



African Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture Support Program (GCCASP)

**Proceeding of Conference of Women in
Agriculture. Investing in African Women:
Opening the Space for Agribusiness**

A program of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency with the support of the Norwegian Government

October 2014, Durban, Republic of South Africa

Key Messages:



“The necessity to undertake cultural transformation and provide a favorable financial infrastructure to support and empower women in agriculture is critical for African economic development” His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini



“Enabling women to engage meaningfully in agribusiness will enhance agricultural productivity, economic growth and social justice which in turn assist in achieving food security, reducing poverty and ensuring social security at family, community and national level.” H.E Zenebu Tadesse – Minister for Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Federal



“Our resolve is reinforced not only by the challenges, but also the opportunities, as a result , there is a need to practice agriculture differently, innovatively and in a more gender responsive manner, to improve women’s role as important actors in the rural economy.” Mrs. Estherine Fotabong, Director of NEPAD –Planning and Coordinating Agency



“There is a need to assisting low income and resource-poor women farmers to improve subsistence production and explore strategies for linking them to food value chains in national and regional markets in Africa.” Ms. Bodil Maal, Representative of NORAD



“Women are definitely ready to take up the challenges but only need consistent and unflinching concrete support for them to make things happen.” Dr. Martha Mbatha, Chairperson of the Agribusiness Development Agency



Conference for Women in Agriculture
"Investing in African Women: Opening the space for Agri Business"
October 9-10, Durban, South Africa



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NPCA also wishes to extend its appreciation to H.E Zenebu Tadesse, Minister for Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA), Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, for her devotion in advocating for the betterment of the life of disadvantaged people in Africa and for her strategic support and contribution to the success of this conference.

NPCA is particularly indebted to and takes pride in the African intellectuals and practitioners who made the lead presentations, facilitated the strategic dialogue and contributed as panelists, which provided the knowledge base for well-informed deliberations.

We would like to extend our genuine thanks to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for supporting the conference. In this regard, our special thanks go to a dependable partner Ms. Bodli Maal for her contributions to the success of the conference.

NPCA would also like to appreciate the support and participation of the Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA), and the Chairperson of the Board Dr Martha Mbatha. Our gratitude also go to all those who participated in the conference for honoring our invitations and actively taking part in generating ideas and sharing their useful experiences.

We would like to put on record our appreciation to GeoSAS Consulting Service Plc. and its staff members for their professional support and for their relentless efforts in the preparation of this proceeding report.

Finally, NPCA would like to thank its staff members for their hard work and dedication in the organization and successful undertaking of this conference. In particular, the staff include: Ms Estherine Fotabong, Mr Martin Bwalya, Ms Edna Kalima, Mr Kwame Ababio, Mr Vincent Oparah, Mr Symerre Grey-Johnson, Mr Abraham Sarfo, Dr Justina Dugbazah, Ms Eliane Koko Ngnasoke, Mr Teko Nhlapho, Ms Millicent Seganoe, Mr Collen Moyo and Mr Mohammed Abdisalam.

1. BACKGROUND

Agriculture is the economic and inclusive development backbone of most African economies. On average, it contributes 30 to 40% of gross national products, accounts for as much as 60% of total export earnings, employs 70 to 80% of the total labour force, and provides over 50% of household food needs and an equivalent share of income in sub-Saharan Africa, where the reliance on agriculture is the highest. Smallholder farmers dominate African agriculture and women constitute the majority of smallholder farmers in the continent. Within the value chain, women are responsible for up to 80% of food production, 60% of the harvesting, 80% of food storage and transport from fields to villages, 100% of the processing of basic foodstuffs, and 60% of marketing activities. In addition to being the major participants in agricultural production, women are responsible for numerous household chores.

Women's engagement in the agricultural sector however, comes under constrained circumstances. The constraints come from different sources broadly categorized under policy and institutional challenges as well as constraints with regards to culture and intra-household power relations and access to services. More so, environmental and climate change challenges are posing a great threat to African agriculture as the bulk of African agriculture is rain-fed. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, rain-fed agriculture is estimated to account for over 90% of the total food production. Consequently, agriculture in Africa is highly vulnerable to climate variability and extreme weather events.

The 2012 consultation workshop report of the NEPAD Gender Climate Change Agriculture Support Programme (GCCASP) in five participating countries of Ethiopia, Cameroon, Malawi, Niger and Rwanda identified challenges at strategic and practical levels. At the strategic level, there is neglect of women's needs and priorities in agricultural policies and plans. There is also very low access to land among rural women. Similarly, rural women have low level of representation and participation in decision making within formal and informal institutions and generally these women have very low status in society. In terms of services or practical needs level, there are serious challenges in accessing financing, agricultural extension services, technologies including inputs as well as limited market access to opportunities. The problem is exacerbated by unfavorable existing gender inequalities and gender-based division of labor which tends to disadvantage women farmers.

In the same vein, it is worth noting that women's roles along the value chain are limited mostly to primary production and small-scale marketing of produce; without being integrated comprehensively into other sectors of the value chain, including high value activities like commercial processing, logistic management, retailing and linkages to international market. Nevertheless, the important role that African women smallholder farmers play in agriculture is inevitable and there is need to link them to agribusiness opportunities.

2014 is a very important year for it is a landmark year for the African Union – 10 years of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Year of African Agriculture and Food Security. The International Community is also celebrating the

International Year for Family Farming. This is a demonstration of the recognition given by all stakeholders of the importance of agriculture and specifically the role of African smallholder farmers of whom the majority are women and are critical in the development of African countries and the continent as a whole.

At the 23rd Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea (June 2014), a concern was raised that there is limited progress made in agro-industries and agribusiness development, which hampers value addition and competitiveness of African products in trade at local, regional, and international levels; and this undermines the potential of the agriculture sector in transformation and generation of gainful employment opportunities for the growing African youth and women. The Summit reaffirmed its resolve to achieve the goals as provided in the 2010 Abuja Declaration on Development of Agribusiness and Agro-Industries in Africa. Again, it was reaffirmed to resolve towards ensuring, through deliberate and targeted public support, that all segments of our populations, particularly women, the youth, and other disadvantaged sectors of our societies, must participate and directly benefit from the growth and transformation opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods.

In the Malabo Declaration decision 1V commitment to halving poverty by the year 2025, through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation, it was also resolved to support and facilitate preferential entry and participation of women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities.

From the aforementioned, it is important to note that African women smallholder farmers need to be fully supported to not only improve their production but also engage in effective and successful agribusiness activities that will benefit them economically and socially. This implies that women farmers are also to be supported for post harvesting activities which may include processing (value addition), sales and marketing, and distribution and linkages to regional and international markets.

It is against this backdrop that the Conference for Women in Agriculture was organized with the theme *“Investing in African Women: Opening the Space for Agribusiness.”*

2. CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this Conference was to engage with various stakeholders on what is needed to open space for agribusiness in African smallholder women farmers.

Specifically, the following were the objectives of the conference:

- Policy dialogue to facilitate awareness raising, consultations and the exchange of perspectives among women in business, policy makers, agribusiness entrepreneurs, small holder farmers, experts and practitioners on integrating women in agribusiness at the national, regional and international levels;
- To support the capacity building and empowerment of women in agriculture through the identification of appropriate policies, training needs and technologies, including ICT, essential to link women entrepreneurs to the market;

- Review best practice – lessons and insights on functioning financing mechanisms which have made relevant provisions on aspects such as collateral, insurance, fiscal policies to ensure women access to investment financing.
- Capacity building and training of smallholder African women and women entrepreneurs on key aspects of agribusiness including, agriculture value chain concepts and analysis, starting up of businesses, micro-financing, transformation technologies on products and marketing.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE CONFERENCE

- A decision to establish a fund for supporting women smallholder farmers in Agribusiness activities
- Establish a platform/forum for showcasing best practices of women in agribusiness including facilitation of organizational development for women agribusiness entities
- Agreed on a set of practical interventions to stimulate and facilitate expansion in the numbers of young women entrepreneurs engaged in agribusiness activities within the GCCASP

4. CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE

4.1. Conference Organization

The Conference was organized in such a way that the opening ceremony involved the delivery of introductory and welcome speeches, statements by development partner and AU member states representative. Subsequently, opening remarks were made by His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini. This was followed by Key Note Address - “The Role and Position of Women in Agribusiness Development.” Two Panel presentations, one on “Policies and Institutional Considerations for Empowering Women in Agribusiness” and the other “Women in Agriculture: Technologies and Financing Innovations for Agribusiness Development” were made to set the scene for Conference. After each presentation, reflections were made by selected panelists assisted by session facilitator, which were followed by plenary discussions. Most of the time of the second day was devoted to parallel training-cum-group discussions on concepts of value chain, business development consideration as related to “Technologies and Financing Innovations for Agribusiness Development” strategic panel dialogue. The training sessions was set to create awareness on agribusiness, build capacity and empower women not only to focus on agriculture production but also focus on agribusiness activities that would improve their standards of living. The final plenary was focused on summary points of individual group chair’s note. In addition, there was a side event where women in Agribusiness who came from Cameroon and Ethiopia show cased their products and explained their business situations. The conference was concluded by making a ‘*call to action*’.

4.2. Participants of the Conference

The participants invited to this conference included: AUC representatives, policy makers, women small holder farmers and farmer group representatives, Leading Women Agribusiness Practitioners and Experts, Academia, Researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations, UN Women, Development Partners including NORAD, Private Sectors, and Government Ministries of Agriculture, Gender and Environment. All in all a total of 113 participants participated in the conference drawn from the above indicated organizations.

5. OPENING SESSION

5.1 Introduction of the Conference –By Mrs. Estherine Fotabong – NEPAD Agency

Mrs. Fotabong, started her introduction with greetings and observing the protocol. She welcomed all participants to the conference and thanked His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini for taking time of his busy schedule to grace the occasion and showing his solidarity and leadership for African developmental agenda as usual. She noted that the year 2014 was declared by the African Union as the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security, and is also the International Year for Family Farming.

She recalled that in all the commemorative events that were organized throughout the year, there was a strong acknowledgment that African Smallholder farmers are critical players in the continent's efforts to end hunger and attain food and nutrition security.



Mrs. Estherine Fotabong, Director of NEPAD Agency

She reemphasized the role that women play both as producers of food, managers of natural resources, income earners, and caretakers of household provisions, as well as nutrition security. She then highlighted that NEPAD Agency wants to join forces with relevant stakeholders to influence the formulation, financing, implementation and monitoring of gender responsive agricultural policies and interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this connection, she outlined the opportunities for inclusiveness of women in agribusiness in Africa noting that gender equity and women's empowerment is among its key strategic objectives in agriculture, agri-business, climate change and rural development for the next four years.

Mrs. Fotabong noted that the NEPAD Agency considers that agriculture and agri-business in African countries is a sector of exceptionally high impact in terms of its potential to reduce poverty. Therefore, she said, closing the gender gap in agriculture and agri-business is of priority to the NEPAD Agency, since it works in partnership with member states, farmers, development partners and civil society to promote equal access to resources and opportunities, to ensure that policies and programmes are gender-responsive, and to make women's voices heard as equal partners for increased agricultural productivity, food security and sustainable development.

5.2 Statement by Development Partner - Ms. Bodil Maal

Ms. Bodil Maal, representative of NORAD, made reference to the Malabo declaration that underlines the limited progress made in agro-industries and agribusiness development, the need to put smallholder agriculture at centre-stage to reduce poverty in African countries. She also pointed out the projected escalating demand for processed and convenience foods in many regions of African urban centers. In her speech, she underscored the need to assisting low income and resource-poor women farmers to improve subsistence production and explore strategies for linking food producing smallholder farmers, who mostly are women, to food value chains in national and regional markets in Africa.



Ms. Bodil Maal

She also emphasized the need to pay attention to assess what can be learnt from experience and impacts of different types of partnership on small holder farmers, such as public-private partnerships, farmer's cooperative-private partnership and private-private partnerships.

5.3 Statement by Chairperson of the Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA) -Dr. Martha Mbatha



Dr. Martha Mbatha

Dr. Martha Mbatha, chairperson of the Agribusiness Development Agency in her brief statement extended her sincere gratitude to NEPAD for the opportunity given to her to speak on behalf of the Agribusiness Development Agency and welcoming all the participants. She said women are definitely ready to take up the challenges but only need consistent and unfailing concrete support for them to make things happen. Her speech appeared short but she conveyed the key message that was more focused.

5.4 Statement by AU Member State- H.E Zenebu Tadesse – Minister for Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Ethiopia

H.E Zenebu Tadesse, at the outset cordially thanked NEPAD on behalf of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs and on her own behalf for being invited to make a statement on such prestigious event and for its continued endeavors for the advancement of Africa and upliftment of its people.

H.E in her statement:

- Questioned the puzzle of seeing throughout Africa’s farmlands, marketplaces and homes - a scene of multitasked industrious women living in a quagmire of poverty in a sector considered as the backbone of most African economies, as the poorest, most disadvantaged, disempowered and unrecognized segment of society.



