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Gender Policy Brief for Uganda's Agriculture Sector

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FORUM FOR WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

Gender Policy Brief for Uganda's Agriculture Sector

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Gender Policy Brief for Uganda's Agriculture Sector

1. Introduction

The Government's vision for the agriculture sector is to transform the sector from a peasantry farming system to commercial agriculture through improved productivity and production as well as market access. This policy brief presents an analysis of gender issues in the agriculture sector in Uganda; highlights the efforts so far made by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) in addressing these issues; constraints that hinder engendering of the agriculture sector and makes policy recommendations for improvement. The analysis is based on desk review of secondary data sources including the Uganda National Household Surveys (UNHSs), analytical work undertaken by Rosette Nabumba Nayenga in 2008 and various MAAIF documents including the DSIP, Ministry Policy Statement and the budget for FY 2010/11.

2. Overview of the Agriculture Sector in Uganda from a Gender Perspective

In Uganda, 80% of the population depends on agricultural production while in the rural areas more than 85% of the total population depend on agriculture as the main source of livelihood either as pure subsistence or with little commercial farming. Agriculture is also the main occupation of women. Nationwide, 72% of all employed women and 90% of all rural women work in agriculture. Only 53% of rural men do so. The majority of subsistence farmers are poor men and women faced with many constraints that keep them poor such as lack of knowledge and skills, lack of credit, lack of information about what to produce and how to produce to earn more money, HIV/AIDS, malaria, insecurity and poor yields as a result of use of

rudimentary technologies. However despite these constraints both men and women continue to play a critical role in the agriculture sector, producing, harvesting, processing, marketing and producing food that is consumed at the household levels and also .

In recent years, the agriculture sector in Uganda has become increasingly dependent on women due to: Change of attitude towards agriculture because of low earnings leading to migration of men and the youth from rural areas to urban areas in search of alternative job opportunities; insecurity especially in the north where mostly men, boys and girls were abducted; sicknesses and death due to HIV/AIDs and other diseases.

Available statistics show that close to 26.3 percent (a third) of the rural households in Uganda are headed by women most of whom are young (between 26-49 years), less educated and have less capital

compared to their male counterparts. A higher proportion of Women Headed Households (WHHs) (39 percent) lack formal education compared to only 10 percent of their male counter parts (UBOS, 2007).

3. Gender Issues in the Agriculture Sector

3.1 Land Holding

In Uganda, land is regarded not merely as a factor of production, but first, and foremost, as the medium which defines and binds social and spiritual relations within and across generations. Land thus remains highly volatile and a political issue and its control continues to be a critical factor in Uganda’ s development. The systems of land ownership that are recognized by law in Uganda include: Mailo, freehold and customary tenure. The Uganda National Household Surveys (UNHSs) carried out since 2003, show that Women-Headed Households (WHHs) have low levels of cultivatable

land compared to the Male-Headed Households (MHHs). A critical analysis of the WHHs reveals that those headed by un-married women have less land assets while the widowed have slightly higher levels. There are indications that the proportion of WHHs in rural areas that are landless has decreased in the last decade suggesting that women's access to land has increased although the access is to smaller areas of land

A National Survey carried out in 2005/06 investigated the total land size owned by different household types. The survey showed that MHHs hold more than twice the land size held by WHHs. This is a disadvantage to women who do the bulk of farming activities in households most of which are land based. Larger land sizes have helped the MHHs to commercialize their agricultural activities thus earning higher incomes and reducing their poverty levels. This is not the case in the majority of WHHs who own smaller land sizes which cannot facilitate

commercialization. Further still MHHs are more advantaged as they are able to use land as collateral to access credit for growing more cash crops and livestock rearing which is not the case for majority of women who in many cases are not land owners.

The same survey also showed that even when WHHs have land, the level of asset depletion through sales to acquire other basic needs is much higher for them than the MHHs. For example, between 1992 and 1999, while the percentage increase in land area for MHHs was 27.1%, a decrease in land area of 14.3% was registered for the WHHs. This is because WHHs lack viable sources of income to meet their basic needs.

