

**Women Farmer's and Agriculture Growth: Challenge and Perspective for
Africa face the economic crisis**

By

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Abstract:

In poor countries the agricultural sector is essential to growth, poverty reduction, and food security. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector employs 65 percent of the labor force and generates 32 per cent of GDP growth (Christian Friis Bach and all, 2008). More than half of rural employment in Sub-Saharan Africa consists of self-employed farmers, many of whom are women. Women generally own less land and the land they have is often of lower quality than the land owned by men. According to the International Development Research Centre, women in Africa only own 1 per cent of the land. Women have to contend with limited access to financial and technical resources. Women lack political influence.

However the recent economic crisis that has affected the food crisis may have considerable consequences on African rural women who are mostly vulnerable in African society and may increase some challenges that can limited the African agriculture growth as women is the heart of this sector in Africa even if most of politic don't consider them in the policies. This paper is to evaluate the major effect of this crisis on this vulnerable group In Africa and define some perspective that policies maker could use for Africa Agriculture sustainable growth..

The Descriptive analysis show that the economic crisis has increase in gender inequality in agriculture sector, increase women financial credit access lack, women farmer migration, women farmer income reduction, women land access facilities reduction and their health problem has also increase.

It is clear that to solve the economic crisis impact on African agriculture for sustainable growth, policies maker should include more policies which should consider women farmers. Research also should focus more on women vulnerability in agriculture face the economic crisis.

Key –words: Women Farmer-Africa- Economic Crisis-Challenge and Perspective

Introduction

In poor countries the agricultural sector is essential to growth, poverty reduction, and food security. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector employs 65 percent of the labor force and generates 32 per cent of GDP growth (Christian Friis Bach and all,2008). More than half of rural employment in Sub-Saharan Africa consists of self-employed farmers, many of whom are women.

Agricultural growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has accelerated from 2.3 per cent per year in the 1980s to 3.8 per cent per year between 2000 and 2005. Agricultural growth has indeed been the engine behind recent growth successes in several African countries. Importantly agricultural growth has strong growth linkages to other economic sectors. A 1 dollar growth in agricultural income typically translates into an increase of 2, 5 dollar in total income in the society as a whole. Therefore, agriculture has a strong potential in growth and employment creation in Africa.

In the early 1980s, while the population grew rapidly, food production and agricultural incomes decreased in many African countries. In general, government allocations to agriculture declined as the global recession resulted in a renewed preoccupation with growth as opposed to equity concerns. Against this background, the situation of rural women was characterized by overwork, low productivity, and little access to credit, land, training, and the use of rudimentary technology. In many countries, the diminishing capacity of agriculture to provide for household subsistence increased the workload shouldered by women as men withdrew their labor from agriculture. Women had to increasingly make up for the family's food deficit by working as casual hired labor on larger farms, or by starting up income generating activities in addition to continuing their farming activities as well as other household tasks.

At the same time, government interventions did little to address the plight of rural women as, in most countries, the agricultural sector continued to be neglected. Women's low participation in national and regional policy-making, their invisibility in national statistics and their low participation in extension services (with the exception of home economics programmes) has meant that those issues of most concern to women had been neglected in the design and implementation of many development policies and programmes .

When women were targeted as beneficiaries, it was generally in their reproductive capacity or as targets of welfare interventions. Small, dispersed "women-specific" projects, or project components focusing on their productive role in agriculture, remained isolated from national agricultural planning and policies.

Agriculture dominates female employment in many countries in Africa. Women's possibilities in agriculture are, however, hindered by formal and informal rules restricting their opportunities for more productive employment and income. Women's access to land is hindered in many countries by formal and traditional rules, although several countries are reforming landownership. As a result, women often face difficulties in recruiting workers and obtaining credit for improving production, as they are not the rightful owners of the land (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997). Women also often face restrictions in relation to ownership of cattle and to control over water resources. Even

if more conducive property systems were eventually implemented a large group of women having only small funds, very little education and low social status would still find it impossible to enter the market. Consequently, these women will either have to continue to rely on male members of their family to provide them with access to land or will have to seek employment elsewhere. Development of rural areas has the potential to provide women with better jobs. Concurrently with the increasing urbanization many rural areas in Africa are undergoing a process towards market oriented systems where agricultural products are produced for the market place. It is clear that women are playing important role in Africa agriculture growth that is mainly Africa countries growth source.

