



A woman in Tsholotsho District in Zimbabwe is participating in a pilot project to develop drought-resistant crops and learn simple methods to effectively grow produce (2016). Photo: Sven Torfinn/Oxfam Novib.

# FINANCING WOMEN FARMERS

The need to increase and redirect agriculture and climate adaptation resources

# SUMMARY

Oxfam analysis finds that governments and donors are failing to provide women farmers with relevant and adequate support for farming and adapting to climate change. Oxfam conducted research on government and donor investments in Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tanzania.<sup>1</sup> Funding in these countries is significantly lower than commitments that have been made, and there is little evidence of resources and technical assistance reaching women farmers. Resources are being diverted to priorities other than smallholder farmers, and for the most part governments lack the capacity to deliver funding to them.

Highlights from the findings include:

- Data analysis confirms there is no evidence of money reaching women farmers, as all of the reviewed countries are failing to gather gender-specific data.
- Only **Ethiopia** has reached the Maputo target of spending 10 percent of its national budget on agriculture, although this target was already met in 2003 at the time of the Maputo Declaration.
- **Ghana** invested almost half of its international climate change adaptation funding to support agriculture in 2014, while the women's ministry received on average 0.1 percent of the government's climate change budget in 2010–15.
- **Nigeria** had the lowest share of spending on agriculture and rural development (4.9 percent) as part of international aid in 2007–15.
- Of 3,000 farmers surveyed in **Tanzania**, about 80 percent reported not receiving extension services.
- In **the Philippines**, the public works department, which is responsible for infrastructure development, received 88 percent of climate adaptation funding in 2017, while agriculture received just 6 percent.
- In **Pakistan** in 2014, almost 99 percent of the funding for climate change adaptation was given in the form of loans, with grants amounting to only \$3.4m.

Women farmers play a central role in reversing poverty and food insecurity, and building resilience to climate change. About 80 percent of the world's food is produced by family farms, and small-scale farming is the dominant livelihood in most developing countries.<sup>2</sup> Women farmers make up on average 43 percent of this agricultural labour in developing countries, but are the majority in some countries.<sup>3</sup> However, they produce 20–30 percent less than men farmers because they often face barriers to accessing farm inputs, markets, technical assistance, extension services and finances. Equalizing this gap could boost agricultural output and decrease global undernourishment by up to 17 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Women farmers face two compounding layers of exclusion—as smallholder farmers and as women. Low levels of government spending on agriculture and climate change mean that the share of resources that women farmers can receive is already limited. Governments are skewing investments toward infrastructure projects, research institutions, private sector initiatives and more prosperous geographical areas. Climate change mitigation is prioritized over adaptation. Separately, international aid amounts are not matching expectations. Resources are geared toward other priorities such as infrastructure, there is limited transparency in spending in some countries, and coordination and operational challenges are the norm.

Despite the rhetoric given to international commitments, little action has been taken to ensure that women farmers have the resources they need to improve their livelihoods, tackle food insecurity and build their communities' resilience to climate change. Governments are not effectively working to address social, cultural, economic and institutional barriers that prevent women farmers from accessing critical farming inputs. Indeed, women are largely excluded in governmental planning, budgeting, data collection and monitoring processes at all levels.

Genuine support to women farmers could unleash the potential of hundreds of millions to effectively reduce poverty and hunger, while building countries' resilience to climate change. To achieve this,

Governments should support women farmers by:

- **Allocating resources specifically to women farmers**  
Rather than assuming that resources trickle down to women, budgeting for agriculture and climate change adaptation should incorporate specific line items to support women farmers.
- **Disaggregating data by gender**  
Gender-disaggregated data should be collected throughout agriculture and climate change planning and implementation processes.
- **Breaking down gender-specific barriers**  
Agriculture ministries should target gender-based barriers that restrict women's access to key farm inputs.
- **Supporting the participation of women farmers in local budget decision making**  
Women's groups and farmer associations can be trained to monitor budgeting at the municipal and local levels, in order to better leverage funding.

Governments should redirect resources to small-scale farming by:

- **Balancing support across small-scale farming and existing investments**  
Governments should critically examine investments and redirect sufficient support to small-scale farmers.
- **Aligning funding to areas with high levels of poverty**  
Spending should respond to geographic areas in which small-scale farmers are facing extreme poverty, rather than leaning

disproportionately toward more agriculturally productive or prosperous areas in a manner that can exacerbate inequality.

- **Building transparency and accountability through financial tracking systems**

Governments should establish, or strengthen, expenditure tracking systems and assign a single coordinating agency to serve as the clearinghouse for information on all financial flows coming into the country.

- **Improving coherence and reducing bureaucracy**

In order to channel the limited funding available to small-scale farming, ministries and local governments should integrate climate change, agriculture and gender issues across planning and programming.

- **Providing resources to local governments**

Local governments need adequate resources to facilitate effective participation of small-scale farmers in budgetary decision making, and should receive adequate support to set up dedicated budget lines for participatory processes.

Developed countries should take steps to target women and smallholder farmers by:

- **Directing funding to where it is most needed**

Developed country governments should have explicitly clear budget lines for small-scale producers, direct aid to countries and regions where it is most needed, and provide long-term funding for climate change adaptation to help diversify farmers' livelihoods.

- **Improving reporting on international aid**

Developed countries should post complete project data and documentation with clear coding in online databases, and monitor gender-related investments through budget tagging.

# NOTES

- 1 While the focus of Oxfam's research for this paper, these countries are not representative of all countries worldwide.
- 2 FAO. (2014). *The State of Food and Agriculture 2011: Innovation in Family Farming*. <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2014/en/>
- 3 FAO. (2016). *The State of Food and Agriculture 2016: Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security*. <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2016/en/>
- 4 Ibid.

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email [advocacy@oxfaminternational.org](mailto:advocacy@oxfaminternational.org)

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