

Promoting women's participation in international agrifood trade: Current practices, challenges, and prospects for inclusive trade

Side event at the 76th Session of the FAO Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP)

Thursday, 12 September 2024 | 12:30-13:45 CEST

Hybrid Event

Sheikh Zayed Centre, FAO Headquarters & Virtual conferencing platform Zoom

[REGISTER HERE](#)

(Password: 66719947)

Background

Agrifood trade can be an important engine of economic growth, particularly in those developing countries that rely on agriculture, as it can create jobs, increase income, and help reduce economic inequality. It also has the potential to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. New and growing opportunities generated by trade can benefit women, who represent 36 percent of the total workforce in agrifood systems.

Globally, however, women's participation in international agrifood trade remains low. Key factors behind this gender gap relate to gender inequalities and discriminatory social norms and rules that constrain women's access to markets, resources and services. For example, wage gaps and occupational segregation, limited access to finance, digital spaces and technological solutions, overrepresentation in the informal economy with lack of social protection, and the high costs related to agrifood trade create impediments for the participation in trade of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in which women mostly operate, especially in developing countries.

Global cooperation in agricultural trade policies and practices remains essential. It is important to strengthen efforts among stakeholders in all key development areas, identifying the impacts of trade on women and addressing their distinct challenges, which have become pressing in the face of increasing global economic uncertainties. In this regard, continued and open dialogue and increased collaboration between all stakeholders can promote cross-fertilization of knowledge and harness the power of cooperation to address women's specific needs and make agrifood trade more inclusive and sustainable, leaving no one behind.

Objective

The event will discuss the status of women's participation in international agrifood trade, inform on current gender-responsive policy practices and development initiatives, and exchange on prospects and pathways to make agricultural trade more inclusive and socially sustainable. To this end, panellists will present their work and address the following guiding questions:

1. What are the key challenges faced by women in international trade in the agrifood sector?
2. What actionable policies and strategies can be adopted to overcome these challenges and ensure that women and men benefit equally from agrifood trade and markets?
3. How can international development agencies support developing countries in promoting women's participation in international agrifood trade?
4. How can countries and stakeholders leverage on good policy practices, networks, and institutional mechanisms for facilitating women's access to regional and global agrifood markets?

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Moderator: Clara Park, Senior Gender Officer, FAO Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP)

12:30–12:35 OPENING REMARKS

- *Clara Park*, Senior Gender Officer, ESP

12:35–12:45 OVERVIEW OF AGRIFOOD TRADE AND GENDER EQUALITY MATTERS

- *Iryna Kobuta*, Economist and Gender Focal Point, FAO Markets and Trade Division (EST)

12:45–12:55 EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH AGRICULTURAL TRADE

- *Judith Fessehaie*, Head, Women and Trade Programme, SheTrades Initiative, International Trade Centre (ITC)

12:55–13:15 COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES

- *Country Representatives (TBC)*

13:15–13:40 Q&A SESSION

13:40–13:45 CLOSING REMARKS

- *Boubaker Ben-Belhassen*, Director, FAO Markets and Trade Division (EST)