

ROUNDTABLE #2: GENDER EQUITY & EQUITABLE LIVELIHOODS

Barbara Stinson - Moderator

October 21, 2021 | 9:00–10:15 A.M.

Roundtable Participants

Chandra Shekar Bhadsavle	Founder, Saguna Rural Foundation
Beth Dunford	VP of Agriculture, Human and Social Development, African Development Bank
Shachi Gurumayum	Head of Business Development, AgBiTech; Co-Founder, MaolKeki
Christopher Hegadorn	Secretary, Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
Nabeeha Kazi Hutchins	President and CEO, PAI
Jemimah Njuki	Director for Africa, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
Janie Simms Hipp	General Counsel, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Gareth Johnstone	Senior Director, Aquatic Food Systems, CGIAR; Director-General, WorldFish
Jocelyn Brown Hall	Director of North America, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

Roundtable Moderator

Barbara Stinson

President - World Food Prize Foundation

If there is anything the last five years have shown us, it's that gender equity is required in all sectors but especially in agriculture. In ag we have to achieve gender equity and access to so many different kinds of resources – finance, education, healthcare, reproductive services for women. Women need access to markets, entrepreneurial training, and all kinds of empowerment to increase their personal agency.

The U.N. Food Systems Summit actions and the Committee on Food Security's Voluntary Guidelines on Gender all focused on the importance of ground-level action as well as improved policy. In this session we are going to be examining what's working and the actions that are needed to again scale these projects and activities in all of the critical areas I just mentioned. It's going to take everyone – the U.N. system, donors, multilateral organizations, private sector, the International Research Institutions and non-governmental organizations all have to focus on joint action.

Today our speakers are going to touch on women's involvement in the agricultural economy, how it bolsters equitable livelihoods for everyone, which is so needed now in the disproportionate impacts we've seen from COVID on women and girls. We'll focus also on promoting the agency of the most historically disenfranchised populations. This is especially women in rural areas who are working so hard to improve the lives and livelihoods of

everyone. We'll also focus on those policy and private sector innovations that are needed, especially in the area of finance, to help women face agribusiness. We'll spotlight innovations on women's empowerment and right to access to market, etc., and the important role of men in accelerating the progress for women and girls.

I am so honored to have before you a panel of nine wonderful speakers. I'm going to introduce them one by one.

Barbara Chandra Shekar Bhadsavle – he is the founder of Saguna Rural Foundation. Welcome, Shekar.

Shekar Thank you, thank you, thank you very much, and good morning, good evening.

Barbara Thank you. Dr. Beth Dunford is the Vice president of Agriculture, Human Development and Social Development at the African Development Bank.

Beth Thank you. Good morning.

Barbara Yes, thank you for being here.

Beth Glad to be here. I wish we were there in person, but it's nice to be here.

Barbara I know. We're going to get there. Shachi Gurumayum – he's the Head of Business Development at AgBiTech as well as Co-founder of Maleki. Welcome, Shachi – so good to have you.

Shachi Thank you, Barbara, and hello to everyone. Good to be here.

Barbara Chris Hegadorn is the Secretary for the Committee on World Food Security. Welcome, Chris.

Chris Thank you. It's great to be here too and especially with this caliber of panelists, so thank you, and hi to my friend Jocelyn and others.

Barbara Good to see you. Nabeeha Kazi Hutchins is the CEO of PAI. Welcome, Nabeeha.

Nabeeha Hello, all. Thank you so much, Barbara, for convening this and it's great to be here.

Barbara And Jemimah Njuki – she's Director for Africa at the International Food Policy Research Institute.

Jemimah Thank you so much for having me. Great to be here.

Barbara Welcome from Nairobi. And Janie Simms Hipp is now General Counsel for the US Department of Agriculture. Congratulations, Janie, and welcome.

Janie Thank you, and it's great to be with everyone today, and greetings from the USDA.

- Barbara We also have in person Gareth Johnstone – he’s Director-General of WorldFish. Welcome.
- Gareth Thank you, thank you, Barbara. And thanks to being here in person, fantastic.
- Barbara It is, yes. And Jocelyn Brown Hall is our Director, new Director for North America for FAO, Food and Agricultural Organization. Welcome, Jocelyn.
- Jocelyn Thank you, Barbara. It’s a delight to be here.
- Barbara So we are going to get started. And we are going to ask Jemimah – Dr. Njuki, please frame this discussion for us.
- Jemimah Thank you very much, Barbara. I'm delighted to be here today especially, as we celebrate the work of a remarkable woman, my sister and CGIAR colleague, Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted. I will share a few broad parts to tee up the ensuing discussion with my great colleagues and friends on the panel. Now, a lot of these thoughts have been shared by my learnings over the last 20 years working on gender equality and agriculture, but they are also shaped most certainly by women from around the world that we have engaged as part of the U.N. Food Systems Summit but also the work we are doing within the CGIAR.

Now, as we all know, while women are already engaged in multiple ways across the food systems as producers, as consumers, as processors, as traders, and they have done so for a millennia, actually, their work has been invisible for two main reasons: that our current food systems are inequitable; they publish your gender equalities that are further shaped and bring forth by context for gender but also our food systems, resources, opportunities and benefits are not equitably available to men and women. And as we have seen, even though rising hunger, malnutrition are compounded by COVID-19, the call today really from this roundtable is for bold and ___ shifts in approach if we are to achieve systematic change.

I will share with you some four domains of change that I believe must happen and happen together for us to achieve gender-just systems. One is expanding women's voice, agency and leadership in food systems. We need to guarantee the rights of women to occupy their space in our food systems. In collaboration with Global Health 50/50, the CGIAR launched the Global Food 50/50. It is a global Index and mechanism to monitor and hold food systems institutions accountable for gender equality in their leadership, in their workplace policies and their outcomes.

Now, we launched the Inaugural Report a couple of weeks ago, and this report shows that only 6% of the leaders of 52 food systems organizations are women from low and middle-income countries. We must change this, because women's voice and leadership is needed, and it must be visible, all the way from the grassroots to boardrooms, to labs, to parliaments. Two is increasing access and rights to resources and services that women need to engage and benefit from food systems. But if there is a place where we need to shift our thinking, it is here. We must shift how we think about resources and rights. For example, in financial inclusion we often work with women to make them bankable. We must shift this thinking and make financial inclusion *womenable*. We cannot continue asking women to do the work when they are already doing it. We need financial institutions that are actually

committed to design and deliver transformative financial services, and I am glad that the AFDB is here to tell us how they're doing that.

