



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# ACCELERATING GLOBAL ACTIONS FOR A WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY

Eradicating hunger and ensuring food security in the context of  
COVID-19: A focus on agri-food system transformation

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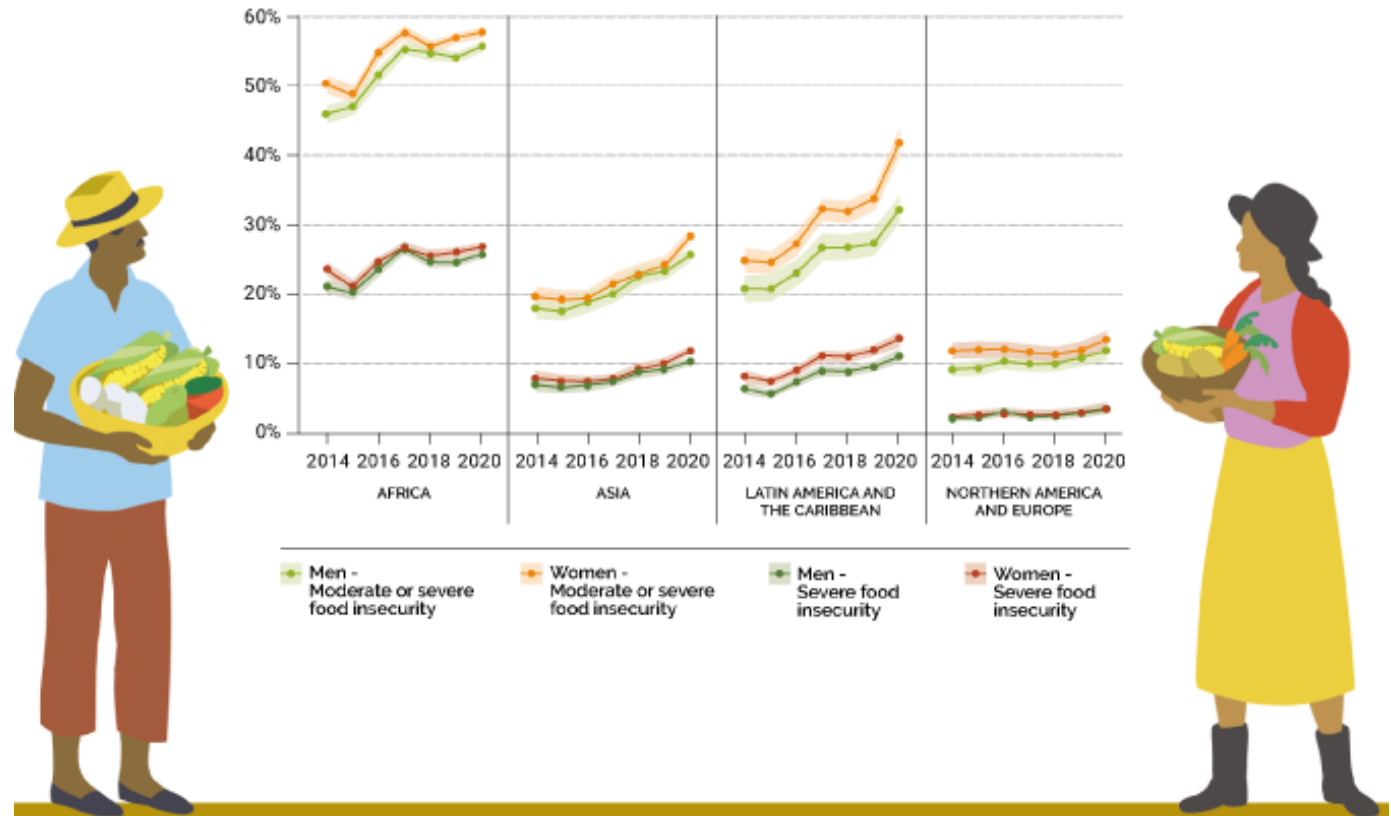
Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP)