However, the impact of the economic crisis on the poor and food insecure is likely to be substantial, especially in light of the negative impact of soaring food and fuel prices already experienced by the most vulnerable population groups during 2006–08. The more difficult global economic environment has a significant influence on national food security in a number of poorer countries, many of which have become increasingly dependent on grain imports over the past decade. This reliance on food imports was spurred by trade liberalization policies and the expansion and improvement of the global transportation system. Increased reliance on grain imports has helped keep prices more affordable for consumers, but the lack of domestic agricultural growth that drove the imports has exposed many countries to volatility on international markets. Imported foods, including basic staples such as grains and vegetable oils, now constitute an important component of diets in most countries. From 1970 to 2003, import dependency grew most among the least-developed countries compared with higher-income country groups. In 2003, least-developed countries relied on imports for 17 percent of their grain consumption (compared with 8 percent in 1970) (FAO,2009).

Economic crisis has negatively affected large segments of the population in developing countries. The position of those who were hurt most by higher food prices (the rural landless, female-headed households and the urban poor) is particularly precarious because they have already approached, or in many cases reached, the limit of their ability to cope during the food crisis. Among these groups, the urban poor may experience the most severe problems because lower export demand and reduced FDI are more likely to cause employment to fall in urban areas, which are more closely connected to world markets than rural areas. But rural areas will not be spared – reductions in employment have caused back-migration from urban to rural areas, forcing the rural poor to share the burden in many cases. In some countries, declining prices for specific crops will add to that burden. Thus, despite the recent fall in food prices, urban and rural areas have experienced a reduction in various sources of income, including remittances, diminishing the overall purchasing power of the poor and food-insecure. It is true that the economic downturn has caused food prices to drop but they are still high compared with four years ago, and it is increasingly expensive to eat a balanced diet and deepening poverty. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has estimated that the number of hungry people could increase by more than 100 million in 2009 and will surpass the one billion mark. As a consequence, the affordability of important staples became a critical issue for many countries most in Africa, as high prices often took the affordability of important staples such staples out of the reach of poor and low-income consumers. Poor people had to eat less or limit themselves to lower quality food, contributing to

an increase in malnutrition. The World Bank estimates that the combined fuel and food crises last year Pushed over 120 million people in Africa and in other developing countries in poverty and malnutrition. And according to FAO, 21 out of 36 countries affected by increasing food insecurity are in sub-Saharan Africa. Women are most vulnerable face this situations especially African where women are responsible for the production of 80 percent or more of the food supply in the same time for agriculture growth.

This paper is to evaluate how the economic crisis has affect African women Farmer and Agriculture Growth, and which Challenge and Perspective for Africa.

II- Gender Effect Increasing in Women Employment in African Agriculture

Similarly, over 60 percent of female labor force in Sub-Saharan Africa is employed in the agricultural sector (ILO, 2009). Any decline in these exports is likely to significantly reduce female employment particularly among these groups of women workers. The impact on women in the agricultural sector as farmers and workers partly depends on whether or not agricultural subsidies in industrialized countries are reduced or eliminated during the crisis, and partly on whether government services are provided to help increase output and productivity in agriculture (especially in food production). It also very much depends on the impact of trade on the costs of inputs. The steepest decline in world prices is in the cost of fuel, followed by those of metals. It is not surprising that one country with the lowest terms of trade losses like Zimbabwe is net fuel importers. The extent, to which the costs of oil-dependent inputs such as transport costs decline, in turn, determines whether the production costs of farmers, including women, are lowered.

The financial crisis on Agriculture that has increase food insecurity has important gender implications as well. The shift to cash export crops has also reduced women's bargaining power and status as their role of food producers is replaced by contingent and seasonal employment and by unpaid family work in men's crops (Udry 1994, 2000, Williams 2004).

Given the role of women in household survival and social reproduction, these trends constitute a threat to food security. According to World Bank estimations, 130 to 155 million people in the developing world fell into poverty in the last two years due to the recent surge in food and fuel prices. While fuel prices are more moderate compared to two years ago, domestic food prices remain much higher than previous years and show little signs of abating (World Bank, 2008). The ongoing global economic crisis has exacerbated the food crisis by the inability of many food producers, especially women farmers, to maintain their production level and by further constraining developing country governments'ability to provide necessary assistance in terms of food subsidies and support to food producers. Based on the ample evidence that gender disparities in the quality and quantity of food consumption increase during times of shortage, the combined impact of these crises on women and their dependents are likely to be large. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), female-headed households are more vulnerable to food security as they tend to spend more on food than male-headed households

(FAO 2008). In addition, recent findings from over a hundred interviews with informal female workers in 10 developing countries indicated that unpaid domestic work, primarily consisting of food production, became women's primary coping strategy in the face of the economic crisis (WIEGO 2009).