H.E Zenebu Tadesse

- Inquired on why African women who account to a large proportion in agriculture, which is the main stay of the economy of countries, live in such poor conditions? She responded to the question that this is because their produce and efforts are not sufficiently rewarded with economic benefits and social recognition.

H.E. Zenebu stressed that:

- Africa cannot make any meaningful socio-economic progress unless it has undergone agricultural transformation, with the participation, benefit and the empowerment of women.
- Enabling women to engage meaningfully in agribusiness will enhance agricultural productivity, economic growth and social justice which in turn assist in achieving food security, reducing poverty and ensuring social security at family, community and national levels.
- We must work to solve problems which are basically linked to deficient policy and legal frameworks, institutional limitations, inaccessibility of services and gender inequality.
- This conference “Investing in African Women: Opening Space for Agribusiness” is indeed a great opportunity for us to thoroughly deliberate on issues and identify strategic and pragmatic measures which African nations will apply to bring a real difference into the lives of women engaged in agriculture and agribusiness.

H.E Zenebu Tadesse concluded by expressing her optimism that it is through the unwavering commitment and zealous efforts of all concerned and full participation of women, that we will be able to see in the foreseeable future, socio-economically empowered women throughout Africa’s farmlands, homes and market places.

5.5 Opening Remarks- His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini

His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini, started his opening speech by highlighting the role that agriculture play in African economy, and its associated weakness with reflection to post political independence economy building. The king then underscored the important role women play in agriculture and limitations imposed on women farmers range from cultural stereotypes to limited access to resources.

His Majesty has also pointed out underlying issues and convictions including:

- If a solution to women marginalization can be found, then the African continent would take a huge step to meaningful economic development
- The need to see agriculture more than a means for food security but also as business undertaking
- The need to put in place an enabling policy and institutional frameworks for women



Opening Remark by His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini

to engage in agri-business

- The necessity to undertake cultural transformation and provide a favorable financial infrastructure to support and empower women
- The critical need of addressing issue of disproportionate impacts of climate change on women in agriculture

Finally his majesty the king welcomed all participants to Durban and to the whole of the Zulu Kingdom and expressed his sincere hope that the deliberations in this conference will come out with better strategies for empowering women in agriculture and agribusiness.

6. KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Mrs. Estherine Fotabong, Director of the NEPAD Agency, in her key note remarks on the theme of “**The Role and Position of women in Agribusiness Development**”, underscored that:

- The Year 2014 is designated as the African Year for Agriculture and Food Security, and the International Year for Family Farming. She noted that in all the commemorative events African Smallholder farmers are recognized as critical players in the efforts to attain Food and Nutrition Security.



Mrs. Estherine Fotabong,
Director of the NEPAD

- Agriculture plays a significant role as the main stay of economy and source of employment and livelihoods for the large population in Africa. The sector however, is underperforming in part because women, who are an important resource in agriculture and the rural economy, face constraints that reduce their productivity.
- In terms of challenges facing women in agriculture in Africa, Mrs. Estherine Fotabong highlighted the key findings of the assessment undertaken under the GCCASP, NPCA's ongoing program, including:
- Women in the rural areas do not have the rights or title over productive resources, such as land. Their contributions to agriculture and rural development are seldom noticed, they have either no or minimal role in the decision-making process regarding agricultural development and have poor or limited

access to extension services.

- Rural women face restricting influence of some cultural practices and religion
- They are rarely connected with agricultural export crops such as cocoa, cotton and groundnuts.
- Women's access to formal credit sources such as bank loans remains extremely low compared to men's due to lack of regular income, inability to guarantee the loans and limited access to information

She also pointed out key considerations for changing such situations, among others, the need for:

- Recognizing rural women farmers' contributions to agriculture and rural development as well as food security.
- Finding a new and innovative way of addressing the problems that bring about significant impacts in transforming the situation of rural women.
- Building capacity of rural women and women in agribusiness in the development of new business and value addition.
- Improving rural and agribusiness women's access and empowerment to lands, inputs (improved seeds, breeds, tools, techniques and machines), credits, markets and policy making processes supported with affirmative actions (including incentives) to support and build capacity of women in agribusiness in knowledge and skill acquisition.
- Ensuring equality of women by transformation in the way governments devise budgets, make and enforce laws and policies with the aim of including trade and agricultural policies that will engender small and medium enterprises businesses.

- Eliminating all the structural, cultural, social and economic barriers that prevent rural women from participating fully in the economic and political life of their countries.

She further underlined the necessity for:

- “Sustaining the CAADP Momentum: the CAADP 10-year results framework”; upholding the Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods” and adherence to its decision 1V, commitment to halving poverty, by the year 2025, through Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation.

Regarding, opportunities for Inclusiveness of Women in Agribusiness in Africa, Mrs. Fotabong pinpointed out that:

- The NEPAD Agency posits that agriculture and agri-business in African countries is a sector of exceptionally high impact in terms of its potential to reduce poverty and closing the gender gap and for increased agricultural productivity, food security and sustainable development.

Mrs. Estherine Fotabong finally concluded that:

- Our resolve is reinforced not only by the challenges confronting Africa at this time, but also the opportunities now opened to her as a result of structural shifts in the global economy.
- There is a need, however, to practice agriculture differently, innovatively and in a more gender responsive manner, and to engage in agriculture as a business and not only as a means to reduce poverty and making strong commitments to improve women’s role as important actors in the rural economy.
- She culminated her key note remark by reaffirming the commitment of the NEPAD Agency to promoting gender equality, women’s empowerment and sustainable development in Africa and thanking the participants in advance for their active participation and looked forward to fruitful deliberations at the conference.

7. PANEL DISCUSSION- STRATEGIC DIALOGUE - PLENARY

7.1 Panel 1: Policies and Institutional Considerations for Empowering Women in Agribusiness

The panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Justina Dugbazah who commenced her moderation by raising salient issues on which the overall theme of the conference is based. In her remarks she indicated that:

- Women have a big role as an economic player in the agricultural sector which needs to be accounted for in economic delivery equation
- Agriculture cannot be considered in isolation from Agribusiness. Agribusiness should be an integral part of agriculture.
- Women face a lot of challenges when we look into their role in agricultural production, processing and marketing and looking at agribusiness as a constituent of that.

She then reminded the participants that a lot have been said in several literatures and various forums about the challenges women farmers and women in agribusiness have been facing of which will be revisited in the lead presentations and subsequent discussions. However, she said, the purpose of this conference is to give focus on the concrete need and come up with pragmatic solutions that can help set the pace for developing interventions for women in agriculture and women in agri-business. Therefore, she stressed that we should keep an eye on the solutions and the interventions that we need both at policy and programmatic level. With this note, she called up on Prof Peter N Ewang to deliver his lead presentation.

Prof. Ewang started by introducing the content of his presentation which includes the role agriculture plays in the economy, the part women holds in the sector and the constraints they face, agribusiness as a revitalizer for women development and the part that the Government and the private sector should play. In his lead presentation, Prof Ewang highlighted many issues and challenges that provided central elements to the conference discussions, which are highlighted as follows.

Prof Ewang started his presentation by noting that the subject identified for discussion is critical to African people and specially is a key strategic issue to women farmers and those engaged in agribusiness, in view of the role they play in the agricultural production and



Prof Peter N Ewang, Dr Justina Dugbazah, Ms Bodil Maal, Ambassador Sheila Sisulu and Ms Yassine Fall

marketing. He noted that sub-Saharan African Agriculture is at crossroads and we are at a point where deliberate decisions must be made to address these crossroads. In this

connection, he noted that in the coming decades, African agriculture will need to undergo major changes to meet the food demands of a growing urbanized population. He reminded African heads of state's recognition of the issue that brought the continent's agriculture into public and political discourses through the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) initiative. This programme was an African initiative launched in 2009 which gave space for agriculture sector as a strategic industry for African development, which have registered positive strides in the sector.

He also noted on the dilemma that, the agricultural sector in most countries has withered; making African countries net importers of food, despite the fact that it employs the majority of the population. Prof. Ewang noted that in most African States agriculture is mainly subsistence-based, made of small-holder farms who have the lowest yield in the world. He pointed out that this is a reflection of the resources that have been diverted from the sector. To reverse this trend, he stressed the need to reinvest in agriculture for ensuring food security, improvement of livelihoods, development of private sector and national economic growth.

Prof. Ewang indicated that agricultural development is complex in nature and associated with a number of challenges. He then noted that women farmers play a vital role in food production and food security. He further highlighted the critical role women play in agriculture as producers, and local marketers but lack visibility of their contribution in agriculture and national development in general.

He further highlighted the impediments to women's empowerment noting their critical lack of access to decision making processes, their low participation in local governance, as well as their limited access to technology inputs and credit. He underscored that land tenure is another stumbling block to women's full access and control of land and the agricultural output.

Prof. Ewang underlined that the general constraints faced by women farmers are: limited access and control of land, lack of on-farm infrastructure, lack of access to finance for production inputs, lack of access to mechanization, transport, logistics, extension and research support and limited access to high value markets. He highlighted the role agribusiness has as a revitalizer for women development. Here, he pointed out that agribusiness and agro-industrial development has tremendous potential to poverty reduction and improved social outcomes, there by stimulating economic growth and contributing to sustainable development.

Prof. Ewang noted that despite the observed economic growth in recent years, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day has increased by 93 million during the same period. The achievement of the MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa has been constrained by two factors he stressed: firstly, most countries have not met the required GDP growth rate to reach the MDG1 target. Secondly, labour absorption and employment intensity have been low due to a concentration of growth in some capital-intensive extractive sectors.

In his presentation, Prof. Ewang detailed the role the government and private sector should play to rejuvenate agribusiness. Prior to that, he pointed out that the pace of change in agribusiness, agro-food and agro-industrial markets around the world is accelerating rapidly

and that if Africa is to benefit from these changes; its agro-industry needs to undergo a structural transformation.

In this connection, he underlined that transformation of the entire agribusiness sector requires increasing the productivity of activities at each stage of the different agriculture-based value chains, while simultaneously improving coordination among these stages. Improved vertical coordination is critical to achieve the timely flow of productivity-enhancing inputs to farmers and of quality agricultural raw materials to agro-industry. At the same time, production must be closely aligned with the rapidly evolving demands of consumers. Furthermore, he highlighted for the re-introduction of price support systems, input subsidies for agricultural inputs, more support to small-holder farmers, support to agricultural research to foster the production of locally relevant knowledge.

He went on recommending that agricultural extension should be treated as a strategic institution and serve women farmers. Government strategies should purposefully designed for strengthening agribusiness that would benefit women and informed by critical differences in gender equality. In general, policies must address critical elements for sustainable agricultural development: Human capital skills development, production consistency for market by increasing access to production resources, address the high transaction issues coursed by poor infrastructure and communication services, improve support for on-farm infrastructures post-harvest storage and processing facilities.

In a nutshell, prof. highlighted that key factors that governments should focus on: firstly, rising global interest in farmland by multi-national, climate change - improving policies on land and water resource management, equalizing access to productive resources between female and male farmers and developing policies that define the role of extension and advisory services in assisting smallholders to become more resilient.

As a conclusion remark he stressed that Africa should make use of its existing potential to develop a strong comparative advantage in agriculture to ensure domestic food security, job creation and economic growth. He further indicated the existence of significant opportunities in agriculture to promote business and investment that enhance development for improved livelihoods.

He finally expressed his notion that while the State has significant responsibility to support agriculture, the private sector should be given room to provide products and services that could successfully compliment this support and encourage agricultural production and distribution.

Following the above presentation, the moderator called upon the panelists to share their experiences on the related subject.

Ambassador Sheila Sisulu started her intervention by raising two questions. Why agriculture and why now, why women and agribusiness and why now? She then noted that agriculture is the backbone of development across Sub-Saharan Africa. She continued by remarking that Africa is the only continent that has a comprehensive strategy for agricultural development written and signed up by all African governments. She pointed out that there was no significant move until the 2008 global food crises. She recalled that leaders of Africa and all over the world were concerned with the food supply system. The global food system was no longer capable of feeding the world. She recalled that it was not however; due to lack of food,

but the food was not reaching those who need it even if they had the money. She indicated that in some countries, agriculture was abandoned and the focus was given on cash crops instead of growing food crops. She gave an example of wheat crises which occurred due to the fact that the countries producing wheat closed their borders and decided not to sell their produce. The issue of CAADP arose in response to the global food crises – she said was a serious wakeup call at that critical moment (2008), looking at it as an African initiative to be self-sufficient in food through agricultural productivity. .

She further gave insight on the land issue by asking a question on land access problems faced by African farmers. She noted that Africa has the largest arable land for agriculture, but in many countries the land is being used for growing cash crops such as tobacco, cotton and cocoa for the supply of raw materials to foreign companies. On the other hand, she highlighted that agricultural land for the women is a source of livelihood. Women need land for the lives of their children and family in general. The shift of arable land to the production of cash crops has led many African countries to be consumers of agricultural products that are imported to the countries in shiny packages. This situation, she noted, has put many countries in a precarious situation. In this connection, she pointed out that African governments need to look into the context of their policies so as to avoid unintended outcomes on the national economy and welfare of the nations.

