender good and accountable governance of land and related resources;
- Actors commit to safeguarding rights and interests of communities; and
- Actors commit to developing required capacities at all levels.

“Statistics for food and agriculture show that women have less access to productive resources and opportunities; if they enjoyed the same access as men, they could substantially increase yields and raise agricultural output. If women in Africa had the same access to inputs and opportunities as men, this would raise outputs and economic growth.”

~ Sue Mbaya, LPI

The *Guiding Principles* further serve to facilitate the implementation of the *AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa* and the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) by providing policy direction and guidance to inform land-based investments in African agriculture. Creating a basis for effective coordination and collective responsibility, the *Guiding Principles* also provide investors with a tool to inform their responsible engagement with African governments, traditional authorities, and other actors, and offer a basis for developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for land-based investments.

In closing, Mbaya highlighted that once the *Guiding Principles* are formalised, a review of existing land-based investments will be needed to ensure alignment, but this requires political will among Member States.

## FAO: Policy and governance responses globally

Does foreign direct investment (FDI) matter compared to other sources of capital for developing countries? Can it stimulate or hinder local development? How can developing countries maximise its benefits and reduce risks? What tools are available for African countries in terms of international policy frameworks? **Pascal Liu** from the FAO addressed these questions in his presentation.

Investing in agriculture is among the most efficient ways to reduce poverty and hunger, he argued. At the same time, large-scale land acquisitions are not the most effective form of investment. So, while increased agricultural investment is needed, investments need to expand opportunities for the most marginalised. Interestingly, existing African farmers are by far the biggest investors in agriculture; far more significant than any other corporate or foreign investors. Smallholder farmers are the majority of the poor in Africa; they produce the bulk of Africa's food and yet suffer most hunger. In order to reduce poverty, there is a need to stimulate investments in small farmers themselves. But how? This requires investments from governments, and enabling policy frameworks, to channel investments into existing farmers' efforts and help them invest more and generate better returns from their crops and livestock.

To understand better the trends and impacts of FDI in agriculture, the FAO conducted case studies exploring investment in primary production implemented under different business models. The findings show that the risks of land deals for local communities include reduced access to natural resources and inadequate compensation, alongside the negative impact on rural livelihoods caused by displacement of smallholders. With high transaction costs and local opposition, land-based investments do not seem to offer the best business model, even from the perspective of investors. Conversely, inclusive business models can offer positive impacts – by providing opportunities for job creation, value-addition, increased productivity, and higher incomes – especially when farmers

keep control of lands and are involved as partners. There is a building of institutional capital, which is very important for long-term economic development. However, these effects take time to emerge. Extensive external support is needed to ensure that real benefits accrue to host communities, countries and investors. In summary, public-private partnerships are needed because of their ability to offer long-range initiatives and capital that is “patient” in that it does not demand immediate returns on investments.

**“The FAO promotes investment in agriculture, which is not necessarily the same as investment in land. Investments in land involve risks and disadvantages that often outweigh the benefits. We prefer inclusive business models that do not involve land acquisition.”**  
~ Pascal Liu, FAO

There are various intergovernmental funds and resources that can help African governments to maximise the benefits and reduce the risks of agricultural FDI. Several global initiatives aiming at fostering more responsible agriculture investment have been developed. Some of them are as follows:

**The CFS (Committee on World Food Security)** is currently engaged in negotiating a set of principles for responsible agricultural investment (CFS-RAI). This considers all types of investment in agricultural value chains and food systems – including foreign and domestic, public and private, small-, medium-, and large-scale investments. The CFS-led process has involved multi-stakeholder regional and e-consultation processes. These principles aim to address the main issues of what makes investment in agriculture and food systems responsible; identify the relevant stakeholders, as well as their key roles and responsibilities; and provide a framework to guide the actions of all stakeholders engaged in agriculture and food systems so that investment in agriculture foster food security and poverty reduction and strengthen the livelihood of women and men.

**PRAI (Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment)**, proposed in 2010 by FAO, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and World Bank, are particularly applicable to medium- and large-scale investment in agricultural production. The principles aim to provide a framework for national regulations, international investment agreements, global corporate social responsibility initiatives, and individual investor contracts, and a checklist for developing and enforcing laws.

**The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** and FAO are developing guidelines on responsible business conduct (RBC) among agricultural supply chains aimed at investors. This will synthesise existing standards of RBC to help implement and avoid risks, including due diligence to support investors in preventing and mitigating adverse impacts. RBC guidelines will promote an approach where investors can work with government and civil society to conduct business responsibly, guided by a multi-stakeholder advisory group.

The FAO presentation conceded, and it was widely agreed, that gender has been overlooked in most of the initiatives mentioned. However this is being remedied, and the forthcoming CFS-led RAI principles will reflect the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in agricultural investments and also along value chains.

## Private investments and large-scale land acquisition trends globally and in Africa

**Ward Anseeuw** of the Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) and the University of Pretoria presented key findings on trends and practices within private investments and land acquisition trends, based on quantitative and qualitative data generated by the Land Matrix ([www.landmatrix.org](http://www.landmatrix.org)) and other research literature and analysis<sup>4</sup>.

Of the top 20 countries most affected by large-scale land acquisitions, 11 are in Africa, in particular East Africa<sup>5</sup>. Western countries are still the main investors, with growing involvement by emerging and Middle Eastern countries. While the rush for land is slowing down, due to many factors, there is evidence of continued long-term commercial interest in land. Food production is the main driver of land acquisition along with other factors, which include growing demand for biofuels as renewable energy feedstocks, and speculative interest in rising land values. Very little production is taking place currently on land-based investments only 1.7% of the land acquired is being used. Where production has got underway, there is a high failure rate among projects; in Mozambique, for example, the failure rate stands at 63% of projects. Focusing on the implications for investment models and agrarian change, different land acquisitions produced different outcomes, but the high rate of failures across farming models suggests that it is not only poor communities who are not benefiting from land deals, investors are also not reaping rewards. Some participants argued that the high attrition rate explains the slowing down of new land acquisitions, while others argued that global drivers, such as oil prices, commodity markets and the renewable fuel industry are behind the slowdown.

Anseeuw called for a change of strategy to promote more equitable land-based investments. This would require a review of investment and land policies, increased transparency, adequate monitoring instruments, the political will to challenge investment protection regimes, development of more inclusive business models and community partnership programmes, and better international and continental guidance. Instruments,

<sup>4</sup>The Land Matrix is a global and independent land-monitoring initiative, which aims to facilitate an open development community of citizens, researchers, policy-makers and technology specialists to promote transparency and accountability in land investment decisions.

<sup>5</sup>Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana, Madagascar, Sudan, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Senegal.



such as the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*, PRAI, and the AU's, *Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa* are largely voluntary, with ineffective implementation, and little enforcement of compliance.

Anseeuw stressed the danger of legitimising large-scale land acquisitions as the sole model for agricultural investment, with its potential for long-term marginalisation, and proposed instead the need for “alternative” development trajectories and a more inclusive approach that puts existing landholders and farmers at the centre of development.

### Discussion

In a lively plenary discussion that followed, participants responded to and raised questions based on the presentations, and linked to the broader conference themes of agricultural investment, gender and land. Specific questions were raised about large-scale land acquisitions and the LPI draft guidelines, the roles of civil society and international financial institutions, water rights, land governance and land administration, and the need for

reliable data on agricultural production and investment disaggregated by gender and size. Some participants emphasised the hierarchies of interests and power struggles at community level, which exclude women from shaping investment decisions that affect them.

Alternative approaches are needed to land access and tenure, which balance the needs of food security and small-scale farmers with national priorities in terms of agricultural investment. Several questions dealt with the ways in which investments aim not only at acquiring land but also at controlling value chains, and the relationship between national politics and policies. As a civil society representative pointed out, the 2013 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report and the 2012 International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) report support small-scale “organic” production as a default alternative, and warn that the development agenda of land governance and agricultural production has been usurped by corporate interests.



Chrispen Matenga  
Future Agricultures and  
the University of Zambia

Fatima Shabodien  
Action Aid, South Africa



OPEN FAIR  
EXCHANGE

## OPEN FAIR EXCHANGE

Facilitated by **Nancy Kachingwe** (International Land Coalition [ILC], Malawi), this session gave participants a platform to showcase alternative approaches to investment that promote gender equality in agricultural initiatives.



**Grace Tepula** of the Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) shared her personal experience of empowerment as a dairy farmer in Zambia and an active member and leader in the local small-scale farmers' association. Tepula called for governments to implement the Maputo Declaration (10% of national budgets for agriculture) and increase investment in infrastructure. Citing high input costs, access to markets and value addition as problems facing all farmers, especially women, she highlighted the need to develop local and regional markets and secure women's land rights.



**Eunice Adhiambo** shared experiences of seaweed farming on the Kenyan Coast, as a sustainable alternative to fisheries and mainland farming in the light of dwindling fishing stocks. Here, the Ujamaa Centre has supported women (individually and in groups) to cultivate and harvest seaweed, which has enabled them to diversify their livelihoods, though they face conflict with their spouses and other fishermen competing for resource rights on the coast.



**Dimuna Phiri** of Zambia Land Alliance (ZLA) screened a powerful documentary, entitled *Large Scale Land Acquisitions: Impacts and Solutions for Zambia*, which was produced by PLAAS and ZLA as part of a Future Agricultures project on land-based investments in the context of the New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition. The footage graphically illustrated the impact of agricultural investments in two rural areas in Zambia through the voices of those directly affected.

**Benard Chitunga** of the Cooperative University College of Kenya spoke about the use of public-private partnerships in developing and implementing mentorship programmes to build business capacity among farmers. The Cooperative University College of Kenya has developed a toolkit to support farming as a family business, which considers roles of all family members in developing work and business plans.

**Jules Kazungu** spoke about the positive impact of a public-private partnership designed to improve seed for autogamous crops. In Rwanda, this led to the emergence of a bean export sector, which has benefited women and men, though more still needs to be done to facilitate women's access to financial services, training opportunities and agricultural technology.

**Val Payne** from Sustaining the Wild Coast (South Africa) talked of a pilot project run among rural communities in South Africa's Eastern Cape province to address power relations and create a shared vision of development and what this means in a very local context. Consultation with local communities ensured that future projects by public and private investors could be assessed against articulated local needs and views.

“We reject the sale of land to corporate interests that put profit before human beings.”  
~ Grace Tepula, RWA

## INSIGHTS FROM THE OPEN FAIR

In response to the examples and experiences that were shared, participants commented that, while there is much talk about “mainstreaming” gender in research and policies, the real problem lies in the failures to implement measures to ensure that women can lead agricultural development initiatives. This requires recognising that women have extensive traditional knowledge about farming, climate change and local conditions. The best way of increasing women's choices and opportunities associated with agricultural investment is to ensure that they are heard

in consultative processes. Following on from this, one participant called for the implementation of the Maputo Declaration and for the inclusion of women in decision-making positions and their participation in policy processes, as well as adequate provisions to ensure women's access to productive resources, including access to land and advisory services. Another participant stressed the need to address gender explicitly in budgets, including through ring-fencing of resources targeted at women.





## MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Gertude Dfiza Torvikey  
Future Agricultures and  
University of Ghana

## MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

### What needs to be done and who should do it?

A multi-stakeholder dialogue, facilitated by E News Channel Africa (eNCA) anchor **Nikiwe Bikitsha**, addressed what needs to be done to create an enabling environment for inclusive and gender-equitable primary agricultural investments. The panel comprised George Macharia (Equity Bank Limited, Kenya), Samuel Kiiru (Principal Economist, National Treasury, Kenya), Esther Obaikol (Uganda Land Alliance), Paula Nimpuno (Ford Foundation Southern Africa), Hamza Galiwango (Uganda Investment Authority) and Rudo Chakwera (Malawi Farmers' Union).

While most panellists agreed that agricultural investment in Africa should promote gender equality, they disagreed about what measures need to be adopted and the roles and responsibilities for stakeholders from different sectors. The question of who should take primary responsibility to ensure gender equality was contested, as investors pointed to governments, governments pointed to civil society and civil society pointed back to both investors and governments.

**Hamza Galiwango** from the Uganda Investment Authority claimed that, when investors approach rural communities, they want to speak to rights holders, and in Ugandan custom only men are rights holders. In his view, women and civil society actors need to challenge gender discriminatory attitudes by investors as well as persistent inequalities in local custom. However, he admitted that in boardrooms, when state institutions negotiated with investors, gender equality and the impacts of investment on women were not even part of the agenda; investors did not see that

gender equality was relevant to their commercial goals, and government did not pressurise them to do so.

**Esther Obaikol** of the Uganda Land Alliance disagreed with Galiwango's view that it was up to women and civil society organisations to challenge custom and change gender relations. She argued that gender is not merely a social issue but also an economic and political one, in which governments need to provide leadership. Women are producers, and investing in women makes "economic sense" because economies grow by investing in producers. She called for comprehensive efforts by governments and investors, alongside development partners, to transform gender relations.

