

WOMEN GENDER CONSTITUENCY

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Submitted on behalf of the Women and Gender Constituency.

Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) submission on KJWA's topics "2(e) Improved livestock management systems, including agropastoral production systems and others" and "2(f) Socioeconomic and food security dimensions of climate change in the agricultural sector".

The Women and Gender Constituency welcomes the opportunity to submit its views and recommendations for the next Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture workshop. In light of the current pandemic and the impacts that it is having on agriculture, food security and sovereignty, small-scale farmers' livelihoods, and how it is exacerbating the existing gender inequalities, we would like to start the submission addressing this important issue.

It is first crucial to debunk the view of the coronavirus as a "natural disaster"¹. Scientists have long warned us about how the destruction of biodiversity and ecosystems creates the conditions for new viruses and other pathogens, and zoonotic diseases that can lead to pandemics. The environmental damages—such as depletion of soil nutrients, excessive chemicals and pesticide use, and many other unsustainable practices—due to massive clearing of forest lands for monocrop plantations, far outweigh the "benefits" it brings to corporate agriculture, and even less so for small-scale farmers, farm workers and women. The Covid-19 pandemic reminds us

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"Tip of the iceberg": is our destruction of nature responsible for Covid-19?

that our current food system is unsafe, unjust, and unsustainable because it involves massive ecosystem disruption².

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 135 million people³ struggling to access enough nutritious food, with a vast majority of them living in rural areas and highly dependent on seasonal agriculture, pastoralism and fishing, both for food and income. Now, Covid-19 is forcing countries and regions to significantly reduce high food import bill given the closure of borders and interruptions in global, national and local markets supply chains, and the effects of the lockdown are being felt in fresh produce markets and among the smaller farmers and sellers, who are locked out of value and supply chains with supermarkets. Small-scale farmers are being directly affected by the closure of street trading and informal markets, as well as the loss of outlets to the rich – a double whammy for the most vulnerable producers. For instance, in South Africa, nearly half of the households across the country already experienced hunger or insufficient nutritious daily food prior to the Covid-19 disaster announcements. With Covid-19, the disruptions of food production, value chains and access to food due to confinement measures to contain the spread have created much more enormous food and nutritional risks for already vulnerable households. Similar situations are taking place in many other countries around the world.

With climate change resulting in an increase of the frequency and strength of extreme weather events, the impacts on small-scale agriculture and farmers are being further exacerbated. Climate change continues to cause unprecedented adverse effects on agriculture where small-scale producers, especially women, are particularly impacted, and poses increasing challenges to maintain healthy crops and livestock, physical and psychological (or mental) health and social/cultural wellbeing, affecting families and communities' livelihoods all around the world.

Discussions about agriculture in a climate change context have long focused on massification and technological approaches to increasing unsustainable food production with insufficient consideration of how inequalities shapes access to land and other resources needed for productive, healthy, sustainable, and resilient livelihoods, particularly for women, and how climate change will exacerbate the existing unequal access to adequate nutritious food for all.

Recognizing and respecting land tenure and governance rights of rural, Indigenous and peasant communities, particularly women's rights to land, must be central to ensuring local livelihoods and food sovereignty. Safeguards for climate action in the agricultural sector have to ensure the environmental, socioeconomic and cultural integrity of any action and adherence to the principles of safety nets for healthy food systems' and food sovereignty based on social and environmental principles including ensuring gender equality and protection of human rights⁴. Therefore, food sovereignty, gender equality, agrobiodiversity and human rights should guide and underpin the KJWA's work.

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[COVID-19 pandemic: Statement by the Southern African People's Solidarity Network \(SAPSN\)](#)

³ [COVID-19: Our hungriest, most vulnerable communities face "a crisis within a crisis"](#)

⁴ CARE Org. CARE's 2016 submission to the UNFCCC regarding the SBSTA agriculture agenda

2(e) Improved livestock management systems, including agropastoral production systems and others

Women play a major role in agriculture, mainly in developing countries, and about 43% of the agricultural labor force are women. Livestock is the backbone for millions of people and rural communities' livelihoods worldwide, and it is estimated that for 600 million of the worlds' most vulnerable households, livestock farming is a vital source of income⁵. Rural women constitute two-thirds of low-income livestock keepers and an estimated 290 million women and girls depend on livestock farming to generate income⁶, being an important safety net, especially for pastoralist women, and providing a key source of food and income. The consequences of climate change on livestock and agropastoralism are both direct (e.g. when livestock dies due to drying land/water sources, fodder scarcity that leads to starvation and malnutrition, or killed during floods) and indirect (e.g. outbreaks of diseases, poor livestock market prices).