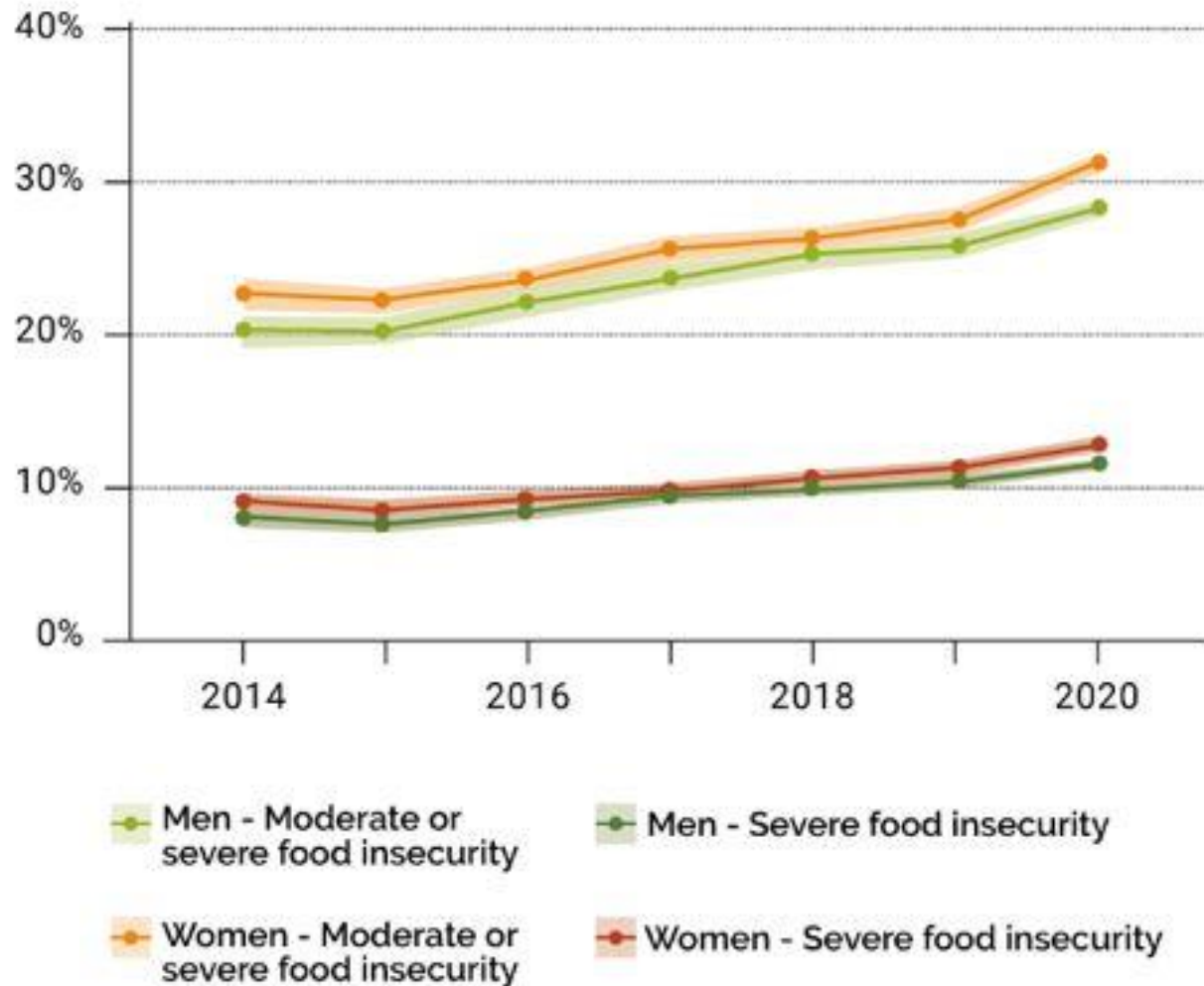
# Increasing poverty, inequality and food insecurity

- In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed 97 million more people in extreme poverty – a gap that has not started to close yet
- For the first time in twenty years, global inequality also rose, and more in LICs
- Food insecurity is on the rise, in all regions, exacerbated by COVID 19
- Africa and Latin America particularly worrying trends

PREVALENCE OF SEVERE AND MODERATE FOOD INSECURITY FOR MEN AND WOMEN BY REGION (PERCENT) 2014-2020<sup>28</sup>



# Globally, food insecurity for women is more acute



The prevalence of **moderate or severe food insecurity** was **10%** higher among women than men in 2020 compared to **6%** in 2019.