The recent food crisis showed the risk of ignoring agriculture, not only for the people living in rural areas but for the world as a whole, and international organizations as well as some governments have recently put a stronger focus on the sector. It is more and more widely accepted that rural development is a key to poverty reduction. But it is also a key to more gender equality as many women make a living out of working in that agriculture sector. Despite a decline in the share of agriculture in total female employment, agriculture still provides a living for many women and their families especially in Africa.

Africa suffered more severely from the recent food crisis than other continents. Remarkably, the food crisis hit not only the least developed, agriculture-based countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, but also the better-off countries in North Africa where agriculture is no longer the main sector in terms of employment and is contributing little to GDP. One of the reasons why economies in Africa were so hard hit was the desolate state of the agriculture sector in both parts of Africa. As a result, Africa, which was more than self-sufficient in food 50 years ago, is now a massive food importer.

Many of the challenges facing Africa's agricultural sector stem from a few root causes, including poor political and economic governance, inadequate funding for agriculture, poor water resources management, and neglect of research and development. But throughout Africa another very important reason for the failure of the sector have been gender inequality and lack of empowerment of women, who are often running this sector. As was noted before, Sub-Saharan Africa is besides South Asia the region with the highest share of female employment in the agricultural sector. Even though more women work in the service sector in North Africa, agriculture still plays an important role in providing jobs for women in this region as well. Whereas in sub-Saharan Africa the employment share decreased over the last ten years (by 6.6 percentage points between 1998 and 2008) as in almost all regions, it increased in North Africa by 6.8 points (see Table 1).

Table1. Sectoral share in employment, world and regions, females (%)

	1998	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
Agriculture							
World	42.9	40.6	39.4	38.4	37.5	36.4	35.4
Developed Economies and European Union	5.0	3.8	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.1	2.9
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	27.0	22.2	21.6	20.7	19.8	18.7	17.9
East Asia	51.6	50.6	48.2	45.9	43.5	41.2	38.9
South-East Asia and the Pacific	51.3	48.3	46.4	45.9	45.0	43.9	43.0
South Asia	74.4	66.9	66.5	65.8	65.5	65.1	64.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	12.6	11.0	11.0	11.0	10.3	9.7	9.2
Middle East	26.1	32.2	32.1	32.2	32.2	32.0	32.0
North Africa	31.3	31.6	36.8	38.8	39.3	38.9	38.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	71.0	68.1	66.8	65.3	66.0	65.1	64.3

Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, January 2009.

There is little information available on the regional level regarding the key elements that would make employment in agriculture decent and productive. However, looking at vulnerable employment groups (own-account workers and unpaid contributing family workers) leads to interesting insights. Unfortunately, the indicator of vulnerable employment is not available by sector for many countries. But country level analysis does make it clear that the majority of jobs in agriculture are most likely lacking some elements of decent and productive work. Women mainly work as contributing family workers and men very often are own-account workers. And if women manage to change their status it often means moving from being an unpaid contributing family worker to being an own-account worker.

As Figures 1a and 1b show, vulnerable employment and employment in agriculture changed in parallel in both Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. The sharp increase since 2002 of vulnerable employment in North Africa is remarkable and not seen in any other region. It is also interesting to note that the total number of female unpaid contributing family workers and female agricultural workers in North Africa are very close, making it likely that this status group makes up the majority of jobs for women in agriculture.

In sub-Saharan Africa the picture looks very different (see Figure 1b). Here there are more female own-account workers than contributing family workers and overall there are many more agricultural workers than contributing family workers. But again, both categories increased in parallel with the increase of female workers in agriculture, indicating that the majority of jobs created in the sector continue to be vulnerable employment, outside of economically less risky wage and salary jobs.

How can vulnerable employment be transformed into decent work? One precondition is that

productivity must increase. This will not only lay the groundwork for earnings to rise sufficiently for people to escape poverty, but it is often the first step towards more social security and other components of decent work. Even though productivity in agriculture has increased in some countries, this increase has not been very impressive in many countries and the levels of output in economies in Sub-Saharan Africa remain very low. Many countries have not seen an increase in productivity at all, making it almost impossible to take people in rural areas out of poverty. If one adds that women are often profiting less from wage increases induced by productivity increases than men as a result of the weaker status of women, it is obvious that there has been very little potential for women to improve their situation and the situation of their families.