**Rudo Chakwera** of the Malawi Farmers' Union suggested that farmers should be included in discussions at all levels – even before land and agricultural investment take place – to ensure "win-win" solutions. She pointed out that investors often see women as cheap labour, and yet if investors were required to negotiate directly with farmers and not only central government authorities, this would increase the likelihood (even if not guarantee) that women would be included, as most African farmers are women.

**George Macharia** of Equity Bank Limited in Kenya agreed that it was the role of both the public and private sectors to bring about gender equality through agricultural investment. His bank has specifically designed financing packages and advisory services for women farmers and has found this to be mutually beneficial as women farmers are effective agri-business operators. Nonetheless, he recognised that the private sector faces practical obstacles and needs to be incentivised to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and that this requires innovative approaches.



**Samuel Kiiru**, Principal Economist at Kenya's National Treasury, outlined how his government has attempted to address gender equality through legal recognition of women's land rights. He explained that, in Kenya, land governance had been decentralised and it was up to local communities to push for women's interests to feature centrally when negotiating land-based investments deals. His view was contested by the women representing farmers' organisations, who insisted that governments could not expect rural communities (often dominated by men and elites) to negotiate with private sectors, without support.

**Paula Nimpuno** of the Ford Foundation Southern Africa pointed out that it was not just international investors who were acquiring large tracts of land, but also local elites, and that this needs to be tackled to protect poor rural women. Nimpuno proposed that problems could be tackled by brokering intermediation between civil society and investors, and suggested that governments, in conjunction with civil society, take on this brokering role. Contracts are complex legal documents and rural women farmers need extensive legal support to understand their provisions before signing; currently, illiterate women are being held to contracts that they did not understand when they signed.

It is up to governments to ensure that women have access to the necessary legal support. Nimpuno argued that most governments in Africa have not established adequate regulatory frameworks to govern land and land-based investments, and those that did have such frameworks need to do more to ensure that investors comply with them.

The dialogue generated some fresh ideas but also some heated debate. On the one hand, one government representative argued that there is no land grabbing happening in Africa; rather, investments benefit citizens by contributing to national gross domestic product. On the other hand, conference participants argued that governments prioritise private sector interests over citizens' entitlements, with one participant arguing that "government is in business, courts and judges are in business, and business is in business". As a result, it was argued, it is not surprising that governments give business preferential treatment compared to their own citizens who, as farmers, also wish to be able to expand their investments in agriculture.





## HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT PANEL: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Promoting inclusive and equitable agricultural investments: challenges and opportunities

Chaired by **John Bugri** from Ghana, this panel heard inputs from high-level government representatives from Mozambique, Kenya, Ghana and Zambia on their governments' initiatives to promote inclusive and equitable agricultural investments. The presentations focused on general efforts to improve agricultural production, productivity and profitability, both to meet domestic needs and to earn foreign exchange. However, many of the initiatives did not have a clear gender focus, while others set targets for women's representation in local governance institutions.

A key theme that emerged was the need to identify appropriate alternatives to leasing out land, for instance through value-chain partnerships. These alternative business models need to be built on the basis of secured land rights at community or group level, but also, where appropriate, at individual or household level. Even where appropriate legal frameworks allow for this, such as in Mozambique, securing tenure in practice remains a challenge and requires strong development partnerships with civil society groups and funding agencies.

**Olegário dos Anjos Banze**, Deputy Director, National Directorate for Promotion of Rural Development at the Ministry of State Administration, Mozambique, described the policy context in his country, highlighting the efforts underway to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships. Mozambique's Land Act of 1997 provides equal rights for women and men to access, use and control of land in communities, while its regulatory tools enable the establishment of mutually beneficial partnerships between holders of land use rights (*Direitos de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra or DUATs*) and those seeking to acquire land for large-scale projects. Since 2010 the government has set up a Community Investor Partnership

Project (Pro-Parcerias) as an alternative to leasing out land, which seeks to integrate communities into commercial agricultural production and value chains through partnerships with external investors. Its key aspects include: not transferring land rights; delimiting community and private land, and specifying women's land and women's status in governing institutions; developing standard contracts; involving local authorities; building the capacity for service providers; adopting a value-chain approach that involves smallholder producers; and "territorial" marketing to identify better investment opportunities.

While some practical results have been achieved – linking cassava family farmers with bigger producers, and seed producers with commercial plantations – there is still a need to improve implementation capacity and develop guidelines for partnerships. Different partnership models with investors have arisen, with outgrowing being the most common in the tobacco, sugar cane, cotton and sesame sectors. More needs to be learnt about inclusive business approaches that are sustainable, and civil society can play a crucial role in building the capacity of local communities and traditional authorities, and in monitoring the impact of investments.

**Samuel Kiiru**, Principal Economist in Kenya's National Treasury, reminded the conference that different countries have reached different stages of addressing gender equality in their domestic context. Because only about 9.5% of Kenya's land is under cultivation, and despite improved agricultural productivity, it spends billions importing basic foodstuffs, and so the government considers commercialisation to be a strategic priority. The government is encouraging investment in agriculture – by Kenyans and non-Kenyans – and a shift from subsistence to commercially oriented farming. Kiiru did not, though, specify whether this approach addresses gender equality. Government is aware of both the benefits and risks of land-based investments, and that agricultural policy must consider

food security alongside sustainable land management and land reform. The government has a pivotal role to play in reaching marginalised communities in the economy, including women, and this is being effected through targeted interventions, including financial support and a rights approach to inheritance.

**Alhaji Sulemana Mahama** from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in Ghana pointed out that in Ghana there are multiple sources of land law, multiple institutional actors such as chiefs involved in land administration, and a hierarchy of interests and complex issues around ownership and management. The government is engaged in an initiative – the Ghana Land Administration Project – aimed at harmonising the legislative framework for land administration, enhancing institutional capacity, and developing a spatial framework with high-level oversight. The programme has now entered its second phase (LAP2), which aims to improve land administration in order to pave the way for future investments.

In Ghana, women make a significant contribution to agricultural development, producing 70% of food crops, 95% of agro processing and 85% of food distribution. If the country is to scale up agriculture, and reduce dependence on imported foodstuffs, women must be supported to expand their productivity. A gender strategy for land administration that covers all aspects of project activities has been developed along with an action plan and implementation strategy. The project has conducted a number of gender-based training activities for participating agency staff, and it has identified gender focal persons to respond to gender issues from their agencies and report them to the project. The strategy has been incorporated into project activities for implementation under LAP2. The rights-based gender strategy of 2010 provides for equitable access to opportunities, services and information, fosters women's participation and inclusion in natural resource

management, and enhances accountability through participatory monitoring and evaluation. The goal is 40% representation by women in institutional collaborations and partnerships, though this is not yet the case; more public education, capacity building and advocacy is needed to achieve more inclusive and equitable investments.

**Christopher Mbewe** of the Department of Policy and Planning in Zambia argued that the main challenge faced by Zambia's agricultural sector is the low productivity, especially among small-scale farmers. In 2011, a newly elected government reviewed policies and strategic plans in order to operationalise plans to support farmers, though whether these specifically focused on women's needs and gender equality was not clear.

The government introduced an e-voucher system for agricultural inputs, and aims to extend this to commodities – initially for maize, but now sorghum rice and groundnuts are included. This has resulted in a massive increase in the production of these crops. Other policy measures being implemented include crop diversification, livestock extension services, livestock breeding and restocking centres, fisheries development (mostly men but aiming to reach women, too) and irrigation development.

In terms of allocation of plots, when allocating statutory land, 30% is allocated to women, and 70% is open to everyone to compete. Christopher argued that this would encourage investment in high-value production and a shift to viewing agriculture as business. To improve the profitability of agriculture, Zambia's government is still reforming policy and legislative frameworks, while also promoting cooperatives, value addition and agro-processing, providing entrepreneurial training for farmers, establishing district farm blocks and agricultural commodity markets, and rehabilitating market-related infrastructure.



## PARALLEL SESSIONS ON KEY THEMES

Lawrence Attipoe  
Country Director of SNV, Zimbabwe

## PARALLEL SESSIONS ON KEY THEMES

Five parallel sessions took place during the conference, with findings from country-specific case studies and practitioners' experiences presented to stimulate discussion on the key conference themes.

All presentations are available online at [www.plaas.org.za/event/AIGLIA2014](http://www.plaas.org.za/event/AIGLIA2014). Reports from each parallel session were collated and presented in plenary sessions, and a brief summary is presented below.

### PARALLEL SESSION 1

Primary agricultural investments and their implications for rural women and men

*Who benefits and who loses out from these investments, and what determines the distribution of risks and benefits for (differently situated) women and men? Participants met in four groups to discuss the topic, drawing on country-specific case studies.*

### PARALLEL SESSION 2

Partnerships, business models and corporate social responsibility for pro-poor, inclusive and gender-equitable agricultural investments

### PARALLEL SESSION 3

Innovative approaches to pro-poor, inclusive and gender-equitable agricultural investments

### PARALLEL SESSION 4

Participation, leadership and collective action

### PARALLEL SESSION 5

Enabling environments for fostering agricultural investments conducive to poverty reduction, gender equality and food security

*Four groups focused on a specific aspect:*

- *public-private partnerships*
- *Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)*
- *legal and policy frameworks*
- *international governance and monitoring frameworks*



## PARALLEL SESSION 1

### PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL WOMEN AND MEN

*Who benefits and who loses out from these investments, and what determines the distribution of risks and benefits for (differently-situated) women and men?*

In these parallel sessions, researchers and practitioners presented 14 cases studies from different African countries, focusing on the engagement of local farmers with agro-processing enterprises. Overall, the various cases clearly show that primary agricultural investments implemented under different business models have different implications for the livelihood of women and men. Although the specific risks and opportunities depend on multiple factors, including the socio-economic and cultural context, the type and structure of the business model, the contractual arrangements and the practices of the company and the crop or product involved, some general conclusions can be drawn.

**First**, there is not a blueprint that can be promoted. Different models can have positive and negative outcomes and not all the participants involved are affected in the same manner. It is therefore crucial that analysis takes into account the differentiated implications for various population groups.

**Second**, gender-neutral approaches do not help to overcome (and can reinforce) pre-existing gender inequalities. The evidence suggests that whether or not benefits in fact accrue to women depends on how the investments are designed. Investors need to adopt explicit gender policies and take proactive measures to ensure that women participate in and benefit from the opportunities created.

**Third**, women tend to benefit little from contract farming as, in general, owning or having control of the land is a main requirement for participating. Women's limited and insecure land rights hinder their economic opportunities.

**Fourth**, various cases presented showed that commercial agriculture projects have proven to contribute to job creation for women, especially in primary production and processing. However there is also evidence that most of these jobs are concentrated in gender-stereotyped, low-paying and insecure roles, often as casual labour, with women having less access than men to out-growing, value-adding and marketing opportunities. Likewise, women tend to be seriously under-presented in managerial and decision making positions.

**Finally**, the cases also shed light on the importance of having a gender sensitive policy, legal and institutional framework. The necessity of advancing women's equal tenure rights, and their equal access to and control over productive resources and services were highlighted.

**Gertrude Dzifa Torvikey** of Future Agricultures and the University of Ghana drew on an on-going, cross-country research project on the commercialisation of agriculture in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia ([www.future-agricultures.org/laca](http://www.future-agricultures.org/laca)) to present the gender-differentiated impacts of outgrower value chain models. Gertrude focused her presentation mainly on an outgrower scheme in Ghana, where family farmers produce fresh fruit, including mangoes, pineapple and papaya under a contract farming arrangement with Blue Skies (BS), a cut-fruit export company selling into high-end retail chains in Europe. Torvikey highlighted the absence of women in the outgrower scheme and the increasing casualisation of labour. She suggested that these issues need to be addressed through policy to encourage affirmative action and quotas for procurement sources.

**Charlotte Wonani** of the University of Zambia drew on two FAO case studies of the Kaley Smallholder Company Ltd (KASCOL) and Mpongwe Development Company Ltd (MDC) to investigate the gender dimensions of agricultural investments. KASCOL produces sugar cane from a nucleus estate and an outgrower scheme. Overall it provides opportunities to 160 outgrowers, with women comprising 28% of outgrowers. The company provided access to land to the outgrowers and this has benefitted women whose access to land tends to be more limited than that of men. Moreover, the number of female outgrowers has recently increased after the adoption of a succession clause allowing widows to take over their deceased husbands' contracts. The selection criteria are equally accessible to women and men and the credit access minimises barriers to entry for many women. Fire and rain insurance, which forms part of the contract appears to be an important risk reduction mechanism for all farmers but may also be particularly important to women who, in general, have poorer access to credit. Female outgrowers felt that having their names on the contracts has contributed to challenging negative attitudes about their capabilities and rights.