## Leaving no one behind

- Since majority of poor and food insecure continue to live in rural areas, achieving SDG 1 and SDG 2 requires focusing on agri-food system and rural areas—and structural transformation of economy
- Inclusive nature of transformation limited when specific groups suffer more from unequal access to resources, services, employment and decision-making, and are disproportionately affected by climate extremes and disasters, conflict, economic downturns and unaffordability of healthy diets
- Their constraints shaped and further reinforced by social and structural inequalities in agrifood systems
- Those being left behind: poor, youth, women, rural, small-scale producers, informal and agricultural wage workers, landless, migrants, Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities, persons with disability, the elderly, those living in areas of conflict or under humanitarian crisis
  - Characterized by multiple vulnerabilities/intersectionality



## Inclusive agri-food system transformation is central to economic development

- Agrifood system remains engine of growth for countries with high contribution of ag to GDP growth and high share of poor in rural sector
- Extreme poverty reduction driven by sustained and inclusive economic growth, starting in agriculture, with direct effects on employment and labor income for rural extreme poor
- Share of employment in agrifood system decreases with increasing per capita GDP
- Within agrifood system, employment shifts from agriculture to nonagricultural food system





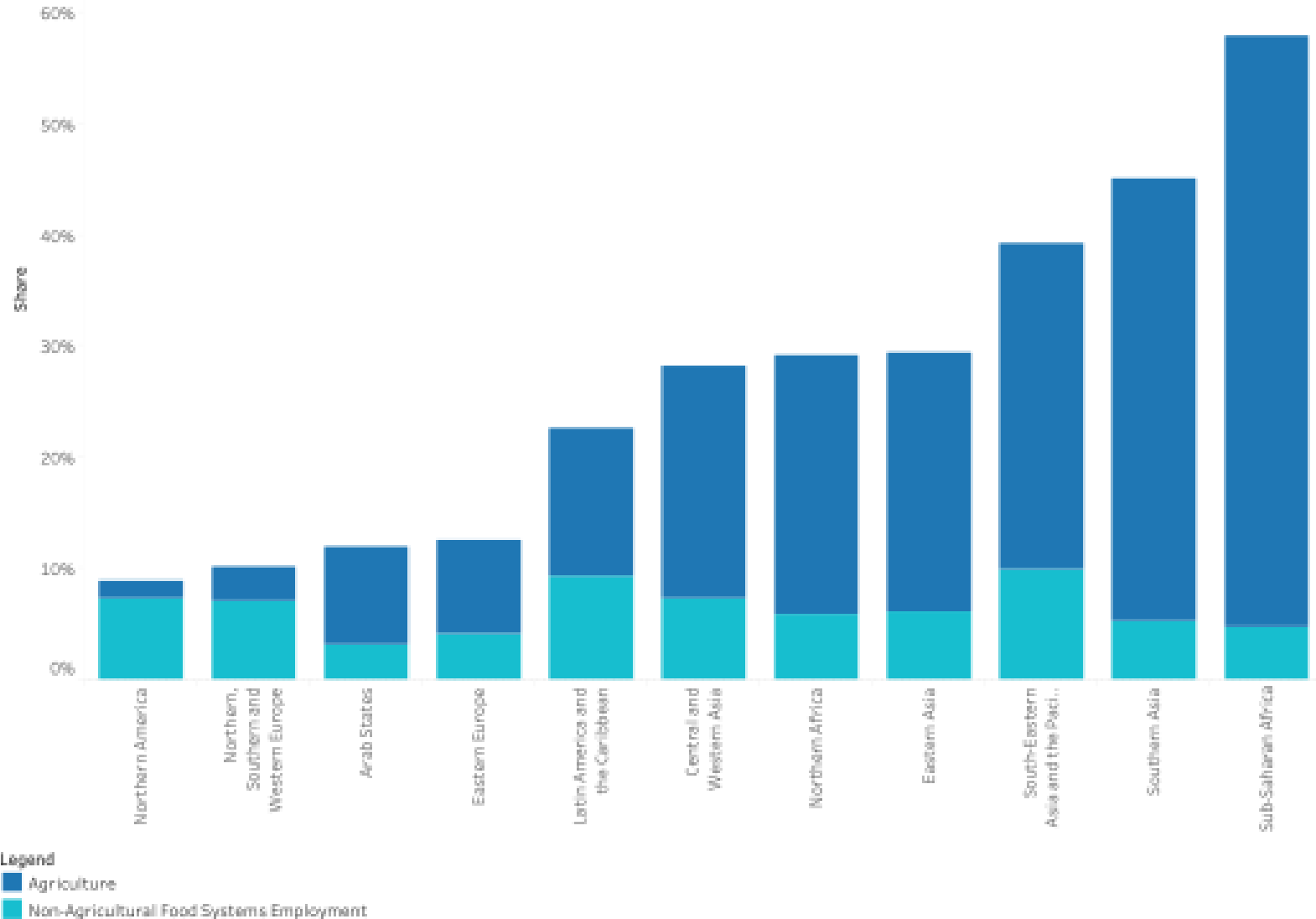
## Midstream of supply chains are crucial for inclusive agri-food system transformation

