



# WOMEN'S WORLD MAJLIS

## FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND LIVELIHOODS WEEK

**From Farmer to Boss Lady:** Developing a gender-equitable agricultural sector

Women's Pavilion Programming, in collaboration with World Majlis



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<b>Curation</b>	Women's Pavilion, co-curated with US Pavilion
<b>Date</b>	Monday February 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2022
<b>Time</b>	15:00 – 16:30 GST
<b>Venue</b>	Women's Pavilion

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**Women make up approximately 43 percent of agricultural workers in developing countries, but less than 15 percent of all landowners are women, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The lack of female ownership and leadership in the global agriculture sector not only inhibits economic growth, but societal and community growth as well. For example, it is estimated that if women had equal access to land ownership, opportunities and resources, their farm yields could be increased by 20 – 30 percent, feeding an additional 150 million people. Increasing female ownership in the agriculture sector is pivotal in alleviating significant barriers that may hamper personal, community and global growth to hundreds of millions of people.**

The 'feminization of agriculture' is in full effect – 70 percent of the agricultural producers worldwide are women, and women produce more than 50 percent of the food worldwide. As more men move to urban areas for better pay, rural women in developing countries are often left responsible for the agricultural production. In sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, women produce up to 80 percent of basic foodstuffs. In Asia, women cultivate 50 to 90 percent of the rice yield yearly. In Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America, women's home gardens represent some of the most complex agricultural systems in the nation. In some cases, this can empower women, giving them greater decision-making power in their communities but overall, despite women's large share in producing food, they still tend to "eat least, and eat last".

### **Overview and Key Questions**

The challenges are many and multifaceted, ranging from poor irrigation systems, lack of access to mechanization and equipment, as well as complex supply chains and inadequate infrastructure. The share of women in production is also not reflected in related leadership positions, such as in producer organizations, and across the entire value chain of agribusiness.

Indeed, affecting women most directly are potentially ownership rights, which are further exasperated by patriarchal societal norms, laws and traditions that continue to hinder women's access to owning and inheriting land. As a result, women represent less than 15% of farmland owners. This lack of property rights leads to unequal access to the most basic essentials such as seeds, fertilizer, machinery, tools, and labour, which on average leads to women-run farms producing 20 to 30 percent less than farms run by men. The reasons for this "crop gap," according to the FAO, have nothing to do with an aptitude for farming and everything to do with the gender-specific obstacles.

Gender parity in agriculture is essential. Every \$1 invested in a woman who farms turns into \$31 worth of benefits for her family and her community (CARE International, 2020). In feminising agriculture, there are several ways to better accommodate women. That includes smaller, more manageable packages of seed or fertiliser and targeted radio content to offer relatable advice on the best crops and techniques to achieve maximum yield and nutritional value. Women need to be included in the process of modernisation too, so they can learn new techniques such as how to programme drones, analyse weather pattern data, assess seed types, or operate a robot tractor remotely.

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Rural women and women in agriculture are key to lifting communities out of poverty and ending food insecurity. By neglecting them, we are neglecting an opportunity that could change and save lives.

**Key Questions:**

- What initiatives, policies, and tools should be promoted in order to ensure gender equal access to agricultural ownership? What have been the key barriers to ensuring this type of equality?
- How can we challenge the “crop gap” and eliminate structural barriers to gender equality in food production and global value chains?
- How can we break the glass ceiling for female food producers to reach leadership positions in their field? What is holding them back?
- How can we support the role of women in feeding the next billion people, and how do we ensure that women no longer “eat least, and eat last”?

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**Moderator**



**Dr Suzie Newman**

Head - International Development, Institute for Plant & Food Research, New Zealand

Dr Newman is an experienced, award-winning international development leader and a thought-provoking speaker. She has a wealth of on-the-ground experience in Africa, SE Asia and the Pacific and leads a highly skilled team that is on track to double its portfolio of horticultural and seafood sector projects in the next few years. She is well placed to discuss all aspects of agriculture and livelihood development including the use of new technology, sustainable practices, the shift to higher value crops, food security and partnership across the food value chain.

Dr Newman heads Plant & Food Research’s International Development Unit. This Unit was established in 2017 with a current portfolio of horticultural and seafood sector projects in SE Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. Dr Newman has extensive program management experience in international development having worked in both government and academic sectors. She has technical skills in agribusiness, horticultural production and postharvest management research and extension.

From 2009-2016, she was based in Hanoi, Vietnam leading a series of regional projects in Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). She also has previous experience in Papua New Guinea, China, and Africa. In 2012, she was awarded the MARD Medal for her contribution to Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam and in 2016 the Vietnam Women’s Union award for contribution to women’s development and empowerment in Vietnam. She holds a PhD in Plant Science (Postharvest Physiology) and a BHortSci (Hons) both from Massey University.