She gave a practical example of school feeding launched in Lesotho where women were given the opportunity to grow food for the school. This pilot project failed because of dry spell which resulted in crop failure. On the other hand, the women went into debt by failing to pay their loans for the inputs they used for their farming such as seeds and fertilizers they acquired from the big traders on credit basis. She revealed that these women did not have land for collateral and had it been the case, they could have lost their lands and became utterly impoverished. In light of this, she noted that there should be a system by which policies are monitored, to avoid unintended outcomes to women farmers who have major responsibility in food production. She stressed the need for drawing very well thought policy that addresses the full package for implementation so as to protect women farmers from any unintended market risk.

She finally called NPCA to work on empowering women through, among others, creating a system where women can get information about what to produce, when to produce, soil, weather, and market related matters in order to make appropriate decisions.

The second panelist, Ms. Bodil Maal, informed the participants on the practice of Kenyan youth farmers where they use web page known as “Mkulima Young”. She said the web page was bought by young educated people and at present about 27, 000 people are participating. She noted her observation that many of the members express their pride of being digital farmers. With the help of the web page and mobile phones farmers are assisting each other with extension advice, requests and get comments from other fellow farmers on crop disease, share information on the product markets, organize training, buy equipment etc. She also indicated that there exist champion farmers sharing their experiences on different farming activities. With this background she suggested that such good practice should be tried in other African countries since mobile phone is relatively affordable technology available all over the continent.

Ms. Bodil Maal also shared Asian experience in the sphere of social business. She noted the experience of Grameen Bank and organization known as Brouk, a huge NGO working in Asia

and Africa. The latter company is engaged, inter alia, in addressing farmer's post-harvest loss which has remained a critical problem in many countries in Africa. In this connection, she pointed out that farmers were supported through Grameen Bank who enters into agreement with big companies in Europe to set factories. The practice is that once the companies earn the money they put in for establishing the factories they handover the factories to the associated communities. She also mentioned the example of a French Company that owned a yogurt producing factory in Bangladesh who transferred the same to the associated local people. In this connection she suggested the need to approach such socially conscious companies to draw benefits from by engaging local communities.

The third panelist, Ms. Yassine Fall started by questioning the notion of accelerated agricultural development, inclusive growth which has been aired over and over again for the last decades and which lacks concrete action in terms of putting it into practice. She pointed out that there is a need for revisiting the existing macroeconomic policies of African countries.

She said that the existing macro-economic frameworks are not allowing us to do what should have been done. In order for us to accelerate inclusive growth, certain policy frameworks need to be revisited and actioned upon to generate positive outcomes. There are some elements such as, government spending, consumption, investment, balance of trade that are determinants to generate GDP. She asked how we make sure that GDP reflect in the lives of people especially in the lives of poor. How do we make sure that agriculture led development generate a GDP that is inclusive? In order to respond to this question she outlined on the key elements that have to be considered as follows:

- Fiscal policy that enables us to look at government spending, taxation, budget allocation, subsidies, needs to be viewed.
- We need to look into the regulatory framework of land. Many governments have a policy on land but do not allocate budget for implementation.
- Consumption is very critical if we think of inclusive growth. Here she called for the need to see into women's role in the value chain – women workers, processors, producers etc. She asked for the need to examine government policies in terms of supporting women in the production of seeds and marketing.
- Spending - what the government spends, what the private sector spends what entrepreneurs spend. How can these be regulated and implemented?
- Investment – here she noted that women need to be supported in investments in response to the growing demand of food. She noted for the need to revisit the existing monetary policy and the banking system/lending system.
- Trade – trade issue, trade regulations, what is happening in cross border trade in Africa? Access to global trade? Where can we help women to play an effective role in the value chain?

She concluded her argument by stating that all of the above are linked to goods and services, financial and labor markets. In terms of ensuring inclusiveness, she underlined the need to look into the macro level regulatory frameworks, meso level institutions, and micro level interventions.

Plenary discussions

Following the lead presentation and panelist reflections, the facilitators opened the floor for the plenary discussions. The following points give highlights of the questions raised, comments made and responses given.

- Why the issue of young boys and girl's education was not mentioned as a challenge for capacity building to enhance African creativity and cognitive thinking? We need to build confidence of our young boys and girls from childhood. It is then that we will have the kind of people who can ask and write questions, find solutions and execute them to the interest of the nation. I need views on this from the panelist.
- My concern is that every business needs business plan to access finance. Looking at the agriculture sector most women that practice agriculture have no formal education. How can NEPAD support women to prepare business plans?
- Agriculture is presented as a very poor sector. We need to change the image otherwise we are losing our children to be attracted and engaged in the sector.
- Has CAADP registered expected objectives? How do we ensure governments comply with CAADP? Do we have a monitoring system?
- We need to create an enabling environment for women to play their role in the agricultural value chain. In any good governance, the government should be able to report how the poor is migrating from poverty to middle income levels. Focusing on women, we have observed that women are involved in food commodity value chains. A lot of women work very hard but are not being paid for what they produce. Many of them do not have the enabling environment such as information, skills, infrastructure and the kind of capacity building that should be provided by the governments. The value chain system is not working as it should.
- We should look at the value chain system- those who have the role to play in capacity building, research, good governance in terms of managing development partners, managing information system, ensuring the market infrastructures are available to support women. We need to do a fresh mapping of each of the process in the value chain and see the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and then be able to fill the gaps.

Responses from the panelists:

Ms. Bodil Maal shared her concern on the gaps in policy frameworks. She noted here that many educated people want to come back to Africa and work for their countries but are facing policy and bureaucracy related challenges. From her experience and observations she indicated that government policy frameworks have posed a big obstacle for farmers to engage in productive activities. She cited an example of Tanzania where the country imports simple agricultural tools in cheaper prices from China, which affects the competitiveness of locally produced ones and resulted in the displacing the local producers from the market. On this background she forwarded her proposal that African governments should review

their macroeconomic policy frameworks, identify the challenges with the view to create an enabling environment for local based development.

Prof. Ewang commented on the need to redefine the existing research systems with the view to addressing the actual need for the Africans. He pointed out that many of the African institutions in their major research work have not made attempt to focus on programmes that address African concerns. Most of the universities are undertaking very conventional academic research with the focus to publishing their findings on journals abroad on the subject with little or no benefit to the Africans. He also pointed out that most conventional university graduate researches lack social context.

He finally underlined the need to undertake purposeful attempt to redefine African agricultural research systems in terms of what we do to benefit our farmers and stressed on the need to building capacity in research, to generate new knowledge to be used and consumed locally. To this end, he suggested that resources should be invested in doing socioeconomic research to strengthen productive functions.

Ms. Yassine Fall shared the view that science and farming systems research that is tailored to addressing the African need is lacking. In this connection, she noted her concern that research areas on the kind of seed technologies to be promoted in Africa is defined and promoted by external research companies. On the market issue, she asked where the place of women is in the market forces. She then suggested the need for government's regulatory measures that would give space for the women to play their roles in the value chain. She further stressed the need for political will and application of the right economics for ensuring market equilibrium which is instrumental to bring those at the back notably women to upfront in the value chain so that they will be visible in a regulated and plain level field.

With regard to the question related to NPCA's support Dr. Justina Dugbazah, responded that NPCA has been supporting women through NGOs in different African countries in the provision of training such as in business development plan preparation and business management. She also pointed out that NEPAD Agency is working on the establishment of a fund to address the capacity needs of women farmers and women in agribusiness. She further noted that, taking into consideration the discussion that has come up in the conference, there is a need to increase the support to African women farmers and women in agribusiness get training in value chain, marketing, business development and management. In order to realize the aforementioned needs she stressed for the need to establish a fund devoted for capacity building for women farmers and women in agribusiness, which is the one of the objectives of this conference.

7.2 Panel 2: Technologies and Financing Innovations for Agribusiness Development

This strategic Dialogue was facilitated by Mr. Martin Bwalya of NEPAD Agency. He started by providing a summary of the opening session and what had been discussed in the first panel. He pointed out that extremely thought provoking key messages and issues were raised in the opening session of the conference calling on the need to focus on concrete actions and

delivering results. He further indicated that the opening session and the first panel discussion had accordingly provided guidance to the group discussion.

Mr. Martin summarized the central messages that came through speeches made during the opening session and the panel discussion on Policy and Institution as follows:

- The recognition of women as important economic players and not a charity case, and the need to address how we can empower women to assist them actually plays their role as part of the economic delivery equation,
- The need for transformation of the agricultural system through building appropriate and strong institution and right policy as part of the enabling environment to deliver on our goal,
- The requisite to consider agriculture as a critical business undertaking, and in so doing the need to talk of agribusiness with emphasis on, the key player, women in agriculture, as a formidable economic force,
- The issues of making it happen and delivery and the need to address challenges,
- The necessity to establish partnership in terms of purpose with a different view, that is making partnership within ourselves, as African and communities. In this regard, the need to do partnership planning and financing in terms of delivering results instead of looking always to outside assistance or conventional partnership for securing donors support,
- The necessity of creating and strengthening knowledge-base and facilitation of market information and the need to harness and move with it,
- The need to understand, strengthen and improve the role of government and private sector,
- The need to establish linkage between agricultural research and extension service as well as reorienting extension system towards being gender responsive,
- The requirement for revisiting of macro-economic frameworks and financial mechanisms in political economy context, where governments in Africa need to take bold affirmative actions in areas where agribusiness women require support and how to make it happen. This was also extended to the taking of measures including provision of subsidy to women farmers, which may not be popular among global economic space but necessary for the sake of Africa's development and protection of poor farmers,
- Africa needs to look at agriculture very differently from the way we have done it for the last 4 to 5 decades; we need to look at our perceptions and mind set which is not only crucial to women but also the broad consideration of the role of agriculture in economic development.

Mr. Martin went on introducing the second panel where he emphasized the important issues. In his introductory remarks he said that in Africa we have good policies and we excel when it comes to political statement; but underscored that this session is about walking the talk to

ensure improved livelihoods and prosperity that will galvanize even more energy in transforming our policy, institutions and the way we do business.

The theme of this panel, he indicated, is to look at issues of “technology, financing and innovation for women in agribusiness.” He then underlined on three key words, namely technologies, innovations and agribusiness as women being the subject matter.

Regarding technology, he said we need to see technology in the context of enabling entrepreneurship and doing business and help remain competitive. Then the issue is how to ensure that women, who are key actors in driving agriculture as a business, are empowered to access technology, skills and knowledge.

He described innovation as it refers to linking to adaptation, domestication with local system and partnership.

He also raised important issues that need consideration in the discussion, including:

- Private sector investment, inclusive growth, wealth creation and employment generation
- Issues of access to empowerment in designing and operationalization of financial products
- Demand driven product development and issue of project preparation
- Product development as part of enabling women framers and agribusiness as entrepreneurs
- Information communication technology
- Designing and operationalization of products in value chain
- Introducing entrepreneurship in actual farming and supply side in terms of major investments in generating technology across the whole value chain

He then introduced and requested Ms. Bongiwe Njobe to give the lead presentation for the session. Ms. Bongiwe Njobe, is Executive Director (Owner) of ZA NAC Consulting and Investments, endowed with substantial knowledge and experience of private and public sectors development issues.

Ms. Bongiwe’s Njobe presentation was focused on issues related to learning from experience, setting goals and pushing limits, the reality check and options for progress.

She commenced her presentation by defining three key concepts namely agribusiness, entrepreneurship, and technology. She defined agribusiness as “all business opportunity that happen in agri-food chain” and entrepreneurship as “the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit”, and technology as “the purposeful application of information in the design, production and utilization of goods and services and in the organization of human activities as well as the application of knowledge and use of materials, tools, power and techniques to improve productivity and to make life easier”.

Ms. Njobe then went on suggesting the need to redefine technology to expand and apply it across the agriculture value chain. On the other hand, she identified knowledge and skill as drivers to get to technology. According to her, the important issue rather is how we supply technology in a developing country context so that technological innovation comes within Africa that is from within the continent or the countries being effectively generated from agribusiness women's own creativity.



MS. BONGIWE NJOBE

She then went on reciting that a lot of programs on women have been done but the expected result has not been achieved. To achieve the desired result, she called for the recodification of our social norms to remove gender disparity as a means to tackle the discrimination and power imbalance that exists between men and women. She further noted that what is important is to learn from our experience and initiatives such as CAADP and other African based inventiveness.

Referring the Mo Ibrahim Foundation study, she pointed out that Africa's top 20 ranked agribusinesses have produced a good number of job opportunities and generated big sums of turnover. However, she argued that women as workers in agriculture benefit disproportionately to what they contribute while they are the target and users of agri-food value chain outputs. Yet women are not in control of the processes that determine and produce the products they are consuming.

