

CSW 66 side event

“Women’s time IS money”

- Climate change and unpaid care work impact on women’s profits in agriculture

Organized by:

UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office (UN Women ESARO)

Co-hosted by -UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Action

Date: 24 March 2022

Time: 3:00-4:30 p.m. Nairobi time

Venue: [Zoom webinar](#)

Background

The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) remains instrumental in promoting women’s rights, documenting the reality of women’s lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission takes a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), among others. The BDPfA identifies 12 critical areas to unlock gender equality and women’s empowerment, including “women and the environment”. In 2015, Member States also adopted the Sustainable Development Goal 13: “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”, crosscutting with all other SDGs, including SDG5 on gender equality. The sixty-sixth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) will be held in New York from 14 to 25th March 2022. This CSW is being organized under the priority theme: ***Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.***

Issue: Gender, climate change and unpaid care work in the East and Southern Africa Region

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is the region in the world most vulnerable to climate change¹. Rising temperatures, rising sea levels, and rainfall anomalies are increasing the frequency and intensity of natural disasters and are markedly transforming the region’s geography. Consequently, climate change has also emerged as a major threat on food security, agriculture, and livelihood of millions of people in SSA. Climate change is expected to make agricultural development in Africa more challenging due to reasons such as: most farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture, weather patterns becoming less favorable in many instances, increasing the volatility of crop and livestock yields among other issues. This will in turn have an impact on the economy of the region as agriculture remains one of the key economic activities of the region. There are intrinsic links between COVID-19 and climate change as climate change can indirectly

¹ <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/REO/AFR/2020/>.

affect responses to the pandemic, by undermining the environmental determinants of health and placing extra stress on health systems².

The adverse effects of climate change continue to overly burden the poorest and the most vulnerable, especially poor women. This is primarily because women are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. Furthermore, women represent more than half of the agricultural workforce in Africa and thus face social, economic, and political barriers that limit their coping capacities³. In many developing economies, women are charged with the responsibility to secure water, food, and fuel for cooking due to societal structures and gender roles that confine women and thus, they consequently face the greatest challenges when unfavorable weather conditions strike. When coupled with unequal access to resources and to decision-making processes, limited mobility in rural areas, this limits women to a position where they are disproportionately affected by climate change. Therefore, the discourse on gender and climate change is very relevant cognizant of the intersectionality that exist.

UN Women's work and rationale of side event

Gender-based inequalities in access to and control of productive and financial resources inhibit agricultural productivity and undermine resilience and sustainability efforts in an era where climate change is increasingly present. In 2021, UN Women ESARO and the UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Action (PEA) continued with a rollout of the studies on costing the gender gap in agricultural productivity in selected countries in sub-saharan Africa. The first was a quantitative study conducted in [Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda](#) in 2015 also in partnership with the World Bank, with similar studies conducted in [Ethiopia](#) and [Rwanda](#) in 2017. These studies provide estimates of the monetary value of the gender gap in agricultural productivity for each country and then calculate the costs associated with gender gaps in access to individual agricultural inputs. They also delineate how factors of production contribute to the overall gender productivity gap. To explain the drivers of the gender wage gap, UN Women and PEA also conducted a set of follow-up qualitative studies in 2017 in [Malawi, Tanzania](#) and [Uganda](#). These studies provide field level analysis of the factors in each country driving the gender gap in agricultural productivity and adoption of climate-resilient approaches. The 2021 studies will be focusing on Mozambique and Zimbabwe. UN Women and PEA further conducted [regional analysis](#) to summarize lessons on best practices in eradicating inequities in the agricultural sector emerging from the UN Women and PEA studies on the gender gap in agricultural productivity.