Three is, overarching all of this, we must change policies in these institutions so that they work for women. As part of the U.N. Food Systems Summit, we made a call to the government, and we started seeing this in the national food systems transformation _____. For them to adopt feminist food systems policies that are hinged on addressing the needs and priorities of women, to adopt gender-responsive budgeting, and to actually have clear agenda outcomes. We cannot leave the job of gender equality only to the ministries of gender.

And four and last is addressing the underlying causes of gender equality, including harmful gender and social norms – norms about what women can and cannot be, what they can or cannot own, where they can go or not go. These continue to limit women's ability to exercise their agency, and I hope we can talk a bit about that in the panel.

In closing, I know we have made a lot of progress, but we must ensure the food systems work for women as much as women are working for food systems. Without addressing gender inequality, we know, and we have the evidence that shows our Sustainable Development Goals will remain draft goals and not reality.

So thank you, Barbara, so much, and I'm really looking forward to a deeper engagement on some of these priority domains of action that we know we must tackle.

Barbara Thank you, Jemimah, for highlighting those four areas – they are so crucial. And I love the statement, “We need to work for women as hard as they're working for us.” Now we're going to go into questions and a bit of discussion on what really is most needed to effectively scale these strategies for women in agriculture. There is so much going on. So much emerged out of the U.N. Food Systems Summit. We have recommendations in reports and action being taken all over. What is most needed? Gareth, you've been working in this field for so long.

Gareth I have.

Barbara You've been advocating for women. Give us some of your thoughts.

Gareth Yeah, and thank you, Barbara, and thanks for the introduction there. Gender equality and women empowerment, remember, is one of the four levers for change that was identified in the U.N. Food Systems Summit, alongside human rights, innovation and finance. So these levers are really critically important in terms of unlocking the significant progress we're making in terms of global call of action for sustainable food systems transformation and attaining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

So, moreover, aquatic foods, which is the focus of research and innovation of WorldFish, the organization that I represent and lead, is identified as one of the seven priorities in terms of the U.N. Food Systems Summit to end hunger and malnutrition and to protect the planet. So gender equality and women's empowerment are key input areas for us. Over the past decades, our scientists at

WorldFish have studied and [inaudible] made many gender transformative approaches and strategies, not only relevant to aquatic foods but also relevant in terms of the wider agricultural development agenda.

Now, I have five areas that I would like to highlight in this roundtable that I think are really critical. Remember, in the aquatic foods, one in every two workers are women, and they work directly in agri-aquatic food production but moreover in fisheries and agriculture, but moreover the majority of the work is in the other value chain activities related to development, processing, marketing, selling fish and other aquatic foods, and products. Women provide the labor in the sector, entrepreneurship, which is maybe invisible in many aspects.

And so my first point is it's very important that we capture, document, describe and formally recognize the women's social and economic contribution by gathering the right data – really important. So even the budgeting, to understand not only in terms of production but in terms of distribution and the role that women play across the whole food systems. And this data is necessary in terms of guiding food systems policies, innovations, investments that we need to be talking about, and ensuring that they are designed in terms of women's needs, aspirations and experiences. I can provide examples of where we're working with, for example, in the FAO and the Duke University on eliminating hidden harvest, which is understanding the role of women across the whole spectrum of activities around small-scale fisheries.

Empowerment to women, the second point I would make, is empowering women in terms of financing, women-led innovations. I would also prioritize women's needs and voices, as we mentioned previously, particularly in the current COVID pandemic and really tackling some of the issues that really set back gender equality.

My fourth point, I would say, is that men need to be better allies to attest for the quest for gender equality and women's empowerment both in the workplace but also in the home as well in particular.

And finally, I'd like to say that we need more women in science. We need more women in science. In 2015 UNESCO published an article that said, 28% of researchers around the world are women – simply not good enough. We need women to be in science, collecting that data and making sure that we have real-world understanding of the problems and the issues facing our women across the food systems.

I got my five points.

Barbara You did, thank you.

Gareth Thank you.

Barbara Excellent. And 28% of women are researchers? Oh, my gosh. We know how we need to grow the research community and gender equality there is absolutely crucial.

Jocelyn, we're going to stay with our in-person speakers today, and tell us your thoughts.

Jocelyn Well, thank you so much, Barbara. And, Gareth you really stole some of my talking points, but I'll try to build on what you said. First of all, I think we've come a long way. I have been in agriculture and the food security field for over 25 years. When I first came back from overseas... I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Peshawar, Pakistan, and I came back to the United States to get a job in agriculture and food security. And I was specifically interested in women. And so people said to me – and I'm afraid to say this – in the U.S. Government, said, "Well, women in development, that's a dead issue. We're over that. We don't need that anymore." And meanwhile I would go into meetings, and I would be the only woman in the meeting, and there would be 20 people in the meeting. So we've come a long way with the U.N. Food Systems Summit where now gender and gender issues and women's empowerment are one of the five levers. And I think we've made huge strides. However, we have a lot more to do.

And I want to build on some things that Gareth talked about. First of all, women's empowerment and positive feedback. Barbara, I cannot thank you enough, and I'm so grateful that you've chosen Shakuntala Thilsted this year – a woman involved in aquaculture, a woman of color, a woman from Asia; she's going to be a role model for so many people, myself included, even though I don't fit some of those categories. So one, we need more role models.

Two, Gareth said the data and the feedback – so important to collect this data and statistics. We're focusing on it at FAO. We have a global campaign for indigenous women's empowerment report that focuses on indigenous women, which is yet another area and yet another Frontier that we really need more data and statistics about. We need to have women to have access to this data. I have just returned from Africa where I served as FAO's representative to both Zimbabwe and Ghana. And the data is out there, but women don't have access to it, and oftentimes they're not allowed to have access to it. We've got to just break those barriers down.