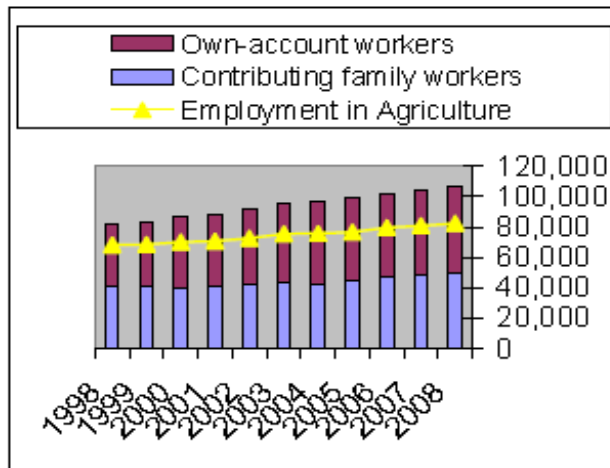
Despite the differences in levels of productivity in North African countries and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and despite the different role agriculture plays in providing employment for women, women's daily work life characteristics all over Africa are similar. The majority of women in agriculture are smallholder subsistence farmers or spouses of smallholder subsistent farmers. They substantially contribute to national agricultural production and food security. Large scale farming and commercial production is less of an income source for women in rural areas, which is why structural adjustment programmes often do not reach women. It is estimated that rural women in Africa produce 80 per cent of the food (source). They do most of the work in storing, processing, transporting and marketing food. It has been shown that when women receive the same levels of education, experience and farm inputs as men, they can increase yields of some crops by 22 per cent.

Given the key role of women in the agricultural sector, improving their situation means progress for the sector and for the economy as a whole. According to a study conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute, if men and women had equal influence in decision-making, an additional 1.7 million children would be adequately nourished in sub-Saharan Africa.. The impact would be of similar importance in North Africa.

The case of North Africa showed that agriculture can be a creator of new jobs for women, and even though they often enter the labor market under vulnerable conditions, being part of the labor force already gives them additional economic power. The potential which the sector offers in creating jobs for women should be used in other regions as well. However, job strategies have to be developed while keeping in mind that in the long run only decent jobs have a sustainable impact on poverty reduction.

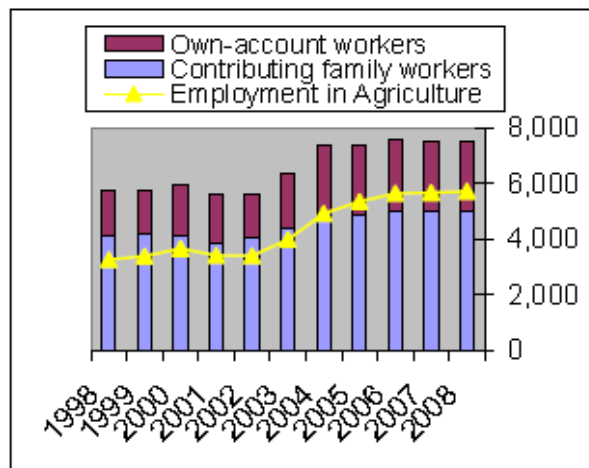
An often discussed question is whether Africa can reach the MDGs by the year 2015. North Africa might be closer to reaching the goals than Sub-Saharan Africa. However, due to the current economic crisis, the likelihood of reaching the goals has diminished. Agriculture in the region is the backbone of most economies and women are involved in food production at all stages, but the financial crisis forced many countries (such as Malawi) to sell their agricultural goods such as tobacco and others at a lower price. Many women were retrenched from their employment.

Figure 1a: Female employment in agriculture, by status, 1998-2008, North Africa (thousands)



Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, January 2009.

Figure 1b: Female employment in agriculture, by status, 1998-2008, Sub-Saharan Africa (thousands)



Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, January 2009.

III- Effect on Women Farmer Income

The employment situation has an impact on the capacity and the ability to create decent jobs in already overburdened economy. Generally these are the survival areas of parallel economy, which are developed in times of crisis, and which are areas occupied mainly by women. As mentioned above, the impacts of the crisis are not uniform across and within countries; some groups are hit harder than others. Given exports volatility of goods, the households involved in production for export are likely to suffer negative impacts.