3.2 Land tenure and access to farmland

Uganda's divergent land tenure system and overlapping land rights have impacted negatively on different gender and on long-term investments in the agriculture sector. Furthermore, many landless

potential farmers (especially the women) cannot easily access land because of the costs involved, cultural norms and the threats imposed by the existing overlapping land rights. Women provide from 70-80 per cent of agricultural labor and yet few have rights to own (7%) or control use of land. According to the Sixth Draft of the Land Policy, the gender structure of the land rights varies across the country but in general it is highly unequal. For example, women work on the land more than men but have unequal land rights. The women's rights tend to be limited to access, while men are more inclined to enjoy ownership rights. Available literature indicates that only 30% of women have access to and control over proceeds from land but ownership and control over land is ultimately with men (Ovonji-Odida et al, 2000).

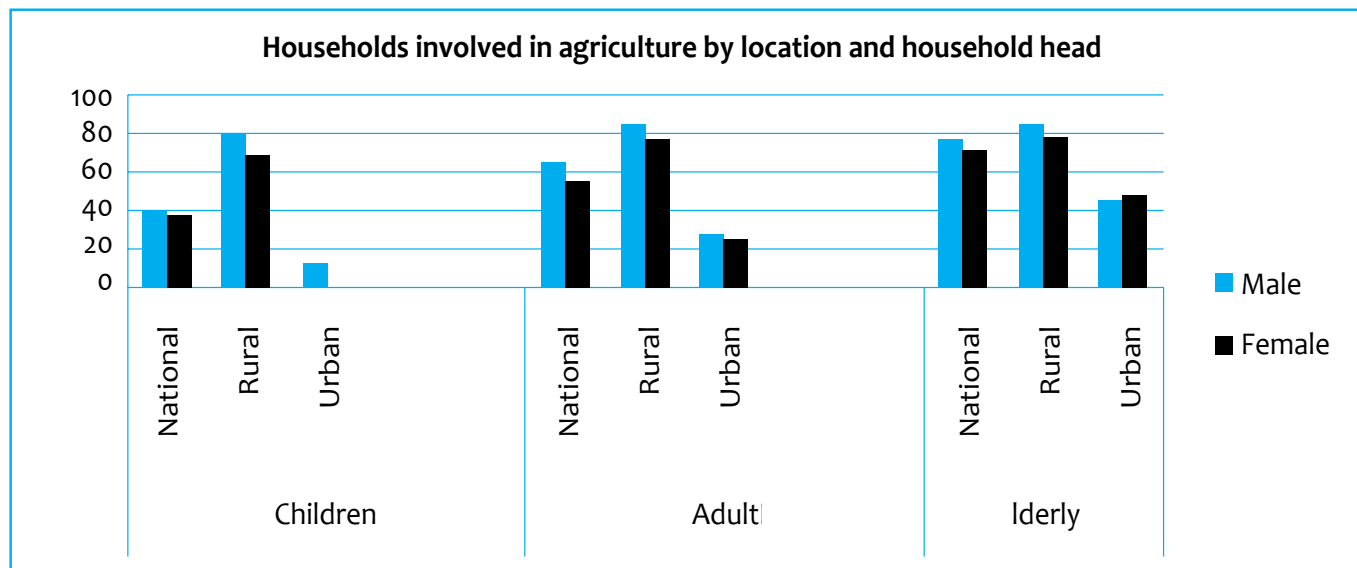
In general terms, women's access to land is usually through their spouse or male members of their

family. Loss of the spouse increases the chances of violation of their rights to land. However, in urban areas, some working women are able to purchase land and in cases where poor women have taken on the role of family breadwinner such as when widowed, women have full control of land.

3.3 Involvement in Agricultural Activity

A review of available literature indicates that in 2004 there were more MHHs (73.1%) than WHHs (26.9%) involved in the agriculture sector in Uganda and to date, the situation has not changed much. Consequently, more MHHs are involved in agriculture than their counterparts the WHHS. In addition, older people are more greatly involved in agriculture as a means of livelihood than all the other age categories. It should however, be noted that children headed households too, especially in the rural areas are highly engaged in agriculture. See Figure 1.

Figure1: Households involved in agriculture by location and household head



Source: Rosetti Nabumba Nayenga, 2008

Predominantly male tasks in agriculture include the felling of trees, ploughing with oxen or tractors, digging holes, the purchase and use of chemicals, looking for markets and the sale of produce. Women

usually undertake sowing, harvesting, head loading of produce, crop-drying, winnowing, seed selection, pig and poultry-rearing and bartering sunflower seeds for oil. Other tasks, such as weeding, bagging

and crop storage, are almost equally undertaken by both women and men. It is estimated that women do 85% of the planting, 85% of the weeding, 55% of land preparation and 98% of all food processing. However, decisions to market are mainly made by men (70%), or are made jointly (15%). In rural areas, it is estimated that women's workloads both in the agriculture sector and household considerably exceed those of men.