And, finally, and I hope we hear about this more from our other panelists, talking about the term *glocal* for women. So we need these global overarching ideas that come down from the U.N. Food Systems Summit that are top-down, that show the leaders, show the citizens of the world that the leaders are emphasizing this, but we also need local solutions – not everything is going to work for every different community in this area. And I'll go back to some work, some really interesting work that FAO is doing in the indigenous peoples. We had a talk yesterday from an elder and a policy advocate, Ken Paul, who talked about how the women in his first nation in Canada are the real drivers. The men happen to be the spokespersons, and that's how they divide up the advocacy for women. But not everything, not every... There's no one size fits all for women. We've got an enormous diversity, and we need to embrace that.

So those would be my additions for you. And I also just want to make a final quote that yesterday I was so delighted to hear, and build off what Gareth said about women and agriculture and science. Your Borlaug Field Award moderator yesterday, Aditi Mukherji, stated that there weren't that many women in science

before, but now ten years later she feels like she's gotten more people around her. And I just can't emphasize enough how much we've got to change this paradigm.

Thank you.

Barbara It is gratifying to see, and I think five out of our ten Borlaug Field Award winners are women, and two were initially. So it is wonderful to see the progress, and there is so much more work to do. We're getting a bit of a theme about local solutions. As things proceed, we have to get to the ground and be sure that we're applying across different regions of the world, the kinds of solutions that fit. And I know many of our speakers coming forward have more to say about that.

But let's go now to our virtual speakers. Nabeeha Hutchins, offer some of your opening remarks on this.

Nabeeha Thank you, Barbara, and it's so great to be here. As you know, my father worked for Dr. Borlaug for almost 30 years at CIMMYT in Mexico, so it's also so special to be part of the dialogue. And look forward to joining you back in person at some point.

We know about COVID, right, how it's had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, and we know the results. There is more food insecurity. We're seeing increased gender-based violence, reduced access to essential health services, including reproductive health services. And I could go on and on. But I think it's really important to underscore that this is not just a set of outcomes that has occurred because of COVID-19. I think it's hard pressed to find a global challenge that doesn't disproportionately affect women and girls. And this year, yes, we had two big global moments. One was the U.N. Food Systems Summit, and then the other was the Generation Equality Forum. And what stands out is that, in both of these gatherings, they certainly centered around rice and the power of people. And also local systems need solutions that will enable equitable livelihoods, empower communities and also resilience. And I always say that, for any system to be resilient and equitable, it needs people. And if we are to take that further, whatever that system is, whether it's a food system or a health system or a political system, it needs to work for women, but also women need to be powering them.

So as we look at the system being powered by women, I think one thing that is so fundamental is that we need to stop piece-mealing the needs and the rights of women and do away with an approach for others, and oftentimes it's men in leadership positions, in control positions that are deciding what healthcare do women get to have, what healthcare do they not get to have, what programs are good for rural women – but then these rural women are not in the table to shape these policies and programs. What rights should women have, and what rights shouldn't they have? So it's your original question on – what is it going to take to scale up the most effective strategies for women in agriculture? Of course the ag DNA that runs through my blood would say access to credit and capital, land ownership, access to quality inputs and seed and markets and more. And those are really important. We certainly have gone a very long way in those regards – but we haven't made it the entire way.

And so I think that the most effective strategies for women in agriculture really require a comprehensive approach that's going to promote, propel and protect the agency, autonomy and rights of women. Women and youth should not have to jump through hoops to access family planning and contraception services if they want it – this is a personal decision, right? To improve the nutrition outcomes of children, women shouldn't be limited to a handful of options in the food basket that don't actually meet the taste and preferences of her family. I always say providing food and nourishment is an act of love – and we can't forget that. And this aspiration of empowerment and gender equality, it requires a fundamental shift in our mindset, in our approach.

And the final thing I want to just lift up is my organization, PAI, based here in DC, we're a civil society organization that is advocating alongside 96 of civil society partners across 33 countries to ensure that communities have access to sexually productive health and rights. And we are very, very clear that, in order to achieve our mission and the aspirations of women's rights and global health, we have to power shift. And our model is entirely around power shifting, where local communities are deciding where they're driving and they're sustaining. And we believe that when that happens, certain is certain. Our approach to change is always through a lens of possibility, positivity and strength and not through an assumption of deficiency or insufficiency. We trust, we believe, we _____. We look at sustainable ways forward, and we get out of the way.

Barbara Right.

Nabeeha So what's the solution? Ask them what they need, what they want, and how you can help, and then meet them where they are when they want to go.

Barbara Thank you, thank you so much, Nabeeha. What a great depiction not only of the whole range of work that's needed but the appeal for a comprehensive approach, not a piecemeal approach and where the women get to decide. So I'm standing here as a woman saying I support that.

So let's just take a minute or two if one or two others, we can go to our gallery view and just see if anybody else has comments that they'd like to make. We need to convert hours to gallery view so we can see. Anybody have any one thing that they might like to add, a follow-on comment? We've heard some great propositions of areas for action. If not, we can move on to our next question. Great, we are going to move on and talk about historically disenfranchised populations. And Janie Simms-Hipp, you are the perfect person to launch us into this discussion. Women in rural areas in developing countries here in the U.S., you've worked with Native American populations for years. Please, what kinds of progress do you see that's needed, and what is the role for men?

Janie Well, first of all, thank you for inviting me and having me participate today. And greetings to everyone there in Iowa, and greetings to my own Secretary Vilsack. I think he's there with you this week. Let me just start by saying that in my current role as general counsel at USDA, I'm the first native woman to hold this position within the Department. And I have worked at USDA before, and I'm so honored to be back, but I'm also back to a USDA that looks quite different from what it did

before. We have Secretary Vilsack back, but we also have Dr. Jewel Brunaugh, the first African-American woman to serve as Deputy Secretary of the USDA. So I cannot tell you how proud I am to be a part of this team. And we have lots of pillars of work that were involved in USDA. Many impacts that we're making across the globe, obviously, and some of you have run into the Secretary and the Deputy in various settings over the last several months since we've come on board. But one of the areas that I, obviously, Barbara, hold near and dear to my heart, is the work we're doing on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. This is a renewed effort of this Biden Administration, Biden-Harris Administration, I might add. And we are rolling up our sleeves. I actually just within the general counsel's office have emboldened my staff to have an Indian Law working group, which is going to examine all the legal frameworks that sit up around indigenous access to land and resources in the U.S. But I've also asked that same group to broaden their scope and pull in an examination of the barriers and... Some of them are even beyond barriers – they're systematic systems that have been embedded in our policies for so long, that have created almost insurmountable abilities for people to access our programs, because they're just designed poorly to meet the needs of gender issues as well as disenfranchised populations. So we are, within the general counsel office itself, really taking a deep, deep dive into the policy frameworks. But I just have to tell you that that's just a part of the work. That's just within my own office. We have teams around USDA that are tackling these issues just as deeply as we can push into that space.

