

The status of women in agrifood systems report by FAO

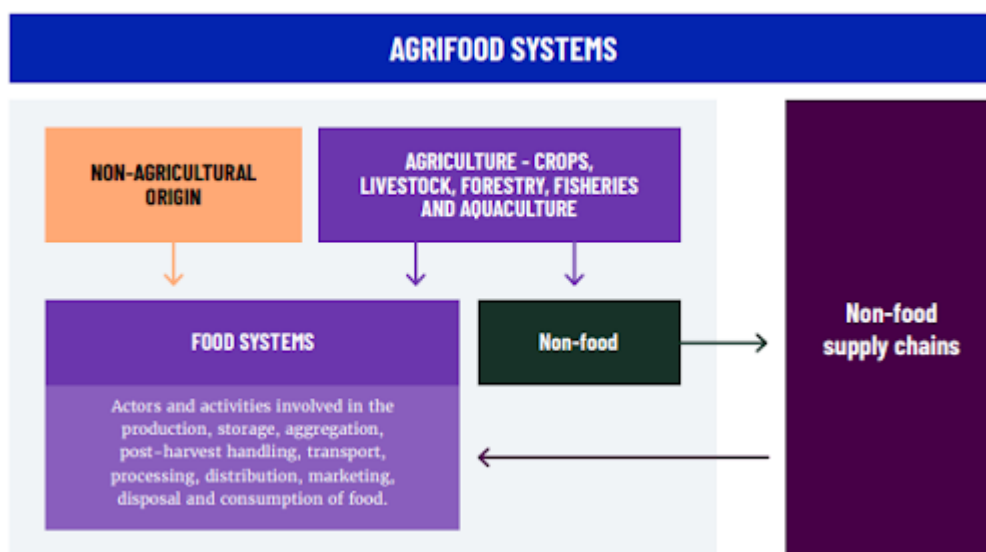
April 17, 2023

In news– Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has released a report on The status of women in agrifood systems recently.

About the report-

- The report is the **first of its kind since 2010** (*State of food and agriculture (SOFA) 2010–11: Women in agriculture – Closing the gender gap for development*).
- It **goes beyond agriculture to provide a comprehensive picture of the status of women working across agri-food systems** – from production to distribution and consumption.
- The status of women in agrifood systems was prepared by a team from the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP) of FAO.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework for agrifood systems



What does the report say?

- Agrifood systems are a major employer of both women and men. **Globally, 36 percent of working women are employed in agrifood systems**, along with 38 percent of working men.
- For both women and men, this represents a **decline of about 10 percentage points since 2005**, driven almost exclusively by a reduction in employment in primary agricultural production.
- **Globally, 21 percent of all workers in the fishery and aquaculture primary sector are women** and almost 50 percent of all workers in the entire aquatic value chain (including pre- and postharvest) are women.
- Female workers are significantly more likely than male workers to work part-time or in other vulnerable positions.
- **The gender gap in land productivity between female and male-managed farms of the same size is 24 percent.**
- Agrifood systems are a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries.
- **In sub-Saharan Africa, 66 percent of women's employment is in agrifood systems**, compared with 60 percent of men's employment.
- **In southern Asia, 71 percent of women in the labour force** work in agrifood systems versus 47 percent of men.
- **Women engaged in wage employment in agriculture earn 82 cents** for every dollar that men earn.
- **Men have greater ownership or secure tenure rights over agricultural land** than do women in 40 of 46 countries reporting on Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 5.a.1.
- The gender gap in women's access to mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries narrowed from 25 percent to 16 percent between 2017 and 2021, and the gender gap in access to bank accounts narrowed from 9 percentage

points to 6 percentage points.

- While 75 percent of policy documents relating to agriculture and rural development from 68 countries recognize women's roles and/or women's challenges in agriculture and rural development, only 19 percent included policy goals related to gender.
- **The gap in food insecurity between men and women widened** from 1.7 percentage points in 2019 to 4.3 percentage points in 2021.
- **Globally, 22 percent of women lost their jobs in the off-farm segment of agrifood systems in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic**, compared with only 2 percent of men.
- **Closing the gender gap in farm productivity and the wage gap in agrifood-system employment would increase global gross domestic product by 1 percent** (or nearly USD 1 trillion).
- This would reduce global food insecurity by about 2 percentage points, reducing the number of food-insecure people by 45 million.
- If half of small-scale producers benefited from development interventions which focused on empowering women, it would significantly raise the incomes of an additional 58 million people and increase the resilience of an additional 235 million people.
- A review of a portfolio of 13 agricultural development projects from nine countries in Africa and South Asia, the pro-Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) indicated that the programme's impacts on empowerment were mixed.
- The projects included combinations of crops, livestock and nutrition interventions to increase income and nutritional outcomes.