Traditionally, women in all their diversity, are often responsible for traditional livestock, small-scale eco-farming/agroecology and for providing healthy and sufficient food for their families and thus, policies and measures regarding small-scale agriculture, livestock farming, and climate change need to address the gender dimensions, the roots of gender inequality in the sector and fully respect the rights, role, knowledge, needs and aspirations of women, and indigenous peoples. We need the focus on methods and approaches that enhance the resilience of small-scale and family-level livestock farmers, taking into account gender aspects (such as gender roles, relations and different knowledge) and acknowledge the key role that agroecology and agropastoralism play in enhancing the resilience of agricultural systems and hence, for climate change mitigation and adaptation of women and communities. We need public policies that provide legal, economic, political and technological support to agropastoralism and traditional livestock practices, and in particular to women, including appropriate support to community-based initiatives that ensure local food production. The recognition of land tenure and governance rights of rural, Indigenous and peasant communities, including women's rights to land, has to be central to these policies and measures as one of the most effective ways to ensure local livelihoods and food sovereignty as well as halting and reversing large landowners and the increase of land concentration in the hands of a few. It is also key to promote and adopt policies that strengthen the role of women in decision-making regarding politics, land, production and food, and make visible the issue of gender in the area of food production systems, including small-scale livestock farming and pastoralism.

Traditional farming models are also greatly suffering from the expansion of the industrial unsustainable livestock production model and the subsidies and perverse incentives given by governments to this sector. It is important to differentiate between unsustainable intensive large-scale livestock and feedstock production, and agropastoralism and small-scale traditional

⁵ FAO. 2018. World Livestock: Transforming the livestock sector through the Sustainable Development Goals. Rome. 222 pp. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

⁶ FAO. 2012. Invisible Guardians - Women manage livestock diversity. FAO Animal Production and Health Paper No. 174. Rome, Italy.

livestock farming. The former is a key cause of social and gender injustices, as well as of environmental degradation and vicious treatment of animals. In many contexts, this production is worsening the already negative impacts of climate change on all agricultural production, including that of smaller-scale farmers and producers. Unsustainable industrial large-scale livestock production is a major cause of climate change, deforestation and biodiversity loss. For instance, in Latin America, industrial livestock and feedstock production is, by far, the main driver of deforestation. This model also triggers land degradation, rural depopulation, the depletion and pollution of water and soils, and has significant negative impacts on human health, both directly, through contamination with agrochemicals and inappropriate use of fertilizers, and indirectly, by providing unhealthy and unbalanced food. The current large-scale livestock and agroindustrial model has also failed to address persistent and often chronic malnutrition and starvation, especially amongst economically marginalized women and children in the global south.

In many cases, export-oriented large-scale agriculture and livestock production, supported by trade agreements and government subsidies, leads to corporatization and privatization of the land and resources, grabbing them from local communities and women. Most often occurring in the global south, this jeopardizes the local food security needs and local consumption, displaces community-based food systems, and creates a reliance on global food markets¹. It is often the case that women's agricultural work is concentrated on producing food for household consumption and local and domestic markets, whereas men are more engaged in export-oriented industrial, commercial food production. This model has also often worsened food inequalities and asymmetries because of the depletion of soil fertility, water sources and destruction of forest ecosystems, and forcefully evicted indigenous people from their territories and committed land grabbing, threatening the livelihoods of small-scale farmer, peasants and pastoralists, who must seek alternative livelihoods elsewhere.

In addition, overcrowding in factory farms can also become a breeding ground for the spread of new pathogens, contributing to zoonotic diseases, and for antibiotic resistance. Waste management systems of intensive livestock farms, like CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations) can also become even more problematic with the increasing impacts of climate change, having environmental impacts and risking people's health as it was proved when Hurricane Florence battered North Carolina causing, among many other things, the failure of the CAFO's waste management system which flooded and spilled into rivers⁷.