She then discussed matters related to making things happen and identified the need for policy reform, institutional transformation and innovation as critical determinants to bring about the desired change. Ms. Njobe further pointed out that in order to move forward, we need to set a vision and pushing the limit. Our capacity to think into the future needs to be tapped. By making reference to AU 2063 vision, which is about prosperity, peace and integration, she indicated that for agriculture to contribute to the realization of the vision through CAADAP, maximization of women's contribution to agricultural value chain is very important. Then she associated AU's vision as a sign post of pushing the limit.

Ms. Njobe reminded the participants that we do not have much option to progress, but to look into full agricultural value chain and understanding our power in value chain as consumers of several products. As a result, women can define what is coming from value chains to empower themselves and benefit more.

She pointed out that agricultural women tend to focus on production but the real problem is processing. She then put a case in point using how Ethiopians reclaiming coffee as African products using rituals to promote coffee. On the other hand, talking of Peanut farmers in Zambia, she said the farmers have produced tasty and good peanut butter but have failed to commercialize it to the desired level due to their lack of capability for laboratory test to show

that the peanut butter is free of aflatoxin. Ms. Njobe identified this as one of the areas where governments can intervene by way of providing subsidies, assist farmers in certification or through quality assurance system.

Regarding reality check, she cited NEPAD's 2014 report that reveals that women participation in agricultural production, harvesting, food storage, processing of basic foodstuffs and marketing activities accounts to 80%; 60% , 80% ,100% and 60% respectively. She showed that the participation of women in the agri-food value chain in Africa compared with women in other continent is low and it is also restricted to small scale and basic production activities. She reminded the participants that we need to enlarge our participation throughout the value chain, production, harvesting, etc. She ascribed the limitation of African women to small scale production to lack of capital and policy related problems. On policy reforms, she pointed out that we need to focus on provision of incentives, while we need to recodify our traditional norms in relation to emerging markets as related to institutional matters.

When we look at African women entrepreneurs' situation, she commented that we are not doing better in terms of technological adaptation for competitiveness which obviously limited women participation in value addition and markets. Accordingly, she advocated for leap frogging into new technologies and making good use of technologies. Ms. Njobe emphasized that leapfrogging is doable, and indicated that the important matter is to change mind set, put people in the right direction, and building capability and confidence among women groups to use technologies.

Ms. Njobe recommended that:

- We need to become technology savvy, appreciate the value of technology and use it with intent
- Policy, incentives, institutions and society need to become 'technology-savvy'
- Establish knowledge systems to facilitate access to innovation for women entrepreneurs
- Gender disaggregated national statistical data is a pre-requisite to plan and evaluate our progress and allocate target based resources

Ms. Bongwiwe Njobe, the lead presenter of panel, finally concluded by quoting Anatole France - "To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe"

The facilitator called up on the second panelist Mrs. Njabulo Zwane to share her experience.

Mrs. Zwane shared her experience of the sugar factory where she found out that sugar, a primary product, can be transformed into various products through value addition. She came across the fact that sugar can be transformed into various high value products that appear to ordinary producers as completely a different outcome or products. Sugar can be a candy, Coca-Cola, an alcohol or perfume, and so forth. Mrs. Zwane underlined that until we understand the value chain we cannot see its economic significance, thus emphasized that understanding the transformation of a product along the value chain is critical to generating high economic worth products and a gainful undertaking for the agribusiness sector.

Mrs. Njabulo Zwane concluded that it is important to pay attention to the understanding of value chain and associated transformation, and follow the life cycle of products, and it is equally vital to codify or package our products in the context of new reality and requirements.



PARTIAL VIEW OF PLENARY SESSION DISCUSSIONS

The third panelist, Dr. Abdul Razak, from 3N, Secretariat, Niger, delivered on the experience of Niger's public sector food security program, which is prepared as a government response to ensure food and nutrition security. He informed the gathering that the program focuses on the resource poor smallholder women farmers and pastoralists.

According to him, the intervention of this program include the diversification of agricultural livelihoods of smallholder farmers and pastoralists through provision of ruminants, creation of awareness, cash for work, distribution of farm tools and implements, establishment of women platforms, provision of credit, training and consultation.

Dr. Abdul Razak indicated that the program has improved the lives of poor women and helped stop importation of food from abroad, assisted in the diversification of agricultural livelihood. He emphasized that this was made possible, among others things, through the arrangement of women and technical people to work together, investing in poor women, developing and implementing long term plan, constructing and devising some points of sale for their products. Besides, he indicated that government arrangements to buy farmers' products when there is no viable market, monitoring activities have also contributed for the success of the programme.

In Niger government decided that products that are cheaper than what was produced or grown locally was not allowed into the country. He concluded that to do more and better, Niger still needs additional financial support and provision of markets.

The facilitator indicated that the presentation made by Dr. Abdul Razak was informative and gave a different perspective of a public sector experience and intervention in capacity

development. He further noted that the presentation was relevant and had linkage with messages made during the opening session in terms of the need for public sector financing and affirmative action expected from the governments.

He then highlighted important issues of concerns that rose during this session and summarized that it is important to shift emphasis from production to value chain improvement to promote agribusiness. He underscored that we need to make attitudinal change, move to concrete action and stop lamenting. He reminded the participants of the need to look at what is working and why it is working in terms of knowledge, policy, finance, human capacity and institutions. How can it be scaled up? How do we translate our good intentions into practice? How do we bring the success to the critical mass, to empowering women? Then he invited participants by opening the floor for comments, questions and suggestions.

During the plenary discussion the following comments and issues were raised:

UNEP –representative commented that:

- One of the key challenges in leapfrogging in technological innovation is our inability to promote research and innovation and commercialize the findings that are happening in all spheres and institutions in Africa, especially among locally practiced and indigenous knowledge based ones.
- Regarding advocating on moving from production to value addition, she commented that Africa emphasized on production due to the need to fill the existing food security gap. She also questioned to say when we are encouraging moving from production to other parts of the value chain in agriculture, what can we do to small scale farmers especially women farmer to move to value addition from production, when we are not in a situation to produce enough in subsistence agriculture for day to day living? How can small scale women move to value addition? Having this reality, who are those women you are talking about?
- She gave the case of adoption of organic farming production by small scale farmers in large numbers in Uganda that turned into billion dollar business people that transformed the lives of small scale women farmers. She added that the same holds true for Kenya in organic farming stream. What can we learn from such adoption and similar experiences that improve lives of farmers in other countries?

The issue of transboundary informal sorghum trade going between Niger and Nigeria was raised by a participant from Nigeria. He pointed out that reports indicated that through this transaction a total volume amounting 20 million USD was generated only in three months. He requested who is benefitting from these transactions, and suggested the need to examine how could farmers and women in agribusiness benefit from such transactions by establishing formal trading system and introducing transformative value addition measures in the commodity value chain.

He also talked about the need to study the issues of import substitution and associated investment to fill the existing food supply gap so as to make ourselves self-sufficient.

A participant from Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA):

- She also commented that there is a need for organizing cooperatives, integration in commodity production, and establishing business corridors in order for farmers to work

together, avoid being neglected and overcome red tape in business. She indicated that ADA is working on the strategy being convinced of the fact that if women farmers and women in agribusiness work together they can produce enough to meet the market.

Subsequently, the session facilitator gave opportunity for the panelists to reflect on comments and suggestions made.

Accordingly, Dr. Abdul Rezak commented on issues raised on sorghum inter boarder trade. He added the fact that Niger is also engaged in exporting livestock and seeds to Nigeria and likewise import food from Nigeria. He also addressed how small farmers can benefit from value addition? He said this can be possible by having simple machines for drying and store their products and using simple processing plants.

Regarding Africa's inability to leapfrog in innovative technology, both in creation and scaling up, Ms. Bongiwe Njobe indicated that this can be possibly overcome by learning and adopting from other countries like S. Korea and Malaysian and also by tapping our own ability.

Mr. Bodli, NORAD representative:

Reciting the case of Norway's past experience she indicated that in the former time students had a view to be an employee but not to be an entrepreneur. She said that many years ago a system called "rural active school" was introduced by the government to change the situation, where a group of students sit down and discuss what they wanted to produce as a business activity. At universities students also learn about entrepreneurship, where they go to rural areas to study the place and available materials and come up with a business plan. This can be an important example to take as a lesson to teach young people among farming communities and also teaching entrepreneurship at school and university levels.

Dr. Niger-Thomas Margaret of Cameroon also raised the following issues:

- How do we make use of research results which are presently shelved to bring innovation and creativity within the context of African countries?
- Can we identify structures in governmental bodies that farmers can be helped to develop agricultural business plans so that they are not exploited by others?

Other important questions, suggestions and issues raised include the following:

- The need to pay attention to capacity building and deep research in value chain to build viable business to help women farmers.
- The challenges of rural women remain similar that relate to limited access to land, funding, market, technologies, difficulties in terms of access to transpiration services and the likes, but the questions are :
 - How can rural women overcome these problems without enabling agricultural policies?

- How can we ensure that the government allocate 10% of their national budget to agriculture as agreed by heads of state and of what percentage of this budget is earmarked to rural women and made available?
- It was also suggested that capacity building of government staffs should receive attention so that rural women can get effective support.
- Finally, the participants appealed to NPCA to speak for rural women as the voice of voiceless, play advocacy role on behalf of African rural women so that at least governments will earmark the necessary budget to support them.

The next speaker questioned the participating women by asking are we, the women ready for second level of value chain and really mastered the primary production? She emphasized that value chain demands consistency of production that requires costly machineries, meeting the requirements of various regulations and standards. Is there available support envisaged to assist rural women in this regard, say by African governments or NEPAD-Agency?

The year 2014 is declared as a year of family farming, is there a plan to take our children, who are school dropouts and stay at home, to train them in value addition, so that small holder framers and their family fully benefit from enhanced value addition?

Another participant highlighted that women in agriculture are at different levels of production and business capacities. At level one, we find women, whose primary concern is to ensure food security at household level and wish to move to the next level. In the next level, we find women farmers engaged in small scale businesses that need technological and financial support to move to full-fledged commercial farming level. The third level comprises commercial farming women who need skills in enhanced value addition activities, market linkage and the like. So, it is essential to design support and assistance according to their levels and needs. "let us not say one size fits all."

The facilitator finally requested the panelists to reflect on some of the issues raised as a way of conclusion. Accordingly, some of the key responses are highlighted here below:

Regarding allocating of budget to the agriculture sector and availing to women framers Dr. Abdul Rezak pointed out the necessity for change of the mind set at the level of government. It was decided at African level to allocate 10% of the national budget to agriculture but it is the country that decides what percentage of its national budget the agriculture sector constitute. Concerning access to technology, he pointed out that there are available simple technologies that rural women can make use of but they need to make additional efforts.

Ms. Bongiwe Njobe pointed out that:

- Until we really deal with the reality of power relation in family unit, we cannot make visible progress because of gender relation. Gender dimension of earning income and prosperity is a research question. Codifying what the society need to embrace in order to make harmony and rebuild social fabric is essential.
- There is nothing that replaces good leadership. It takes leadership to recognize potential and to make things happen to change our world.

In general, the discussion on technologies and financing innovations for agribusiness development revolved around the following issues as summarized by Mr. Martin Bwalya, panel II discussion facilitator:

- We have a tendency to look at agribusiness as a means of ensuring food security but we need to look at it as an opportunity for business and entrepreneurship
- We more often emphasize on production than value addition so we need to move to value addition. We need to take into account the whole value chain, from production, value addition, and transportation to marketing, financing all in a more systematic manner.
- We need to address the question-“Are the women ready?” This refers to the capacity to do business and empowering the women.
- How to galvanize change through the youth into agriculture and value chain process is something that demands attention.
- Gender disaggregated data is essential to draw evidence based plan, to make decisions, allocate budget and monitor gender equality and interpretation of progress.
- Good leadership is essential in government, private sector, and traditional system for affirmative action and recognition of women roles and making the desired change to happen.
- The need to transform agribusiness women should take into account the prevailing social conditions and power relations context
- We need to learn from good examples in terms of technology, policies capacity building and effective institutions. We need to look into them why they are working? How can we scale them up?

To sum up the panel discussion, the master of ceremony asked the panelist to identify one key issue that should be reflected in the call to action and the following were their responses:

- Those agribusiness women should be given opportunity to available technologies across the value chain, to access, adopt, domesticate, scale up and commercialize as part of empowerment.
- There should be a mindset shift in policy, program, institutions and people to foster entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector.
- There is a need for revitalization of an extension service, where an extension agent should participate in research and communicate results to farmers.
- Purposeful measures should be taken to promote indigenous based entrepreneurship,
- It is important to engage smallholder farmers and agribusiness women in policy and decision making processes, and agricultural research with a view to help them play enhanced role in value chain.

8. RECAP DAY ONE

The Recap of day One was presented by Mr. Kwame Ababio as follows.