Wonani also outlined how the company ETC Bio-Energy cultivates a mix of crops, including jatropha, on company run plantations. About 30% of the seasonal workers are women and women constitute only 14% of management. The two schemes generate significant seasonal employment. Overall, women's participation rates in waged employment are significantly lower than those of men, due to local gender norms. Women hold a higher proportion of seasonal jobs than fixed-term or permanent positions, but even within seasonal work women generally secure work for shorter time periods than men. Seasonal work is associated with poorer conditions (e.g. limited paid leave arrangements). Nevertheless, women wage workers have experienced significant improvements in their living standards and increased participation in decision-making at a household level. A key issue emerging from the research is that investors must adopt explicit gender policies and take proactive steps to ensure that company practices help

to overcome rather than reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities. For instance, particular attention needs to be paid to challenging patriarchal attitudes in the workplace and to the adoption of active measures to encourage more women to apply for jobs, including making terms and conditions of employment more amenable to women's particular needs (e.g. provision of adequate leave, free transport to and from work, and child-care facilities). Equally, companies should provide targeted training and coaching to women workers, in order to increase the proportion of women in management positions. Given women's concentration in less secure jobs, improving the conditions of seasonal and casual workers, and bringing these more in line with those of fixed-term and permanent workers, is also very important.

**Rebecca Smalley** of Future Agricultures shared findings of a literature review on different models of commercial agriculture in Africa – large plantations, smallholder contract farming and medium-scale commercial farming areas. The review suggests six determining factors that most strongly affect the outcome of schemes across all three farming models: terms of contracting or employment, behaviour of the employer, crop characteristics and farming practices, legal and policy institutions, the local context and migrant employment. In terms of gender the review shows that often female agricultural workers are paid less than men and suffer from health problems associated with manual labour; that in contract farming a clear risk exists that men take over new “male crops” and traditional female crops are marginalised; and that when land is acquired on a large scale for farms or plantations, women risk losing access to firewood and usufruct rights. At the same time, women can benefit from having a new income source, or can use the new situation to defend or renegotiate control over land and their own labour power.

The study also reveals that outcomes for women are greatly affected by legal and policy institutions, and local gender norms. This includes: the customary inheritance system; gender divisions of labour and crop cultivation;

women's existing tenure security and use of marginal lands; the educational disparity between men and women; and the broader policy environment concerning land, agriculture and gender equality. These aspects should be taken in consideration by researchers, policy-makers and employers to better understand gender-differentiated outcomes. Moreover, rural women are not an homogeneous category and differences among women determined by class, education, ethnicity and marital status influence how they participate and are affected by different agricultural investment schemes. Notably, poor women, perhaps from female-headed households, who have few alternative earning sources, are often described as a captive labour pool for farms and plantations.

**Bebby Andriamanalina** of the Land Observatory, Madagascar shared some findings of a case study carried out in Madagascar to explore the impact of two business models – a plantation and an outgrower model – on the local population. The research revealed highly divergent outcomes for different homesteads. “Winners” in the plantation model were those who gained employment without losing land, while “losers” included households which lost land. Women were hired far more frequently than men, probably because of the type of work involved in the crop production (the crop was not disclosed, to protect the anonymity of the companies involved in this study). In the outgrower scheme, households without contracts included larger farmers engaged in other kinds of production, and small farmers without sufficient land or homestead labour. Contracted households included small and medium farmers, about one third of whom were women. Even when not recognised as farmers – i.e. not holding the contract in their own name – women were heavily involved in production by contributing their labour, and some wielded significant control over the income. The certainty provided by their supply contract enabled them to overcome a number of financial and working-capital constraints.

**Freedom Mazwi** of the African Institute for Agrarian Studies presented the findings of a study in Zimbabwe

on contract farmers producing cash crops (sugar, cotton, tobacco, tea and coffee). Women contribute around 60% of agricultural labour, but are in the minority of contracted farmers. While the number of contracted farmers has increased, overall trends have been very diverse and show differentiated impacts on households. Tobacco-farming households were largely found to be reinvesting in production and in education, hiring more labour, and adopting more gender-equitable, intra-household resource allocation. By contrast, cotton farmers had faced a vicious cost-price squeeze, with high levels of default on debt and repossession, widespread side-selling and a huge drop in employment of largely seasonal female labourers. State regulation of the tobacco industry is an important factor in determining outcomes, while the cotton industry is not similarly regulated.

**Roberta Pelizzoli** of the University of Bologna presented the preliminary results of an FAO case study carried out in Mozambique. She pointed out that investment in primary agriculture in Mozambique has prompted a series of conflicts and controversies, including the exacerbation of socio-economic and gender inequalities. While some positive outcomes exist in terms of production and infrastructure, overall Mozambique's experience has been negative, with the failure and lack of implementation of many investment projects. A notable exception has been the Companhia de Vanduzi, an agri-industrial company located in the Beira corridor in Manica province. It has created jobs for permanent and seasonal workers in a vegetable packhouse producing fresh vegetables for the international market from contract farmers as well as two estates. To manage conflict between all stakeholders, the company has established a system of formal representation of contracted farmers. The company has established quotas for women's participation as outgrowers. Women workers also benefit from flexible working conditions, which are intended to enable and encourage them to continue subsistence production alongside their wage employment, to improve food security.

**Rudo Chingono** and **Clemence Nhliziyo** of Ruzivo Trust and Future Agricultures presented research on the Chisumbanje biofuel investment in Zimbabwe, a joint venture supported by government and private investors to build five ethanol plants and place 8,000 households under an irrigation scheme on 50,000ha of marginal agro-ecological land. Currently 5,000ha are under sugar cane cultivation, employing nearly 5,500 people and 1,750 households have been resettled on irrigated plots. After resistance to uptake of blended fuel, the company closed down, but was subsequently re-opened as a public-private partnership between the government of Zimbabwe and a Canadian company. However, the idea of communities joining in shareholding has not been actualised, some smallholders have been displaced, and there is controversy about allocation of plots. Securing women's independent tenure would strengthen their leverage in negotiations but this has not happened as yet.

**Jordan Chamberlin** of the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute illustrated the rapid conversion of customary land to leasehold tenure in Zambia under the 1955 Land Act, with an increase by 183% of plots titled for agriculture, now covering about 10% of land held by smallholders. While the theory is that titling provides security and collateral, which should promote investment and re-investment, the evidence is mixed, as elites tend to benefit. Title does not lead to increased agricultural incomes or investments – women with titles tend to invest less than male title-holders. In contrast, a study on land rental markets showed these are important ways of redistributing factors of production, which should lead to efficiency and equity gains, especially when there are lower barriers to rental market participation. There is a spectrum of arrangements from borrowing to sharecropping to fixed-rental contracts.

**Hanson Nyantakyi-Frimpong** of the University of Western Ontario shared a case study identifying the major investors in Ghana, and highlighted that most large agricultural investments are taking place in the northern region, where

food insecurity and poverty are concentrated. These land deals were deepening intra-household gender inequality, further limiting women's access to land, and aggravating land scarcity. This was explained in part by the fact that consultation on land, by investors, traditional authorities and government, was conducted only with men. The research found an emerging class of “landless farmers” as a result of land-based investments. This has led to deepening intra-household gender inequality, with men increasingly appropriating women's land.

**Clara Park**, an FAO consultant, shared the findings of two FAO case studies that explored the gender implications of land-related agricultural investments in Tanzania and Ghana. The first case focused on Multiflower Ltd, a horticulture company in Tanzania producing flower seed, vegetable seed, and fresh vegetables. The second case focused on the Tamale Fruit Company, a fruit company located in Northern Ghana, involved in mango production. Both companies are implementing their business through outgrower schemes, but they also generate wage work in their own estates. While both investments have brought benefits to local communities, in both cases men have benefited more than women. The study showed not only that women had fewer possibilities to participate in the schemes, but also that when women are not outgrowers in their own right, their workloads increase and they do not benefit equally from the investments with their husbands.

However, when specific measures have been adopted, women's participation has been enhanced, as well as their enjoyment of benefits. In the Tanzania case study, the horticulture company ensured that women could join as outgrowers by establishing individual contracts for both men and women. Equally, the company located in Ghana issued individual contracts to any member of the same family who wanted to participate as an outgrower. Thus, a woman could join the scheme even if her husband was already a member. Despite this measure, women represent only 12% of the outgrowers because of their limited control over land. Traditionally, men are reluctant to grant women



access to land for tree cultivation for fear that they may claim rights over the trees and the land on which they are grown. The company's efforts also included extending social security, healthcare and maternity leave benefits to permanent women employees and promoting women to management positions.

**Nidhi Tandon** of Oxfam (Canada) argued that the expansion of crops as feedstocks for biofuels has dangerously compromised women's resource rights and

their participation in the economy. She provided an example from Cameroon, which showed how women are progressively losing control over land with the expansion of palm oil, a commercial crop controlled by men through contracts with processing companies. Turning to Malawi and the sugar expansion by South Africa-based multinationals, Tandon indicated that although many women were opposed to growing sugar, their husbands wanted to participate in cash crop production, despite the fact that poor communities are receiving very little income.

## DEBATES

**Are women effectively “empowered” or not, and how can this be measured?**

While in a number of cases female farmers were found to benefit from agricultural investments, it was also pointed out that discriminatory gender practices and norms at different institutional levels – from the household up to the market level – continue to constrain women's access to socio-economic opportunities. It was noted that even investments that produce commercial success for family farmers often involve the feminisation of casual labour. Participants questioned whether the conception among policy-makers that women are “good” workers may be due to women's greater willingness to undertake highly devalued labour, as a result of both patriarchal discipline and gendered responsibilities over social reproduction.

**We still lack reliable, empirical analyses showing the detailed impacts on women.**

Gender-disaggregated data is needed on land ownership, distribution and use, as well as on employment, financial skills and agronomic knowledge. Some participants argued that researchers need to explore how to align their studies with the relevant Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More work is needed to understand women's participation – or lack thereof – before developing affirmative action policies. Centuries of agricultural commercialisation in South Africa provides important lessons about the dangers; here, it produced and continues to reproduce poor quality jobs that keep workers in a vicious cycle of poverty. What are the alternatives to commercialisation that produces such levels of inequality?



Rudo Makunike  
NEPAD, South Africa





Hon. Allan Chiyembekeza  
Minister of Agriculture, Malawi



## INSIGHTS ON THE GENDER IMPLICATIONS OF AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS

### General insights into different business models

- Different models of agricultural commercialisation – plantation, contract farming and commercial farming – as well as the type of crop and the existing gender division of labour in agriculture lead to differentiated impacts on women and men.
- Business models need to be adapted to local contexts within a policy, legal, and institutional environment that guides investment priorities conducive to poverty reduction and food security and creates decent employment opportunities and other benefits for women and men.
- Different institutions, that is to say the household, the community and the private investors, embed discriminatory gendered norms and practices, which shape the investment process, thereby leading to differentiated gender outcomes.
- Investors must adopt explicit gender policies and take proactive measures (i.e. extend healthcare and maternity leave benefits to women employees, provide child-care services, promote women to management positions, etc.) to ensure that company practices help to overcome rather than reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities.

### Outgrower schemes

- Outgrower schemes and contract farming do not necessarily benefit small producers and, when they do, women and men do not equally participate in and benefit from the investment opportunities.
- The choice of crop, coupled with the value chain stage(s) in which the company is involved, also appears to have a substantial influence on the gender outcomes of investments.

- Women tend to be under-represented in outgrower schemes as they have weaker property rights and limited access to land compared to men, which prevents them from participating in this type of contractual arrangement.
- Male capture of crops traditionally grown by women can occur as a result of commercial investments.
- When women are not outgrowers in their own right, they can experience an increase in their workloads and might not be able to share the benefits from the investment equally with their husbands.
- Participation and/or representation in decision-making is not an adequate indicator of gender equity in commercial farming ventures, as women might not be able to reap the benefits.
- There is evidence that when women with independent access to land are encouraged to participate in outgrower schemes as own account workers they can experience economic empowerment and improved decision-making at the household level.
- Contract farming schemes can benefit women, depending on whether they are enabled to participate in and influence contract negotiation, sign the contract in their own name, and take advantage of gender-sensitive measures.

### Wage labour

- Different forms of labour and different types of crop have different implications for women and men.
- Often jobs created through commercial agricultural projects for women are low paying and gender stereotyped, thereby confining women to poor quality, insecure and casual labour.

- Real benefits from wage employment accrue to women and mainly when they can retain their land, rather than when they lost it as a result of acquisition from the private company. Nevertheless, wage work provides women with a clear opportunity to improve their living standards, including improved participation in intra-household decision-making.
- Best practices that have been observed are where companies provide flexible working conditions that enable women and men to combine their own farming with wage employment on commercial estates.

### Land tenure

Increased land scarcity as a result of land acquisition by private companies affects women disproportionately, as men tend to appropriate the land traditionally controlled by them.