- Major influence on farm incentives to invest.
- Driven by increased role of purchased food and processed food in urban/rural diets.
- Roughly 90% of agrifood system in Africa in transition between traditional and modern supply chains—primarily MSMEs and informal.
- Most inclusive at early stages of transition, with informal MSMEs — strong poverty reducing role.
- Transition to more formalized markets with large-scale players can bring better prices and increased access to insurance, inputs, credit, etc, but also excessive consolidation, market power and inequality.



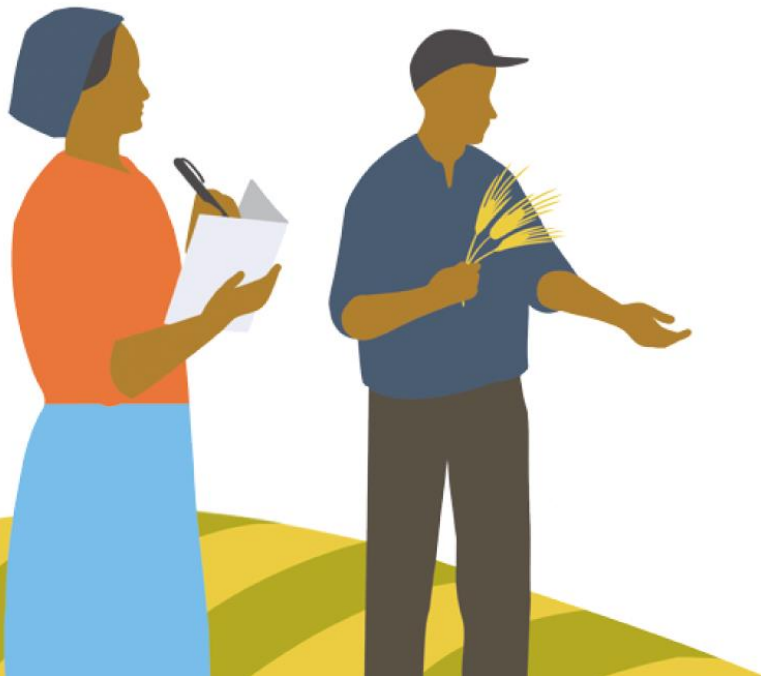
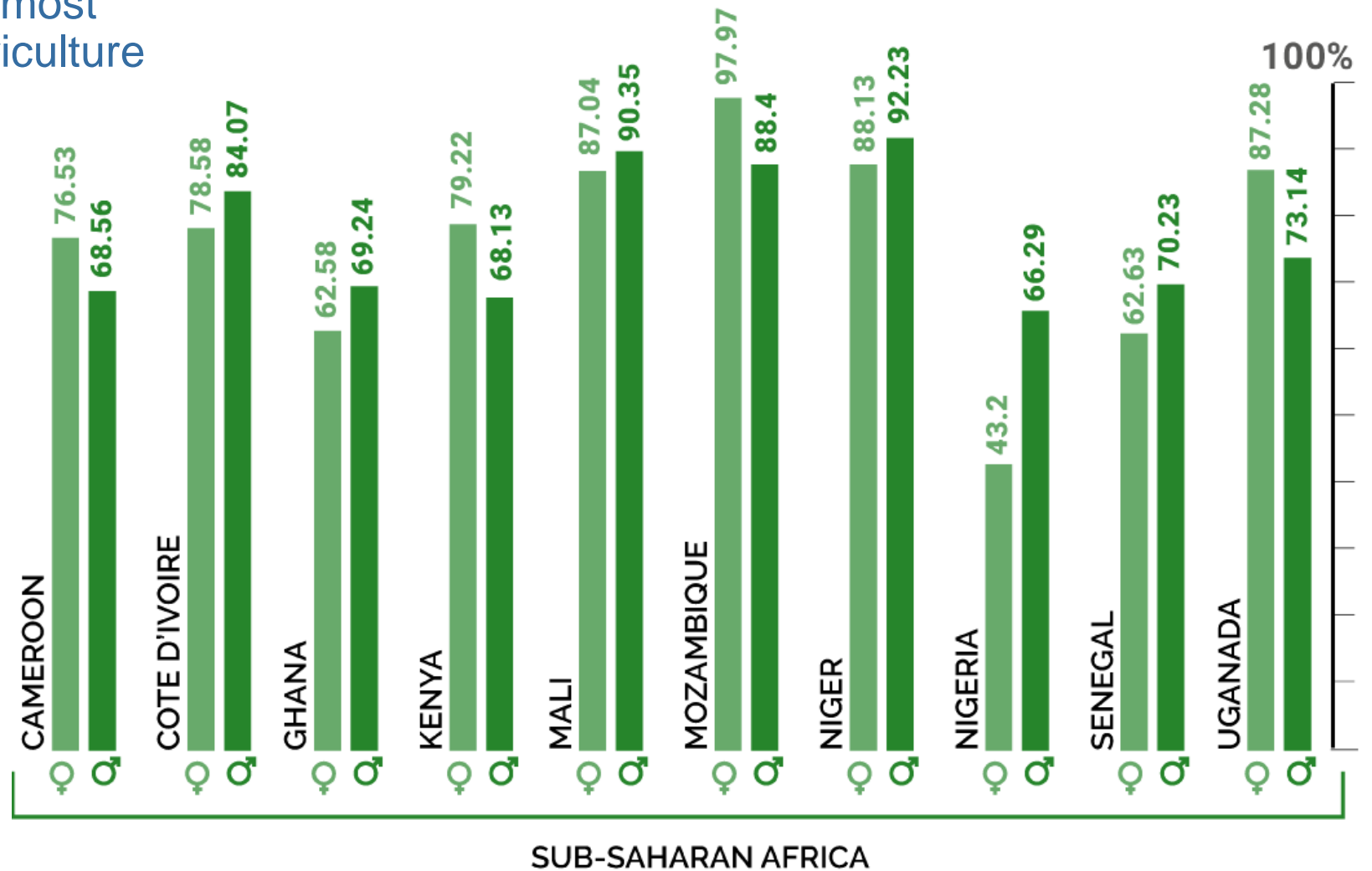
# Agri-food systems are largest employer in SSA