The solutions proposed by the large-scale and industrial livestock model, often relate to "sustainable" intensification and/or reduction in emissions intensity per kilogram of meat and/or dairy production. These are, of course, flawed solutions in a context that does not consider the number of kilograms when consumption increases, and hence currently, there is not such a thing as "sustainable intensification". These solutions are also blind to the need of reducing meat and dairy consumption and achieve more balanced diets as a way to improve human health, address animal welfare issues and mitigate a range of environmental problems. It is therefore crucial to promote conscious and responsible consumption, including awareness of

⁷ [The Storm Moved on, But North Carolina's Hog Waste Didn't](#)

the need to reduce meat and dairy consumption, and to inform consumers of the health and environmental impacts of consuming factory farmed meat while promoting the consumption of locally sourced food, addressing North and South dynamics (i.e. social, economic, environmental implications). In this context, we need to continue documenting and exposing the industry, the consequences that factory-farmed meat can have and the impacts of excessive meat and dairy consumption on soil degradation, loss of biomes, including deforestation and biodiversity loss, pollution of fresh water and on human health.

On the other hand, the benefits of agropastoralism and small-scale livestock farming are many and these are systems that combine expertise with traditional knowledge and where livestock performs several functions such as providing food, fertilizer and natural manure, cash income, fuel and restoring carbon soil; importantly, it also contributes to sociocultural and community cohesion. Therefore, it is important to promote and adopt policies and measures that address livestock and recognize the difference between the aforementioned agroindustrial model and a subsistence/small-scale one and climate change, and that address the social, gendered, health, environmental and cultural impacts of unsustainable livestock production and consumption, including through regulatory frameworks. We need active mechanisms that promote agroecology and traditional livestock farming to strengthen some of its aspects⁸.

Traditional livestock farming also contributes to a diverse gene pool and locally adapted livestock breeds that are better adapted to local environmental conditions and hence they get sick less often, requiring fewer nutritional supplements, medicines and antibiotics. In this context, climate resilient animal husbandry is key, and it includes, among others, grazing and pasture management, herd mobility, fodder production and feed management, animal breeding, animal and herd management, disease control and feeding strategies and resource use efficiency. Some examples of adaptation and mitigation strategies in traditional livestock farming include ecosystem-based grassland management, rotational grazing, production and conservation of improved forage and legume seeds, better herd and manure management.

There is still a gap between customary norms, traditional conservation practices and scientific perspectives that has to be bridged. Collaboration between these two complementary types of knowledge is essential to transform production and consumption, and to improve small-scale/subsistence livestock management systems. The need to generate more knowledge and a clearer connection at all levels between pastoralism, sustainable livestock farming, climate change, health, traditional knowledge, gender inequality, biodiversity loss and deforestation persists.

“2(f) Socioeconomic and food security dimensions of climate change in the agricultural sector”.

⁸ [Industrial meat production: reshaping the world in its own image Perspectives from the Global South and the path to an alternative model of sustainable livestock farming](#)

There are many interactive processes that determine and influence the dynamics of world food demand and supply: agro-climatic conditions, land resources and their management are clearly a key component, but they are in turn critically affected by distinct socio-economic pressures, including current and projected trends in population growth, availability and access to technology and development climate change impacts on agro-climatic resources, potential arable land and related changes in crop production patterns.

The consideration of socio-economic dimensions of climate change in the agricultural sector requires a rigorous examination of the role of inequality, especially gender inequality, poverty and other power imbalances in driving vulnerability to climate change, hunger and access to resources (inputs, land, information, markets & decision-making). The vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change have to consider the need to strengthen food systems approaches to improve food security, sovereignty and livelihoods for smallholder and family farmers. Small-scale food producers, and particularly women, face challenges in accessing critical resources, like credit, land and extension services and also often lack access to decision-making power, meaning that they are not at the table when priorities are set, solutions identified and/or resources allocated, often overlooking their needs, rights and aspirations.

The consideration of the food security dimensions requires going beyond productivity, a change of paradigm, from food security to food sovereignty, and to consider the role of food systems not only for livelihoods but also for the well-being which includes health and nutrition. Feeding and nourishing a growing and changing global population in the face of very high numbers of chronically hungry people, slow progress on malnutrition, environmental degradation, systemic inequality, and the dire projections of climate change, demand a transformation in global food systems, including dietary shifts to promote nutrition and the sustainability of quality food production and security under climate change.