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## Panel 1 Participants

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**Jamie Beyer**  
**Farmer and Female Leader, USA**

Jamie Beyer and her husband Rodd farm with his mother and two full-time employees. They live in Wheaton, Minnesota, with their three daughters, ages 12, 14, & 16. The Beyers raise soybeans, corn, alfalfa, sugar beets on 3,500 acres in west central Minnesota and northeastern South Dakota.

Jamie serves on the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and national American Soybean Association. She also works part-time off the farm as administrator of a watershed district, helping landowners address water quantity and quality issues across six counties in the Red River Valley.



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**Dr Marie Lisa M. Dacanay**  
**Founding President, Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA), Philippines**

**Virtual participant**

A pioneer in social entrepreneurship education and research in the region and recognized as Outstanding Social innovation Thought Leader of the Year 2019 by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship and World Economic Forum. She is a coach and mentor of social entrepreneurship practitioners and resource institutions and a bridging leader promoting dialogue and collaboration between the social enterprise sector with government, business, civil society and academe to achieve greater impact. Through ISEA and its partners, she has led the building of platforms and the promotion of an ecosystem for social entrepreneurship to become a major pathway to address poverty, inequality and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

She led the policy research and consultations that resulted to the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Coalition and ongoing efforts to lobby for the enactment of a PRESENT Law in the Philippines. She is leading the development of the Social and Community Enterprise Constituency as part of the Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism with the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. She has led the action research and a multistakeholder platform building initiative promoting a set of Benchmarks for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains (AVC) in Southeast Asia and beyond, launched at a conference co-convened by ISEA and UNESCAP in September 2020. She also led the policy research that resulted to the Transformational AVC Guidelines, a set of proposed policies and programs that governments can adopt to incentivize the practice of the Benchmarks and enable women's economic empowerment in agricultural value chains, expected to be launched in March 2022.

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**Lauren M. Phillips**

**Deputy Director, Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Italy**

**Virtual participant**

Lauren M. Phillips is an international political economist and currently Deputy Director for the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization. The division works on FAO's social and poverty mandate, contributing to no poverty, zero hunger and reduced inequalities, including those related to gender.

Prior to joining FAO, she worked in a variety of policy, strategy and advisory roles at the International Fund for Agricultural Development from 2015-2021, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics (2008-2014), as a Research Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute (2005-08), and in a variety of private finance roles in the City of London and New York.

She holds a PhD in International Political Economy from the London School of Economics and master and undergraduate degrees from Stanford University. Dr Phillips is also an Adjunct Professor at Johns Hopkins SAIS Europe and has published widely on finance and development. She is an American national and lives in Rome, Italy with her family. This is her second time speaking on women's role in agriculture at Expo; the first was in Milan in 2015.

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## Panel 2 Participants

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**Silvia Cruz-Vargas**  
**Director of International Programs, PepsiCo Foundation, USA**

**Virtual participant**

Silvia Cruz-Vargas is the Director of International programs for the PepsiCo Foundation, the philanthropic arm of PepsiCo. In this capacity, she is responsible for driving PepsiCo Foundation's programs across 4 continents and 25 countries and leading a diverse team located around the globe. In addition, Silvia conceived and coined, PepsiCo's industry-leading safe water access program, which aims to deliver access to safe water to 100 million people by 2030.

Silvia holds a Master of Public Policy from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs; Master's in Environmental Management and a Bachelor of Science from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, Colombia.



**Elizabeth Nsimadala**  
**President of Eastern Africa Farmers Federation, Uganda**

Elizabeth Nsimadala is a Ugandan young agriprenuer and a smallholder farmer; currently the President of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) and the Director in Charge of Women Affairs as well as the immediate-past President at the Pan Africa Farmers Organization (PAFO). She is a member of the United Nations Advisory Committee for The Secretary General's Food Systems Summit 2021, a task force member for AU-EU Cooperation in Agriculture, sitting on the Global steering committee for Forest Farm Facility (FFF) by the FAO, sitting on the steering committee for IFAD's Global Farmers Forum, serving on the Civil Society Committee of the Africa Development Bank and on the board of Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), is a Governing Council member for Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism (AFFM), member of the steering committee of Pan Africa Agribusiness Chamber (PAAAC), a board member for ACTESA/COMESA and Advisory member of National Alliance of Agricultural Cooperatives in Uganda (NAAC). She also serves on a number of National and local farmers' and cooperative platforms.