- Male capture of crops traditionally grown by women can occur if the crops acquire a market value as a result of commercial investments, which, in turn, can compromise women.
- More reliable, empirical data disaggregated by gender is needed on land tenure.
- Private land titling does not promote gender equity – supporting land rental markets, alongside support for production and value-chain participation is a better approach.
- Gender-sensitive private land titling is not necessarily a trigger for agricultural production and economic empowerment, as women title-holders are less willing to invest in their land than male title-holders. Conversely, supporting land rental markets, alongside production and value-chain participation, does indeed encourage women's investments.

## PARALLEL SESSION 2

### PARTNERSHIPS, BUSINESS MODELS AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Smallholder outgrower schemes are often hailed as innovative and inclusive business models that empower those involved. However, these involve diverse practices regarding contracting between farmers and processors, and farmers and wholesalers. The session on this topic heard three contrasting examples from Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique, of sugar and vegetable outgrower schemes that employ different contracting models, which influence how women and men participate and benefit. An alternative empowerment model, from South Africa, enabled farm workers to become shareholders in the enterprise where they were employed.

Presentations illustrated that strong collaboration and partnerships among actors are necessary in order to put in place sustainable, inclusive and gender-equitable investment models that work and can be up-scaled.

**Emmanuel Sulle** of Future Agricultures and PLAAS presented the case of the outgrower model adopted by Kilombero Sugar Company in Tanzania. The company promoted the outgrower scheme through the provision of cheap loans to farmers, improved infrastructure and social amenities. The contractual arrangements are governed by a cane supply agreement, which awards 57% of proceeds to the outgrowers and 43% to the company. However, due to increased cane production and the company's limited capacity to crush all produced cane, each season most cane remains unharvested. Outgrowers are also challenged by the arbitrary importation of sugar, often leading to late payments for the outgrowers who have to absorb risks and production costs. Land scarcity and a declining sugar

profitability are also inhibiting small outgrowers and newcomers from participating. The lack of sufficient land for food crops largely affects women and children, as often families commute between sugar cane- and rice-producing areas, leaving children alone or with one parent. Unless these issues are addressed, poor outgrowers are unlikely to benefit much from the initiative.

**Sane Zuka** of Future Agricultures and the University of Malawi presented a case study on Malawi, focusing on the impact of the outgrower model on women. In this case study, outgrowers sell sugar cane to the South African sugar company Illovo, through private contractors. Farmers are paid net returns after deductions for overheads, management and other association fees. Multiple costs and deductions mean that farmers, especially the poor ones, barely make any profit. This has made the outgrower scheme very unpopular among farmers and many, especially women, are withdrawing as a result.

**Takunda Shava** of Companhia do Vanudzi in Mozambique presented on the outgrower operations of this company, which forms part of the Mozambican group Mosfoods. Smallholders produce beans, patty pans, courgettes, baby corn and other high-value vegetables, which are packed in a centralised packhouse and exported under a fair trade label to markets in South Africa, Europe and elsewhere. The scheme has brought modest benefits for the company in expanding its supply capacity and for contracted farmers increasing their access to cash incomes. The company signs individual contracts with farmers and offers support in the form of inputs and technical support, and 30% of the 500 contracted farmers are women. The company sees women as being more reliable, but has not been able to increase the proportion of women it contracts due to traditional gender roles.

**Craig MacGillivray** of South Africa's Solms-Delta wine estate presented a different model. This commercial

estate established a Workers' Trust to give workers a one-third equity share in the farm, in partnership with a British philanthropist. The profits are used to provide decent housing, recreational facilities and other social services for workers and their families. Women have received substantial practical benefits, including expanded employment in a school, though there were no specific gender interventions mentioned in relation to the equity sharing scheme. While the initiative has resulted in substantial improvements in living conditions and incomes for the workers, the point was made that this is the only example of this nature in South Africa. This situation was possible because the company was willing to put up its land as collateral for purchasing land for the Trust – an unusual risk for a commercial enterprise – and was supported by a philanthropist. This was a case of corporate social responsibility that enabled a subsequent business partnership. While a positive model, its replicability in other contexts was called into question.

**Chrispin Matenga** of Future Agricultures and University of Zambia presented evidence of the impact of a sugar cane outgrowers scheme in Zambia's Mazabuka district, where this business model is being scaled up by the South African sugar company Illovo Ltd. Participation in the scheme is based on households' ownership of land in blocks contiguous to the main sugar cane nucleus estate. He argued that the use of the household as the contracting unit in the scheme (and as a unit of analysis) obscures the intra-household gender inequalities, with women excluded from decision-making structures. Women contribute with unremunerated labour on husbands' plots, or sell their labour to the enterprise to work in the core estate or in processing activities, often at low wages. Matenga concluded that, while outgrower schemes such as this one may assist in increasing household income, they are not transforming gendered economic relations or empowering women. There is an urgent need for alternative economic opportunities in sugar-growing communities.

**Vera Rocca** of Future Agricultures and Carleton University augmented Matenga's case study, with a specific study on women outgrowers in the Illovo scheme at Mazabuka. Here, just 16% of contracted farmers are women, due to the limited land ownership by women. An impressive 90% of women who had contracts said that they had more income compared with the time prior to the sugar investment in their area. The study also confirmed a clear increase in the number of meals consumed per day in households where women held contracts. However, the survey did not address women who did not have contracts, and even those who did reported that access to common property resources like water, firewood and grazing land had become more difficult as a result of the sugar investment. The study confirmed that women can experience both benefits and costs as a result of commercial investments and the introduction of contract farming. The distribution of risk and reward is uneven, and can be addressed in part by companies requiring joint registration of contracts among spouses, alongside gender sensitisation interventions and provision of training to women.

**Enok Ndongole** of Tanzania's Southern Highlands Agricultural Development Company presented on his company's sunflower outgrowing scheme. The scheme has seen higher levels of participation by women than the other case studies but decision-making structures remain male-dominated and women's interests are not represented in these types of production arrangements. Ndongole clarified that women who participate in the scheme are heads of households; in households headed by men, women are not usually signatories of the contracts, despite the fact that they contribute heavily with their labour. He mentioned that the main obstacle that has to be surmounted is the patriarchal set of norms that hinder women's empowerment and participation in decision-making. Investors cannot confront these alone, he argued. He also suggested that there is a need to create partnerships among different actors and that CSOs can play a fundamental role in changing cultural patterns.





“If your criterion really is farming experience then women should be in the vast majority among your partners, but still women are a minority in your programmes. Breadcrumbs, breadcrumbs, breadcrumbs!”

~ Sue Mbaya, LPI

## INSIGHTS ON PARTNERSHIPS, BUSINESS MODELS AND CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS

- No business model is perfect and each context requires a unique approach.
- While the outgrower model has the potential to bring opportunities to farmers, it can directly or indirectly threaten their social and economic survival, and further marginalise poor farmers if the terms and conditions agreed are not adequate.
- There are different levels of women's participation in outgrower schemes – and land ownership appears to be the major barrier to women's participation in their own right.
- When farm households participate in outgrower schemes, women might not benefit if appropriate measures to tackle intra-household inequality are not implemented.
- Outgrower schemes bring greater self-determination for women if they are able to contract individually, rather than as part of household or community agreements.
- Smaller, locally embedded companies seem to benefit more women than external companies that arrive with pre-set contracting, payment models and operating systems, as the contrast between Zambia and Tanzania demonstrates.
- Participation in the sugar outgrower scheme depends on having land adjacent to the main sugar plantation, which in the Zambia case excluded those further away, and contributes to rising inequality and potential conflict among local farming households.
- Outgrower schemes need to be carefully planned, based on thorough knowledge of and engagement with the local socio-economic context, including attention to gender specificities.
- Implementation was identified as a challenge, as were different visions of how to evaluate “success”.
- Without specific measures in place to foster women's participation in the scheme and to ensure that women and men benefit equally from the opportunities created, women tend to be incorporated into these schemes on disadvantaged terms.
- Outgrowers' crops are sometimes not harvested, where the supply exceeds the company's milling facilities, or where cheap imports make local processing unprofitable.
- There are wide variations in how processing companies determine the division of proceeds and payments due to outgrowers, and conflicts arise over the terms and timing of payment.
- Multiple deductions – for overheads, management and other association fees – mean that farmers, especially the poor ones, barely make any profit.

## DEBATES

### Questions emerging from the debate

- Do women experience an increase in their labour burden as family farms increase their levels of commercialisation, for example through growing cash crops as outgrowers?
- What is the impact on women's labour burden as men are recruited into wage labour on investors' estates?
- What are the implications of both of these forms of commercialisation for food production for household consumption, and therefore for child nutrition?

### Participants agreed that pro-poor, gender-equitable partnerships require:

- Policy, legislative and support by state institutions and bureaucracy
- Intermediaries (development actors, farmers organisations need to expand)
- Clarity on rights, ownership and entitlements at household and community level
- Inclusive negotiations and building of shared interests and trust
- Self-organisation of outgrowers into trusts and cooperatives in order to strengthen collective action and negotiations.



## PARALLEL SESSION 3

### INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PRO-POOR, INCLUSIVE AND GENDER-EQUITABLE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS

This session explored innovative approaches to promote agricultural investments that are more gender equitable, and discussed how to scale up good practices. The session included two case studies of contracting companies in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and one international agency working in Uganda, all of which act as intermediaries to connect smallholders with markets by taking a value-chain approach.

The presentations clearly showed that a 'gender neutral' approach to agricultural investments is not enough: investors must adopt explicit gender policies and take proactive steps to ensure that company behaviours help to overcome rather than reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities.

**Lawrence Attipoe** of SNV in Zimbabwe presented SNV's value-chain approach, linking smallholder farmers with companies, through local organisations and institutions. The starting point is to analyse the value chain to identify spaces for smallholder inclusion. He argued that value-chain financing is essential, along with business development services. SNV employs staff with gender equity skills, generates gender-disaggregated data on its operations and recognises the business case for working with women, specifically. To incentivise other actors in the private sector to work with women farmers and through the value chain, SNV has created a fund for investment, risk sharing and reduction of transaction costs for balance of payments. To illustrate this approach, Attipoe shared the story of one

producer, Mrs Mai Samanga, chairperson of the Mpangwa Banana Producer Group in Zimbabwe. She owns a plot with 800 plants, selling to Matanuska Marketing, a fresh produce wholesaler, and earns \$6,000 to \$8,000 per annum from her bananas. This activity has enabled her to pay school fees, build a house, get a passport and start another business. Attipoe outlined the reasons for her success: a clearly defined market, a buyer who is willing to purchase from smallholders, a producer who has business skills, a contract that is transparent, a farmers' association that is powerful enough to bargain with the buyer on price and services, and to advocate to government for improving infrastructure. Attipoe emphasised that, to get Matanuska to work with smallholders, there was a need for intermediation by groups like SNV to change the balance of risks and incentives for both farmers and buyers. Market forces cannot do this. The role of intermediaries such as SNV is to overcome resistance, experiment with new suppliers, engage on pricing, timing and quality, and establish trust. Overcoming transport and logistics costs and risks is a key role for government and other intermediaries.

#### What is the secret behind Mrs Samanga's success?

- A product with a clearly defined market
- Buyers willing to do business with smallholder producers
- Private sector confidence in women producers
- Producers who understand agriculture as a business
- A clear understanding of how the value chain works
- Transparency in contracting
- A clear motivation and an expressed need to associate in a group
- Bargaining power for smallholders to negotiate with buyers (price, services etc.)
- Advocacy with local authorities to invest in infrastructure (the road and school are improved)
- Clear governance and accountability mechanisms.

**Erika Schutze** of TechnoServe South Africa described how this US-based non-profit organisation addresses market failures by developing capacity among farmers to improve productivity and formalise their businesses; promoting market connections by finding buyers and negotiating deals; and improving the business environment (providing information and incentives). Their theory of change is that smallholder farmers can scale up production, diversify their crops and enter into profitable value chains by working directly with market players and by receiving technical assistance, access to finance and access to markets (developing value chains).

Technoserve takes a "segmentation" approach, focusing on people considered to have entrepreneurial flair and provides on-farm support, off-farm training and access to experts as part of a business "incubator". To fund all this, they aim to get diverse sources of finance, avoiding micro-finance as its high interest rates and short cycles are not in tune with agricultural production cycles. Another initiative by Technoserve is a company called E-fresh, an alternative marketing platform, with storage facilities to buy inputs in bulk, negotiate discounts, and act as an intermediary between farmers and markets. However, while many of their clients are women, unlike SNV, Technoserve does not adopt a specifically gendered approach to empower women as independent farmers, or ensure that women overcome obstacles to participation.