But let me give you an example of the role of indigenous women in U.S. agriculture. Indigenous communities held the land of the United States in total for tens of thousands of years. We now farm and ranch on about 50 to 60 million acres of land. And if you look at the data – and I'm so glad someone brought up data; it's so terribly important – we make up, Native women make up over half of all indigenous farmers and ranchers; but we are totally invisible in the conversation. And that's one of the things that I want to bring home to everyone. I think every one of the panelists has already said it, but I'm going to say it again – we have to be visible. We have to be in leadership roles, because it matters that we're not the only ones in the room. We must, as policymakers, really see the issues from the eyes of the people that are being disenfranchised and have been for so long, including gender-based issues. Men have a huge role to play as allies, but we've got to do the deep work of tackling financial systems, policy systems, access to resources, access to land, access to infrastructure – that often is kind of nebulous, but it's really, really important.

I just will tell you that I'm going to cede the rest of my time to everyone else. There's so much to say in this space. But I'm thrilled to be with you and just to let you know that USDA is deep in the weeds of this important work. Thanks.

Barbara Thank you. Just so wonderful to hear all that perspective and that commitment. It's so important – we need to see that leadership really in all governments. So we'll be looking for that across the world. Chris, you're coming to us from Rome. Thank you so much. The CFS issued voluntary guidelines on gender equality this year, but what are some of your reflections on particularly these inequities?

Chris

First, Barbara, thank you for the invite, and thank you for helping. Last week we had a very successful 49th Plenary Session here in Rome, held virtually. Barbara helped manage one of our discussions around follow-up to the Food Systems Summit. I'd also like to thank Janie for the work she's working on, and everybody else, Secretary Vilsack, on down from USDA. My very first job in the Executive Branch was working as a policy analyst in the WIC program. And so that was 37 years ago, and it stuck with me this whole time, the importance of getting nutrition right, getting gender issues right, taking care of the most vulnerable. And so it's a great topic.

We are working now on voluntary guidelines. In fact today we're having a regional consultation in Africa. We've already had regional consultations in Latin America and Europe, but this is part of what the CFS is working on in this particular area, along with many others. But let me tell you, CFS is still outside of Rome. And particularly in the U.S. a lot of people don't know what the CFS is. It's the U.N. 's Rome-based Committee on World Food Security, which since 2009 has been providing policy convergence, advice frameworks, guidance on food security and nutrition issues. The full range and complexity of food systems are captured, negotiated, based on reports, scientific reports of our CFS High Level Panel of Experts. And since 2009 we have, building on the Voluntary Guidelines for the Progressive Realization of the Right to Food, a very key foundation stone. Now, we've developed monetary guidelines on land tenure, principles for responsible agriculture investments, the forward on protracted crises, and just this year, voluntary guidelines on food systems and nutrition, as well as policy recommendations for an agri-ecological and other innovative approaches to food security and nutrition. So we've been busy, and hopefully in the U.S. more people will lead those for the HLP reports and the products that we promulgate.

So our advisory group – we have 133 member states, so this is the most inclusive U.N. intergovernmental body for food security and nutrition, and the advisors consist of U.N. agencies, U.N. nutrition, the CGIAR, the World Bank and Gates Foundation, special rights to food and self-governing mechanisms of civil society and the private sector. Now, we report to the U.N. General Assembly via ECOSAC and the FAO Conference. So at today's conference on gender, as I said, we're looking to develop voluntary guidelines, and those we anticipate negotiating next year in the spring and summer and finalizing and adopting CSF50 in October. So we are collecting regional inputs that give the whole scope, complexity, the particular views and perspectives of the various regions. And those will help shape the negotiated document, the first draft, which we will have, and I'll put in the chat where you can find all this.

But this is exactly addressing the wide spectrum of issues that other speakers have already talked about, the hurdles for women and girls in particular, the negative impact, and our ability collectively to achieve the SDGs, particularly SDG2. So we all know women are essential to producing our food, to feeding our infants and families, to investing in sustainability food systems to protect our soils, water and biodiversity, yet they're consistently underrepresented in decision-making on the core issues that directly impact them. They need to be included... in the decision at the tables where ____, my predecessor. Too often they don't have access to land, to capital or to the resources necessary to thrive. They often live in poverty, suffer the

harshest impacts of climate change and where agency and rights are either not respected or sometimes not even recognized. So this must change, and all of us, all of us, are responsible for raising these issues in our governments, our communities, our mosques, our churches, our temples, even within our own families.

So join us on this issue. I'm just saying goodbye, and thank you, and that's just – come and join us. Thanks.

Barbara Thank you. It's really great to hear what the U.N. is doing, the broad reach, the regional dialogues, the guidelines themselves, and to know the action, the detailed action in the report is also really well spelled out. So great to hear all of that. And Jemimah Njuki, we're going to come to you for a bit more on this, following on what you said earlier.

Jemimah Thank you very much, Barbara. I think one of the things that I have seen, and especially as I've worked across Africa and Asia, is the power of women organizing, and especially marginalized women. From the Sampan groups in India to Village Savings and Loan Associations across Africa. And we need to support these women organizing. I've seen, for example, the Self Employed Women's Association really bring to the forefront the issues of informal workers that work in the food systems, integrating them into global value chains but also really being part of a voice for women at the global level. And I think we really need to make a very intentional effort to support grassroots organizations.

I want to talk a bit about the role of men, because even as women organize, even as they play their roles in the food system, we cannot leave the job of achieving gender equality on women. We cannot put the burden on getting to equality to those who are most affected by inequality. I think it has to shift fundamentally. And there is such a critical role for men to play as leaders, as husbands, as fathers, as friends, as allies. And I just want to mention three key areas that I think are really important.

