

International Women's Day 2024: Inspire Inclusion Invest in Women to spur Socio-economic Development in Africa's Agri-based Economies

'Women are a source of inspiration and are full of wisdom. It is wise to invest in women, to ensure gender equality, and a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. The unique nature of women needs to be valued, their potential developed and their contribution to society celebrated. Women are a resource the world should care to explore'

Women and girls are vulnerable and adversely affected by the effects of climate change as they constitute the majority of the world's poor, who are overall more affected. Climate change is of great concern and increasingly the cost of responding and recovering from impacts attributable to the same has left a great gap in the economies of African nations. Climate change impacts threaten to undermine sustainable development as they ravage agri-based livelihoods such as livestock, crop farming and businesses that women depend on for their food and income. This is affecting the management of resources, affecting health, health and productivity. There is a notable increase in health-related challenges, more so the psychological well-being of individuals and communities and due to their roles in society, women are disproportionately affected, increasing their vulnerability. If things don't change, millions of women and girls could be living in extreme poverty in the next few years with transgenerational ripple effects.

Our environment is a resource, despite the challenges of climate change and its attributed impacts on livelihoods women are uniquely positioned and contribute to providing solutions. Their traditional, cultural roles within families mean they often act as stewards of natural and household resources. Every day, billions of women worldwide make decisions that influence the environment, biodiversity, and land; whether it is as politicians, policy makers, business women, farmers, caregivers for their families, or consumers. These roles position women well to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals, Nationally Determined Contributions and plans for climate adaptation, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods. Achieving gender equality and women's well-being in all aspects of life is more crucial than ever if we want to create prosperous economies and a healthy planet.

Economically, it is paramount to acknowledge and value the contributions women make to our society, through paid and unpaid ventures. It is said that women spend three times more time on unpaid care work than men. However, what would happen if these activities were assigned any monetary value? What amount or per cent would they account for our GDP?

To ensure women's needs and priorities are considered, there is a need for the global community to designate gender-responsive financing and increase public spending on essential services and social protection. Investing in women and championing gender equality ensures a future where everyone in society can thrive, creating a world of unlimited opportunity and empowerment for all.

#InvestInWomen #InspireInclusion

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