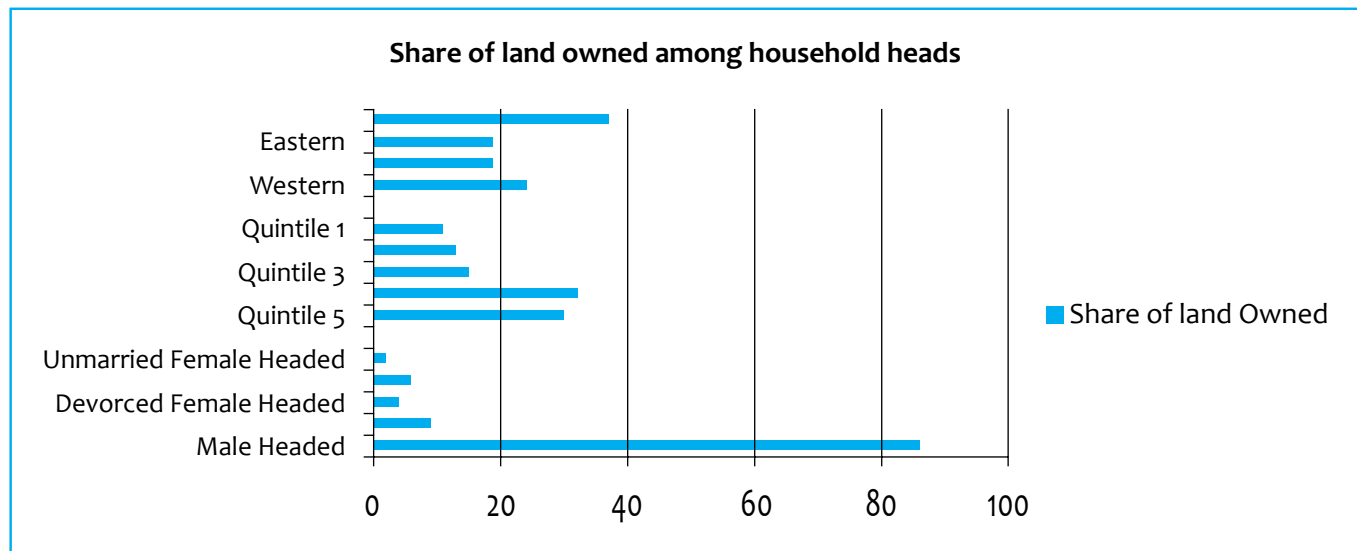
Traditionally, men tend to be responsible for the cash crops, but male labour is usually withdrawn if those crops decrease in profitability. This happened with many crops in the seventies and eighties, when producer prices were unfavourable. When market conditions change, attracting male labour back to such crops may be difficult. In most districts, the MHHs act as employers within the agriculture sector while WHHS are largely employees.

3.4 *Crop Farming*

The majority of households involved in agriculture in Uganda are engaged in crop farming, with almost equal representation of adult WHHs (98.4%), (MFPED, 2008) and MHHs (98.7%). Almost all the elderly headed households, irrespective of sex are engaged fully in crop farming as a livelihood means, possibly due to the fact that they cannot offer their labour for other productive activities due to limited physical energy and age constraints.

Most households do allocate land to growing cash crops such as coffee, cotton, maize, beans and cassava. In many cases, WHHS normally allocate less land to growing cash crops giving more land to food crop growing and the reverse is true for the MHHs. See Figure 2:

Figure2: Share of land owned among household heads



Source UNHS 2005/06

3.5 Use of Agricultural Inputs

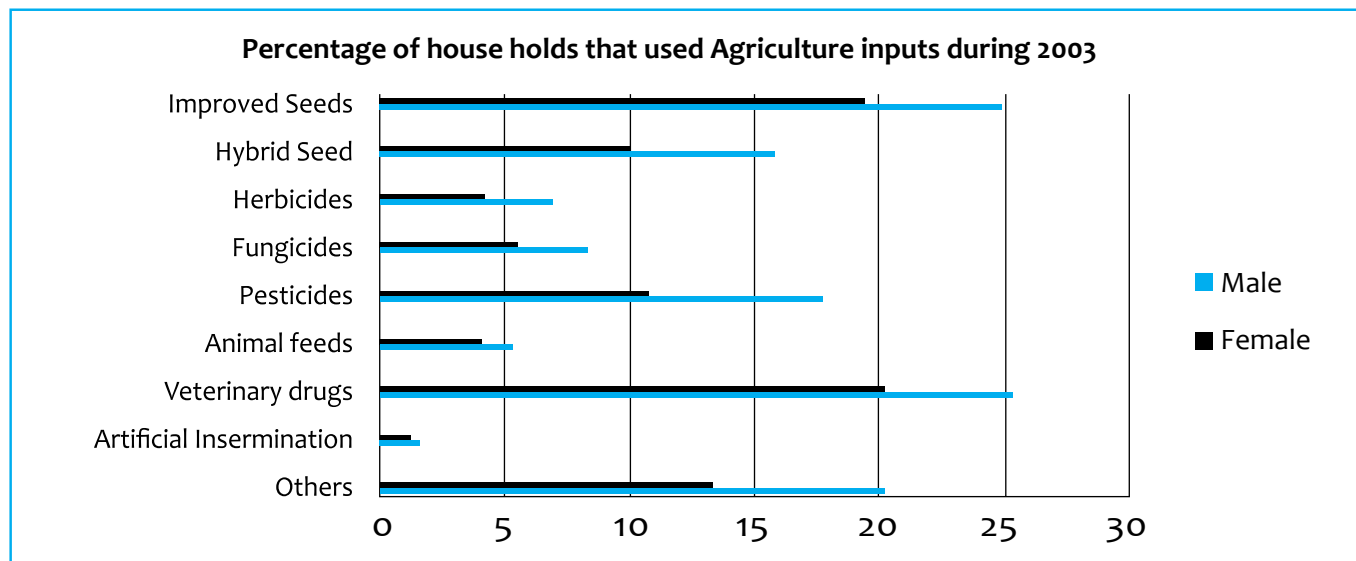
National Surveys carried out between 2005/6 to 2010/11, show that use of improved agricultural inputs is generally limited among all households

in Uganda except for a few commodities such as coffee, cotton, maize, beans and cassava. Other than these crops, both MHHs and WHHs utilize limited improved seeds, fertilizers, manures and pesticides in the other crops. It is believed that less than 5%

of all households use any of the improved inputs for any given crop. Any attempts to make use of improved inputs are primarily by married male-headed MHHs and married, divorced and widowed

WHHs. The un-married irrespective of sex hardly use any improved inputs especially since they are engaged in crop farming in a limited way.

Figure2: Percentage of house holds that used Agriculture inputs during 2003



Source: Rosetti Nabumba Nayenga, 2008

3.6 Agricultural Extension Services

According to the 2005/06 UNHS the majority of households in Uganda of all types indicated that they had not accessed agricultural extension. Overall, only 7.4% of households had accessed extension services. For the few that had accessed extension, access was slightly higher among male-headed households (7.7%) than female-headed households (6.8%). Most had accessed extension for 1-5 times a year. Among the MHHs, access was highest among the married while among the WHHs, all household types were accessing the services to some extent.

3.7 Market Access and Availability

Farmers are motivated to produce when they are sure of good yields and markets for their commodities and a good price. A study carried out by MFPED in 2008 presented that the majority of households reported availability of a market for most of the

agricultural products within their sub-counties with exception of oranges, mangoes, pineapples, coffee, tobacco, simsim and rice. These are the high value commodities that are mostly grown by the MHHs. Most households also reported improvements in markets for cattle, goats and poultry, irrespective of the gender of the household head but improvements were greater in urban than rural areas.

3.8 Gender roles within the households and agriculture sector

Studies in the gender division of labour indicate that women have the prime responsibility for domestic duties and food production while men spend time on productive activities or at leisure. Both women and men contribute to agricultural production, with the women playing a bigger role and in most cases entirely responsible for food production while the men grow cash crops. Women are found to be responsible for small-scale livestock rearing while men care for the larger livestock, particularly

cattle. Women do most of the harvesting but in most cases are not responsible for marketing — a male domain. However, changes in gender roles have been noted with women especially in urban areas doing more income generating work other than agriculture and yet the men are not taking on any more responsibilities. Hence, women's roles and responsibilities have increased to the extent that time is now a constraining factor.