**Steven Jonkheere** of IFAD shared experiences of crafting alternative agricultural investments that do not involve land acquisition, but rather focus on soft loans and inclusive business models to enable family farmers to improve production and profitability. Smallholder agriculture is a business, he insisted, and farmers need access to services, knowledge, finance and technology. Inclusive business models are defined by shared value across four criteria: ownership, voice, risk and reward. IFAD partnered with the government of Uganda in a palm oil project for the development of vegetable oil, based on a nucleus estate and contract farming. Farmers are organised in an

association which holds a 10% share in the company and are represented on the pricing committee. IFAD uses the gender action learning system (GALS) framework, an innovative community-led methodology aimed at building consensus among value-chain actors, and at the household level aims to promote improved sharing of resources, including land, incomes and benefits. Through the partnership, IFAD has worked with the government to promote joint titles, legal empowerment of women to guard against land grabbing within families, and has advocated for allocation of independent land rights to women's plots. The key lessons IFAD has learned are that no single model fits all, the contracting company must be willing to engage with genuine inclusion of farmers in the business, and the negotiating power of the smallholders depends on them having secure land rights. While development agencies can play a role, host governments still need to play a central role in regulating, negotiating, managing and monitoring contracts with agribusinesses.

**Jennifer Duncan** of Landesa explained a "land-for-equity" approach, which is a joint venture model being piloted in Tanzania and promoted by several governments and donors. Duncan conceded that it is not specifically an innovation for gender inclusion and more research is needed on the gender implications. As opposed to a fixed lease payment and other compensation approaches, the "land-for-equity" sees landholders becoming a minority shareholder in the company, taking on start-up risk. However, there are risks: as minority shareholders, they have little control over the company, over re-investment or distribution of dividends (i.e. transfer pricing); asymmetries of skills to negotiate terms lead to deals that undervalue the land as a contribution to the enterprise, and the multiple land uses that the landholders are to forego; and returns on investment can take 15–20 years to materialise. Landesa suggests designing model contracts as a tool for communities to address these risks, while at the same time conceding that the model has not been proven to be equitable.





Susan Kaaria  
FAO

African governments need to increase investments in sustainable agriculture, by spending more on research and extension services and reorienting towards addressing women farmers' priorities.



## DEBATES

### Does helping to commercialise women farmers promote gender equity?

While there are good and innovative programmes that promote commercialisation of smallholder farmers, inclusion of women is not the same as promoting gender equality. Whether or not these initiatives actually promote gender equality depends on who gets the contract, who is doing the labour and who controls the income. This requires that intermediaries who wish to link smallholders to markets should look at how their approaches work at intra-household level. What are the criteria for deciding who will get support from intermediaries? What some companies consider to be farmers with entrepreneurial flair can actually be (often male) farmers who are relatively privileged and free from the time-consuming drudgery of reproductive labour.

### Problems with the land-for-equity model

- Minority shareholding is practically meaningless in primary agriculture, as holders of these shares cannot prevent transfer pricing or insist on the declaration of dividends.
- The examples of equity sharing derive from farm worker schemes in South Africa, where the state buys the shares for the workers, and where they do not forego land; conditions inapplicable to most investment situations.
- The value of land is largely determined by the availability of water, so local people's water resources need to be valued in determining their contributions to joint ventures.

## INSIGHTS ON INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO GENDER-EQUITABLE SMALLHOLDER COMMERCIALISATION

- All agencies working with smallholder farmers need to address gender issues effectively in agricultural investments, including intra-household inequalities to scale up their production and reach markets.
- Government promotion of joint titles to land can help to promote fairer distribution of resources and benefits among women and men, including more equitable sharing of both productive and reproductive workload, and monitoring intra-household dynamics in access to and control over assets.
- Private companies and non-profit organisations can provide effective intermediation between women farmers and buyers. This could be done by building and strengthening women's associations to enable collective action and the ability to bargain collectively with buyers on prices and services, as well as advocating to government for improved infrastructure.
- Public and private financial institutions need to provide capital on preferential terms to incentivise the private sector to experiment with new suppliers, work with women producers and establish trust between parties.
- Interventions by private companies, non-profit organisations and donors that aim to connect women farmers with markets need to work with governments to overcome transport and logistics costs and risks.
- Intermediaries aiming to connect smallholder farmers with markets need to improve the business environment by providing information and incentives to both farmers (sellers of produce) and wholesalers (buyers of produce).
- Provide storage facilities to buy inputs in bulk and negotiate bulk discounts.
- Avoid types of micro-finance that involve high interest rates and short cycles – unlike agricultural production cycles.
- Secure land rights provide essential leverage for smallholders' negotiating power.

## PARALLEL SESSION 4

### PARTICIPATION, LEADERSHIP AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

The presentations focused on facilitating collective action and capacity in local communities in three countries, Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia, particularly in regard to securing land rights in the context of large-scale land investments.

**Godfrey Massay** of HAKIARDHI in Tanzania presented the work of the Land Rights Research and Resources Institute (also known as HAKAIRDHI), which trains community-elected “land-rights monitors” in paralegal and advocacy work to mobilise and network with communities, and government to defend community legal rights, largely against outside threats. HAKIARDHI has successfully defended rural communities against illegal claims on community land made without consultation by private investors and local governments (including one case of 82,000 ha). They have been able to gain compensation for people whose houses were demolished by a private investor, and they have secured funds for investment in social infrastructure. Among the land rights monitors, there are similar numbers of women and men. Massay noted that the biggest successes occurred when broad coalitions of organisations and institutions were mobilised.

**Dimuna Phiri** and **Cesar Katebe** of the Zambia Land Alliance and Future Agricultures presented research conducted on several large land acquisitions in Zambia, fuelled largely by rising mineral and food commodity prices. While the investments were made with the promise of promoting “development”, particularly technical modernisation, raised productivity, employment generation and efficient resource use, local farmers and communities were largely excluded from consultations – both women and men. This led to a risk of dispossession and degradation of the natural resource base. It was noted that legal defences of rights were rendered problematic by an archaic 1995 Land Act, which offered little security of tenure for communal land, and little basis to promote transparency, accountability and/or compensation in engagement with affected communities.

**Helen Dancer** of Future Agricultures and the University of Brighton presented on the “New Alliance for Land Transparency Partnership” in Tanzania, an agreement signed with the G8 to promote investment and increase productivity and technological transfer, particularly through accelerated land titling. Research found that women’s rights were particularly vulnerable, with both women and men reluctant to convert their rights into private life. Despite provisions for women’s rights over cultivated land in the 1999 Land Act, these were particularly vulnerable to negation during inheritance, both from father to son and father to daughter. The government of Tanzania has shown interest in establishing a “land bank” to centralise “unused land” and local equity models to further expedite the process. The political imperative for rapidity, however, is at odds with the significant time, resources and research required to map and untangle embedded and overlapping rights, particularly for women.

**Val Payne** of Sustaining the Wild Coast, South Africa, presented an integrated village-based leadership and skills development programme initiated among Pondo communities on the Wild Coast. The programme is an attempt to bridge the socio-political and economic inequality faced by local communities in relation to outside investors, and local and government male elites, particularly when threatened with dispossession for “development”. The programme places an emphasis on the use of participatory methods as well as on establishing solidarity networks among communities, specialists, and CSOs to effectively empower communities to mobilise for their interests. Challenges included sourcing funding for such “soft” processes, which are not pre-defined, and relying on local knowledge about resource use and tenure. Payne pointed out that international pressure to secure large concessions rapidly, in response to commodity booms that occur mainly through titling – which is at odds with embedded and overlapping rights to land – requires research and participatory engagement to understand. Without such careful processes, intra-community interests are likely to spark conflicts, with women being prejudiced by hurried processes to enable investment.

## DEBATES

Participants questioned the possible short-comings of rights-based approaches, despite some of the impressive successes presented. Rights-based approaches work better if progressive legal frameworks are in place, and these approaches tend to be “reactive” in character, being invoked mostly when there is a direct threat to existing land rights. At the same time, the positive impacts of community mobilisation could be enduring and lead to the progressive expansion and realisation of rights in practice.

## INSIGHTS ON PARTICIPATION, LEADERSHIP AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Provide adequate time and resources for community engagement prior to defining the character and purpose of investment.
- Enable collective action by farmers through support for local associations.
- Ensure women’s participation in decision-making through leadership capacity-building programmes.
- Land rights monitors organised through civil society groups could play a role in mapping and delineating existing rights and interests in land; not only defending against incursions.
- By clarifying existing tenure practices participatory mapping can make visible women’s use of natural resources and their claims to them.
- “Titling” of land is not necessarily an effective method of defending rights, as it involves privatisation of resources that are usually managed as common property, and it can also lead to ultimate dispossession by investors through the market.
- Women are usually prejudiced by titling of land.
- At the same time, it was recognised that no single model can be exported across diverse contexts.



## PARALLEL SESSION 5

### ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

What “enabling environments” are needed to foster agricultural investments conducive to poverty reduction, gender equality and food security? The final cluster of four parallel sessions addressed a specific ingredient for an enabling environment:

- public-private partnerships;
- the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP);
- legal and policy frameworks; and international governance and monitoring frameworks.

#### Public-private partnerships

The three presentations all centred around public-private partnerships (PPP) employing “inclusive business models” in Ghana, Uganda, and Ethiopia, from the perspective of relevant government representatives.

**Victoria Aniaku** of Ghana’s Commercial Agriculture Project explained that this initiative started in May 2013 with loans from the World Bank and USAID. It involves production of food crops (rice, maize, soya beans, vegetables, etc.) on a nucleus estate surrounded by small outgrowers, which supply their produce to it on contract. The socio-economic objectives of the project are to improve poor farming households’ access to inputs, private finance, markets and information. Participatory methods for collecting information on existing land rights and uses were adopted, and mechanisms for dispute resolution were established. Women were expected to directly benefit from the initiative as farmers, workers, traders and processors; and also from training programmes and support for

women’s organisations. However, the project is still in the early stages and definitive assessments are premature.

**Connie Masaba** of Uganda’s Ministry of Agriculture shared her experience of implementing a public-private partnership based on a nucleus estate and outgrower model producing oil palm (VODP). This is an ambitious project that includes 1,600 farmers (578 of whom are women) on 3,800ha; complementing an estate of 6,500ha leased from government and purchased from farmers – 1,000ha of which was reallocated to mainly women farmers – and employing 2,000 people. Maximum sizes were imposed on farmer allotments. Working capital is provided by farmer organisations, while loan finance is linked to in-kind crop collateral to prevent dispossession; and pricing is determined through a formula negotiated with government, but limited by import parity prices, with farmers on average receiving \$390 per month.

The experiences from VODP provide useful lessons on how inclusive business models can play an important role in improving the livelihoods, land and natural resource tenure security of poor rural women and men. Some serious investors in agriculture are increasingly looking towards mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships, as it makes good business sense. And many smallholder farmers are prepared to participate if they are properly consulted, well informed of the implications and potential risks, and see a real benefit. In any case, partnerships that do not require a major transfer of land rights to investors are more desirable and socially sustainable. Any land relinquished in such deals should be preferably done on a temporary basis (e.g. through a lease agreement). Rights to land need to be recognised, taking into account legitimate occupation versus legal rights, and how to capture the continuum of rights in the design of inclusive business models. The case also shows that establishing mutually beneficial partnerships is possible, but requires sustained support by a range of service providers (government, civil society, private

sector) to secure rights, support land use and investment planning and to negotiate with outsiders. Particular attention needs to be given to empowering smallholder farmers and rural communities to engage on equal terms with outside investors. Women’s empowerment requires specific attention if these investments are to benefit both men and women. This case study shows that women can benefit from these deals, but that proactive measures are needed to improve the opportunities for women in smallholder-based supply chains. VODP started with a thorough gender analysis at the design stage to identify the particular needs and challenges of women. Based on this assessment, specific measures were taken to increase their opportunities for improved participation.

Among these measures the most important have been:

- increasing and strengthening women’s access to land;
- increasing women’s membership and participation in smallholder sourcing schemes;
- ensuring that women benefit from technical training, extension services and production inputs; and,
- introducing the household mentoring approach in order to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment at household level.

**Nicholas Nyathi** of the GRAD Project SNV-Netherlands Development Organisation/USAID presented on public-private partnership schemes in Ethiopia that are orientated towards food-insecure households that rely on government cash transfers, and operate on small plots. Their production and productivity are hampered by an array of constraints, including lack of access to improved inputs and technologies, financial services, market information and sustainable markets. As a result, food-insecure households remain heavily reliant on subsistence farming, where yields are too low to facilitate their graduation to food security. Gender inequities in access to income-generating opportunities, as well as the

unpredictability of the climate, are also additional barriers that prevent these poor households from attaining sustainable food security. These farmers require government to play an important role in structuring supply arrangements with private sector partners, including pricing agreements, training, and working capital.

Given these realities, the USAID’s Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development (GRAD) project aims to significantly contribute to sustained food security for 65,000 food-insecure households in rural Ethiopia. In addressing input and output market constraints, GRAD promotes private sector investments through risk sharing, a public-private partnership (PPP) approach. Bringing in the private sector in the GRAD-selected value chains (livestock, pulses, honey, red pepper and potato) has improved farmers’ access to improved inputs, appropriate technologies, and sustainable markets, benefiting both men and women. As a result of the project, in one scheme, around 1,300 farmers were able to generate \$350,000 in revenue. GRAD conducted a gendered value-chain selection by identifying value chains that offer opportunities to empower women, not only in primary production but also in all functions of the value-chain, including in marketing activities.

