

Network of ECOWAS Parliamentarians on Gender Equality and Investments in Agriculture and Food Security



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

INTRODUCTION

In November 2017, the ECOWAS Parliament, together with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and OXFAM organised a conference on the gender dimensions of agricultural investments in land, during the 2nd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament in Abuja, Nigeria. The conference emphasised the importance of securing women's land rights in agricultural and land-based investments as a pre-requisite for food security, nutrition and poverty reduction.

As a follow up to the Conference, the *ECOWAS Network of Parliamentarians on Gender Equality and Investments in Agriculture and Food Security*, was launched in Abuja on 11 December 2018 during the Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament.

The Network seeks to provide Members of the ECOWAS Parliament with knowledge and capacities to advocate for gender equitable agricultural investment, and influence policy processes at national, regional and international levels. It forms alliances with the ECOWAS Commission, development partners, academia and civil society organisations to promote effective policies and legislations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK

The Network provides a high-level permanent discussion forum between parliamentarians, policymakers, civil society, farmers and experts, to promote gender transformative policy change through:

- Encouraging the adoption of effective national and regional legislation and policies related to gender, land, agriculture and investment;
- Creating a dynamic coalition to influence regional institutions, policies, and research to transform and strengthen legal frameworks for empowering women;
- Building knowledge and skills amongst Member of the ECOWAS Parliament on issues of gender equitable agricultural investment;
- Identifying persistent bottlenecks in addressing gender equality in agriculture and working with key stakeholders to take adequate legal and policy measures.



ACTIVITIES OF THE NETWORK

- Study tours and knowledge sharing among ECOWAS parliamentarians for peer learning and replication of good practices
- Learning exchange of ECOWAS Parliamentarians to Rwanda for policy dialogue with Members of Parliament in Rwanda, with the participation of the East African Legislative Assembly and the Secretariat of the East African Community.
- Capacity development of Members of Parliaments to advocate and monitor for gender equality and responsible agricultural investment in ECOWAS member countries
- Organisation of Parliamentary forums on Gender Equality and Investments in Agriculture and Food Security at country level
- Annual debate at ECOWAS parliament on progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment
- Production of content, advocacy tool kits and knowledge products.

THE ADVISORY GROUP

FAO supports capacity development, knowledge generation and advocacy activities of the Network, drawing on its empirical evidence, tools and approaches such as: national gender profiles on agriculture and rural livelihoods; FAO Gender and Land Rights Database; and its methodology on SDG Indicator 5.a.2 on women's legal land rights for which FAO is the custodian agency.

IISD helps low-income countries reduce the risks associated with foreign investment, maximizing the benefits for the communities and the environment. IISD supports the Network through provision of legal support and capacity development to build legal and policy frameworks that promote responsible and sustainable investment in agriculture, land and water.

OXFAM builds on its diverse experience in combating social injustices and gender inequalities to support the Network through awareness raising and capacity development on international instruments and principles supporting gender responsible governance of natural resources.

For more information, contact

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