The studies note that gender-based inequalities in access to and control of productive and financial resources hold back agricultural productivity and undermine resilience and sustainability efforts. The constraints that rural women face have been comprehensively documented in other publications which have all convincingly validated that gender inequalities hold back agricultural growth, sustainability efforts and affect environmental management negatively. Therefore, interventions in the agriculture sector to mitigate climate change, increase food production, reduce poverty in rural areas cannot be successful without due attention in supporting women in the agricultural sector. This is more so not only for the

² <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/climate-change-link-infectious-diseases-covid-19-study/>

³ https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf

contribution of women in the sector but closing the gender gap in agriculture could be beneficial for women's economic empowerment, meeting societal food needs, improving rural economies, adaptation and resilience to climate change, and overall increasing economic growth of countries.

It is against this backdrop that UN Women ESARO and UNEP-UNDP-Poverty Environment Action are co-hosting a side event at the CSW 66 to substantively discuss ongoing initiatives, findings, and lessons of the series of studies and engage stakeholders on closing the gender earnings gap in agriculture and supporting women to adapt to climate change. The discussion will focus the quantitative and qualitative evidence on the gender-based inequalities in the climate smart agriculture and the implications on productivity and incomes of women and countries. Further discussion will also be on strategies that have the potential to increase agricultural productivity, adapt and mitigate climate change, lower women's unpaid agriculture and care work, increase access to decent employment and overall improve women's lives and their communities in Africa.

Objectives of the side event

The 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2022 will focus on "*Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*". UN Women ESARO proposes to host a side event and present on research, policy initiatives, provide an overview of the key trends in these reports and how they compare with patterns documented in other published studies. The discussions aim to share on important lessons and best practices in eradicating inequities in the agricultural sector and how this interlinks with practices that promote environment protection and resilience to climate change.

Due attention will be paid to the intersecting inequalities that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the forefront and its impact on agricultural productivity, climate resilience, burden of unpaid care work and overall effect on economic growth.

Expected results.

- To inspire discussion among relevant stakeholders on policy options aimed at closing the agricultural productivity gap between men and women and pursue interventions that provide linkage to climate change and environmental management.
- To present the findings and recommendations of the studies: *The Cost of Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Seven East and Southern Africa countries*
- To discuss selected good practices from country climate smart agriculture programmes;
- To leverage on ways of operationalizing the findings and recommendations of the studies in by exploring partnerships with interested stakeholders in further investment at national levels in closing the gender gap in agriculture productivity.

Audience: The side event will be a virtual interactive session in which technical experts, International Agencies, United Nations entities, academia, civil society organizations, National Statistical Offices, donors, country office teams and other stakeholders will network and engaged around solutions within the discourse.

Opening remarks

- Ms. Jemimah Njuki, UN Women Chief of Economic Empowerment Section, Headquarters Office
- Mr. Frank Turyatunga Regional Director OIC - United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Panelists

- Malawi Government
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Prof. Haroon Akram Lodhi-Study author
- Therese Gondwe- Women’s Economic Empowerment Specialist Malawi Country Office

Closing remarks

- Zebib Kavuma- Deputy Regional Director, UN Women East, and Southern Africa Regional Office

Moderator:

- Mehjabeen Alarakhia-Women’s Economic Empowerment Policy Specialist, UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office

Agenda

Venue: [Zoom webinar](#)

Date: **24 March 2022**

Time: **3:00-4:30 p.m.**

	Zoom link open
3:00-3:10 p.m.	<p>Opening Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jemimah Njuki, UN Women Chief of Economic Empowerment Section, Headquarters Office. ▪ Frank Turyatunga Regional Director OIC-UNEP
3:10-3:40 p.m.	<p>Presentation of the findings of the study.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Cost of Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in seven East and Southern Africa countries</i> Study Author -Prof. Haroon Akram Lodhi</p>
3:40– 4:25 p.m.	<p>Moderated discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therese Gondwe- Women’s Economic Empowerment Specialist Malawi Country Office • Malawi Government (name TBC) • Prof. Haroon Akram Lodhi-Study author • United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
4:25-4:30 p.m.	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Zebib Kavuma- Deputy Regional Director, UN Women East, and Southern Africa Regional Office</p>