In order to facilitate the meaningful participation of women in the selected value-chains, GRAD has adopted the following measures: facilitating financial linkages, providing training and technical support, directing inputs and market information to women, supporting women’s participation in associations, encouraging women-owned enterprises, and supporting women’s cooperatives to move into value addition.

Currently, of the 27,197 households engaged in value chains 10,577 (39%) are female. However, despite women farmers being included and often showcased as model farmers, they were not involved in the production of traditionally male-dominated crops.

## DEBATES

The apparent successes of the projects presented stands in contrast to the wider critical research on “inclusive business models”. But what constitutes success? Participants suggested that the structure of the agreement (how risks and benefits are distributed) and social impact, including on gender relations, scalability, and influence on policy, should be considered criteria for success. States need to be actively engaged, both in structuring the agreements and in facilitating the involvement of local farmers in participatory ways that put women at the centre of decision-making, to counteract the enduring patriarchal ideologies and practices in rural communities, as well as state institutions.

### Questions to assess the gender implications of public-private partnerships

- What are the differentiated impacts on women and men?
- How can PPPs transform gender relations, rather than merely accommodate gender roles?
- What are the prospects for replication and scalability of gender-sensitive PPP?

## INSIGHTS ON PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- The experiences with PPPs that were presented are much more positive than the more critical narratives of “commercialisation” through private investment, where governments do not have a direct stake.
- There have been positive outcomes in terms of access to markets, technology, capital, credit, information, increased incomes for farmers, investment in agriculture, local employment and tax revenue.
- The best results occur when PPPs focus on both food and “cash” crops, and so avoid the displacement of household food production that often occurs during commercialisation.
- Women are generally represented in farmers’ associations and sometimes also in leadership positions, though the experience here is mixed.
- Mutually-beneficial partnerships require sustained support by a range of service providers – government, civil society and the private sector.
- Participants must have personal bank accounts, to ensure that women control income streams from their participation in the scheme.
- Implement quotas for women’s participation in the scheme as well as in training.
- PPPs require government involvement in negotiating favourable terms of exchange and working capital arrangements, as well as in securing land rights.
- PPPs are more robust if participatory methods are implemented beforehand to map existing community land rights and establish dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Value chains, which open up opportunities for women, as both workers and producers, should be prioritised when planning the investment.
- Avoid financial instruments that can lead to dispossession; rather, opt for crop collateral or some form of in-kind repayment for loans.

## The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)

A wide-ranging debate about the past 10 years of CAADP acknowledged that the process has been largely gender blind. There was broad agreement that, in the next ten years, CAADP must make visible women’s investment in agriculture and reorient agricultural investment towards women and sustainable agriculture.

**Fatou Mbaye** from ACORD and **Ruchi Tripathi** from Action Aid presented the analysis from a joint report by their organisations, entitled *Putting Small-scale Farming First: Improving the National Agriculture Investment Plans of Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania*.<sup>6</sup> Mbaye said there is consensus that African countries invest too little in agriculture. Only seven out of 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have consistently reached the budget target of 10% investment in agriculture. How can we end hunger among 25% of Africans? Of agricultural production 90% comes from small farms, and smallholder farms contribute 40% to 60% of rural incomes, as rural households combine farming with non-farming activities. While gender roles vary across countries, women contribute between 50% and 80% of the agricultural workforce. The proportion of agricultural budgets spent on extension services varies from 0.5% (Rwanda) to 50% (Uganda). Research is seriously under-funded, constituting only 1.6% of the agriculture budget in Zambia and up to 22% in Uganda; across the continent, most agricultural research is top-down and does not involve women in defining research priorities. Research needs to address sustainable farming methods in terms of seed provision and drudgery-reducing services to free up women’s labour.

Access to land and tenure security for women farmers needs to be addressed in land policies, especially in countries affected by large land-based investment.

<sup>6</sup> [www.acordinternational.org/silo/files/acord-naip-report.pdf](http://www.acordinternational.org/silo/files/acord-naip-report.pdf)

Access to credit also needs to be directed to women, and finance must be made available at low interest rates. Recommendations also included the need to improve the quantity and quality of public investment, increase the role of farmers’ cooperatives, re-orient spending priorities to focus on women farmers, step up investments in sustainable agriculture that reduces input-dependency, and ensure land tenure for women smallholder farmers.

Tripathi argued that CAADP is contributing to bringing agriculture to the centre of Africa’s development agenda. CAADP has been positive because it pushes coordination among ministries and also among donors. National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) have led to increased investment, but CAADP has not yet delivered to women smallholders. NAIPs and CAADP compacts are all consistent with the CAADP framework, but the NAIPs do not prioritise smallholders and smallholder women, in particular.

**The biggest private investors in African agriculture are women smallholders, so both public and private investment should target them.**

Focusing on niche supply chains is a limited approach; major investments are still needed to improve productivity in staple crops produced by women farmers. Rural women producers’ associations need support to organise and prepare themselves before CAADP meetings take place to ensure that they can participate and engage meaningfully in multi-stakeholder processes.

**The litmus test for all CAADP planning should be this: what would a women smallholder like in terms of agricultural spending?**



**Shingaidzo Mupindu** from FAO Africa regional Office argued that women are still limited to “secondary” land tenure in the customary tenure systems of most countries. Women own just 15% of landholdings in Africa and this constitutes a major constraint for women’s participating in and benefitting from agricultural investment. CAADP has not yet adequately addressed gender equity in land and water rights and this is also mirrored in the National Agricultural Investment Plans. Mupindu argued that on the basis of research, it seems that, if women had the same resources as men, they could increase production from their farms by 20% to 30%. Even if you connect women smallholders to markets, when it comes to who controls the money, husbands insist that it is theirs. They say, “did you bring land here, to my village?”

FAO’s approach is to partner with governments and others to promote the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*, provide technical capacity and link land access and tenure security to investment and production growth. The *Guidelines* recognise that women who are already socially and economically marginalised are particularly vulnerable when tenure governance is weak. One of the principles the *Guidelines* are founded on is gender equality. Improving gender equality is important as women often have fewer and weaker tenure rights to land, fisheries and forests. This inequality is due to a number of factors, including biases in formal law, in customs, and in the division of labour in society and households. The *Guidelines* do not have a particular section on gender. Instead, gender issues are mainstreamed and addressed throughout the *Guidelines*.

This approach is used to encourage that the requirements and situations of both women and men are addressed in all actions to improve governance of tenure.

**Rudo Makunike** of NEPAD assessed the progress and lessons learnt from ten years of the CAADP process, which she recognised had not adequately addressed gender inequalities and women’s interests in agriculture. Progress has been made with CAADP: there are 40 country compacts and 28 NAIPs. Both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) have regional CAADP compacts. Makunike argued that CAADP has brought about greater political commitment to agriculture and higher budget allocations, has mobilised stakeholders around a common agenda, and has promoted regional integration and coordination. It has promoted not only production, but also value addition. Some criticisms of CAADP are that there is too much focus on public financing without enough attention to how markets are working, a multiplicity of initiatives, and a risk of bureaucratisation: too much talk, and too little action. In the coming ten years CAADP will be focusing on “wealth creation”, improving Africa’s capacity to feed itself, using public investments to leverage private investments and regional trade, and strengthening policies and institutions to promote gender equality. While NAIPs have, up to now, been “gender blind”, they can be used to channel financing towards women. Makunike also mentioned that CAADP is planning to launch a “gender fund” to help women farmers, though the details of this were not yet available.

## DEBATES

### How to hold states accountable for investment?

Participants debated the roles of the public and private sectors, as conceived in CAADP processes. Some argued that, since the private sector only invests where there are prospects for profits, the state has to invest to create the conditions to attract investors through policy and public investments. There was some debate about agricultural growth corridors like SAGCOT (Southern Agriculture Corridor) in Tanzania and ProSavana in Mozambique and whether, by introducing large-scale investments in areas that are already occupied and used, these threaten to displace women and men farmers.

### The need to implement CAADP

Participants expressed concern that there is also a generalised non-implementation of CAADP because there remain major funding gaps in the NAIPs, which governments hope to fill from private investors and donors. There is also a big difference between the budget and actual spend. Some participants expressed skepticism about CAADP’s future focus on “wealth creation”; how would the creation of wealth and the pursuit of a 6% growth target be balanced with a need to improve equality and women’s interests in agriculture?

### How are gender issues addressed in the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land? What lessons can be drawn for similar processes, for instance those aimed at promoting agricultural investments that benefit women and men?*

The process of consultation and negotiation that preceded the adoption of the *Voluntary Guidelines* demonstrated a great commitment to gender issues by the members and participants of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and also by the large number of practitioners and civil society members who were part of the process since the beginning. The *Guidelines* are unique because they represent the first global land tenure agreement, and they adopt a sustainable development model that directly responds to the needs of rural families and communities. Within this framework, gender equality is identified in the document as one of the ten principles for the implementation of responsible tenure governance. They also make special provisions to improve gender equality in both formal and customary systems, for instance, through amending discriminatory inheritance and property laws.

Gender issues and women’s perspectives are well articulated in the *Guidelines*, which call upon governments to fully remove inequalities in the law: both in property, family and succession laws, as well as in national agrarian laws. Among other issues, the *Guidelines* address women’s lack of access to legal advice and representation; the occurrence of arbitrary evictions of women from their land; and the need to safeguard the rights of women who hold subsidiary tenure rights, such as gathering rights. The *Guidelines* also look at introducing legal reforms that strengthen women’s land rights, even when these come into contrast with customary tenure systems. One of the key recommendations from the *Guidelines* is for governments to acknowledge the different roles, needs, challenges and priorities women and men have and to take specific measures to accelerate gender equality.

## INSIGHTS ON CAADP

- The past ten years of the CAADP process has been largely gender blind.
- In the next ten years, CAADP must reorient agricultural investment towards women and sustainable agriculture.
- CAADP is a useful framework as it pushes coordination among ministries and also among donors.
- NAIPs have led to increased investment, but CAADP has not yet delivered to women smallholders.
- NAIPs and CAADP compacts are consistent with the CAADP framework, but none of these prioritise women smallholders.
- The biggest private investors in African agriculture are women smallholders, so public and private investment should target them.
- The CAADP gender fund seems a positive development and more information and engagement on this is needed.

### How to influence CAADP?

Will the next ten years see the CAADP process being strengthened? While NEPAD coordinates it, CAADP is operationalised at country level, and it is up to governments to popularise it and open it up to more participation.

CAADP is not widely known or understood by farmers themselves, even though it affects them. If CAADP is to

be responsive, then farmers – especially women farmers – should be engaged in the process and shape outcomes. Action Aid's suggestion of women smallholder caucuses being organised ahead of CAADP meetings was the most concrete suggestion to address this.

### Sustainability and agro-ecological farming

Participants argued that there is a degree of hostility towards sustainable and agro-ecological farming among decision-makers in some agricultural ministries, and CAADP should help to reverse this. The key message of the authoritative International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) report was that small-scale farmers and organic agro-ecological methods are the way forward to solve the food crisis, yet this direction is not adequately reflected in the CAADP framework, compacts and NAIPs. This will need to be addressed in the coming years.

### Opportunities to strengthen gender in CAADP's agenda

Participants disagreed about whether there is real change underway towards redressing the gender blindness in CAADP. Makunike confirmed that there would be opportunities to participate in a gender review process.



Hamza Galiwango  
Uganda Investment Authority





Camilo Nhancale  
Mozambique

CAADP has been largely gender blind. In the next ten years, CAADP must make visible women's investment in agriculture and reorient agricultural investment towards women and sustainable agriculture.

## Legal and policy frameworks

National laws and policies can direct private investment in agriculture in ways that can promote gender equity and social inclusiveness. Case studies were presented from Ghana, Malawi and Kenya which showed some successful interventions to strengthen the policy environment at national level, and to contrast these with less successful interventions. Making gender equity an explicit objective, creating milestones for implementation, and budgeting for this, were among the factors differentiating the more and less successful government reforms.

**John Bugri** of KNUST/KUMASI presented on improvements in land governance in Ghana through development of a regulatory and institutional framework, drawing on a case study of research on two agricultural investments in Northern Ghana and a national application of the World Land Bank Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF). Bugri argued that, while investors are pouring into Africa, governance of land is not yet adequate to enable transparent transactions. Land is a livelihood resource, not merely a productive resource, and it is critical that legal and regulatory frameworks are established to ensure benefits for communities. Ghana has been working with the World Bank and other donors to establish guidelines for large-scale land acquisitions that include local consultation, definition of roles, feasibility reports, inspections, and referral of applications for over 1,000 acres to the National Land Commission. However, gender equality in land governance was not specifically emphasised.