Pickers of shea-nuts in West Africa and its processors and traders are a class apart. It is mostly composed of women, and often ranks among the poorest in their communities. The shea tree of the West African Sahel par excellence which grow wild nuts are picked by women who either sell them or convert them before selling them to raise their incomes. Shea pushes in 18 countries that represent a range of about 5000 kilometers from Guinea to the woodlands Sahel. The countries that produce most of shea butter are also among the poorest in the world (Elias and Carney, 2007). Burkina Faso has the highest concentration of shea butter, it covers approximately one quarter of its national territory and is the largest exporter of West Africa, with annual production estimated at 850,000 tons (Harsch 2001, Elias and Carney, 2007). Shea is a substantial part of income of rural women. This income is seasonal; however, it coincides with the last hungry season between May and August. Shea butter helps to alleviate food insecurity saisonnière¹⁶. While the West African market consumes most of beurre before the crisis, exports to Europe, where it is used for chocolate and cosmetics, were flourishing. The drastic price reduction of Shea on the international market is felt in West Africa. Lower prices in Ghana are estimated between 50% and 75% and women noted the lack of businesses to buy shea butter in their communities (Bauer and Mahama 2009). The situation in Burkina Faso, Mali and other countries of shea producers in West Africa is likely to worsen. The situation Shea additional consequences due to the poverty of women who are not traditionally involved in the cash crop. Among the small farmers to food, farmers are most exposed to the worst effects of the crisis. These women of the region, particularly Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, and they treat palm oil and copra in Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. The decline in international demand and prices of edible oils due to the crisis economic has a negative impact on women's income from processing. Women's work in the horticulture industry as cultivators has also been hit and resulted in a decline in jobs and wages.

In West Africa, there are farmers involved in producing cocoa, oil palm, cotton and horticultural products such as fruits and spices and the people involved in the collection of shea nuts. In addition, households those incomes depended on wood workers, mining and tourism are also affected. With the exception of shea, these sectors are controlled by businessmen and male employees, who enjoy higher incomes and lower levels of poverty relative to other sectors. However, they are also facing layoff and reductions of their income. Their own homes and homes that depend on their support will also be affected. A small minority of women who independently produce cotton, cocoa and other agricultural products for export are more vulnerable to adverse impacts of the recession because they operate on a smaller scale and therefore feels suffered

more production constraints such as access to land and operate it, they will be more severely affected if prices of commodities do not straighten up in the near future

IV- Land Access Facilities Limitation and Unequal Division of Labor

The shift to cash export crops in recent decades especially in the Africa region not only helped contribute to the growing food shortage, but has also undercut women subsistence producers' access to land, thereby reducing poor households' command over food and increasing the burden of domestic work on women. Land tenure systems, for instance, are based on discriminatory policies. While most African states have considered agriculture the backbone of their economies and acknowledge the significant role of women in the agricultural sector, few have paid much attention to the land tenure systems which have been discriminating against women. Women's access to loans and other credit facilities for agricultural improvement has been constrained by their inability to own land.

The impact of discriminatory land tenure systems on agricultural production; and specifically on production of food crops; is an area which needs careful analysis by policy makers and planners. This problem is more pronounced in countries where the migrant labor system has led to an increase in female heads of household who lack power and control over the land they work. This condition is worsened by the fact that the existing rural credit policies are also blind to the existing discriminatory systems. Women agricultural producers are not benefiting from rural credit facilities and this limits their contribution to promoting sustainable development in this sector.

Most African communities have had gender specific roles in agricultural production. Land clearing is normally assigned to men, while women and men participate in tilling the land. Weeding is normally done by women, who are also responsible for transporting crops from the farm to the home or to cooperative units. In terms of division of labor, studies have indicated that women have been contributing more time in the agricultural cycle than men. A recent study done for the World Bank, for instance, estimated that women in sub-Saharan Africa produce up to 80% of all staple foods but own less than 10% of the land. In another study, on the world economic crisis and its impact on women, it was further estimated that women in this region contribute up to 30% of labor in ploughing, 50% of labor in planting, 60% of labor in weeding, 85% of labor in processing and preserving food, while performing up to 95% of all domestic chores. Indeed, throughout rural Africa, women's labor input is estimated to be three times that of men. This was neatly expressed by the former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, who said, "It would be appropriate to ask our farmers, especially men, how many hours a week or how many weeks in a year they work. The truth is that women in the villages work very hard, 12-15 hours in a day. They even work on Sundays and public holidays. Women who live in the villages work harder than everybody else in Tanzania. But men who live in the villages are on leave for half of their lives."

Development policies on this continent have been functioning under the assumption that women's labor supply is elastic. Increasing labor demand, as well as increased infant mortality

rates, has been forcing women to produce more children. The time devoted to biological reproductive tasks constrains women's involvement in other productive activities. In Tanzania, for instance, it is estimated that an average woman devotes up to 17 years to pregnancy, breastfeeding and caring for young siblings. Women's biological and social reproductive roles are supposed to go hand in hand with their other productive activities. The present food insecurity cannot be isolated from the existing gender division of labor which is forcing women to increase the child population as a source of future labor. This has created an imbalance between food production and population growth. Sound population policies should not ignore existing inequities in the sexual division of labor.