Men who are in leadership positions – to ensure that they are gender-responsive, they're transformational in the things that they do, that the things they design, whether it's infrastructure, meet the needs and priorities of women. In Kenya ____ we had one of the governors in one of our counties actually build their biggest rural markets and include childcare facilities in that rural market. So imagine if those that are designing infrastructure respond to some of these needs and priorities. It allows women to actually engage in economic activity without having to worry about where their children are.

The second group is the men who are in traditional and cultural leadership roles. I see that so critical in Africa where a lot of our land is still under customary laws, that they ensure that women have equal ownership and rights during their allocation of land but also ensure that the traditional laws, customs and practices that they oversee actually guarantee the rights and dignity of women and girls. I've seen traditional leaders in Mali say 30% of the land we allocate as customary landholders is going to go to women. So this is really, really powerful.

But also men in households engage in equitable decision-making, recognizing the women, hearing the voices of women, and making sure that there is equitable

decision-making, the sharing of unpaid care work so the burden is actually shifting to be much more shared. But more generally, making sure that women are creating the spaces, that men clear the spaces for women's voices and leadership in the food system spaces that they currently dominate, even as we expand to get more women into these spaces.

Barbara Thank you so much, Jemimah. Excellent points, and I appreciate you bringing us back to the grassroots work that's needed and following those actions and the three different levels of responsibility that men have as well in leadership, cultural leadership, and also in households – so much more to be done really at all levels.

Anybody have one quick follow-on comment they might like to make on this particular topic? You can just raise your actual hand. Yes. Shachi.

Shachi Thank you, Barbara. I was just going to say that aligns so well. When Jemimah said leadership for men needs to drive change, and I've also been thinking about how in many societies – and this might also align with what Janie said earlier – a woman might be visible in the workforce, but that doesn't necessarily translate into equal rights. And that's something that we do need to address and think about more seriously in our design process.

Barbara Excellent point. Any other last, quick point? Yes, Nabeeha.

Nabeeha I'm just going to build on what Shachi said, that certainly equal rights. But I want to make sure that we're also looking at this from an equity perspective, because that then informs where the heavier investments are needed and where greater access to whatever the programs might be and interventions might be, can reap the benefits in an equitable way. But all great points.

Barbara Yes. Janie, your last thought.

Janie Just a very quick add-on. As we're really digging deeply into the policies and the laws that sit up under these issues, if we don't have the women's words at the table and their brains and the disenfranchised communities at the table, then we do not have all the information we need to actually fundamentally shift those words on the piece of paper that literally drive policy. And that is hard work, but I think it's very important that we have everyone at the table, because we will not hear from them if we do not know them.

Barbara Thank you. Well said – We will not hear from them if we do not hear them.

Janie If we don't know them.

Barbara Yes, if we don't know them. Sorry.

Jane If we don't, we cannot hear from them.

Barbara Yeah, exactly. Thank you. We're going to shift our focus and topic now, significantly, and talk specifically about finance and investment. We know that policy-level and private sector innovations are proceeding. There is a need to increase financial opportunities for women-based agribusiness all over the world. It needs to be

localized. It needs to be specific to the regions of the world. How can we build on some of the experience and programs that we know are out there addressing innovations for women's empowerment and rights and their access to markets and finance in the ag sector? And what more needs to be done? We have three speakers that are really anxious to address this issue specifically. Shachi.

Shachi Thank you, thank you, Barbara. Great, great so far. I mean what I'd like to say is just continuing on the topics raised earlier by my fellow panelists. I mean I would like to address financing in three themes. I think the money's out there. It's a question of how do you make sure that women find access but also are prepared to have that access and make good use of the money. Now, I said three themes. The first one is... And I think it goes well with what we've just discussed, is gender-sensitive design with an inclusive mindset from the very beginning. So you design a program with equality in mind, with equity in mind, and you say – how are we going to implement this?

I can give you an example. LadyAgri, the group that I am an advisor to, has been working with coffee, Robusta coffee growers in multiple countries, and they're doing that with a focus on smallholder women farmers. But then they are also thinking about – what is it that women need specifically? And if you think about safety during pregnancy, for example. So women need loans to get access to labor to help them manage their land, their crops during times of need. At the same time, if they need labor to do the manual work, they need to be able to access that. So design it in such a way... I mean my own organization, the MaKeki Foundation, back in Manipur in India, when we were training farmers at crossroads, just waiting for them to show up at our info-session, we found it really hard to get farmers to come on their own, until we included a nurse in the group. And suddenly the nurse started talking to the women, and women suddenly showed a lot of interest in their own personal health. And then they dragged the men along, and suddenly we had all these farmers, men and women, attending our info-sessions.

Now the first point is around the design, and then the second point is around policy. Now policies take multiple stakeholders to be involved. It takes time. It takes the government championship and so on. But then while we are working on the policy, what is it that we're going to do to fill the gap? So if we say financing for women, equitable financing for women and equal access, that's not going to happen from a policy level today, tomorrow. It might be long... It's a long-term exercise. But then there are organizations like the Microloan Foundation, who are working not on the collateral basis but by vetting them well, by training them well and organizing loan, you know, guarantees in such a way that they get their loans repaid on time, and I think they have a success rate of 98, 99%.

The last point is around capacity-building, and we've touched on this earlier on. Over the last years and decades, women have been left behind, and this is visible in the statistics. Talking about data, women-owned farms, I think generally are 40, 50% lower in productivity. So we need to ask ourselves why and how do we address that. And that comes from again, designing specific programs that are targeting skill sets uplifting for women. An example, you know, coming to a specific, on-the-ground example, it's this recent partnership between Cargill, the major trading organization, and LadyAgri in Central Cameroon to train up to 3,000

farmers in their cocoa-growing community. So they're growing cocoa already, but what if you could train the women in the communities to also grow seasonal cash food crops that they could sell and earn? That empowers them. Empowering a woman simultaneously addresses a lot of issues in the family, including child labor, deforestation. I mean there are many reasons why we should be working on gender equality and equitable livelihoods. So I'll close with that. Thank you.

Barbara Thank you so much, Shachi. I appreciate you referencing that. The work of LadyAgri was featured in a workshop yesterday, and you could see all of those aspects being addressed and the inclusive design, filling the gaps in that policy change until you get there, and the capacity-building that's needed. So very important components and great to hear what's going on, on the ground to try to address some of those.

