



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Advancing parliaments action for gender equality and investment in agrifood systems



Meeting the challenge

The number of people affected by **conflicts, ecosystem-degradation, hunger and malnutrition** increased considerably in 2020, disproportionately affecting **women and other vulnerable groups** – threatening their lives and livelihoods. As recognized at the United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021, in order to build back better in times of global crises, it is critical to design sound gender-responsive, transparent and stable policies, and to create legal frameworks and incentives which are essential to enhancing **responsible investment** in agriculture and food systems.

Through their legislative, advisory, budgetary and oversight responsibilities, parliamentarians hold a strategic position to inform political programmes which foster **more inclusive and equitable investments in agriculture and food systems**. Furthermore, joint initiatives like the Second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition provide further opportunities to expand such political momentum.

In action

FAO supports national and regional parliaments and their networks worldwide by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and good practices on legal frameworks and public policies. FAO provides support to parliaments for the development of **legislation and public policies**; strengthening the **capacities** of parliamentarians on key issues relevant to food and nutrition security and gender equality. In turn, this fosters connections between parliamentarians and related bodies on matters linked to food security and nutrition (such as gender equality in food systems) promoting **coordination, partnerships**, and the **exchange of knowledge**.

Looking at the evidence

In 2021, **828 million** people faced **hunger** due to the global crisis.



In 2019, **one in three** women aged 15–49 years (29.9%) were affected by **anaemia**, with no progress since 2012.



In 2021, **31.9%** of women were **food insecure** compared to 27.6% of men, a gap that widened by 48% compared to 2020.



Comparative advantage

FAO carries out extensive work to raise gender-awareness and to strengthen the capacities of parliamentarians to formulate **gender-responsive** legislation, policies and investment plans in the agrifood sector, building on the existing parliamentary networks and fronts against hunger. This work entails strengthening and building **parliamentary alliances**, fostering innovations in national legislation, facilitating knowledge and information exchange, and providing technical assistance to strengthen policy-makers' capacities on themes related to food and agriculture. These integrated actions are supported by key policy tools, such as the **Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI Principles)**.

FAO's Strategic Framework 2022–31 encourages stronger engagement with parliamentary networks as key stakeholders for agrifood systems transformation uniquely positioned to make a positive impact on national legislative and political agendas. This would contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 5, and to FAO's goal of achieving food security for all, making sure that everyone has regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.

“Learning with people from different backgrounds was a good experience. I felt the world coming close to me through various, rich and up-to-date documents with good references about gender equality, equity, and inclusion in food nutrition security.”

**The Honourable
Françoise Uwumukiza**
*Parliamentarian - East African
Legislative Assembly*

Best practices and results

1 In 2018, the **Network of Parliamentarians on Gender Equality and Investments in Agriculture and Food Security** was launched. Activities included a learning exchange, six global virtual dialogues, and an on-line course on *Achieving gender equality in climate change and food systems*.

2 In 2021, parliamentarians from 50 countries and 9 parliamentary networks attended the **Virtual Parliamentary Dialogues on Food Security and Nutrition in the time of COVID-19**. They renewed their commitment to prioritize food security and nutrition for political agendas.

3 Between 2020–2022, FAO organized national high-level multi-stakeholder policy dialogues and capacity development workshops for parliamentarians on gender equality and investments in agriculture in Togo, Sierra Leone, Niger and Benin.

Expected results

FAO aims to expand its collaboration with parliamentarians, leveraging parliamentary mechanisms identified at the regional and national level, while supporting the creation of further parliamentary alliances and networks to:

- **Maintain the political momentum** on gender equality in agrifood systems at the Second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition and its follow up processes.
- **Strengthen the capacities of parliamentarians** to advocate for gender equality in laws, policies, programs and investment plans.
- **Support the elaboration and roll out of sectoral model laws** informed by gender analyses and gender-sensitive indicators.
- **Share good practices, tools and approaches** aimed at promoting gender-equitable and inclusive investments in food systems.

These initiatives will have a great impact, aligning regional and national legislations to create an enabling environment and concrete measures to direct investments in agriculture and food systems that are aimed at achieving gender equality and zero hunger.

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Contribution to the SDGs



Partnerships to scale up impact

- government agencies for development cooperation;
- regional development agencies (ECOWAS Parliament, Women in Law and Development in Africa [WILDAF]; the Pan African Parliament and other regional parliamentary networks);
- the United Nations system (the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization [ITCILO]); and
- academia and research institutions (the International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD]).



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