In some region where the migrant labor system prevails, such as in Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland, women have been forced to manage all agricultural activities single-handedly as most of the men have migrated to the mining industry in South Africa. This condition is worsened by the fact that the tools of labor used by women have never been improved. As a matter of fact, mechanization of agriculture has marginalized women. The small hand-hoe has been the main farm implement used by women. Their backs and heads have been the major means of transporting food and agricultural outputs from the farm to the household and to the market.

But despite the fact that women contribute more labor in agricultural production, they constitute a small minority of formal employees in this sector. A study done in Tanzania in 1989, for instance, showed that only 47 women were employed in the agricultural sector in the Ministry's head office, compared with 80 men. Of all these employees, not a single woman was a Principal Agricultural Officer. Also UNICEF study and analysis of the condition of women and children in Namibia showed that women constitute a small minority of formal agricultural employees despite the fact that they are a majority of rural producers. Figures for 1988 show that out of 38,388 employees in the agricultural sector equivalent to 20.77% of the total labor force; only 1885 or 4.45% are women. Marginal participation of women as formal employees encourages gender insensitivity in the planning and development of this sector. Studies have shown that there are socio-cultural barriers which limit male extension officers in providing technical advice to female farmers. In many parts of the continent, extension services have been biased in favor of male farmers; a factor which explains male biases in the sector's technologies.

Traditional methods of preserving foods have also been ignored and substituted by modern techniques which do not extend knowledge of preserving female-grown perishable crops, such as vegetables. This has contributed to food insecurity at household level throughout the region and during a period when most of the countries in the region have already been hard hit by drought. Most agricultural technology, for instance, has been directed towards certain 'cash' crops, which are male dominated, and little input has been directed to food crops, especially the traditional and staple foods normally referred to as women's crops. Hardly any research has explored ways of improving such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, a variety of yams and traditionally grown peas, beans, vegetables and so forth.

But most of the work which women do in this sector is not valued or recognized. The very concept of work is socially constructed. The Zimbabwe Bureau of Statistics defines 'work' as "a

remunerative activity usually done under the umbrella of formal or informal organizations, government or private, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)." The bureau further defines the formal sector as registered business, while the informal sector would be unregistered business. Tanzania's Human Deployment Act of 1984 defines employment as "any gainful activity which enables an able-bodied adult to earn a living and which can result in an increase in productivity." The narrow definition of work excludes most of the work performed by women and thus implies that women's activities are not part of the mainstream planning. This means that they do not benefit from the allocation of financial resources.

V- Effect on Women Farmers on Credit access

In Africa, women are known to produce up to 80% of the food. Yet, when it comes to agricultural inputs and services, the share going to women is meagre: they receive only 7% of agricultural extension services, less than 10% of the credit offered to small-scale farmers, and own only 1% of the land.¹ In this context, women are often found concentrated in subsistence agriculture and unpaid farm work, and excluded from more lucrative agricultural opportunities such as cash crop production.

The deterioration of conditions for granting credit will the situation of women in the agricultural sector or the access of credits already women were already complicated. Many women who have had to rely on micro-credit, with all its limitations, for productive investment, could be affected by the credit crunch due to tightening of it downstream. Women's lack of access to finance is also due to factors such as lack of collateral, complicated administrative procedures, unsuitable loan sizes or interest rates, is one of the major factors affecting and limiting the investment and productive capacity of women workers as well as their ability to finance other basic and strategic needs. This is likely to affect small traded, work on family farms in exchange for maintenance are likely to receive less support in the future. Theoretically, the sharp increases in food prices should benefit the farmers. However, the prices set by operators have always been below cost of production due to the glut of production and the inability of farmers to food storage until prices rise again. One set of factors which need urgent money, rising material costs and credit, lack of adequate storage and availability of alternatives to their products inside and outside borders, handicap.

Rural women are mainly responsible for food processing, and distribution, in addition to farming and harvesting. They deal of their own production and that of their husbands, or they buy products for the treatment. They transform, among others, cassava and garri atióké¹⁸ in several countries. In the short term, traders seem more concerned about the high costs of goods, the collapse of consumer demand and the difficulties of collecting the debt by the credit as is the case in Ghana (Bauer and Mahama, 2009).