Within this context, tackling gender inequality in food systems is a prerequisite for transformation. Gender inequality and patriarchy runs deep in the food systems, with men and women playing different roles, experiencing climate impacts differently, and articulating different priorities. Available resources are also not divided equally between women and men (or between girls and boys). As we mentioned before, women tend to have less access to and control over resources such as income, land titles, non-land assets, information, education, technologies, transport, public services, etc. There is a need to include gender assessments and gender disaggregated data in the context of agriculture and climate change that analyze women's and men's ability to access, have power and control over resources including tangible (land, water, livestock, money), intangible (family network, collective solidarity, information, political clout) and human (labor, skills, knowledge) resources. The distinction between accessing resources and exercising power and control over them is crucial as well because even though having access to resources is a necessary condition for women's empowerment, it is not sufficient; women have to have the control over these resources and be effectively and equally involved in decision-making processes around them.

⁹In addition, we cannot ignore the socioeconomic impacts that free trade agreements such as the EU-Mercosur FTA and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) have. These agreements favor large-scale livestock and agribusiness models in detriment of peasants, pastoralists and small-scale producers, including in particular women, and should not be endorsed and ratified by governments. Often, trade liberalization and agreements have gendered impacts including where agricultural sectors are highly gender-sensitive in the composition of the workforce. Such impacts include increasing or decreasing market participation of women (which is anyhow often characterized by low wages and bad working conditions) and reduction of public revenue from low tariffs that decrease provision of social services that women often rely on¹⁰. Governments have to address the contradictions between their policies and ambitions in the field of climate change and agriculture, including livestock and feedstock, gender equality and their policies in the field of international trade and investment. In addition to stopping these types of agreements, government incentives, tax regimes and subsidies that support unsustainable production must be eliminated. It is essential to generate more knowledge as well as accountability about the role of banks in agribusiness', identify the companies involved, and promote policies for higher taxation on unhealthy foods and less on agroecological and traditional production. We also need measures to encourage local food production to mitigate the threats to food security and sovereignty, and they must include women and small-scale farmers throughout the supply chain, from primary production to marketing and sale of produce and products. Corporatization of agriculture and the promotion of large-scale industrial agriculture at the expense of women farmers, pastoralists and indigenous people has to stop. Agroecology has to be considered as it delivers multiple co-benefits (retaining agrobiodiversity, avoiding the utilization of chemical fertilizers and enabling food sovereignty and socioeconomic justice) and is practiced in family farming. The KJWA should acknowledge that large-scale ecosystem restoration is an essential element of effective 1.5C pathways and to build resilience for everyone.

Increasing and strengthening grassroots alliances is also a keyway to encourage and support associations among small producers for production and trade (cooperatives and other forms) and to establish mechanisms to connect producers and consumers; governments should help subsidize this. We also need to increase and implement climate innovation technologies such as solar panels and other sources of renewable energy that promote autonomous or off-the-grid systems, and early warning systems that are easily accessible and manageable by women and communities, and away from corporate techno fixes that do not respect the precautionary principle.

The international community has long focused on climate change mitigation, but the issue of adaptation is equally pressing and must be put on the agenda at the international and national

⁹ [Günther Fischer, Mahendra Shah, Francesco N. Tubiello and Harrij van Velhuizen](#)
Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences Vol. 360, No. 1463, Food Crops in a Changing Climate (Nov. 29, 2005), pp. 2067-2083

¹⁰ [Trade and Gender: What does the new TPPA means for women in developing countries? Arrow thematic papers, 2018](#)

levels. This is of critical importance mainly for many developing countries that have contributed little to climate change and yet, they will bear the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change, including impacts on food systems agriculture and their possibility to feed themselves and their families'. Any work to assess the benefits of adaptation and resilience in the agricultural sector should include the loss and damage caused by climate change focusing on redress and the financial compensations that should be paid to the countries that suffer it and the costs accrued in adaptation to climate change in the agricultural sector. Taking into consideration the vulnerability of agriculture to climate change and the approaches to address food security and sovereignty, methods and approaches for assessing adaptation, adaptation co-benefits and resilience, we call for a gender responsive, ecosystem based, community driven, participatory and fully transparent approach to climate change adaptation and resilience.

Lastly, we recommend the KJWA to develop general guidelines for action in the agriculture sector, particularly to reflect the focus of the KJWA on vulnerabilities of agriculture and socio-economic and food security and sovereignty dimensions. Parties should also use the KJWA to examine power imbalances in agriculture, how those imbalances constrain scaling up of sustainable agriculture and agroecology, access to resources for adaptation, and how policy and practices can address them.