**Loveness Msofi** of Malawi's Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security presented findings of a study on the impact on gender relations in farming households of two government agricultural development projects in rural Blantyre: the Agricultural Sector Wide Approaches (ASWAp) project and the Irrigation Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture Development Project (IRLADP). In a

country where 70% of full-time farmers are women, the sector-wide ASWAp has had a positive impact on gender relations by promoting more equal divisions of labour between women and men, strengthening women's control over and access to resources and benefits, and women's participation in decision-making. These successes were due to a clear articulation of gender inequalities and gender objectives in the project document which guided its implementation, indicators for tracking women's participation, and a budget to support gender inclusiveness. This was in contrast with the less successful IRLADP project, which failed to create inclusive business models in which it mentions gender but provides no clear guide for implementation. Loveness stressed the need to consider the impact of culture on gender relations, and to explicitly address gender in project planning, implementation and evaluation.

**Martin Mutegi** of Kenya's Ministry of Devolution and Planning (MDA) outlined the country's legislative and regulatory framework that has been developed to create an enabling environment for agricultural investments, and to support the socio-economic empowerment of women, in line with the constitutional commitment to gender mainstreaming. The government has also put in place concrete measures, including increased access to credit and tender processes for women. Major agriculture and land-related policies have or are being reviewed and gender is prominent in all of them. Gender indicators and targets have been set and a National Gender and Equality Commission was established and given responsibility of the oversight on implementation of gender targets by MDA. Gender sensitisation programmes have been carried out to ensure that programmes and strategies get implemented and to diminish the risks of officials neglecting the gender component in the face of strong patriarchal values in certain regions. However, these initiatives need to be sustained in order to gain traction.

**Jennifer Duncan** of Landesa (USA) shared a conceptual framework, (the Women's Land Tenure Security Framework,) which was developed to strengthen women's tenure security in the context of changing land tenure arrangements due to public and private agricultural investments. The framework, which was tested in Uganda and Ghana, can be used to identify the gaps between law and practice, taking into account both formal and customary laws. More specifically, the framework can be used as checklist, as a way to detect pertinent issues that can inform policy-makers and relevant stakeholders about women's land rights: for instance, in the context of large-scale investments, to ensure that their rights are respected and that they participate fully in decision-making at all stages of the process.

“Land-based investments are a new form of colonialism that discriminates against small farmers, and women in particular ... Governments, international agencies and the private sector are promoting and facilitating large-scale land-based investments ... The rush for land in Africa after 2007 was due to poor land governance and favours big investors' interests.”

~ Participant

## INSIGHTS ON LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

- Government policy can play a central role in promoting more inclusive and gender-equitable business models by regulating the terms of investment, creating incentives for equitable partnerships that provide real benefits to women, and providing a policy legal and institutional environment for these to prosper.
- Some governments have adopted comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies in agriculture-related policies and strategies, including setting gender indicators and targets, and establishing national bodies with overall responsibility for monitoring implementation of gender targets.
- Land-related investment and land tenure issues are inextricably linked and therefore need to be tackled. Contemporary legislation and regulatory tools do exist in most African countries, with varying degrees of gender sensitivity.
- Key challenges remain in implementation, monitoring and enforcement of compliance – governments must lead in these areas, as investors take advantage of these weaknesses.
- Land is a key factor in construction of gender and power relations in Africa – local land rights and women's rights should be protected.
- Women often have weaker customary and statutory rights and find it more difficult to participate in decision-making processes.
- There is inadequate understanding of “custom” among political leaders and civil servants, leading to traditional authorities – rather than community members themselves – being consulted on commercial investments.
- Women's land rights risk assessments offer an important tool for developing effective policy law and regulation.
- Gender specialists should be involved from design to implementation of policies and projects.
- Campaigns to raise awareness at all levels about women's rights are needed.
- Investment policies need to be revised to confirm community land rights and to promote gender-equitable inclusive business models.
- Investments need to be regulated to include rural communities, especially women farmers, and also private sector actors in revising policy frameworks.



## International governance and monitoring frameworks

**Augustine Mandigora** of Oxfam GB described the “Behind the Brands” initiative, which is part of Oxfam’s “Grow” campaign for global food security. “Behind the Brands” is a value-chain approach to enforcing compliance. It targets the world’s largest food and beverage companies and aims to change the conditions in which food is produced, the use of resources and the extent to which benefits trickle down to the marginalised millions at the bottom of their supply chain. The campaign is to compel multinationals to comply with global frameworks through consumer pressure on the biggest corporate buyers of food commodities, and uses this leverage to secure their agreement on timeframes for total transparency in the supply chain, with no supply accepted from grabbed land. Gender is one of the key principles of the initiative. Oxfam argues that equal pay, equal rights and equal treatment are the keys to a future free from poverty for millions of women. So the “Behind the Brands” scorecard looks at what the “Big Ten” companies say they are doing to fight discrimination and to make sure women get a fair deal now and in the future. Some companies have signed on to the UN Women’s Empowerment Principles and made new commitments to women’s rights. But much more still needs to be done to get equality for women. The matrix agreed upon to assess compliance includes gender equity; free, prior and informed consent; and inclusive business models. Experience shows the need to move up the chain to bring about change at local level, and Oxfam’s aim is to explore how this selective intervention can be scaled up to ensure long-term impact.

**Hopewell Zheke** of Practical Action Zimbabwe discussed some of the ingredients needed to create an enabling environment for smallholders to access markets. He

argued that Practical Action Zimbabwe has assisted policy-makers to create an enabling environment that supports smallholder farmers in Africa. The framework focuses on policies, laws, regulations and practices that can support Africa’s smallholder farmers to improve their productivity and access markets. It can be used as a tool to guide government and donor decisions and is a useful advocacy tool for NGOs and civil society. It identifies relevant areas with different dimensions which specifically support smallholder farmers (pillars) and areas which potentially benefit the entire rural population. Gender is included as a cross-cutting issue across all dimensions.

**Timothy Fella** of USAID presented a proposal to establish a Global Development Alliance (GDA), a public-private partnership aimed at reducing land tenure risks posed to both local communities and investors, and increase the opportunity for benefit sharing, particularly for women. He highlighted the need to create a better understanding in the light of common misperceptions about land in Africa, such as the ideas that there is abundant “empty” land, that government owns the land, that most small farmers have secure rights to their land, that large farms are always more efficient than smallholdings in developing countries, and that all land acquisitions are always “land grabs” by irresponsible investors. Fella argued that local communities need support to secure land rights, understand the value of their resources, and develop technical and legal capacity to negotiate and administer transactions. Private sector investors need assistance to identify legitimate rights holders, design effective benefit-sharing arrangements and conduct transparent community consultation and dispute resolution. The GDA will aim to leverage public and private sector resources to address these needs, with special attention to valuating customary rights and the multiplicity of land uses, including livelihoods that co-exist in customary tenure systems, with particular attention to ensure that

gender is taken into account so that women meaningfully participate in negotiation and decision-making processes and they benefit from the investments.

**George Schoneveld** of CIFOR presented a comparative analysis of the challenges for sustainability in governance of large-scale land acquisitions in sub-Saharan Africa. The study found a diversity of governance, socio-cultural and ecological contexts across several African countries. Yet despite these differences, the research found a striking uniformity of negative outcomes, including loss of access to livelihood resources and a decline in income and food security, with few initiatives to mitigate impacts

and no genuine involvement of communities in project design. Drivers of large-scale, land-based acquisitions are generally understood at global level, but the conditions that enable them to happen are largely deficiencies in governance frameworks and institutions at the national level. These include insecure tenure rights due to failed tenure reforms, inadequate investment policies with loose procedural requirements, no requirement of robust and gender-sensitive beneficiation models, and the range of interests in the domestic political economy. What is needed, therefore is a range of policy and institutional reforms, including land reforms to secure rights, and revisions in investment policies.

## INSIGHTS ON INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING FRAMEWORKS

- Initiatives that target multinationals directly, such as the Behind the Brands initiative, can be highly effective and cost-effective ways of implementing existing governance frameworks and monitoring the behaviour of investors.
- Governments, private companies and civil society institutions all need support to understand and operationalise existing international governance frameworks.
- Accessible guidance in the form of materials and events can help various actors to draw on international

governance frameworks that promote gender equity in land and other resource tenure, and in agricultural partnerships.

- Despite the massive efforts dedicated to the AU’s *Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa*, and the FAO’s *Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of the Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*, much remains to be done to operationalise, implement and enforce these.

## MULTI-STAKEHOLDER WORKING SESSION ON AGRICULTURAL, LAND AND INVESTMENT POLICIES

Lively discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders took place both in multi-stakeholder and sectorial working group sessions. In the multi-stakeholder working session, participants looked at key policy requirements for promoting agricultural investments that are conducive to poverty reduction and food security and discussed why putting gender equality at the centre is essential for achieving positive and sustainable development outcomes. Participants were organised in six groups: two

focused on agriculture policies, two on investment policies and two on land policies. The aim of this session was to create a space in which representatives from different sectors and countries could interact, exchange their views, experiences and ideas, and listen to and learn from each other. This initial discussion, together with the knowledge, views and experiences shared during the discussions held on the first two days, served as a basis for the following working session.



Ruth Hall  
PLAAS

Clara Park  
Consultant to FAO



## RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The conference culminated with reflections on actions required by various stakeholder groups, including governments, civil society, researchers, and the private sector, to take forward this agenda. These mono-constituency groups provided recommendations in response to two guiding questions: What can we do to ensure inclusive and gender-equitable investments in agriculture? What can other sectors do to support our role?

### Government working group

The core message from the government working group was a call for political leadership in every African country to place family farmers, and women farmers in particular, at the centre of rural development.

Participants noted that African governments have the power and leverage to negotiate and choose desirable investments that promote more inclusive and gender-equitable development, and they must use this leverage to good effect. The working group proposed that governments must establish enabling policy frameworks that prevent corruption, ensure enforcement and compliance, and prioritise gender-sensitive investments. Non-executive arms of government – parliaments and the judiciary – should play a stronger role in addressing barriers to women's participation and access to justice. Parliaments, in particular, need to play a stronger oversight role on land rights and forms of agricultural investment. Participants indicated that their own governments need to engage in frank reflection and discussion about the desirability and impacts of agricultural investments and especially large-scale, land-based acquisitions; align national laws and policies with regional and global frameworks and protocols on women's rights in relation to land, agriculture and investment; develop gender-responsive budgets; push inter-ministerial coordination and gender mainstreaming in all areas related to agricultural investment; and create practical interventions to empower women economically and secure their land rights. This would need to extend to government officials working at community level to empower citizens with

knowledge about land rights, including in schools, and will need to involve greater downward accountability of state institutions to citizens.

The government working group also reflected on the current and needed roles of other sectors. It recognised the valuable roles that *civil society* groups provide, by serving as intermediaries between government and communities, contributing to development through capacity building and service delivery, and research and monitoring, which generate valuable evidence to inform effective policy. The government representatives conceded that relations are sometimes strained and there is a need to develop mutual trust between civil society organisations and governments and that, to achieve this, governments need to create spaces for engagement with civil society organisations. The group identified the *private sector* as being responsible for providing investment finance, fair compensation for land and other resources lost by communities, and ensuring contractual compliance. Investors should provide social amenities as corporate social responsibility – not as compensation for land. Compensation should be dealt with separately, with affected people, on the basis of their property rights. Any agricultural investments should secure benefits for rural communities, such as technology transfer, economic empowerment of women, technical advice, access to farming input for farmers, employment opportunities and infrastructure development. The private sector should include farmers' associations as active players in the investment process. Farmers' associations play a vital role in protecting farmers' interests and providing them with services, including access to markets. These organisations are well placed to educate farmers on gender issues and should establish targets for women in leadership positions.

### Civil society working group

Participants in this working group agreed that civil society is diverse, and that different kinds of organisations have distinct roles, which require separate commitments and



recommendations, even while there is space for alliances across, and beyond, civil society.

*Farmers' associations* committed to engaging in collective action from grassroots level to the continent as a whole, to strengthen women's voices in land and agricultural investments. For these voices to find traction, the farmers' associations would aim to strengthen their relationships with state institutions and to participate in policies and programmes and in monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as to engage with social institutions like religious leaders, traditional authorities and the media to advocate for cultural change and the advancement of gender equality. The challenge for and contribution of farmers' associations is to build women's leadership across Africa.

*Non-governmental organisations* committed to promoting dialogue with governments at local, national and multi-stakeholder levels on government agricultural development programmes and women's access to them. NGOs will aim to give women a voice through the media, including community radio stations. At the national level, NGOs will lobby for harmonised laws and policies to ensure that interests of all groups of women are addressed in agricultural investment, and that land rights and land tenure reform are entrenched in national law and policy; and will build strategic alliances with NGOs from other sectors including women's organisations, environmental organisations, human rights organisations and youth-based organisations.