VI- Impact on Women Farmer Labor Migration

Another channel by which developing countries especially Africa will be affected by

the crisis is through shifts in international labor migration flows and the resulting change in remittances from family members working in developed countries and emerging economies. Although international migration is by no means a recent phenomenon, its feminization is a relatively new development. In the last three decades, women have sought employment outside their countries mainly as a form of household survival strategy and in search of better jobs, higher wages and better work conditions. The overseas women workers include regular migrants. There are likely to be changes in labor demand brought about by the economic contraction and decline in incomes in the developed and emerging economies where migrant workers go. As in some sectors, such as health and education-related services sectors, the demand for overseas migrant workers may be stable or even increase despite the economic downturn they can migrate from agriculture to those sector. In addition, some firms may respond to the declining sales by adopting lower cost production strategies such as higher outsourcing to female migrant workers since they are regarded as cheap and docile labor .The employment of women migrants as domestic workers and in tourism and entertainment sectors are also likely to decline, given the overall fall in real household incomes and as part of middle and upper-class household coping strategies

III- Impact of Women Farmers and Children Health

Rising food and fuel prices is particularly difficult for low-income households. People living in poverty in countries some cities region of some are spending almost 70% of their income on food and this percentage can now buy less food compared with the previous year. The involvement of women in food production, distribution, purchasing and cooking put them in vulnerability situation to rising food prices. It affects their income, their purchasing power and imposes on them the burden of developing adaptation strategies. Some focus groups in Ghana have Already noted a decline in the quality and quantity of food consumed, whether an increase in carbohydrate and lower protein or eating less grain and fewer of meals or quantity of food served at every meal (Bauer and Mahama 2009). A poor diet, even if it only lasts one year, is detrimental for childbearing age women , especially when they are pregnant or breastfeeding. It is also harmful to their children, whose poor health due to poor diet causes additional problems for their mothers. It is expected that education, health and transport will be affected by higher food prices (Bauer and Mahama 2009). When we speak of remittances in the context of the crisis we tend to believe that it is only transfers from abroad. However, transfers of funds circulating within national borders are equally affected, especially for poor households (WFP, 2009, Bauer and Mahama 2009). The decrease in remittances is likely to exacerbate the problems of consumption within households, especially those headed by women.

The decline in economic growth and government revenue implications in the ability to cope with major commitments to social policy and this has a negative impact on households and their members. Budget cuts in response to the crisis will affect education and the provision of care and it is likely that the benefits of social development acquired by women are affected. Security

programs such as money transfers, food in exchange for labor, public works, health insurance and free basic education although more needed than ever could be reduced if the cut ODA place. This is due to the fact that most African countries depend on aid-funded social welfare programs.

A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) estimates that recession and reduced investment in agriculture as a result of the current crisis may push 16 million additional children dependent on their mothers into malnutrition by 2020 compared with the scenario under continued economic growth and maintained investments (von Braun 2008). This is consistent with the findings of earlier studies on the drastic impact on infant mortality rates: a one per cent contraction in per capita GDP during economic crises raises infant mortality between 0.18 and 0.44 deaths per 1,000 children born (Baird et al. 2007). Accordingly, at the current growth projections, estimates for Sub-Saharan Africa suggest that there will be 30,000–50,000 excess infant deaths in the aftermath of this current crisis, most of which are likely to be poorer children (born to women in rural areas and lower education levels) and overwhelmingly female (Friedman and Schady 2009). Women and children who constitute a large portion of the 10 million Kenyans facing hunger in Sub Saharan Africa, for example, were recently reported to walk as much as 15 kilometers in search of water and food on a daily basis.

The women migration can increase the prostitution rate. By the prostitution they are more vulnerable for AIDS and others health problem.

VI-Conclusion:

The recent global economic crisis has affected negatively developed countries and developing counties in many sectors. The impact was more important in Africa and on Agriculture that accounts for approximately 21% of the continent's GDP with 60-80% women labor that is used to produce food both for household consumption and for sale. Women generally own less land and the land they have is often of lower quality than the land owned by men. According to the International Development Research Centre, women in Africa only own 1 per cent of the land. Financial resources are limited for women: they receive 7 per cent of the agricultural extension services and less than 10 per cent of the credit offered to small-scale farmers. The global economic crisis has increase African Agriculture growth by affecting women life conditions. This is justify by Gender inequality has increasing, reductions of land and financial credit limited facilities, women agriculture non-employment rate augmentation, women revenue reduction (household income reduction) and women and child health problem increase. All this has affected the Agriculture growth that is key sector for African economic growth and maintains the food security for peoples well being.