- Around 60% of employment is in agri-food system
- Across regions, share of total employment in nonagricultural part of food system consistently between 5 to 10%



# Agrifood system is central to women's employment

- Majority men and women in most countries in SSA work in agriculture





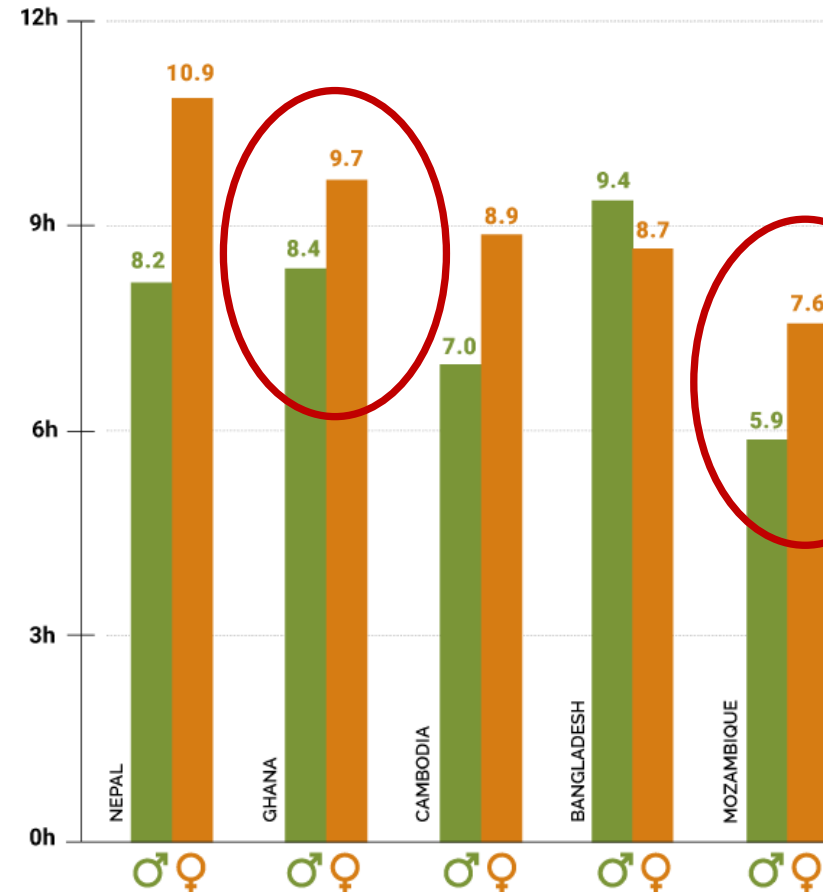
# Women face a series of constraints in terms of agri-food system livelihoods, which have been exacerbated by Covid 19