*International non-governmental organisations* committed to supporting and strengthening rural women's movements. Participants said they would ensure that the effects of gender discrimination were made visible, and would lobby governments and donors to advocate for land rights and gender-equitable forms of investment in women farmers, build coalitions and coordinate with rural women's organisations. The main focus of the participants was to support the "Kilimanjaro initiative" which is a mass mobilisation of rural women across Africa for land and resource rights.

*Together, farmers' associations and local and international NGOs* committed to collectively mobilising rural women to constitute a pan-African rural women's movement. This will

require strengthening women in leadership, increasing the visibility and voices of women farmers through dialogues and creating spaces to raise gender impacts and biases in land rights and agricultural investments and to promote inclusion and cultural change. The participants also committed to influencing regional and global processes such as CAADP, the AU/AfDB/UNECA Land Policy Initiative and the CFS Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investment, and to engaging with the media, investors, governments, NGOs and cultural and religious leaders.

### Private sector working group

A core message from private sector participants was a commitment to critically assessing their own practices, to changing their terms of engagement with farmers, and to reaching out to partners in other sectors who can help private companies to engage with women farmers and other rural women about the kinds of investments they need. The group committed itself to adopting a very explicit gender strategy at the outset of agricultural investments, both within their companies and in relation to farming communities. It recognised the need to find innovative ways to circumvent gender-based constraints to participation in commercial ventures, such as creating financing mechanisms that do not require land as collateral. Participants agreed that inclusive business models need to be adapted to make these gender-sensitive and committed to engaging with different stakeholders in their own national contexts to see how this could be achieved. For women farmers, this would require at least developing products and services that specifically consider women's needs and constraints in farming. To promote gender equity in employment, the private sector participants identified the need for facilities such as crèches and decent sanitation, and for working conditions that enable women's participation, such as flexible working hours. A specific challenge for companies engaged with contract farming is to increase the proportion of women contractors, rather than contracting primarily to men, a practice which reinforces gender inequalities.

The private sector working group also formulated specific requests addressed to other sectors. It called on

researchers to help investors to be more responsible by highlighting forms of investment that are more gender-equitable, and by simplifying research findings to make them more readily understandable and usable. It called on governments to create incentives, such as credit guarantee schemes to change investor behaviour; to make extension services more responsive to the business needs of the private sector; to create a conducive legal environment for enforcement of contracts; and to facilitate multi-stakeholder interaction through business clusters. It expressed a wish for governments to consider the private sector as a partner in developing policies and plans. Lastly, the private sector participants called on civil society groups to play an intermediary role between communities and farmers, on the one hand, and investors and government bodies, on the other; to ensure women's representation in producers' organisations; and to build capacity among women farmers to engage with the private sector.

### Research working group

The research working group focused on the research needed to promote gender-equitable investment in primary agriculture, and identified six priorities:

The first priority was to *generate reliable and gender-disaggregated data* on tenure, land use, production and livelihoods, as baselines for longitudinal studies on the impacts of agricultural investments of various kinds. While good studies have been done, there are few sources of such quantitative data. Researchers committed to sharing research designs and survey data on impacts of investment, and identified a need for FAO and other major research institutions producing macro-datasets to generate gender-disaggregated data.

The second priority was to *understand tenure and property systems* in all their diverse socio-cultural and comparative dimensions, through the life spans of people, and to use this to inform land policy and its implementation; and to explore alternative property systems that provide options beyond the stark contrast of customary tenure and private titling, perhaps such as forms of community titling or other property options.

The third priority was to give *women farmers a voice*, by documenting responses to the basic question, "What do women [farmers] really want?" For this, participatory research methods and multi-media outputs can be used to convey these voices in an unmediated way to policy-makers and the private sector. Such documentation should distinguish between practical gender needs and more strategic gender interests in transforming power relations, and should attend not only to gender but also to generational differences (and kinship positions) in how women are affected by investments.

The fourth priority was to *define gender-equitable investment models*, in terms of their structure, design, interests and outcomes, and specify the institutional arrangements and even 'transgressive' strategies required to transforming gender relations.

The fifth priority was to *document and analyse "success"* – determining what enables it and who defines it or contests it – and to place the outcomes of agricultural investment in a broader frame that addresses socio-economic, environmental, production, accumulation and class dynamics.

The sixth priority was to support action by *rural communities* in defence of their rights and their development needs. This requires researchers to find more effective ways of working with men, social movements, women farmers' associations and other civil society groups, to bring rights back into the development debate and to provide information and analysis in support of these struggles. The group agreed on the need to build more effective alliances among researchers in order to avoid duplication and achieve maximum impact, and on the need to find creative platforms and methods of communication. Researchers need to contribute to multi-stakeholder events and more targeted, local engagements with rural communities as end users.

Audiences from research include rural communities, farmers' associations, civil society groups, traditional leaders, local business, international investors, governments at all levels, development agencies, the G8 Global Donors Platform on Land, and UN bodies, especially those engaged with the post-2015 agenda.



Bernard Chitunga  
Kenya Cooperative University College, Kenya



## CLOSING

## CLOSING

“We appreciated the breadth and depth of the evidence presented here, often from very different perspectives. We sometimes develop blind spots, based on where we come from and how we see things, and we helped each other to find those gaps. We think we made some progress towards identifying elements required to make large-scale, land-based investments more gender sensitive. While we probably come away with more questions than answers, we should not underestimate the importance of what we did. We had a very useful engagement with a very complex topic.”

~ Sue Mbaya, LPI

In her closing remarks on behalf of the organisers, **Sue Mbaya** called for action and encouraged all stakeholders to continue efforts to ensure gender equality in all agricultural investments, including land-based investments, and to commit to taking forward the vital issues of inclusivity in land ownership, gender-equitable governance and accountability for gender equality. She committed the AU's Land Policy Initiative to:

- Review critically the draft guidelines on large-scale land-based investments in light of specific issues raised at the conference and input from ongoing consultation processes.
- Support the development of a solid continental knowledge platform to deepen and strengthen thinking and practice on agricultural investment and gender equality.

- Consider support measures for Member States to improve land rights and develop the capacity of gender experts, as assistance is urgently needed to address these gaps.
- Host a continental conference on Land Policy in Africa in November 2014 and on a biannual basis in the future.
- Mbaya thanked her fellow organisers and the conference co-hosts, including:
  - The donors who made the event possible: Ford Foundation, UK Department for International Development, Omidyar Network, International Fund for Agricultural Development and the International Land Coalition;
  - The government representatives who participated actively and enabled participation of delegates from their countries;
  - The Pan African Parliament and specifically Ambassador Mongella and Honourable Allan Chiyembekeza, for their support and participation;
  - Other organisations and agencies that contributed to the success of the event; and
  - Many who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, especially PLAAS staff.

The conference was closed by Honourable Allan Chiyembekeza of the Pan African Parliament, who thanked participants and organisers, and congratulated everyone for sharing extremely useful information, engaging in lively and constructive debate and, as Africans, formulating responses and recommendations to address the complex issues around land, agricultural investments and gender.

The conference generated extensive interest and media coverage, including blogs by participants and a lively Twitter feed (conference materials, including presentations from all parallel sessions, and other media are available at [www.plaas.org.za/event/AIGLIA2014](http://www.plaas.org.za/event/AIGLIA2014)).





Rudo Chingono  
Ruzivo Trust, Zimbabwe



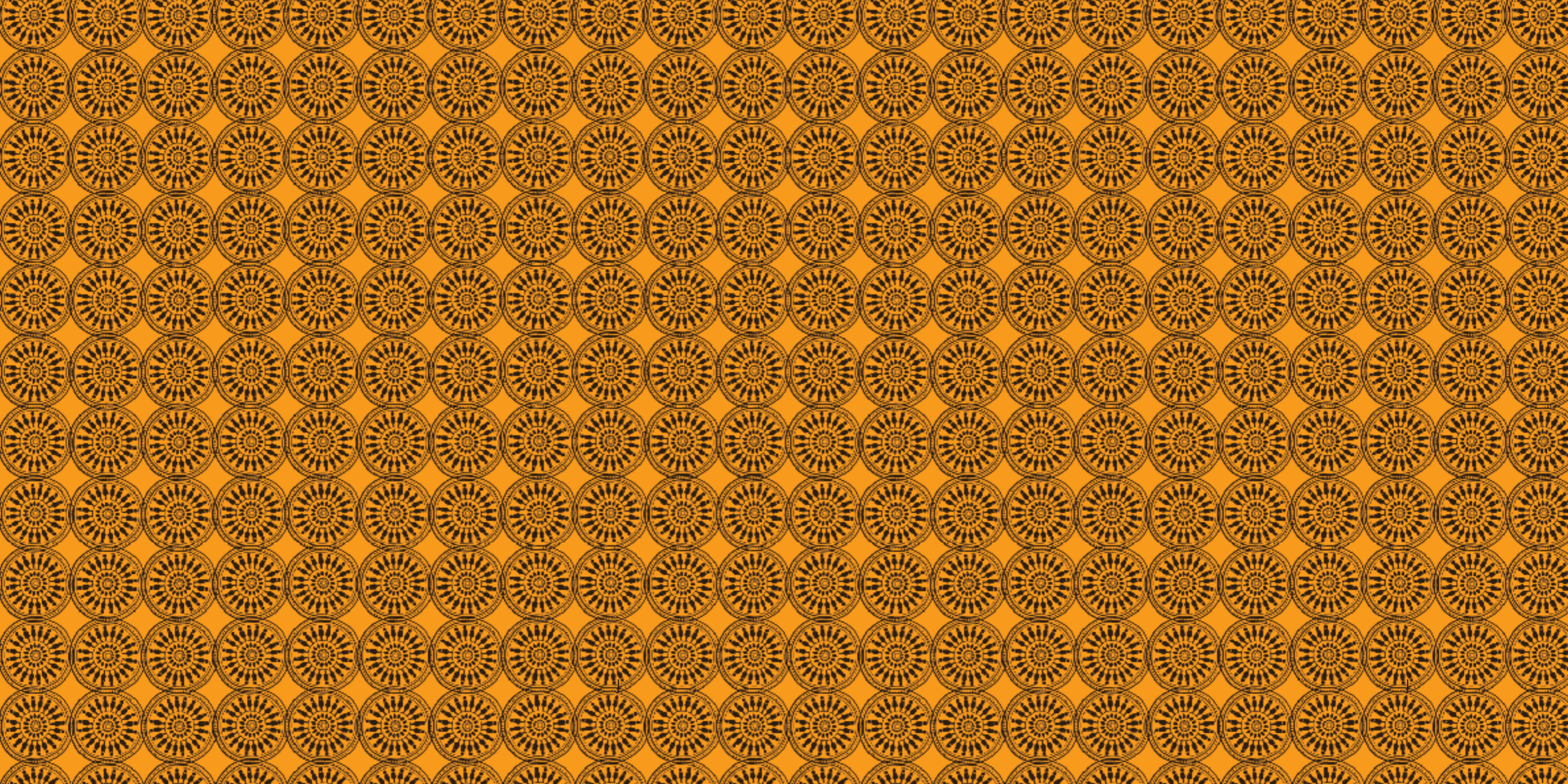
## PARTICIPANTS

- |                                 |                                |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Alda Salomão                    | Eunice Adhiambo                | Olegário dos Anjos Banze |
| Alex Dubb                       | Evelyn Nguleka                 | Pascal Liu               |
| Alhaji Sulemana Mahama          | Fatima Shabodien               | Paula Nimpuno            |
| Allan Chiyembekeza (Honourable) | Fatou Mbaye                    | Paulo Tarimo             |
| Allen Mhatu                     | Freedom Mazwi                  | Rasford Kalamatila       |
| Andrew Makenete                 | George Schoneveld              | Rebecca Pointer          |
| Andries du Toit                 | George Macharia                | Rebecca Smalley          |
| Anna Rappazzo                   | Gertrude Mongella (Honourable) | Robert Abaane            |
| Atsede Assefa                   | Gertrude Dfiza Torvikey        | Roberta Pellizzoli       |
| Augustine Mandigora             | Gilda Homo                     | Ruchi Tripathi           |
| Ayanda Mvimbi                   | Godfrey Massay                 | Rudo Chakwera            |
| Barbara van Koppen              | Grace Tepula                   | Rudo Chingono            |
| Beatrice Ouma                   | Halima Selemane Nequice        | Rudo Makunike            |
| Beby Seheni Andriamanalina      | Hamza Galiwango                | Ruth Hall                |
| Benard Chitunga                 | Hanson Nyantakyi-Frimpong      | Samuel Kiiru             |
| Berhanu Tesfaye Mekonnen        | Helen Dancer                   | Sane Zuka                |
| Bezuaem Bekele Mogessie         | Hopewell Zheke                 | Sharifa Aziza            |
| Boyce Tom                       | Irene Mathebela                | Shava Thakunda           |
| Caesar Katebe                   | Jennifer Duncan                | Shingaidzo Mupindu       |
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