VII- Recommendations

Face the impact of economic crisis on Africa agriculture growth (food production) which affect also African rural women, a news policies including women well-being issues are necessary :

🚩 Policies and efforts to strengthen the role of women in agriculture need of course to be

embedded into a broader strategy of rural development. Such a strategy should include reform of agricultural policies to strengthen the sector, and also reform of trade and tariffs. In addition, domestic subsidies, protective tariffs, and other trade barriers imposed by wealthy nations harm farmers in Africa and other poor developing nations. Investments are needed in rural infrastructure, education and social capital. Agricultural input and crop technologies should focus on land and natural resources conservation, while at the same time increasing agricultural productivity. Finally, dramatic increases in investment in agricultural research and extension are needed if any plan for food and nutrition security in Africa is to be successful.

- ✚ Strengthening the role of women in agriculture and ensuring decent work for a growing number of women is one step to help economies to get back on track. This would help to reach the MDG 1 on halving the share of poor people, and especially the newly introduced target on productive employment and decent work for all. And many of the measures that would be beneficial are not even costly to implement. The list of possible measures includes: increasing women's access to farming land and fertilizers, credit, and education; increasing women's participation in decision-making; and strengthening women's role within the family. All these measures are crucial to guaranteeing food security and improving the nutritional status of children.

- ✚ Women, agricultural productivity, and food imports:
In the longer term, governments in LDCs, especially Sub Saharan Africa, can address the problem both of gender inequality and balance of payments stresses by directing government funding toward resources for women farmers. Well-targeted expenditures will help women farmers increase their productivity, providing more food for families and reducing the demand for imports. Examples of ways to help women include expanding their access to credit (discussed in more detail below) and inputs, as well as technical assistance. This strategy has big payoffs. By some estimates, agricultural productivity would rise between 10-15% in a number of Sub-Saharan countries if women farmers' access to inputs, credit and technical assistance were equalized with men's.

- ✚ By increasing agricultural productivity, governments help to raise output and lower food prices. This reduces inflationary pressures and the demand for imports. The productivity benefits are not likely to be felt in the short run. However, this type of targeted expenditure that raises income over the medium to long run will be cost effective, generating tax revenues to cover the cost of public expenditures. Moreover, investments that benefit women farmers in the short run will raise their income, helping attenuate the other negative effects of the crisis that they will experience. At the same time, government policies that help to stabilize commodity price fluctuation can shield farmers from resulting income variability. Responses are required both at the international level, such as commodity price stabilization funds, and at the national level such as agricultural market boards, most of which were dismantled under structural adjustment programs.

- ✚ The suggested expenditures outlined here on the social infrastructure, aside from cushioning

women and children, have the added effect of contributing to long run health of the economy by raising productivity. That is, by directing public sector spending at job creation and social safety nets that protect women, governments are in effect financing development for the future, generating increased productive capacity. Seen in this way, social safety net spending has both short and long run benefits, serving as an investment in the country's social infrastructure and future productivity. In short, it is not only humanitarian. It makes good economic sense.

- ✚ Moreover, growth in agricultural productivity and food prices is important in determining, food security, wage levels and competitiveness in the economy as a whole. Without investments in agriculture there is a risk that higher food prices could eradicate five to 10 years of poverty reduction efforts.
- ✚ The growth potential of agriculture in Africa has been heavily enhanced in recent years by the improved economic and policy framework, high food prices, the promotion of biofuels and the rapid expansion of nontraditional, high-value exports such as horticulture. Success stories of non-traditional agricultural exports are transforming livelihoods and spurring growth.
- ✚ As such, cooperatives have a role to play in alleviating these shocks, and paving the way towards recovery that is socially and economically sound and sustainable. Where access to credit is becoming restricted, cooperatives can continue as providers of financial services. Where public service delivery is jeopardized as a result of crisis-induced cuts in funding and spending, cooperatives can play a bridging role as service providers (e.g. health cooperatives), while at the same time providing employment opportunities to women and men.

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Annex1: Table list

Table1. Sectoral share in employment, world and regions, females (%).....7

Annex2: Figure list

Figure 1a: Female employment in agriculture, by status, 1998-2008, North Africa (thousands)9
Figure 1b: Female employment in agriculture, by status, 1998-2008, Sub-Saharan Africa9

Annex3: Abbreviation list

GDP: Gross Domestic Product.....	3
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.....	5
FDI: Foreign Direct Investment.....	5
ILO: International Labor Organization.....	6
WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing.....	7
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals.....	9
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund.....	13
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organization.....	16
WFP: World Food Programme.....	16
ODA: Official development assistance.....	16
IFPRI: International Food Policy Research Institute.....	16
AIDS: Acquired immune deficiency syndrome.....	16
LDCS: Least Developed Country.....	18
IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development.....	18
ECA: Employment Conditions Abroad.....	19