- Greater time burden
- Higher likelihood of marriage and childbirth before 18
- Exposure to gender-based violence
- Differently exposed and vulnerable to shocks/stress, due to social norms, attitudes and beliefs
- Less likely to own land, reduced access to financial resources
- Smaller share use internet

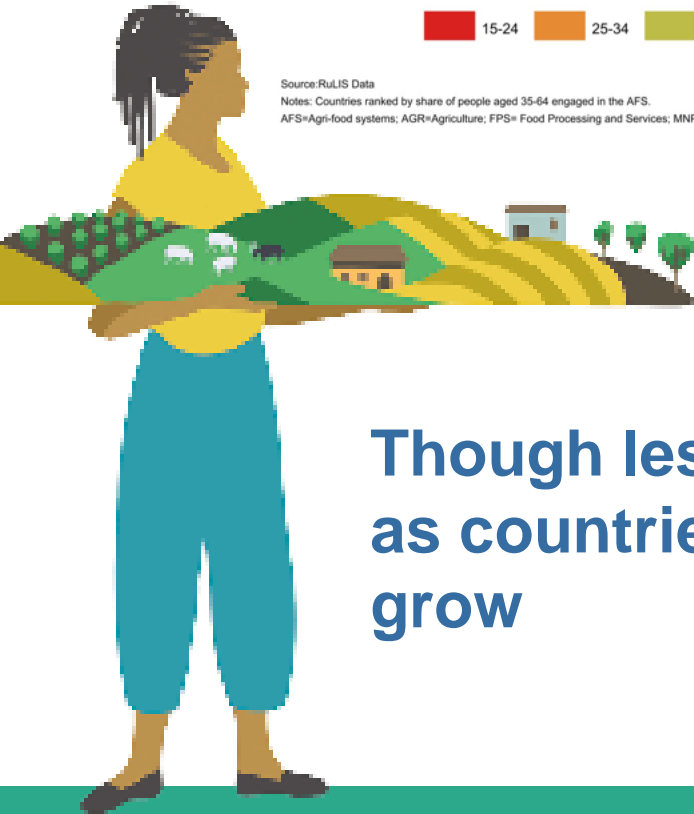
AVERAGE TIME MEN AND WOMEN SPENT WORKING IN RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE LAST 24 HOURS (h)<sup>19</sup>