Highlights from the Opening Session:



- Conference should come out with workable strategies for empowering women in Agribusiness
- Agriculture should be seen as a business
- Climate change presents a formidable challenge that should be addressed
- There is a need to create partnership and market accessibility for African smallholder agribusiness entrepreneurs
- Need to build up on the Malabo Declaration by supporting women in agriculture

Highlights from Panel on Policies and Institutions:

- Policies should take into consideration unintended consequences
- Market information is critical in linking production to the distribution and marketing centers
- Institutional support for generation and production of seed by indigenous African women should be encouraged

Highlights on Financing and Innovations

- Importance of up scaling, developing on larger scale, indigenous technology
- The value chain of every produce should be vigorously pursued
- Disaggregated data on agribusiness for Women

9. PLENARY GROUP PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

9.1 Policies and institutional considerations for empowering women in agribusiness

Group I discussion was focused on identifying issues related to developing policies and institutional interventions for women in agriculture and women in agri-business. Accordingly, the group agreed to concentrate on key macroeconomic policy and programmatic issues and outlined associated actions to address them. The outcomes of the group deliberation was presented by Prof. Peter N Ewang and a member of group one. The key points raised are summarized as follows:

1	Macro level policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade within African countries should be encouraged with clear rules of engagement. • Standards should be harmonized and institutionalized to facilitate trade. • Review the existing trade related agreements so as to
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		<p>maximize the opportunities within African countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement incentive mechanisms including subsidies and granting minimum price of produce for small holder farmers. • Promote integration of production of commodities thence market • Policy framework should support diaspora investment
2	Strategic gender analysis to inform policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies need to be gender sensitive • Gender disaggregated data based should be developed and used for planning, allocation of budget, decision making, policy making and for implementation monitoring
3	Human capacity issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research should be more of action oriented and problem solving contextualized to issues of agribusiness women and stallholder women farmers. • Build the requisite human capital and institutional capability for promoting women in agribusiness and supporting smallholder women farmers • Train action research scholars • Government must strengthen extension system. (Researchers should work with extension agents on field with farmers). • Support the role of private sector in extension services.
4	Access to land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of land ownership should be addressed critically in gender responsive dimensions • Women should get access to communal land • Women cooperatives should be supported to own land • Land should not be sold to foreigners • Cultural barriers need to be addressed through education and awareness raising
5	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content of the ITC should be gender responsive. • Energy diversification (Hydro power energy, solar, wind, ...) to ensure supply of power for enhanced communication • Develop framework for gender disaggregated data base establishment. (NEPAD should take the Initiative for developing the framework) • Strength capacity in the Geographic Information System and Remote Sensing to support and monitor agricultural performance and supply early warning information
6	Inter-ministerial roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance integrated program planning and coordinated implementation • Establish monitoring and accountability system and joint responsibility • Introduce effective systems in policy planning and implementation monitoring • Evaluation should be seen as a tool to support management and encouraged accordingly • Policies should be supported by adequate budgetary allocation

		<p>for its implementation and monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices of Grameen and Islamic Bank system should be adapted to support small holder farmers and women in agribusiness. • Coordination needs to be decentralized at different levels while maintain vertical and horizontal communication and linkage. • Mechanism should be put in place to avoid corruption.
	Access to market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price support systems should be introduced by African countries • Develop a standard Phytosanitary system to strengthen regional trade among African countries • Establish market infrastructure including post-harvest facilities and roads to facilitate access to market • Organize (women small holder farmers) to produce marketing scale production
7	Access to finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central banks should design a policy to protect small holder farmers through cross subsidization actions • Central Banks need to issue regulations for designated fund for women • Provide support to community based saving and credit systems, and cooperative banks • Apportion designated amount of fund to support smallholder women farmers and women in agribusiness • Explore mechanisms for remittances from diaspora to be managed through community saving and credit system.
8	Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong policies should be enacted on water and land management. • Issues of climate change should be mainstreamed in to relevant policies and plans • Disasters and risk management should be given appropriate space in the policies • Funding for climate smart agriculture must be promoted and established • Conflicts of interest should be resolved on the issues of climate change since it is cross sectoral in nature • Remote sensing technology and Geographic Information System (GIS) should be adopted for provision of climate related information for agricultural practices including for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ making decision on what and when to plant ▪ monitoring crop status ▪ Crop production forecasting
9	Self sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African countries should strive towards being self-sufficient in food production and food security. • Regular report should be prepared to ensure progress towards attaining self-sufficiency in food as agreed in Malabo declaration.

10 High performing institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop quality assurance standards and accreditation system for agricultural products • Designed systems for recognition of high performing institutions.
11 Inputs (Seed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries should have biosafety policies which among others prohibit Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) importation. • Efforts should be made to conserve, protect endogenous and home grown seeds from extinction and sustainable use • Local seed banks should be established at various agro-ecological zones • Countries should strengthen research and development on quality seeds production and distribution.

9.2 Investments and Financing for Agribusiness

Group II undertook a discussion on issues of investments and financing for agribusiness development and the arrangement was made as training-cum-discussion. The topics covered were:

- Fundamentals of value chain development in agri-business
- Managing agri-business in agricultural projects
- Innovative financing and agri-business risk management
- ICT for agri-business development

The group II discussion outcomes were presented by discussion facilitator, Mr. Ibrahim Sarfo. He outlined the summary of what was discussed and issues raised as follows:

- **The group analyzed the concept of value chain, discussed on various definitions and actors involved in the process and their roles. Accordingly, value chain is understood to include a number of actors, series of related activities, from production to marketing, working in a chain of system in inter related and inter dependent manner.**
- **The typology of value chain was also defined and the role of different actors at three levels was described. Accordingly, it is indicated that at the Micro level we find those who make things happen, those who do production and processing. At Meso level we find groups, associations and business service providers (BS). These groups include technical agencies, researchers, extension agents, NGOs, farmer associations, etc. Whereas at Macro level the main actors are Central/federal and local government bodies that provide policy support and infrastructures, such as road and market place at municipal and country levels.**
- **During the discussion, development of rural infrastructure such as roads and market place construction was identified as a major challenge of rural farming**

women and for agribusiness development. As a result, it is suggested that the federal/central and local government should look into the matter. In the same manner, construction of infrastructure was also considered as critical issue that NEPAD Agency should take to the attention of the Heads of States and help pursue for the resolution of the problem. It was also suggested that since the agriculture sector is not mandated to provide for such infrastructure development, more cross-sectoral approach should be followed to address the problem.

- In order to make Business Development Service available to agribusiness, it was suggested that NEPAD Agency create an information hub, business development center and work to aggregate the service center where women can virtually get information and support.
- It was also pointed out that the way we manage business matters and African farmers need to be ready to pay for improved business development service that help them manage their business better.
- It was also indicated that all value chain initiatives in African countries want to target export market outside the continent, but it was suggested that local and regional markets should be a priority taking into account the existing comparative advantage. In the same manner undertaking of market analysis, to understand and quantify what is needed, establishing market linkage and grasping the know-how of the supply end was considered as a crucial subject for consideration
- The discussion emphasized the need to identify the type of support women at various levels require and building their capacity especially that of youth and women, at individual and association levels.
- It is recommended that NEPAD Agency undertake study on virtual markets and information center currently practiced in Kenya which is indicated to be useful with the view to replicate in other countries and regional level where women sell their products or obtain information in such virtual centers.
- Furthermore, the group called on NEPAD Agency to organize a market events or exhibition or expo where agribusiness women share experience and sale their products.
- During the group discussion useful orientation was given by the facilitator on the concept of business plan and management.

10. OUTCOMES AND DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE: A CALL FOR ACTION

We hereby make this Call for Action as women in agriculture and as institutions that support the economic growth and empowerment of the African woman. The Women in Agriculture

Conference held on 9-10 October, 2014 in Durban, South Africa comprising traditional authorities, leaders of government, pan-African institutions, business, civil society and the private sector calls for increased support for women farmers particularly in agri-business activities.

With 2014 declared as the year of African Agriculture and Food Security by the African Union in commemoration of a decade of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), agriculture continues to occupy a significant position on Africa's development landscape.

Recognising that within the agriculture value chain, women are responsible for up to 80% of food production, 60% of the harvesting, 80% of food storage and transport from fields to villages, 100% of the processing of basic foodstuffs, and 60% of marketing activities.

Therefore our shared objective is the strengthening of inclusive growth, employment generation and sustainable livelihoods for African women producers and agri-business entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship should be at the centre of agriculture and food security activities.

Under the prevailing conditions we are cognisant of the fact that major strides are being made in policies and institutional considerations for empowering women in Agri-business. This includes addressing among others:

- Strengthening state and private sector led interventions for agribusiness development for women (access and control to means of production, processing and markets)
- Establishing functional markets and institutions for women in agribusiness
- Addressing complex relationships that prevent women from taking a lead role in agri-business

In order to consolidate and scale-up best practice in agriculture-based entrepreneurship, we call on African Leaders, the private sector and all stakeholders to support:

- The establishment of a Fund for small scale agri-business promotion for women in Africa.
- The development of African seed production systems to enhance agri-business promotion in a sustainable manner
- Capacity building and training especially on business plan formulation and development
- Support for research and gender disaggregated data on the agri-food chain systems for evidence based policy making

We are also mindful of the fact that major strides are being made in technologies and financing innovations for Agribusiness development. We call on Africa's leadership to support:

- Innovation for private sector investments, inclusive growth, jobs and wealth creation through provision of women friendly financial institutions, services and loan products
- The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a catalyst for women's empowerment, economic transformation and sustainability
- Empowerment of women through participation in the development of macro-level strategies, rural microfinance and non-financial services policies development
- Enabling environment that takes into cognisance of the socio-cultural, traditional and gender based value systems

In order to consolidate and scale up best practice in agriculture-based entrepreneurship we call on African Leaders, the private sector and all stakeholders to support:

- Generation of knowledge, skills and technology development along the agriculture value chain
- Placing extension services at the core of a systems approach to agribusiness development in Africa.
- Recognising the important role that the youth in particular young girls can play to enhance the brand of the agriculture sector

We welcome the commitment of the African Union through the Malabo Declaration of 2014 which re-affirmed support for the Abuja Declaration on Agribusiness and Agro-Industries in Africa.

We strongly encourage our African governments, pan-African institutions, civil society, private sector, international organizations and development partners to commit to supporting the establishment of a fund for women smallholder farmers in Agri-business activities including facilitation of organisational development for women agribusiness entities.

Call on the NEPAD Agency to make the Women in Agribusiness conference an annual event.

Urge the NEPAD Agency and other relevant institutions to work with African Governments, women groups and other stakeholders to support and facilitate implementation of this Call for Action.

Request the NEPAD Agency to present this Call for Action to the NEPAD and AU Policy Organs, particularly the AU Heads of State and Government.

Adopted by Participants

10 October 2014

11. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Conference Programme

Conference for Women in Agriculture, Investing in African Women: Opening the Space for
Agribusiness
09-10 October 2014, Durban, South Africa

Time	Programme Description	Responsible
Day 1		
Opening Ceremony – Plenary		
08:30- 09:00	Participants registration	NEPAD
09:00- 09:10	Introduction of the Conference	Mrs. Estherine Fotabong-NEPAD Agency
09:10-09:20	Welcome Remarks	Hon. Cyril Vusumuzi Xaba - KZN
09:20- 09:30	Statement by Development Partners	Ms. Bodil Maal (NORAD)
09:30-09:40	Statement by AU Member State	H.E Zenebu Tadesse – Minister for Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Ethiopia
09:40-10:00	Opening Remarks	His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini
Key Note Address		
10:00-10:30	<i>The Role and position of Women in Agribusiness Development</i>	Mrs. Estherine Fotabong-NEPAD
10:30-11:00	Group Photo	All participants
	Networking Coffee/Tea Break	All participants
	Press Briefing	Speakers
Panel Discussions		
11:00-12:00	Strategic Dialogue – Plenary	Facilitator- Dr. Justina Dugbazah
	Panel 1 <i>Policies and Institutional Considerations for Empowering Women in Agribusiness</i> <i>Lead Presentation- Prof. Peter Ewang</i>	Amb. Sheila Sisulu
		Ms. Bodil Maal-NORAD
		Ms. Yassine Fall- UN Women
12:00-13:00	Interactive Discussions	All
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	All
14:00-15:00	Strategic Dialogue – Plenary	Facilitator- Mr. Martin Bwalya
	Panel 2	Mrs. Njabulo Zwane

Time	Programme Description	Responsible
	<i>Women in Agriculture: Technologies and Financing Innovations for Agribusiness Development</i>	Dr. Abdul Razak, 3N Secretariat, Niger
	Lead Presentation- Ms. Bongiwe Njobe	Bongiwe Njobe
15:00-16:00	Interactive Discussions	All
16:00-16:30	Networking Coffee/Tea Break	All
16:30-17:00	Wrap up & Closing <i>Highlights from Panel and Interactive Discussions</i>	NEPAD
18:30	Cocktail (Hilton, Durban)	All participants
Day 2		
08:00-08:30	Recap of Day 1	
08:30-10:00	Workshops in Parallel	
	1: Policy and Institutional support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the incentives and challenges for women in Agri-business promotion? • ICT support for agri-business policy support 	Prof. Peter Ewang
	2: Investments, Financing for agri-business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of value chain development in agri-business • Managing agri-business in agricultural projects • Innovative financing and agri-business risk management • ICT for agri-business development 	Mr. Abraham Sarfo
10:00- 10:30	Networking Coffee/Tea Break	All
10:30-13:00	Continuation of Workshops in Parallel	
13.00-14.00	Lunch Break	All
14.00-15.00	Report back in Plenary	
15:00-16:30	Presentation of Outcomes and Decisions of the Conference	
16.30-17.00	Networking Coffee/Tea Break	All
17:00	Closing	

Annex 2. Statement by AU Member State - H.E Zenebu Tadesse – Minister for Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Ethiopia

- **Excellencies**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

At the outset, I would like to cordially thank NEPAD on behalf of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs and on my behalf for inviting me to make a statement on this prestigious event.