Elizabeth holds a MSc. in Project Planning and Management from Ndejje University - Uganda and a B.A in Social Sciences from Makerere University Kampala - Uganda. She has additional professional and skills experience in Agro processing, cooperative development and agricultural logistics management from Israel and China and administrative law from Law Development Centre Kampala (LDC), among others.

She is a passionate co-operator and farmer who has been at the forefront of championing digitalization of the agriculture sector through the EAFF farmers' owned E-granary mobile initiative that virtually aggregates farmers for input, services and output markets. As a result of her efforts and support to farmers organizations, she has received a number of local and global awards with a recent one from the World Farmers Organization, as one of the women contributing to sustainable development and recognition from the United States of America Farmers and Ranchers in Action for inspiring farmers globally for action and fighting for farmers rights.

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### **Dr Varsha Bhagat-Ganguli**

Professor, Nirma University and Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration, India

Dr. Varsha Bhagat-Ganguly has been a professor at Nirma University and Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration, Mussoorie; and a fellow of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. She has worked in the education and development sector as a Development Sociologist; has conducted research studies on various social and developmental issues. She focuses on linking field-based and academic research with its versatile applications, including ground-up public policy regime, strategic action plan for social change, and raising awareness and communication. She is committed to the strengthening the cycle of social knowledge-action-transformation.

She has been working on land issues in India for more than 35 years. Her exposure to the issue of land rights of single women through a study in 1993 made her aware and convinced to work for land rights of women and the marginalised communities in India. Working as a member of a state level network Working Group on Women & Land Ownership (WGWLO), Gujarat has deepened her understanding of micro-level dynamics. As a member of a national level network Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM), she is able to contribute to micro and macro level initiatives and policy regime of land rights. She is a Governing Board member of WGWLO and a member of National Facilitation Team, MAKAAM in India.

She has widely published and has been an editor of three academic journals by premier institutions in India. Her areas of interest are Research for Development, Land question, Citizen's rights and collective actions, and Gujarat. Recent publications on land include Land rights in India: Policies, movements and challenges (2016); Journey towards land titling in India (2017); India's Scheduled Areas: Untangling governance, politics and law (2019); and The Land question in neoliberal India: Socio-Legal and Judicial Interpretations (2020).

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## Appendix

### Expo 2020 Dubai, the Women's Pavilion and the World Majlis programme

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#### EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future.

Running from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, Expo 2020 Dubai will bring the world together to imagine, design and build a more sustainable, dignified and prosperous world. One that is cleaner, safer and healthier. One inspired by collective action around shared challenges, and in which future generations will flourish. Under the theme of "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" and our three sub-themes of Sustainability, Mobility and Opportunity, Expo will be a platform for positive, collaborative change.

#### THE WOMEN'S PAVILION AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Our Women's Pavilion, under the exhibition title 'New Perspectives', is a critical component of this vision and will be curated by Expo 2020 Dubai in collaboration with Cartier. In highlighting the positive contributions of women, we will demonstrate that when women thrive, so too does all of humanity.

The UAE has dedicated itself to ensuring that issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are centrally addressed in everything we do at Expo 2020 Dubai. By shining a light on women past and present, known and unknown, the Women's Pavilion challenges the misconceptions that women still frequently face, seeks out new perspectives on the impact women bring to our world, explores new approaches to creating a more equal world, and identifies ways in which we, together, can create new perspectives, change deep-rooted perceptions, and adjust mindsets.

Through different modes of convening, our goal is to highlight that the only way to peace, prosperity, and sustainability is through the full and equal participation of women.

#### WORLD MAJLIS PROGRAMME

Deeply rooted in the traditions of the UAE, the Majlis is one of the cornerstones of Emirati civilisation. In Arabic, "majlis" means 'place of sitting' and refers to both a social gathering space and a formal legislative assembly for government. A place where people meet to hear informed opinions and shape decisions on subjects that matter to the community. The host of the majlis and his guests sit facing one another and engage in respectful but vibrant conversation, with the view of better understanding issues and exploring solutions.

*The majlis has been inscribed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It defines majlis as a "sitting place" where community members gather to discuss local events and issues, exchange news, receive guests, socialise and be entertained."*

The World Majlis aims to be one of the most engaging and thought-provoking dialogues ever held at an Expo. It is a space for ideas and conversations to make important and complex topics relatable to the general public. It brings together diverse points of views across geographies and generations. It invites open and informed exchanges between its participants with the objective to generate new insights and start meaningful connections between people and new ideas.

#### WOMEN'S WORLD MAJLIS

The Women's World Majlis is a key programming series at the Women's Pavilion in partnership with the World Majlis. In ten sessions, we will look into ten Expo Thematic Weeks' topics through a gender lens by recognizing and celebrating women's role and positive contributions in advancing sustainable development adapting a free-flowing conversation format.

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