**NEPAL**  
**10.9h**  
WOMEN'S WORK HOURS  
PER DAY ON AVERAGE  
**8.2h**  
MEN'S WORK HOURS  
PER DAY ON AVERAGE



# Agriculture and AFS will continue to be main source of employment for youth

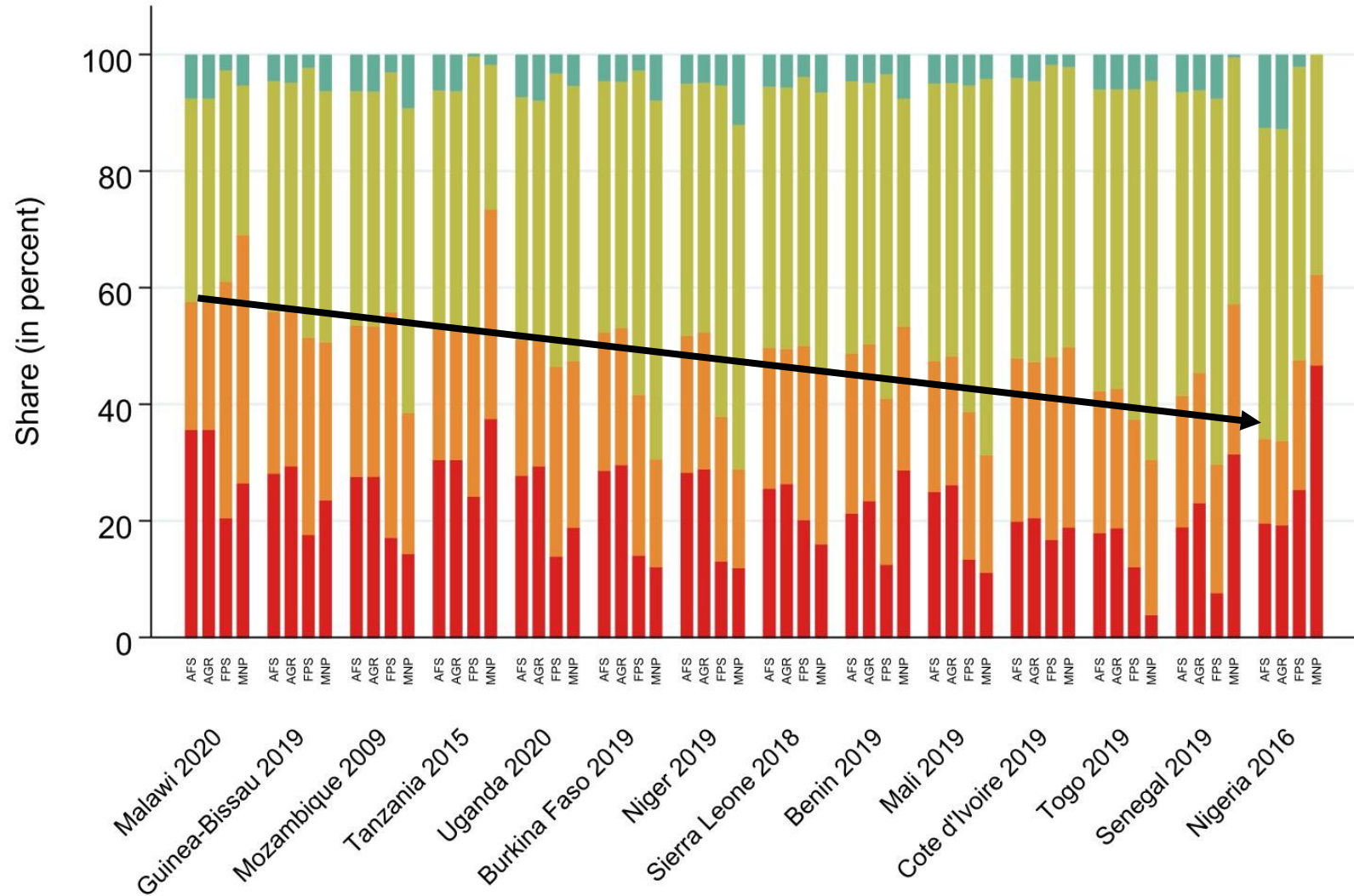


15-24 25-34 35-64 65+

Source: RuLIS Data  
Notes: Countries ranked by share of people aged 35-64 engaged in the AFS.  
AFS=Agri-food systems; AGR=Agriculture; FPS= Food Processing and Services; MNP=Manufacture of non-agricultural products.

Though less so as countries grow

## Age of people engaged in AFS





# Towards accelerated actions for inclusive agri-food system transformation and achievement of SDG 1 and 2

- Explicit focus on Leaving No One Behind
- Recognize centrality of gender equality, youth empowerment, social justice and socio-economic inclusion
- Address root causes of rural poverty and inequalities
- Critical opportunities and accelerators
  - Inclusive access to digital technologies driving innovation
  - Robust data collection and analysis—gender, age, and poverty disaggregated for targeting, profiling and evaluation of impact
  - Expand social protection as an investment—Increase food consumption, improve human capital, strengthen risk management and resilience (climate change), support productive investments, increase efficiency of labour use of the poorest
  - Gender and age transformative approaches to address underlying social norms, attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate inequalities



# Thank you