Beth, you've been waiting. You've got a tremendous portfolio at the African Development Bank. Tell us more on finance and investment.

Beth Great. Well, thank you, Barbara, and really thank you for inviting the African Development Bank to return to the Borlaug Dialogue. And I'm really proud to be part of an institution that holds agriculture really close at our heart and of course can claim as one of our own, the World Food Prize, Bank Group president, Dr. Adesina.

So the Bank is strengthening women-led agribusiness and access to financing, advisory services to foster entrepreneurship and agribusiness on many levels. So for decades we really of course have been talking about the huge contribution that African women make to food systems, but they don't have the same level of access to inputs as men do – which is really important. So the Africa Gender Index says that only 23% of women have access to credit. And we all know that lack of access to financing often, especially for farmers, keeps women trapped in poverty and subsistence farming. And this is especially true with increased climate impacts. So the financing gap for African women in agriculture, the value chains ____ is estimated at 15.6 billion. So my experience with women who have access to finance, markets, technologies, food systems are more inclusive, and the global hunger gap can be narrowed.

So what does the African Development Bank do? The gender strategy at the Bank focuses on women's access to finance, markets, skilled development, access to social services. And so we're doing this to really build infrastructure and with a focus on sectors where women have high entrepreneurial potential. And agriculture of course is key to that.

So one of our flagship programs is the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation initiative, also known as TAAT. And this aims to accelerate the doubling of crop, livestock and fish productivity, expanding access to proven, climate-smart technologies to over 40 million people. And this has really important parts of it, the gender-sensitive reform of national and regional policy, in technology delivery, as well as for commodity value chains, seed releases, access to fertilizer. So

we're already really seeing some positive changes in the lives of women, women farmers, to increase food security and income because of some of these issues.

So in Kenya, just to provide one example, a maize grower named Doreen Atemo is one of more than 170,000 farmers who now have access to climate-smart certified maize seed. So this is increasing yields by 30%, and this is really helping farmers earn money for things that they need. And many of these farmers are women.

So I also want to talk about affirmative action. I'd also like to really talk about another flagship that we have, which is the Affirmative Finance Access for Women in Africa initiative, or as we like to call it, AFAWA. And it aims to reduce the \$42 billion financing gap women businesses face on the continent. And we aim to facilitate up to \$5 billion of financing to women-led businesses. So importantly, one important part of this AFAWA effort is a risk-sharing instrument, and that's to unlock credit to women's businesses and enterprises in Africa. And so this mechanism builds upon the existing network of commercial banks and microfinance institutions to create the structural change and lasting impact that women really need.

So this is a company with technical assistance to help women become bankable, help them improve their businesses, their business development services, their business plans, their accounting systems, their financial system – so they can access finance. But as Jemimah said earlier, we don't just want to make women bankable, we want to make banks *womenable*. And I really, really like how you phrased that. So this technical assistance is also for financial institutions to help them design products, financial products for women that are really specific to their needs and their particular circumstances. So this credit line is also going to use a grading system to evaluate financial institutions based on the share and quality of their lending to women and the socioeconomic impact of this _____. So top institutions will be rewarded with preferential financial terms for African development. So that's the kind of action we need to make financial institutions *womenable* as we said. So again, really looking forward to hearing the rest of this discussion and the impact we can make together on women's finance. Thank you.

Barbara Okay, I know we're going to take that one forward – making financial institutions *womenable*. Thank you, thank you for all of that perspective. Isn't it incredible how much is going on? I mean maybe we're actually going to really start seeing the needle move in these important areas and progress on all fronts.

Shekar, you are going to bring us down to the ground, I think, for some really amazing work going on in your region.

Shekar Yup, yup. I wanted to talk about Indian conditions, equitable livelihood, how it works in our conditions through agri-rural tourism. So to get the spark of equitable livelihood in the minds of agrarian women in rural India, they first need to get the proper feeling of dignity. It is a psychological process through which they can get confidence. Rural Indian women...

Barbara Sorry. Shekar, I'm going to ask you to pause a moment. We have an interruption. Sorry about that. Okay, continue.

Shekar Okay. Yeah, so rural Indian women have been historically disenfranchised by society, and on top of this, overloaded by agrarian duties. Due to this, they are unable to even imagine that there can be a different lifestyle than a misery many such women live through daily. Even after a great deal of efforts, and money spent by the Indian government, local and international NGOs, and individuals with a progressive mindset, achieving these big objectives are a long distance away. To accelerate the progress of women and girls in rural parts of the developing world, we need to have a different way. And I can think of a path which can produce a win-win outcome.

This path is Agra Rural Tourism. We call it ART, A-R-T. We define ART as an activity organized by farmers on an active farm. Their leisurely learning and fun are combined together. ART was born on our farm in a small rural Indian village. It's the state of Maharashtra. In 1985 through ART, 215 disenfranchised women from our village received more dignity with financially more involvement and became an important part of village economy, through Agra Rural Tourism, much more important to the society. The city counterparts who imparted all this to this woman received happiness by spending a day on the farm, leisurely learning about food production. This is called ART.

I want to make a last comment. This spark of dignity and confidence can only be injected, can only be ignited by those who are dignified in the cities. By going to the farmer's farm, spending some money, purchasing available food items and being able to find a new farmer friend. Thank you very much.

Barbara Thank you so much, Shekar, and it's really incredible to hear a man working on behalf of women and women's empowerment in such a creative way. The idea of increasing dignity and confidence is so much part of that personal agency we're all talking about.

So we can see if there's any one or two comments before we go into a final comment round from everyone. I know so many... It's sparked so many comments, I'm sure there would be so much to add. Would anybody want to say anything in particular?

Barbara We have a dog joining us. Oh, that's great. It wouldn't be Zoom if there wasn't an animal or a child involved.

Yes, Janie.

Janie I just want to quickly say that, Barbara, you know this about me—I actually started my legal career as a commercial litigator, and so of financial instruments. And I have just been gripped over the last 30 years that our financial instruments are literally ill-equipped to face the future. And we're looking at that across USDA's financial access to capital portfolio and trying to figure out exactly how we can use the discretion we have or go to Congress and actually think about these things anew. But the reality is that I'm not sure, Barbara, that we share enough of what works, across the world, in these financial instrument spaces. I think there's a lot of work to be done there. I refer to it as—we don't have any ability to have an "oops." You know, 60 years ago farmers were more known to people in the city, and we're so separated and isolated at this point that our financial systems that sit up

underneath us don't really... They don't consider that if we're going to stay out here farming and ranching, that we've got to have long-term financial access.

