



OXFAM

Oxfam's Recommendations for Food Retailers to Address Gender Inequality in Global Supply Chains

March 2021

To be reviewed alongside Oxfam's [Workers' Rights Recommendations for Food Retailers](#)

The following policy recommendations were developed through extensive literature review on issues faced by women workers and farmers in global supply chains, in-depth interviews and consultations with Women Rights' Organizations (WROs) and Oxfam colleagues in Brazil, India, Pakistan, Thailand and South Africa and the analysis of Oxfam's global Supermarket Scorecard. Oxfam seeks a fundamental shift towards gender equality in supply chains – where reforms in national regulations and changes in supply chain practices are necessary. We are calling on supermarkets to take the following actions:

1) Commit to publish a gender policy, by the end of June 2022, covering own operations and supply chains that includes:

- 1) The recognition and disclosure of specific challenges that disproportionately impact women in agricultural supply chains, including their hidden or unpaid productive roles and women's greater unpaid care work; and an outline of their root causes.
- 2) The recognition that the root causes of gender inequality often intersect with other forms of discrimination based e.g., on race, migrant status, sexual orientation and social status and will impact the level of vulnerability women face.
- 3) Gender equality in hiring, training and promotion.
- 4) Annual disclosure of gender data and employer's gender pay gap.
- 5) Promote women's representation and rights throughout workplaces/supply chains and guarantee best endeavours at regular, meaningful and constructive engagement with trade unions.
- 6) Provision of health and safety measures that are gender sensitive.
- 7) Commit to engage and validate this policy with stakeholders, including women's rights organizations (WROs) and local worker-led organizations.ⁱ

2) Commit to publish, by the end of 2022, a gender action plan (with timebound targets) that outlines the following commitments:

- a) Systematically track and disclose by the end of 2023 gender disaggregated data for the company's food supply chains to establish which of them have a high proportion of women represented.
- b) Achieve meaningful progress in closing the gender pay gap by the end of 2023, in at least 3 high-human-rights-risk food supply chains within 5 years, and eventually, across all high-human-rights-risk food supply chains at production/farm levels.

- c) Publish an implementation plan, aligned with ILO Convention 190, by the end of 2023 to address gender-based violence (including sexual harassment and abuse) during the recruitment process, in the workplace and when travelling to and from work in food supply chains, and commit to support suppliers in the process.
- d) Support suppliers to remove barriers to women's representation in workplaces/supply chains and report on progress, in at least 3 high-human-rights-risk supply chain by the end of 2023.
- e) Increase the proportion of food products that the company sources from women agricultural producers/processors and women-owned businesses in global supply chains.
- f) Support suppliers in high-human-rights-risk food supply chains (at least 25% by the end of 2022) with the resources and information needed to promote gender equality in their high-risk supply chains.
- g) Provide guidance, in line with international standards, and support suppliers to ensure appropriate and sufficient occupational health and safety provisions and maternity protection/family leave policiesⁱⁱ that are gender sensitive by the end of 2023.

3) Commit to embed a gendered analysis within the company's existing human rights due diligence (HRDD) approach by the end of 2022. This includes:

- a) Publish a saliency mapping which includes at least 3 high-human-rights-risk food supply chains where women workers/farmers are most prevalentⁱⁱⁱ.
- b) Based on the saliency mapping, publish at least one Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) focusing on the impact of supply chain operations on women (paid and unpaid) in high-human-rights-risk supply chains within 2 years, and subsequently conduct and publish at least one HRIA with a focus on women annually.
- c) For each gender-focused HRIA: commit to publishing a time-bound gender action plan^{iv} for improving the position and conditions of women based on the findings of the respective HRIAs.
- d) Engage with, and validate the analysis and plans with, Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) and local stakeholders throughout the process and report about the engagement.

4) Commit to ensure access to gender-sensitive grievance mechanisms for workers in all high-risk supply chains by 2023 with demonstrable progress in at least one by 2022 on the followings:

- a) Demonstrate how women's safe and effective access to the grievance mechanism and remedy are provided and how any barriers are addressed.
- b) Disclose details of its functionality (especially regarding local WROs' involvement).
- c) Disclose how the grievance mechanism meets the UNGP quality criteria^v.

5) The company demonstrates the actions it is taking to understand and tackle low wages to bring them in line with living wage benchmarks in 3 food supply chains and commits to publish annually, starting by the end of 2022, gender disaggregated data on the amount by which wages increase.

6) Commit to advocate, either individually or with others, to address the root causes of gender inequality in food supply chains, and report annually about efforts and outcomes.

- a) This could include advocacy to reform national regulations to eliminate gender injustice, ensure appropriate and sufficient occupational health and safety provisions, provide maternity/family leaves that are gender sensitive, protect and promote women's rights in supply chains in identified high-risk countries, and recognition of hidden or unpaid productive roles and women's greater unpaid care work.

ⁱ A women's rights organization (WRO) can be defined as a civil society organization with an overt women's or girls' rights, gender equality or feminist purpose; women's rights organizations play a central role in spearheading change in support of gender equality. (from OECD: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organisations.pdf>)

ⁱⁱ This should include social protections for women, access to maternity healthcare, and provide fair flexible working arrangements and homeworking when possible (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---multi/documents/publication/wcms_764977.pdf)

ⁱⁱⁱ The mapping should include the following data: (i) number of women in those supply chains (down to the cooperatives/produce groups level); (ii) women's employment status, pay and position; and (iii) information related to care responsibilities.

^{iv} In line with ILO Convention 190 and based on country-specific context.

^v To comply with the UNGPs grievance mechanisms should be "legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, rights-compatible, a source of learning, and based on engagement and dialogue." See UNGP https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf pgs.33-34