I would like also to express my sincere admiration and appreciation to NEPAD for its continued endeavors for the advancement of Africa and upliftment of its people.

We are accustomed to seeing a puzzling scene throughout Africa's farmlands, marketplaces and homes - a scene of multitasked industrious women living in a quagmire of poverty and depravity. It is indeed a wonder to see women who so prominently engage in and contribute to agriculture – a sector considered as the backbone of most African economies- are the poorest most disadvantaged, disempowered and unrecognized segment of society.

With a contrast so vast and vivid, we must inquire why African women who account for 80% of food production, 60% of harvesting, 80 % of food storage and transport as well as 100% of basic foodstuff processing and 60 % of marketing live in such poor conditions. And in doing so, a simple but compelling answer comes forth to mind, that their produce and effort are not sufficiently rewarded with economic benefits and social recognition.

Today, we know more than ever that Africa cannot make any meaningful socio-economic progress unless it has undergone agricultural transformation - a goal unthinkable to meet without the participation and benefit of women. We are also clear that the vicious cycle of poverty in the continent cannot be broken without the empowerment of women.

These truths shine most when we consider the case of African women farmers that lack attention, education, resources, decision making power and other essential inputs and services have for long been rendered poor and powerless.

- **Excellencies**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Tackling the challenges they face in agriculture and enabling them to engage meaningfully in agribusiness avails them with significant opportunity to gain appropriate economic value for their produce and service as well as get proper recognition for their roles and efforts. It would also enhance agricultural productivity, economic growth and social justice which in turn assist in achieving food security, reducing poverty and ensuring social security at family community and national level.

Thus, we must strive to utilize the opportunities agribusiness avails to women, devise mechanisms to tackle existing challenges in the area and maximize benefits for the women, their families, communities and nations. We must also work to solve problems of African women engaged in agriculture, which are basically linked to deficient policy and legal frameworks, institutional limitations, inaccessibility of services and gender inequality.

These tasks demand from us analyzing the status and role of women both in agriculture and agribusiness, taking into account the aforementioned challenges and other pertinent issues from a gender perspective. This is instrumental in designing and implementing strategic measures which may include revising and formulating policies, setting up new institutions and structures, mainstreaming gender issues, undertaking capacity building initiatives, developing infrastructures, allocating gender responsive budgets and others; which in effect not only remedy for existing problems of women in agriculture and agribusiness but also guarantee far reaching, sustainable and multifaceted socioeconomic change for their community and nation.

In view of this, the conference we conduct under the theme “Investing in African Women: Opening Space for Agribusiness” is indeed a great opportunity for us to thoroughly deliberate on these important issues, exchange best experiences and identify strategic and pragmatic measures which African nations would apply to bring a real difference into the lives of women engaged in agriculture and agribusiness.

- **Excellencies**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Finally, I am optimistic that through the unwavering commitment and zealous effort of African states, NEPAD and regional organizations, the direct and full participation of women and the community as well as the full support of our partners and the international community, we would in the foreseeable future be able to see socio-economically empowered women throughout Africa’s farmlands, homes and market places.

I thank you for your Kind attention!

Annex 3. Key Note speech- Introduction of the Conference- Mrs. Estherine Fotabong-NEPAD Agency

NEPAD Conference for Women in Agriculture: Investing in African Women: Opening the Space for Agribusiness, 09-10 October 2014, Durban, South Africa, Promoting the Role of Women in Agribusiness

- His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini
- Hon. Ministers Zenebu Tadesse – Minister for Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Ethiopia
- Hon. Cyril VusumuziXaba– KZN
- Ms. Bodil Maal (NORAD)
- Ladies and Gentlemen

This year 2014 has been declared by the African Union as the African Year for Agriculture and Food Security, and is also the International Year for Family Farming. In all the commemorative events that have been organized throughout the year, there has been a strong acknowledgement that African Smallholder farmers are critical players in the continent's efforts to end hunger and attain Food and Nutrition security. We have also been reminded that Women's role in food production and provision cannot be over-emphasized. Women produce between 60 to 80% of food in most developing countries and are responsible for half of the world's total food production. They play a central role as producers of food, managers of natural resources, income earners, and caretakers of household provisions, as well as nutrition security.

Your Majesty, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

Investing in agriculture has long been recognized as a critical long-term development strategy, whether the goal is increasing food security, poverty reduction, or helping African economies grow by opening their markets to global trade. Agriculture is the economic and inclusive development backbone of most African economies. On average, it contributes 30 to 40% of gross national product, accounts for as much as 60% of total export earnings, employs 70 to 80% of the total labour force, and provides over 50% of household food needs and an equivalent share of income in sub-Saharan Africa, where the reliance on agriculture is highest.

The agricultural sector however, is underperforming in many African countries in part because women, who are an important resource in agriculture and the rural economy, face constraints that reduce their productivity. Some Facts:

- In developing countries, 79% of economically active women spend their working hours producing food, working in agriculture. **Women represent 43% of the farming work force.** (FAO)
- Yields for women farmers are 20 to 30 percent lower than for men, as they have **less access** to improved seeds, fertilizers and equipment. (FAO)

- **Given equal access** to resources as men, women would achieve the same yield levels, **boosting total agricultural output** in developing countries by 2,5 to 4%. (FAO)
- **Giving women farmers more resources** could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 100 to 150 million. (WFP)
- **Only 10%** of total aid for agriculture, forestry and fishing **goes to women**. (FAO)
- **Female farmers receive only 5% of all agricultural extension** services from 97 countries. (FAO)
- **Women provide between 60 and 80 per cent of the food** for household consumption in most developing countries, mainly as unpaid laborers on family plots. (Action Aid International)

In the last two years, NEPAD with the support of the Norwegian government has been implementing a Programme on Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture. The countries and regional Economic Communities participating in the Programme have carried extensive consultations with small holder farmers, that have involved participation of women farmers from the rural areas. This has been a very rewarding exercise as we have been educated by these women as to what their real challenges are and what the possible solutions to these challenges.

The responsibility placed on the shoulders of women in the rural areas to meet the daily food need of most families cannot be overemphasized. More often than not, they make significant contribution to food production and processing, but men seem to take more of the farm decisions and control the productive resources. For instance, in the area of land acquisition, in the rural areas, the women seems to be completely relegated to the background and made to depend entirely on the piece that the men folk may 'graciously' apportion to them.

Most farmers operate at the subsistence, smallholder level in an extensive agricultural system; hence in their hands lies the country's food security and agricultural development. Particularly striking, however, is the fact that rural women, more than their male counterparts, take the lead in agricultural activities, making up to 60-80 percent of labour force. It is ironical that their contributions to agriculture and rural development are seldom noticed. Furthermore, they have either no or minimal part in the decision-making process regarding agricultural development. Institutional weakness and loopholes in most of our countries have also resulted in poor extension services for women farmers.

Gender inequality is therefore dominant in the sector and this constitutes a bottleneck. Most of our countries have put in place various initiatives to support women-in-agriculture established in cognizance of this and the shortcomings and there has been a surge in the emergence of women groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil societies that give rural women farmers a voice in order to effectively champion their cause.

However, many barriers remain and would have to be addressed to further enhance the role of women in agriculture. Rural women farmers deserve better recognition and greater appreciation of their tangible contributions to agriculture and rural development as well as food security.

Economic considerations are a major determinant of the extent to which women are involved in farming and agro business related activities, as against processing and trading. Once men move out of farming into such non-farm occupations as factory work, mining and distribution of industrial goods, women take up food production for home consumption and for sale, regardless of which ethnic group they belong to, although in relative terms the restricting influence of some cultural practices and religion on the women must be acknowledged.

The women are mainly involved in the production, processing and trading of such food crops as maize, rice, cassava, yam and palm oil. They are rarely connected with agricultural export crops such as cocoa, cotton and groundnuts.

In recent years, women's access to credit has shown faster improvement than access to other economic resources, due to the intensive work done by various organizations and governments in establishing special credit schemes and programmes targeted to women. However, women's access to formal credit sources such as bank loans remains extremely low compared to men's due to lack of regular income, inability to guarantee the loans and limited access to information

Despite the various interventions by governments, development partners, woman farmers organizations and the civil society to harmonise the role of women involved in agriculture related activities with that of their men counterparts, we have not made concrete achievements in that regard. The Question is Why? What are we not doing or what has to been done differently?

The sector needs to advance and leverage on knowledge and capacity to transform ideas into marketable products that result in new business value addition. This is essential because trends and dynamic business environment require organizations to quickly sense market change and detect where the future demand may be. We need Innovative approaches to policies and investments. Actions on access to inputs, credit, markets and policy making processes must build in affirmative actions to support women in agribusiness. Policies and programmes that positively discriminate against Women farmers must be encouraged with a view to take advantage of the fact that the sector is very dynamic and innovative and has the capacity to absolve, train women in agribusiness knowledge and skill acquisition.

Coming at the heels of the Beijing Conference Most governments created a Ministry to aside to address the plight of women in all its ramification. However, collaboration with other technical Ministries has always been a challenge.

The general understanding has been that, women in the rural areas need access to basic resources like revolving fund that would serve as social support initiative. Activities of such fund would greatly contribute to the success of the Agriculture Transformation Agenda as well as fast track the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and SDGs are under development.

Again, as women contribute significantly to the development of the sector in terms of what is consumed in the country and the continent consumes, efforts should step up their efforts in

order to raise the access bar of women to agricultural land, inputs and resources, as well as make them benefit from Incentive-Based market access and business development policies and programmes.

There is also an urgent need to put in place systematic and comprehensive strategies to empower women in rural areas to maximize their potential which has a tendency of combating extreme poverty and hunger, and help them facilitate sustainable development in their communities.

If rural women had equal access to productive resources, agricultural yields would rise and hunger would decline because empowering women requires a transformation in the way governments devise budgets, make and enforce laws and policies with the aim of including trade and agricultural policies that will engender small and medium, enterprises businesses.

Hence as we celebrate the Africa Union Year on Agriculture, International Year of Family Farming and CAADP at 10, we have to strongly advocate and stress that, all the structural, cultural, social and economic barriers that prevent rural women from participating fully in the economic and political life of their countries must be eliminated.

Identifying gender gaps is important for a wide range of agricultural technologies, including machines and tools, improved plant varieties and animal breeds, fertilizers, pest control measures and farm management techniques. Gender discrimination facing women farmers and agri-business are not only detrimental for them, but also has implications for the economic and social development of African economies.

Your Majesty, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

Year 2014 also witnessed the launch of “Sustaining the CAADP Momentum: the CAADP 10-year results framework” geared towards accelerating country implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

The Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods” acknowledged the persistent efforts made in the implementation of CAADP at national and regional levels and the positive growth performance of the agricultural sector in recent years. The Declaration called for deliberate and targeted public support for all segments of the population, particularly women, the youth and other disadvantaged groups to participate and directly benefit from the growth and transformation opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods.

Your Majesty, to recall specifically Decision 1V on the Malabo Declaration on Commitment to Halving Poverty, by the year 2025, through Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation, African Leaders were explicit on the commitment to support and facilitate preferential entry and participation for women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities. This even makes this conference and other initiatives by NEPAD and other partners more relevant in carving strategies for inclusive agribusiness development to integrate women into sustainable agricultural value chains.

The NEPAD Agency posits that agriculture and agri-business in African countries is a sector of exceptionally high impact in terms of its potential to reduce poverty. Closing the gender gap in agriculture and agri-business is of priority to the NEPAD Agency, as it works in partnership with member states, farmers, development partners and civil society to promote equal access to resources and opportunities, to ensure that policies and programmes are gender-responsive, and to make women's voices heard as equal partners for increased agricultural productivity, food security and sustainable development. As a result the Agency has placed gender equity and women's empowerment among its key strategic objectives in agriculture, agri-business, climate change and rural development for the next four years.