Barbara Thank you, thank you. Any other final comments? Yes, Jemimah.

Jemimah Yeah, I'm just struck by what Janie says. And one of the examples I always give is the funding for especially women who work in food systems is so out of sync with the kind of activities that they're engaged in. If you think about it even from a very basic perspective, a woman wants financial access to start a poultry business. And she starts with day-old chicks, and she gets a loan to buy day-old chicks, construct a house for them; but then the bank requires that at the end of that calendar month, that she starts paying. And the chicks are just... I know they're not _____. They're not laying eggs. They're not adults. It's just, some of it sounds so basic, but it still happens over and over again that the financial system is not designing for systems. And even worse, it's not designing for the women in food systems. So there is really a lot that needs to happen in that space, including all the way from the basics of how financial instruments are structured.

Barbara Shachi, it seems you want to build on that.

Shachi Yeah, well, I just wanted to say, you know, I think it's not just city dwellers we need on the farm. We need literally everyone who is involved in the system to come out and spend some time on the farm to understand the dynamics of farm labor – how is it done, you know, what are the risks, what are the potential opportunities, how much is the involvement of women, what is the necessity for safer biological inputs, for example. There are so many things that happen on the farm that people who are designing solutions have, I think, lost touch with, and that's something that maybe we can address through greater interactions between the communities.

Barbara We're hearing so many great recommendations, so much action that's needed. We know that women farmers are half the farmers, one out of two around the world, and especially smallholders. And without dealing with some of the inequities that we've all been talking about, we're just not going to see progress in agricultural fields that we need to around the world. So we want to turn to an opportunity for a last word from each of you, just one or one and a half minutes of your final thoughts that you'd like to leave this broad community with that's listening in today. So I'm just going to take volunteers if you want to raise your hand. Anybody want to start us off? Gareth?

Gareth Thanks, Barbara, and it's been a really stimulating discussion and has raised many questions in my mind as well about how we can move this forward. I think one of them is around how we can look at either a gradual change or a step change. And one of things that comes to my mind is a narrative or a fresh narrative in communications about all that we do. Because it's multifaceted from the farm through to policy, and how then can we create a narrative that is much more appealing, appealing for young scientists to come into institutions that I represent, appealing to change the mindsets of financial institutions. And I think there's opportunities that we haven't thought about communicating. We also haven't thought about gender parity in the workplace. And so those issues in terms of finances. So it's stimulated a lot, and I think, you know, my mind, what I think is

that we need a new narrative, a fresh narrative that really tackles these issues and raises them to much more strategic level, changes mindsets, increases the ability for investors to see the economic value of investing but also the cultural value, and so on and so forth. So that's what's resonating in my mind.

Barbara Fantastic. I mean I think you'd have some takers here in trying to develop that narrative of change that has to happen. Who else would like to go? Janie, would you like to speak next?

Janie Sure, and I always leave every conversation like this with the same thought of... And I try to go to bed every night thinking this same thought: What are we doing today to tackle these issues so that our children and our grandchildren live in a better place? And many indigenous women I work with around the U.S., we have that front of mind. I know many people on this panel have that front of mind. But we have some really important opportunities moving forward to really escalate the attention paid to these issues. But we have to be thinking about what our children and grandchildren will inherit. And many of these issues are long past needing to be fixed.

Barbara Thank you. I'm going to come to Jocelyn and then back to Chris.

Jocelyn Thank you, Barbara, so much. I would like to build on something that Beth talked about, which was accountability in her second example that she talked about, where the financial institutions that were actually serving women were praised more. So there's a carrot approach there. And I'm going to fold it into this idea of accountability for all of us. In FAO each one of our projects, you know, a \$5,000 project, a \$30 million project has several gender-based monitoring and evaluation indicators in it. And we have to hold ourselves accountable. We need not just to get the data, but what are we going to do with that data? What does this tell us? And I just want to... You know, we have to make sure that we don't just talk. Our director-general is big on walking the walk, and I think we all are in a position of authority here where we can do that. And I just want to make a plea to all of us to not just say it with the words but to continue to be accountable for them.

Barbara Great point. Chris, we'll come to you and then Nabeeha.

Chris Well, thanks, Barbara. I think one of the things I'm probably most proud of with the CFS is, amongst its many products, is actually the platform that it represents and how inclusive it is. And I think as we see 150 or so countries who plan policy transition pathways in the coming year or years, I think if they recognize the importance of inclusive dialogue that includes those who don't have the power and don't have the advantages right now, make sure that those conversations include the most vulnerable and those who really are suffering the most. And certainly the Voluntary Guidelines on gender equality and women and girls empowerment, when they're adopted next year, will hopefully go a long way to help shaping those policies and discussions and projects and programs that would come out of it.

And the last thing, somebody brought up UNESCO and how important education is. And I just cannot, for my own daughter, from my own experience, educating girls is such a massive piece of the puzzle for everything from their own healthcare

and reproductive rights but getting them involved in the STEM fields and just involved in improving their own agency and control over their own destinies. So thank you again for the invite.

Barbara Absolutely. We've heard so much in our discussions that — not only the need for making women more visible but having that role at the table, at the decision-making table, inclusive from really all components. And so much work needs to be done to define those areas, the management roles to play, the leadership roles to play, defining the narrative going forward, having the women define the narrative going forward. And of course CFS has a very, very inclusive process, but there's a lot of inclusive dialogues going on around the world, and the Food Systems Summit included something that one of you didn't say... Jemimah, was that you are representative, the special representative, I think, or representative for gender equity in the Food Systems Summit. So we may come back around to you to reflect on that a little bit if we have some more time.

But I think next in our queue we were going to go to Nabeeha and then Beth.

Nabeeha Thank you so much. I'm so excited about the fact that we've been talking about the intersectionality and linkages across issues, across the systems in women's lives. And that's a big takeaway for me and I suspect for many of the panelists here. And Jemimah lifted this up so beautifully — we need to make sure that our food and our health systems aren't placing an undue burden on women in communities and the importance of investment so that they're meeting women where they're at. For PAI it's really critical we always do that, you know, meeting communities where they're at and making sure that the approach is not only for purpose but also future-proof. And we also know that gains in SRHR are gains across a whole host of outcomes, and we have to approach it in a way that is equitable.