3.9 Agricultural Credit

According to the Yearbook on Agricultural Finance 2009, there has been an apparent reduction in the level of agricultural finance from formal banks. Both men and women have faced the challenges of accessing affordable credit to help them invest in the agriculture sector. However, women farmers find it even more difficult since they do not have collateral

and rarely get access to information regarding existence of programmes put up by Government to address the problem of agriculture finance. This has resulted in some of the worthwhile initiatives aimed at improving farm productivity through investment not realizing their goals. Men and women have resorted to use of SACCOs to get finance but these have been found to be expensive and exploitative which discourages farmers from applying for credit.

In FY 2009/10, Government allocated Shs 30 billion to Bank of Uganda to be accessed by both male and female farmers. Accessibility to this credit facility has been a challenge because of lack of clear guidelines and conditions which favour only large scale farmers and not small farmers, the majority of whom are women.

4. Efforts undertaken by MAAIF to engender the agriculture sector

i) Gender focused activities

In FY 2010/11 MAAIF focused on increasing incomes and promoting equity among farmers in line with the Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment plan (DSIP) 2010/11 — 2014/15. However, MAAIF and the other institutions have not taken steps to engender their plans except for NARO which has a Gender Action Plan.

ii) Gender in Policy statements

MAAIF and its affiliated institutions have incorporated gender issues in their policy statements for 2010/11 and 2011/12 as required by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Budget Call Circular. Important to note is that as much as gender sensitive activities are identified they are not usually allocated budgets.

iii) Promotion of labour saving technologies and mechanisms

MAAIF has developed and is promoting appropriate technologies including animal traction and mechanisation which when popularized will help in saving labour and time especially for women farmers and allowing them to do other productive work. However, these technologies still on a small scale thus benefiting a few farmers.

iv) Formation of Women Farmer Groups

The sector through NAADs has promoted the formation and institutional development of farmer groups to facilitate access to agricultural extension services, demonstrations and learning. Emphasis has been put on promoting the formation of more women farmer groups since they are the main players in the agriculture sector.

5. Constraints to gender responsiveness in the agriculture sector

5.1 *Inequalities in land ownership and use*

One of the most significant gender-based constraints that women and WHHs face is ownership and control of agricultural land. Although the Land Act 1998 as amended provided a conducive framework for enhanced tenure security, implementation has been a challenge particularly with regard to women. In the Act, women are legally entitled to own land, but in practice, ownership and control is contingent on social rather than material relations. The asymmetry in control over land has direct implications for the productivity of women's labour, willingness to invest in land, capacity to influence land use priorities and their poverty status. (Catherine Dolan, 2002).

5.2. *Limited markets and market access*

WHHs and women allocate most of their land primarily for food production while MHHs and men allocate a significant part to producing cash crops or high value commodities. Long distances to the village markets, low prices paid for food crops especially at harvest periods, the high market dues demanded by the local government councils are key constraints to market access for both men and women farmers. The drive to transform the agriculture sector from being subsistence to commercialized agriculture will only be possible when the Government and other non-state actors pay attention to these critical constraints to market availability and access.

5.3 *High cost and limited availability of improved farm inputs*

The use of agricultural improved inputs remains low generally and particularly among women farmers.

This is due to lack of access to or non-availability, of inputs lack of knowledge about inputs and the cost barriers. Increased use of improved inputs is key to enhancing yields and production at farm level and ultimately increasing individual and household incomes.

5.4 Inadequate agriculture extension services

Access to agriculture extension services is generally low among all household types more significantly among WHHs. Agricultural production and productivity cannot increase without a substantial increase in access to extension services by all household categories. For example in the FY 2010/11, NAADS was expected to extend direct support to 100 farmers per parish, this is a limited number given that the majority of the rural populations are involved in agriculture.

5.5 Lack of gender analysis to inform the policy formulation, planning and budgeting processes in the agriculture sector

Various reviews of agriculture sector plans and budgets reveal that there is no conscious effort by sector planners and policy analysts to carry out a gender analysis before formulation of policies, strategic plans and programmes and associated budgets. Lack of gender analysis limits gender responsiveness in setting priorities and budget allocations in the sector. For example, the 2010/11 NBFPP reflected a gender bias in the selection of crops to benefit from funding under the NAADS programme. The selected crops included rice, maize, wheat, tea, coffee cocoa, and some implements like hoes and spray pumps to address food security and reduce poverty. These priority investment crops require large scales of land and financial capital, are labour intensive and purely male dominated.

