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Partners and Stakeholders unite to empower African women in Agriculture.

Empowering women in agriculture stands as a critical endeavour in Africa, where women form the backbone of the agricultural sector. Across the continent, women play multifaceted roles, from planting and harvesting crops to processing and marketing produce. Despite their pivotal contributions, women often face systemic barriers that hinder their full participation and potential within the agricultural landscape. Addressing these barriers and empowering women in agriculture is not only a matter of gender equality but also a strategic imperative for achieving sustainable development, food security, and economic growth across Africa.

Throughout history, women in Africa have been the custodians of agricultural knowledge, preserving traditional farming practices and biodiversity. Yet, they often face unequal access to resources such as land, finance, technology, and education, limiting their ability to maximize productivity and improve livelihoods. By dismantling these barriers and promoting gender-inclusive policies and programs, African countries can unlock the untapped potential of women in agriculture, driving innovation, resilience, and prosperity.

Moreover, empowering women in agriculture aligns with broader global development agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Recognizing the interconnectedness of gender equality, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development, policymakers, development agencies, and civil society organizations have increasingly prioritized initiatives aimed at enhancing women's access to resources, markets, and decision-making processes within the agricultural sector.

Centered around the themes of scaling up empowerment, highlighting achievements, and cultivating partnerships, the just-concluded 7th High-Level Breakfast Meeting on Empowering Women in Agriculture served as a dynamic forum to ignite substantial connections and collaborations among a wide array of stakeholders dedicated to advocating for the rights and invaluable contributions of women in agriculture. Throughout the event, attendees delved into opportunities for collaboration, shared exemplary practices, and solidified pledges aimed at enhancing the influence of programs supporting women across diverse agricultural landscape.

In her address, H.E Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, emphasized the critical importance of empowering rural women, asserting that it transcends mere necessity; it is a fundamental imperative for the future of our continent. She underscored that empowering rural women is not only a matter of justice, equality, and human rights but also a cornerstone for constructing a smart economy and promoting sustainable development across all sectors. Highlighting the broader significance, H.E Sahle-Work Zewde emphasized that empowering rural women unlocks the full potential of our nations. It fosters an environment conducive to innovation, enhances productivity, and cultivates prosperity that reverberates throughout society, benefiting individuals and communities alike. By investing in the empowerment of rural women, we lay the groundwork for inclusive growth and equitable progress that propels our continent forward into a brighter, more prosperous future.

H.E Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of Liberia and EWA Champion, emphasized the paramount importance of guaranteeing food security as a fundamental component of development worldwide. She underscored the close relationship between food security and gender equity, noting that women predominantly serve as the backbone of small-scale agricultural endeavors, engaging in both subsistence farming and cash crop cultivation. She urged individuals and collective groups to commit to supporting these women, recognizing them as the vibrant source that sustains our nations, ensuring democracy and development are intertwined for collective success.

H.E Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of Nigeria and EWA Champion underscored the profound influence women wield in the agricultural sector, urging reflection on their multifaceted contributions. Beyond their pivotal roles as farmers, women serve as drivers of innovation, productivity, and sustainability within agriculture. Recognizing this invaluable impact, it is imperative to foster an environment where their skills and potentials can flourish. Despite strides made, women in agriculture continue to encounter numerous challenges. H.E Obasanjo called upon all stakeholders to uphold their commitment to regional conventions, treaties, and protocols aimed at empowering women. He emphasized the importance of translating these commitments into tangible actions and policies that promote gender equality, ensure access to resources and finance, and create economic opportunities and trainings for women in agriculture.

During her intervention, H. E Bineta Diop, African Union Commission, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security emphasized the necessity of tangible outcomes achieved through the concerted commitments of all stakeholders, drawing attention to the successful collaboration with the OCP Foundation in Malawi. Specifically, she underscored the achievements in mechanization and capacity building as exemplars of what can be accomplished through collaborative efforts. In Malawi, the partnership with the OCP Foundation has led to significant strides in mechanizing agricultural processes, thereby enhancing efficiency and productivity in the sector. Additionally, capacity-building initiatives have empowered local communities with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in modern agricultural practices. Mme Diop Bineta stressed the importance of replicating such successful models across other regions and sectors to drive sustainable development and transformative change on a broader scale.

The Breakfast meeting brought together rural women from Senegal, Malawi and Tanzania, civil society, private sector, UN and AU organizations, International NGO's and foundations providing a platform for them to exchange valuable insights and practical strategies. The focus was on scaling up commitments to empower the African Woman farmer.

Download pictures of the event [here](#).

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