Barbara Just say, if you will, Nabeeha, SRHR.

Nabeeha Yeah, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights is the acronym for SRHR. And we know, right, when women have access, for example, to family planning, we have better nutrition outcomes in our households that are economic gains, and so on and so forth. So all of this is connected, and I just hope for greater cross-sectoral collaboration. We're all here to work together. How can we better leverage our dollars and investments so that they work in a multifaceted approach, because our lives are multifaceted? And a win for women is a win for communities.

Barbara Thank you. Beth.

Beth Thanks. I just want to... You know, I love this platform and that we're talking about this, and we are sharing what's worked. Because there's so much to be done, and we need to continue to learn from each other, and we need to continue to do more. Right? We know that we need partnerships. We know that we need governments. We know that we need civil society. We know that we need researchers, we need funders, we need banks. We need everybody to come together and work on this together. And so how we put those partnerships in a way that really fuels action and exponentially increases the impact that we have, is something that we need to continue to get more creative about.

And then with measurement and accountability, I think like Jocelyn said, like who are we reaching, and how are we holding everybody accountable for who they're reaching. And then lastly, what's the scale? You know, I don't want to go to the field anymore and just meet women that don't have access to finance. I want to go and see women who have access to finance. So are we reaching the scale, that critical mass that really shifts that transformation to make financial institutions *womenable*, to make sure that women have a way to really transform their economy.

Again, we haven't talked a lot about COVID-19, but as we're building back better, this is the chance to do it differently. And we can't do it unless we get it to the scale that we need for it to be impactful. So thank you.

Barbara And that's really a theme throughout our dialogue this week, is getting to scale. There's so much great work going on. It's all over the world in all parts of the agricultural sector. And we know we need to build on it, and we need to accelerate the impact of it and get to scale for many of the projects that you all have referenced even today. So let's go perhaps to Shekar or to Shachi, and we're going to give you the last word, Jemimah.

Shekar Yeah. I think of the Indian condition scenario, this, the work needs to be taking place at grassroots level. And I know tourism isn't perfect _____. There are city folks, people with power, men with power can come and interact with women who are working for agriculture. Women in agriculture in a developing country like India, they really get a lot of battering. And they really don't have a chance to express themselves. They don't get a place to go and talk. So agra-tourism is a place where they can start the action, and that's where the action can become.

Barbara Thank you, and thank you for calling in from the middle of the night. I think you're calling in from Mumbai.

Shekar Yes.

Barbara Yes, we appreciate it. Shachi.

Shachi Yes, thank you, Barbara. I am a bit reflective. I think we've spent a good amount of time with... We've heard a lot about high-level policies. We've learned a lot about on-the-ground activities. I am reflective in the sense that, as I walk away from this – and I hope this is the same for everyone here, including the audience – as we walk away from this, what is it that I can do in my own capacity, in my own sphere to make a difference today, tomorrow and for future generations. I think I'll leave it at that, but thank you very much. It's been a pleasure.

Barbara Thank you, thank you so much. Jemimah.

Jemimah Thank you so much, Barbara. This has been such a rich conversation. So a couple of things strike me that I want to finish with. One is, so I challenged the CGIAR about 20 years ago, and the conversation we are having today is the conversation we were having 20 years ago. But the characters around the table have changed. We've got more men, for example, talking about gender equality. But really the conversation is the same. And I think it was Janie who said – what is it that we'll bequeath our children and grandchildren. And I keep thinking that, when I'm 70 and 80, how

people are going to be sitting around the table having the same conversation. Because I think we've got to make enough progress so that that doesn't happen.

And I have a couple thoughts related to what a few people have said. First is the issue of scale. And so when I started this work, and over the years there has been a lot of focus on what women can do and what we want them to do better on the skills and training and capacity that needs to happen and the services that they need to get. And we've talked about that today. But for us to actually get to that tipping point of change, we've got to think about systematic change. We've got to think about the policies, the laws, the institutions, and how they are designed and how they function. Because that's the only way we are going to get to scale. We get enough banks, like what Beth is doing. We get enough financial institutions that are designing for women, that are making sure there are services that are *womenable*. They know what their needs and priorities are. And we get to scale. We are not going to get to scale one woman at a time. [inaudible] half the population. It's five billion in the capitals of _____. So we've got to really think much more about how we remove the inequalities that exist at that system's level, at policy level. Imagine if every government around the world designed a food systems policy that was equitable, that was using gender-responsive budgeting to allocate resources that had clear gender outcomes, that they are accountable to their citizens.

So I know it's a big task. It's a big job to get to that scale. We need to make sure, not just financial services are *womenable*, but extension services are *womenable*.

Barbara Yes.

Jemimah Policies are *womenable*. It's the whole scope of that institution of governments' level that has to change.

Barbara Thank you.

Jemimah The last point I want to make. Oh.

Barbara Go ahead.

Jemimah Back to you, Barbara. Yeah, but I did want to make one last point. Because for all the people listening, we are all working in institutions, in organizations, whether it be research organizations, we've got to make sure that there's based access. We started the Global Food 50/50 as an outcome of the U.N. Food Systems Summit where I had the pleasure of serving as Custodian for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. And part of it was to really make sure that food systems organizations were accountable, not just in the work they do but in their leadership and in their policies as well, because we can't mirror externally what we don't have in our own spaces. If we don't have parity in our internal spaces, how is it going to happen? If FAO doesn't have parity internally, how are we going to make sure governments that we work with...

Barbara Thank you, and I know it was great... It was great to hear from Jocelyn from FAO about that accountability and how it... Thank you. I just have to thank the entire panel, wonderful speakers. Really appreciate you being here, and really just great challenges put forward. There is no doubt that we will not achieve gender equality

by 2030 or anytime even beyond that if we are not accelerating the kinds of actions that you're talking about.

Please stay tuned. Our next discussion is between our own Shakuntala Thilsted, her work of empowering women and uplifting women economically and otherwise and the president of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, new Gender Equality Division. So join us. Click right in just shortly. Thanks, everybody.