Your Majesty, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am cognizant of the complexity of the emerging economic landscape in agriculture and agri-business, but I am also fully confident of our determination to succeed as a continent. Our resolve is reinforced not only by the challenges confronting Africa at this time, but also the opportunities now opened to her as a result of structural shifts in the global economy.

There is a need, however, to practice agriculture differently, innovatively and in a more gender responsive manner, and to engage in agriculture as a business and not only as a means to reduce poverty. This implies making strong commitments to improve women's role as key producers of the world's food and important actors in the rural economy, and addressing the environmental impact and protecting natural resources.

Other businesses have shown that inclusive approach and making business gender responsive achieve results for the bottom line. Madam Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, in 2012, Credit Suisse Research Institute reported a review of 2,360 global companies and their performance based on the role of women in their leadership. Businesses that ignore what women can bring to the table are handicapping themselves and will eventually fall behind in the emerging global economy. Those that invest in and empower women will be advantaged.

What we are ultimately talking about is fashioning agribusiness strategies that are responsive to, and take advantage of, this mega trend. The best managed companies in the world are those that are ready to take advantage of the myriad contributions women can offer. Conversely, holding back half of the world's population through unequal educational and job opportunities, unequal wages, let alone violence and oppression, is not only morally reprehensible, it's dumb economics.

In moving forward we see to actions that translate the Political leadership demonstrated by African Heads of States through the Malabo Declaration and Decisions into concrete actions. Institutions capacity development, policy design and implementation, business development, women participation in decision making process; partnership development. The bottom line is Agriculture is a business no matter at what scale it is practiced.

Your Majesty, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

I would like to end by reaffirming the commitment of the NEPAD Agency to promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and sustainable development in Africa.

I thank you all in advance for your active participation and looking forward to fruitful deliberations at the conference.

Annex 4. Statement by Development Partners - Ms. Bodil Maal NORAD Representative

Women in Agriculture Investing in African Women: Opening the space for Agribusiness, 09-10 October 2014, Durban

- The Malabo declaration on accelerated agricultural growth and transformation that was approved by the African Heads of State in June this year underlines the limited progress made in agro-industries and agribusiness development.
- To reduce poverty in African countries there is need to put smallholder agriculture at centre-stage. A large majority of those who are hungry are smallholder farmers.
- Statistics tell us that rapid urbanisation in many regions of Africa will make urban food markets four times bigger by 2030 compared with 2010 and that this will escalate the demand for processed and convenience food.
- Because low income and resource-poor women farmers primarily depend on their own production for food security, policy and programs therefore need to improve subsistence production, and in the long term enable subsistence farmers to access markets and move into commercial agriculture.
- We must explore strategies for linking food producing smallholder farmers, who mostly are women, to food value chains in national and regional markets in Africa.
- What can be learnt from different experiences, what are the impacts on small holder farmers of public-private partnerships? Impacts of farmer cooperative-private as well as private-private partnerships.

Women in Agriculture Investing in African Women: Opening the space for Agribusiness, 09-10 October 2014, Durban

- **Mrs. Fotabong from NEPAD Agency**
- **MEC Xaba representing KwaZulu-Natal**
- **His Excellency, Zenebu Tadesse from Ethiopia,**
- **My sister Madam Sheila Sisulu, Prof Peter Ewing ,**
- **Distinguish guests ,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen.**

It is general knowledge and well documented that agriculture plays a crucial role in African economies. Since the time when the majority of African countries gained political independence, African economies have revolved around agricultural production. This has largely been due to the fact that the majority of African populations reside in rural areas where agricultural production is the main economic activity. In spite of these realities, African agriculture still exhibit numerous weaknesses.

First, in spite of the fact that women have always been the main actors in agriculture, they remain in the margins and not fully integrated into policy frameworks. In almost all the African countries women farmers are still neglected with very few interventions for empowering them to efficiently and effectively engage in agricultural production.

The limitations imposed on women farmers range from cultural stereotypes to limited access to resources for better production. I am aware that many conferences in the continent have considered this issue, but the problem is that very little success has been achieved. I sincerely hope that your deliberations in this conference will come out with better strategies for empowering women in agriculture. I am convinced that if a solution to women marginalization can be found, then the African continent would take a huge step to meaningful economic development.

Another continuing challenge is the notion that agriculture is simply production for food security purposes not incorporating the business component. The many women who have been engaged in agriculture for years and through generations have not been trained or empowered to consider their agricultural production as a business with numerous business spin-offs. Therefore, the issue of agri-business is very pivotal in realizing greater benefits in agriculture. However, it will remain ever difficult for women to engage in agri-business without changes in policy and institutional frameworks. There should be a development of favorable policies and institutional

structures to empower women to engage in agri-business.

The challenges in this direction are numerous and they include cultural transformation and a favourable financial infrastructure to support and empower women. I am hoping that in this conference you will develop strategies to address this issue. In doing this you need to be honest and sincerely interrogate African realities.

A challenge that has become more pronounced in the last few decades has been the issue of climate change. This is an issue that has had a serious impact on agricultural production in Africa. While the general impacts of this development are recognized, its uneven impact on society should be emphasized. Climate change and climate variability has hit hardest on women. However, it appears that very little has been done to address this disparity. For instance, I have not come across a narrative that addresses the impact of climate change on African women.

Recently we have seen the development of the concept of Climate Smart Agriculture, but I have not seen how it will be achieved through interventions targeting women. We applaud the recent establishment of the Africa Working Group on Gender and Climate Change (AWGGCC), what we are looking forward to are the products of its operation. Again, I am hoping that this conference will seriously interrogate the issue of gender and climate change with particular focus on its relationship to agricultural production in Africa. What we need are strategies and interventions targeting women.

I am very passionate about the issue of agricultural production in South Africa, especially in my province KwaZulu-Natal because it addresses the plight of rural communities that have been neglected for a too long.

I would have loved to make remarks on financing women in agriculture and agri-business, and market infrastructure, but time is not on my side. I am consoled to realize that such issues will form part of your deliberations.

What I also suggest you discuss today and tomorrow is how best we can create partnerships and markets among ourselves. This is important as most of the time we ask what Europe or America can do for us, forgetting to ask what we can do among ourselves as African countries and people.

For example, what can rural women in KwaNongoma, KwaZulu Natal do jointly with their sisters in Ghana, Nigeria, Swaziland and other African countries?

Lastly, I invite NEPAD to KwaZulu-Natal as there is a lot to be done to address among other things, rural poverty, and ensure that we invest in institutional capacity building programmes targeting women groups and initiatives.

With these few words, I welcome you all not only to Durban but to the whole of the Zulu Kingdom. I wish you all the success on your timely deliberations.

Thank you

Annex 6. Bio data of Key speakers

King Goodwill Zwelithini

His Royal Majesty, King Goodwill Zwelithini is the eighth monarch of the Zulu nation and embodiment of peace and unity amongst the Zulu people. As the constitutional monarch of the kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal, he is head of the Ubukhosi, the state-recognized institution of Traditional Leadership that consists of local chiefs. His leadership role also entails chairmanship of the Usuthu Tribal Authority and Nongoma Regional Authority.

King Zwelithini is chairman of the Ingonyama Trust, a corporate entity established to administer the land traditionally owned by the king for the benefit, material welfare and social well-being of the Zulu nation. This land consists of 32% of the area of Kwazulu-Natal.

The king, being a firm believer in the ideals of NEPAD and Africa's development has graced this conference with his presence. His commitment to rural development and the advancement of women is beyond doubt.

Ladies and gentlemen, shall we with a standing ovation welcome his Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini to deliver the Opening Statement

Hon. Zenebu Tadesse

Zenebu Tadesse is the Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and a member of Parliament. Hon. Zenebu has also served as State Minister at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) from 2005 to 2010. Prior to this, she served as Head of the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) from 2001 to 2005.

A devoted advocate for the betterment of the life of disadvantaged people in Ethiopia, she has been actively engaged in high-level policy making for over 15 years.

Ladies and gentlemen, join me to welcome Hon. Tadesse,

Mrs. Bodil Maal

Bodil is Senior Adviser at the Department for Economic Development, Gender and Governance of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and African at heart. Bodil has been very instrumental in the development of the NEPAD Flagship Programme on Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture which is being supported by NORAD. Bodil has recently authored a NORAD report that has delved into gender roles in the fisheries and aquaculture value chains in Mozambique and we are delighted to have Bodil with us to share NORAD's perspective on the NEPAD gender climate change agriculture programme and other Norwegian support to African women entrepreneurs.

Mrs. Estherine Fotabong

Mrs. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong is currently Director of Programme Coordination and Implementation (PICD) at the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency which is the technical body of the African Union.

As the Director of Programmes, Madam Fotabong has oversight responsibilities for the implementation of the over 20 programmes and projects of NEPAD.

A trained lawyer by profession, she is a woman of substance and steel who wears many hats. She is a specialist in many areas including natural resources management, gender, tourism and so on. However, her first love is on environment and climate change issues where she has built a name for herself having worked with a host of international organizations in senior management positions including at the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wide Fund for Conservation of Nature (WWF)

Mrs. Estherine is very passionate about gender issues particularly about recognising and supporting the role of women in national development. She has played a huge role in seeing to the development of the NEPAD Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture Support Programme which aims at supporting African women economically and socially.

Annex 7. List of Participants

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
1	Mrs. Diane Sibanda	F	Botswana Agricultural Union	Vice Secretary	Botswana	jsibanda@botsnet.bw	267 722 60091;2673927903
2	Ms Jeannie Olesitse	F	SADC – CNGO		Botswana	jeannie.o@sadc-cngo.org.bw	
3	Dr.NIGER T. MARGARET AGBAW	F	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family	Inspector No 1; Focal Point for GCCASP, MINPROFF	Cameroon	nigerm@yahoo.com	237 75245388
4	Ms NANGA M. BERTHE OWONO	F	Minister of Environment and Rural Development	Point Focal Adaptationaux Changements Climatique I2	Cameroon	owonob@yahoo.fr	237 99992714
5	Mme Annang Magdaline Osungu. Fuh	F	FOCWED Cooperative	Secretary General	Cameroon	focwed2007@yahoo.com	237 74267032
6	Ms Fouagou Dongmo Seraphine	F	SOCOOPCIDACAM/ COOP.CA	President	Cameroon	nigerm@yahoo.com	237 75245388
7	Mme Sama Mojoko Mariana	F	Natural JOKO Entreprise	President/Managing Director	Cameroon	nigerm@yahoo.com	237 75245388
8	Ms. Ndedi Sarah Mouyenga	F	GIC le REVEIL	Responsable du Gicle reveil Ndoka	Cameroon	valentin_mouyenga@yahoo.fr	+237 50501393;99667813
9	Mr. Edmond Linonge Njoh	M	African Resource Group		Cameroon	edmundl@argcam.com	237 75867353; 33323417;75867353
10	Mr Casimir Nyime Lyonga	M	Limbe City Council	Director, Technical Services & Urban Development	Cameroon	limbecity@yahoo.com ; casnyime@yahoo.com	237 33 33 25 36; 237 71 12 88 61
11	H.E ZenebuTadesse	F	Ministry of women Children and Youth Affairs		Ethiopia	zenebut2009@yahoo.com	251 910158080
12	H.E Tefera Deribew		Ministry of Agriculture		Ethiopia	Tefera.derbew@moga.gov.et	251 911874737
13	H.E. BeleteYifru		Ministry of Environment		Ethiopia	eenvironment@gnail.com	251 115580522
14	Mrs. Tayech Ourgicho Didemo	F	Ministry of Environment		Ethiopia	eenvironment@gmail.com	

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
15	Mr Sitotaw Berhanu	M	GeoSAS Consulting	General Manager	Ethiopia	sitotawb@geosas.net	+251911517354
16	Mr Solomon Kebede	M	GeoSAS Consulting	Environment & Climate Change Senior Specialist	Ethiopia	solomonk@geosas.net	1630611452
17	Kora Tsenay	F	Tesha Yan d genet Farimng Dev.PLC	Managing Director	Ethiopia	genetkassa26@yahoo.com	00251935403443
18	Felekech	F	Fele Lewz Kibe			felepeanutbutter@yahoo.com	0921026321
19	Mr. Mekuanent Eyayu	M	Ministry of Women, Children & Youth Affairs	Department Team Leader	Ethiopia	meqeyayu@yahoo.com	+251912196891
20	Isabelle BOUKINDA NZAOU	F	ECCAS	Chef de la Cellulo Genre	Gabon	boukinda_isabelle@yahoo.fr	00241 04 25 42 85
21	Dr. Andrew Daudi	M		Lead Consultant	Malawi	adaudi@africa-online.net	265 999595015
22	Christine Mtambo	F	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Water Development	Deputy Director for Crop Development	Malawi	ccmtambo@gmail.com	265 888 503 980
23	Annie Namagonya	F	Ministry of Gender, Children Disability & Social Welfare	Chief Social Welfare Officer	Malawi	anamagonya@yahoo.co.uk	265 888 998382;1770411;99598382
24	Mrs. Yakosa Tegha	F	Department of Agricultural Extension Services in Lilongwe	Principal Agriculture Extension Officer	Malawi	ytegha@yahoo.co.uk	265 999329831
25	Mrs. Anne Ndeyapo Shipanga	F	Namibia Agricultural Union		Namibia	farmnina@gmail.com	264 8112 42756
26	Dr Boukary Abdou Razak	M	HC3N/PRN	Technical Advisor	Niger	razachoukary@yahoo.fr	227 96 97 63 26
27	Mme Barkiré Mariama Mabey	F	Gender: Programme Kandadji	Gender Expert	Niger	mariamabarkire@yahoo.com	00 227 96 98 24 38
28	Moustapha Sowou	M	Sarah Consult		Niger	msowou.8@gmail.com	00 227 48 6569; +22797784787
29	Mme Tourawa Zouera	F			Niger	nasiouzouera@gmail.com	00 227 96 81 42 30
30	Mr Ousman	M	ONG KALMATAN	Vice President	Niger	ousmanbos@yahoo.fr	00 227 96 96 60 08