Therefore majority of women (80% doing agriculture did not benefit from these and yet women have a central role to play in household food security.

5.6 Decline in Agriculture sector growth

In the recent years, the proportion of people engaged in agriculture has increased from 6.5 per cent in 2002/3 to over 7.3 per cent in 2009/10 (MAAIF, 2010). However, this increase has not been matched by real growth in agricultural output which has declined from 7.9 per cent in 2005/06 to 2.4 per cent in the FY 2009/10. The decline has contributed to low earnings among the farmers in the rural areas exacerbating poverty levels, food and nutrition insecurity as well as loss of interest in the agriculture sector. It is therefore true that for the agriculture sector to fulfill its potential role, gender disparity must be addressed and effectively reduced through targeted policy interventions.

6. Policy Recommendations

- i) The agriculture sector needs to design and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy cutting across the agricultural production value chains. The strategy would also ensure gender responsiveness of all agriculture sector plans, strategies, budgets, programmes and projects at both central and local government levels. In addition MAAIF institutions that do not have gender mainstreaming action plans like CDO, UCDA, and NAADS must develop them in line with the proposed strategy.
- ii) While it is desirable to maintain food security at household level, it is important that women are encouraged to also engage more in the production of cash crops or high value commodities to raise their household income profile. This would necessitate WHHs and women having greater access to

extension, improved inputs and implements, markets and market information and labour saving technologies.

- iii) There are significant gender gaps with respect to women's ownership of assets especially land and its control and decision making regarding its use. The National Land Policy which obligates the Government to provide for joint or spousal co-ownership of family land and home should be passed and implemented. In addition, the Marriage and Divorce bill which proposes to allow married persons and cohabitants to make arrangements as to how property will be owned during and after relationships must be considered and passed by Parliament.
- iv) There is need to re-design and implement gender sensitive agriculture credit facilities that address the different needs of both female and male farmers. The current credit

facilities in Bank of Uganda are not gender sensitive and will not address the needs of the different gender in the agriculture sector.

- v) It is recommended that MAAIF and its institutions should go beyond identifying gender related activities in their strategic plans and policy statements to allocating specific budgets to these activities. This process should be informed by a gender analysis of the agriculture sector to inform the budget priorities.
- vi) Consideration should be given to providing free or subsidised farm inputs to poor households, particularly the WHHs that have low incomes and hence cannot afford to purchase them. In this regard, individual farmers and farm households should be encouraged to form cooperatives/ groups that purchase inputs in bulk which lowers the cost of operations.

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FOWODE'S GENDER BUDGET PROGRAM

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) is a women's non-governmental organization in Uganda. Since 1999, FOWODE has been implementing a Gender Budget Programme whose goal is to advocate for gender balanced budgets that address the needs of women and men, girls and boys equitably.

The Programme implements its activities through the following strategies:

- Capacity development
- Advocacy
- Mass mobilization
- Research and publication

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- The advocacy efforts for Gender Responsive Budgeting in Uganda resulted in the government of Uganda through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in 2006 initiating the Budget Call Circular directive on gender, directing spending agencies to indicate how they plan to address gender inequalities in their sector work plans and budgets.
- Developing capacities of over 3000 government technocrats, politicians and Civil Society Organisations to independently analyse and interrogate budgets from a gender perspective.
- Conducting research to assess how women and men benefit from national development programmes.
- Annually engaging in the budgeting process to influence government allocation of resources with the aim of improving service delivery especially for the poor people.
- Collaborating with civil society organisations through the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) to produce alternative budgets that provide alternative policy recommendations to government.
- Providing technical assistance to government at national and local level. In the past FOWODE in partnership with Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, produced a facilitators' manual on gender and equity budgeting for sector ministries and local governments. At the local level, FOWODE supported districts to develop Gender Policies and Gender Aware Budgets and Plans which provide a framework for the integration of gender in district plans and budgets
- Creating a critical mass of activists at the community level through the establishment of Village Budget Clubs at the grass root level to demand for improved and equitable service delivery.

This policy brief presents an analysis of gender issues in the agriculture sector in Uganda; highlights the efforts so far taken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) in addressing these issues; constraints that hinder engendering of the agriculture sector and makes policy recommendations for improvement.

Our Vision

A just and fair society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision making processes.

Our Mission

To promote gender equality in all areas of decision making through advocacy, training and research and publication.



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