



A ONE DAY WORKSHOP ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING INTO CLIMATE CHANGE, MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN FARMERS IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL ZONE NIGERIA

3rd March 2022





The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) held a workshop for women farmers in the North-Central zone of the country to enlighten them on the effect of climate change and strategies to mitigate such effects. This was the last of the series of workshop organized by the ministry across the six geo-political zones of the country.

The workshop started with a welcome address by the Ministry's Director of Special Duties Mrs Fausat Lawal who was ably represented by the Deputy Director, Mrs Gloria. She noted that agricultural activities cannot thrive in a hostile environment. Hence there is need to be informed about the causes of climate change, the effect on agricultural activities and how it can be mitigated by women farmers. She commends the incredible work being done by the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure women farmers are well-empowered to mitigate the climate change effect and urged the women farmers present to be attentive and put into practice what they would learn at the workshop.



The convener of the workshop, Mrs Ifeoma Anyanwu who is the Head Gender in the Ministry gave an overview of what the Gender Policy on Agriculture is about and the importance of holding the workshops on climate change. She noted that the gender policy seeks to reduce the vulnerability of women in agriculture. She concluded by commending the political will, zeal and passion of the Honourable Minister of FMARD in driving the implementation of the policy and sensitization of women in terms of mitigation and adaptation strategy to address climate change across the six geo-political zones of the country.



This was followed by goodwill messages from the important dignitaries invited. These include the Lead Consultant for the National Gender Policy on Agriculture Prof. Ben Uzuechi who commended the ministry on their efforts to make the policy see the light of day. He urged the ministry not only to sensitize women farmer in rural areas but also include the women in Internally Displaced Camps and young people.



Dr Priscilla Achagba, Special Adviser to the Honourable Minister of Environment noted that the gender policy in agriculture must be domesticated and implemented at the state levels. She charged the gender desks to take the policy to the state and for the state to take responsibility.



The wife of the former minister of FMARD in her goodwill message, noted the damages caused by firewood and charcoal and applauded the ministry for putting up the program and empowering women with cooking gas. She advised the women farmers present to not sell the cooking gas but use it for the purpose it was given; to mitigate climate change, improve their health and livelihoods.



Prof Hauwa Evelyn Yusuf, representing PAWED project echoed the need to stop being political farmers and be farmers on the field and charge the government to ensure that women have access to land and credit facilities.



In his keynote address, the Permanent Secretary, Dr Ernest Umakhihe (ably represented) noted that the National Steering Committee was approved and inaugurated in readiness of the implementation of the gender policy. The Nigerian agricultural sector is most susceptible to the effect of climate change because any change in weather affects farmers decision on what crops to cultivate. He reiterated that women contribute about 80% to the agriculture labour force in Nigeria, yet they face challenges especially in the area of climate change, access to input, credit facilities as well as information and access to technology. He congratulated the women farmers present and urged them to take advantage of the climate adaptation strategies they will be exposed to.



Noting the ambiguity of the word climate change, mitigation and adaptation, Dayo Olaniyi used a pidgin song to explain what it means to the wider audience who were majorly rural women farmers.



This was followed by the presentation of gas cookers to the representatives of women farmers in each state within the North-Central zone to enable them cook healthy, mitigate the effect of climate change and improve their livelihoods.

In addition, a panel session on the Economic Empowerment of Women Farmers in Nigeria was held in collaboration with the Partnership for Advancing Women in Economic Development, PAWED project. The session was moderated by prof. Hawau Evelyn Yusuf and included Mr Idris Mohammed from the Federal Ministry of women Affairs, Mrs Ifeoma Anyawu from the Gender Unit of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Princess Maria representing Dr Gloria from FMARD and the representatives of PAWED WECS- Madam Ngiza Chahum (NAWE) and Madam Ruth Agbor (AWITA)



In response to a question about what the federal government is doing to improve women's access to economic development and agriculture, Mrs. Ifeoma stated that the ministry developed and launched the Gender Policy on Agriculture as a tool for reducing the vulnerability of women farmers in Nigeria by connecting them with economic opportunities, financial and credit facilities to access funds, and consideration of gender responsive budgeting.



Mr. Idris stated that several interventions aimed at women are byproducts of the current administration's goal of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty by 2030. He also mentioned that the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs focuses on thematic areas such as skill development, enterprise development, cooperative development, microcredit schemes, and financial inclusion.

Princess Maria noted that these interventions do not reach rural women and that they are not aware of them. She maintained that even if these interventions are effective, rural women are unaware of their existence. She provided examples of recent CBN interventions that are not widely known, particularly among rural women.





Mrs Ruth noted the need for timely and accurate information to be passed onto women farmers. She commended the ministry on the gender policy on agriculture, and she attested that the policy is a process and urged them to try more and give more information. She commended PAWED the work its doing at the forefront of Women Economic Empowerment.

Madam Chahum noted the challenge to women access fund which includes documentation requirements such as CoO, as well as lack of inputs. She urge the government to make available grants for women to increase their farming business to increase income to put food on the table and send their kids to school. According to her **"Women do not need loans they need grant"**.



The panelists agreed that more awareness and education for rural women about the interventions available to them is required; and that CSOs and the government must collaborate to accomplish this.

Media link

- The Guardian News: Group tasks FG on economic plans for women, youths
- AIT News: Climate change-FG, CSOs train women farmers on tackling deforestation
- Leadership News: Climate Change: Federal Govt Supports 6,000 Rural Women Farmers With Gas Cylinders

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