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
	Boubacar Sanda					r	
31	Mr. Issa Idi	M			Niger	issaidi@yahoo.fr	
32	Prof Ken Ife	M	NEPAD Nigeria		Nigeria	kenife@aol.com	00 234 80 30 594460
33	Mr Sunday Ekele Uhiene	M	Presidency	Assistant Director, Economic Affair and CAADP	Nigeria	sundayuhiene@yahoo.com	00 234 8032288436
34	Mrs. Bodil Maal	F	Norway	Senior Advisor	Norway	bodil.maal@norad.no	+4791675915
35	Mrs. Yassine Fall	F	UN Women	Chief Economic Empowerment	Senegal	yassine.fall@unwomen.org	+221776449572
36	Papa Gora Ndiaye	M			Senegal	gndiaye@gmail.com	
37	Mr Bheki Mfeka	M			South Africa	Bheki@soareview.co.za	27 12 3510631
38	Ms Nonzaliseko Mlahlwa	F	Department of Rural Development & Agrarian Reform Agriculture	OFFICIAL	South Africa	nmlahlwa@yahoo.com	0458078000; 0835676044
39	Ms. Tepsy Ntseoane	F	African Farmers' Association of South Africa	President	South Africa	tepsy@netactive.co.za	082 787 6134
40	Dr Martha Mbatha	F	ADA – Chairperson of the Board		South Africa	cdrf@telkomsa.net	082 325 7666
41	Ms Njabulo Zwane	F	ADA – Board Member and Illovo Sugar LTD	Geeral Manager	South Africa	njzwane@illovo.co.za	0315084418; 0833270234
42	Mrs Preetha Dabideen	F	ADA – Board Member		South Africa	DabideenP@ada-kzn.co.za dabideen@telkomsa.net	031 208 3910; 083 655 5830
43	Ms Mpumi Mpanza	F	ADA	Marketing & Communications Manager	South Africa	mpanzam@ada-kzn.co.za	071 108 1476; 0333478600
44	Dr E.M Zungu	M	Office of the Premier in KwaZulu-Natal		South Africa	zuncogreenhouse@gmail.com	083 475 6945
45	Mrs Samki Phenyane	F	Africa Growth Institute		South Africa	samki@sodikagroup.com	082 625 0874
46	Dr Fikisiwe	F	Agricultural		South	fikisiwem@gmail.co	083 256 4275

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
	Madlopha		Entrepreneur		Africa	m	
47	Mrs Ashante Ngidi	F	Siyavaya Africa		South Africa	Ashantewaa@gmail.com	060 498 5211
48	Mrs Nothando Zungu	F	Phatgalz		South Africa	nothando@phatgalz.co.za	072 680 3007
49	Ms Phumla Vilakazi	F	Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation		South Africa	vilakzip@ada-kzn.co.za	076 499 6137
50	Ms Gugu Sokhulu	F	Triple Action Co-op	Chairperson	South Africa	gsokhulu@yahoo.com	083 394 4238
51	Ms Hlaleleni Buthelezi	F	Ixhiba Co-op	Agriculture	South Africa	hlalelenibuthelezi@gmail.com	083 620 5763
52	Dr Zoliswa Ndobeni	F	Rehoboth	Director	South Africa	zndobs@gmail.com	082 464 6039
53	Ms Sayo Skweyiya	F	Rehoboth		South Africa	Eskweyiya@mweb.co.za	082 551 9610
54	Ms M Ngcoya	F	Choboza Umhlanga Co-op	Chairperson	South Africa		082 699 4884
55	Ms Nozuko Cezula	F	Tafelkop Farm		South Africa	Tafelkopfarm@gmail.com	076 615 9191
56	Mrs Busisiwe Ngcobo	F	Ntshiki Enterprize	Secretary	South Africa	sbo-n@hotmail.com	083 797 6553
57	Edna Kalima	F	NEPAD Agency	Programme Officer	South Africa	ednak@nepad.org	+27112563600
58	Eliane Koko Ngnasoke	F	NEPAD Agency	Personal Assistant, PICD Division	South Africa	elianen@nepad.org	+27112563600
59	Rokhaya Ndiaye	F	NEPAD Agency	Project Manager, Francophone	South Africa	rokhayan@nepad.org	+27112563600
60	Teko Nhlapo	M	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	tekoh@nepad.org	+27112563600
61	Vincent Oparah	M	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	vincento@nepad.org	+27112563600
62	Collen Moyo	M	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	collenm@nepad.org	+27112563600
63	Kwame Ababio	M	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	kwamea@nepad.org	+27112563600

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
64	Estherine Fotabong	F	NEPAD Agency	The Director, PICD	South Africa	estherinef@nepad.org	+27112563600
65	Mr Ibrahim Gourouza	M	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	ibrahimgourouza.m@nepad.org	+27112563600
66	Mr Symerre Grey-Johnson	M	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	symerreg@nepad.org	+27112563600
67	Mr Abraham Sarfo	M	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	abraham.sarfo@nepad.org	+27112563600
68	Mr Martin Bwalya	M	NEPAD Agency	Head, CAADP	South Africa	bwalyam@nepad.org	+27112563600
69	Ms Millicent Seganoe	F	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	millicents@nepad.org	+27112563600
70	Dr Justina Dugbazah	F	NEPAD Agency	Project Manager, Anglophone	South Africa	justinad@nepad.org	+27112563600
71	Mohamed Abdisalam	M	NEPAD Agency	Head, PICD Division	South Africa	mohamedab@nepad.org	+27112563600
72	Ms.Boitumelo Mabusela	F	NEPAD Agency		South Africa	boitumelom@nepad.org	+27112563600
73	Dr Sloans Chimatiro	M			South Africa	sck1562000@yahoo.com	
74	Amb. Sheila Sisulu	F		Ambassador	South Africa	ssisulu@hotmail.com	+27763894248
75	His Majesty King KaBhekuzulu Goodwill Zwelithini	M	Zulu Loyal Household		South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
76	Her Royal Highness Queen Thandekile Zulu	F	Zulu Loyal Household		South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
77	Prince Thulani Zulu	M	Zulu Loyal Household	Royal Public Relations Officer	South Africa	princethulani@gmail.com	+27338310300
78	Mr N Sithole	M	Zulu Loyal Household	Private Secretary	South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
79	Ms S Ngcobo	F	Zulu Loyal Household	Protocal Officer	South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
80	Mr B M Mdletshe	M	Zulu Loyal Household	Praise Singer	South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
81	Mr M. Gumede	M	Zulu Loyal Household	Royal Cheff	South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
82	Prince W Zulu	M	Zulu Loyal Household	Royal Driver	South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
83	Mr E Masango	M	Zulu Loyal Household	Royal Photographer	South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
84	Q Biyela	M	Zulu Loyal Household	Driver	South Africa	'nhlamvu@gmail.com'	
85	Ms. Bongiwe Njobe	F	ZA Nac Consulting and Investments	MS	South Africa	bn.njobe@gmail.com	083 2000 924
86	Mr. Lucky Ntsangwane	M	South African Weather Service	Manager: Climate and Environment Research & Monitoring	South Africa	lucky.ntsangwane@weathersa.co.za	0123676239; 0843088652
87	Mr Nhlanhla Mtaka	M			South Africa	chair@igununduholdings.com	
88	Prof. Hamilton Simelane	M			South Africa	chair@igununduholdings.com	
89	Chouna Iyela	F	Ubuyile Africa	Manager	South Africa	chounaiyela@gmail.com	0782004007
90	Dr Jean Pierre Bafwa	M	LUKBA	Director	South Africa	bafwajp@gmail.com	0729935330
91	Buyisire Motha	F	Izwilamzansi		South Africa	buyisilemotha@yahoo.com	0735876657
92	Maggie Makheta	M	Ahanang Ma Afrika Eco Nature & Environment		South Africa	lordcomforttours@gmail.com ; mmsisonke1@gmail.com	0318370169;0730332960
93	Prof Peter Ewang	M			South Africa	kwangpe@gmail.com	
94	Cecilia Njanga	M	UNEP		South Africa	cecilianjanga@unep.org	0731808730
95	Nomusa Khanyile	F	Machobeni		South Africa		0824528671
96	Busisiwe Ngidi	F			South Africa	ngidibusi01@gmail.com	0787337262
97	Sydney Phiri	M	SABC Channel Africa		South	phiris@sabc.co.za	0117144884;

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
					Africa		0787103747
98	Pamela Koumba	F	SABC Channel Africa		South Africa	koumbapk@sabc.co.za	0117144449;0726454725
99	Nompilo Zungu	F	Zunco Foods		South Africa		0826372659
100	Moipone Letsie	F	National University of Lesotho		South Africa		0715138960
101	Tshitshi Mbatha	F	ADA	Chairperson	South Africa	tshitshi@cdrf.co.za	031672900; 0823257666
102	Thando Mbokazi	F	Ishashalazi Productions	Project Manager	South Africa	thando@ishashalazi-productions.co.za	0827090772
103	Kathy Hurly	F	SACGA	Director: Regional Services	South Africa	kathy.hurly@canegrowers.co.za	0315087200; 0828003333
104	Lee Hlubi	F	ADA/Cane Grower	NAREG Chairperson	South Africa	mekhtrading@gmail.com	0837711806
105	Poppy Makhanya	F	Mamayi Makhanya Co-op	Emerging agriculture Entrepreneur	South Africa	poppy.makhanya@gmail.com	
106	Nhlanhla Ndlovu	F	Journalismziko DUT's online Publication	Reporter	South Africa	nhlanhlandlovu92@gmail.com	0764949670
107	Thabisile Zulu	F	Machobeni Co-op		South Africa		0781147249
108	Nolulama Narets	F	Machobeni Co-op		South Africa		0781147250
109	Nzobole	F	Machobeni Co-op		South Africa		0781147251
110	Nobuhle Ramabela	F	Machobeni Co-op		South Africa		0824536533
111	Ms Rose Mkhize	F	DFA	Member	South Africa		0827643686
112	Ms Margaret Ndimande	F	IFA Lakamthethwa	Member	South Africa		+27724466523
113	Ms Mbali L. Masuku	F		Farmer	South Africa	mbalim@gmail.com	+27319082116; +27838878295
114	Ms Cindy Zulu	F		Advisor	South Africa	nunutinga@gmail.com	+27313022800; +27768216689

No	Names	Gender	Organization	Position	Country	E-mail	Telephone
115	Ms Winnie Sibisi	F	Ezakhiweni Co-op		South Africa		+27766659517
116	Ms Thandiwe Buthelezi	F	Zama-Uku Khanya Co-op	Chairperson	South Africa		+27738066582
117	Nokuthula Beauty Dlamini	F	Zamampilo	Member			+27797421816
118	Ms Christina Gumede	F	Senzzanjena Co-op	Member			+27742183417
119	Ms. Phindile Dlamini	F	Agriculture	Chief Project Coordinator	Swaziland	phindie48@rocketmail.com	
110	Mr. Edwin Nkuba Tumusiime	M			Uganda	musiimee@yahoo.com	
111	Ms Maria D Phiri	F	COMESA	Gender Climate Change Expert	Zambia	mphiri@comesa.int	+260 229725/32;+260975429295
112	Dr. George Wamukoya	M	COMESA	Climate Advisor	Zambia	wamukoyageorge@gmail.com	+254 729 952821
113	Mrs. Phoebe Vharela	F	Zimbabwe Farmers' Union	Farmer	Zimbabwe	violet.mandishona@gmail.com	263 774 086569

Annex 8. Side Events – Small scale Agribusiness women from Cameroon and Ethiopia showing their products



SMALL SCALE AGRIBUSINESS WOMEN FROM ETHIOPIA ARE SHOWING AND EXPLAINING ABOUT THEIR PRODUCTS AND MARKET RELATED ISSUES