

US Women's Caucus at UN: Climate – Women, Agriculture and Food

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Summary

Strategies to address food insecurity (SDG 2) must recognize the negative impacts of the food system on climate change (SDG 13), as well as how climate change threatens the food system. Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is one approach to building sustainable agriculture, improving farmer resiliency, and reducing greenhouse emissions within the food system. However, the technical and policy strategies of CSA will not be successful without intentional focus on gender equity and inequality.¹

- A focus on gender equity will address micro-level interactional and cultural impacts, as well as institutional and structural constraints on women and girls. The gender gap in agriculture means that rural women are often unable to participate in programs, projects, and investments.
- Women play essential roles in strengthening food security, from agricultural development, conservation, to production and distribution.
- A systems approach to addressing food security includes all stakeholders, especially indigenous peoples, women, farmworkers, and rural farmers.
- Additional policies and funding are needed to build gender-responsive CSA approaches and other gender-responsive climate change approaches to the global food system.

Fast Facts

- One-third of the global food supply is threatened by climate change if greenhouse gas emissions continue unhalting.²
- Women are responsible for 50-80% of world food production but own less than 20% of land.³
- “Women receive only 5% of agricultural extension services worldwide.” Nine out of 10 countries have at least one law impeding women’s economic opportunities, including access to credit.”³
- 10.5% of US households (or 13.8 million households) were food insecure at some point in 2020, and 3.9% of households had very low food security.⁴

Recommendations – Agriculture & Food

¹ World Bank Group, FAO and IFAD. 2015. [Gender in Climate-Smart Agriculture: Module 18 for the Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook](#).

² [https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322\(21\)00236-0?_returnURL=https%3A%2F%2Flinkinghub.elsevier.com%2Fretrieve%2Fpii%2FS2590332221002360%3Fshowa%3Dtrue#%20](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322(21)00236-0?_returnURL=https%3A%2F%2Flinkinghub.elsevier.com%2Fretrieve%2Fpii%2FS2590332221002360%3Fshowa%3Dtrue#%20)

³ UNDP. 2016. [Gender and Climate Change: Gender, climate change and food security](#).

⁴ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/102076/err-298.pdf?v=5663.5>

Global

- A. Research on the food system should account for the externalities of food production and distribution, especially the impacts on climate change and displacements of communities. This would allow for a better understanding of the true value of food products.
- B. CSA and other sustainable food approaches must include gender transformative and gender-responsive policy, analysis, and practices.
- C. Prioritize policies that will grant or restore land rights and titles to women so that they may claim full agency and ownership of family land and fully engage with any agriculture projects aimed at mitigating climate change.
- D. Prioritize biodiversity and local/cooperative land ownership, rather than corporate privatization and agricultural technologies that threaten biodiversity and farmer autonomy.

Domestic

- E. Prioritize the support of women farmers and farmers of color, particularly in land ownership and in shifting to CSA.
- F. At least 55% of food-insecure households participated in one of the three largest Federal nutrition assistance programs in 2020.⁴ The federal government should not only ensure the continued funding of these programs, but also increase funding as well as outreach and education to all communities.

Suggested Reading

- World Bank Group, FAO and IFAD. 2015. [Gender in Climate-Smart Agriculture: Module 18 for the Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook](#).
- UNDP. 2016. [Gender and Climate Change: Gender, climate change and food security](#).
- Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh. 2021. *Household Food Security in the United States in 2020*, ERR-298, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/102076/err-298.pdf?v=5663.5>

Footnotes

¹ World Bank Group, FAO and IFAD. 2015. [Gender in Climate-Smart Agriculture: Module 18 for the Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook](#).

¹ [https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322\(21\)00236-0?returnURL=https%3A%2F%2Flinkinghub.elsevier.com%2Fretrieve%2Fpii%2FS2590332221002360%3Fshowall%3Dtrue#%20](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322(21)00236-0?returnURL=https%3A%2F%2Flinkinghub.elsevier.com%2Fretrieve%2Fpii%2FS2590332221002360%3Fshowall%3Dtrue#%20)

¹ UNDP. 2016. [Gender and Climate Change: Gender, climate change and food security](#).

¹ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/102076/err-298.pdf?v=5663.5>