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Women and Poverty: A Human Rights Perspective

Conference Abstracts

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Gender empowerment as a tool against poverty and malnutrition
Professor Olivier de Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
(Catholic University of Louvain and College of Europe)

Women and girls face various types of obstacles as a result of discriminatory laws or social or cultural norms. Such discrimination has important impacts on the perpetuation of poverty and malnutrition. First, as women and girls of certain educational and employment opportunities, their economic independence is limited. This results in a lack of purchasing power for female-headed households; it also results in a weaker bargaining position of women within the family, leading in turn to differential feeding and care-giving practices that favor boys over girls. Second, the discrimination they face makes it more difficult for women to be productive economic agents. For both these reasons, challenging the discrimination women and girls and enlarging the opportunities they may have, is a "secret weapon" in the fight against poverty and malnutrition: it is achievable, it is inexpensive, and it is highly effective. The cost to society of not acting more decisively on this front is considerable.

However, to remove the obstacles women and girls face, more shall be required than good intentions; nor shall it be sufficient to amend legislation that is discriminatory. The social and cultural norms themselves, and the gendered division of roles that these norms impose, must be challenged. For this reason, empowerment -- an increased role for women in decision-making, at all levels, including the household, local communities and national parliaments -- is required. Change will come only once this implication is recognized. Women's empowerment is therefore a goal in itself, recognized as desirable by Governments, and it is a human right ; but it also has an instrumental value in allowing society to benefit from the increased contribution of women to development, food security and nutrition. The potential of women is one we cannot afford not to reap. But it is one that can only materialize if men accept to reshape the social structures that they have been benefiting from until now.

Engendering Human Rights
Professor Sandra Fredman, Rhodes Professor of the Laws of the British Commonwealth
and the USA (Oxford University)

‘If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, it is that human rights are women’s rights - and women’s rights are human rights’ (Hilary Clinton, Beijing conference 1995)

This paper takes a step beyond the recognition that women’s rights are human rights. I argue that human rights will continue to exclude women unless they are expressly ‘engendered’. As the 1995 United Nations (UN) Human Development Report put it: ‘Human development if not engendered, is endangered’.¹ I argue that it is not enough to see this in human development terms. The gender dimension should be central to States’ human rights commitments made both internationally and domestically by States. And in a world in which power and influence are increasingly wielded by large corporations, such commitments should extend too to all who exercise power.

Engendered human rights aim to take account of the power relations in which rights are exercised. They aim to enhance the set of feasible options open to women. At the same time, they are not merely about personal choice. Many aspects of women’s lives are based on responsibility, care and interdependence. Thus engendered human rights should also support the values of interdependence, solidarity and care, whether or not based on choice.² Moreover, engendered human rights are not only about women. They address the gendered relationships in society. For example, measures facilitating women’s equal participation in the paid workforce should be matched by measures facilitating men’s equal participation in the unpaid work in the home.

Despite formal guarantees of equality, women’s inequality persists. Nearly four decades of equal pay legislation and sex discrimination law in the UK have not eliminated the gender pay gap. This pattern is reflected in many other countries in the world, as my recent work for the World Development Report 2013 has demonstrated.³ Women who are subject to early marriage, to treatment as minors under the guardianship of male relatives, to eviction from their property on widowhood, and other legal forms of discrimination, are inevitably highly limited in their ability to undertake paid work, or to benefit from paid work in terms of income, training, career progression or solidarity at work. Even where such laws have been abolished, structural inequalities are maintained through cultural and social forces. Without secure rights to education, property, social security or contract, labour market participation is severely compromised: where women can access jobs at all, they are likely to be precarious or on poor terms and conditions.

To address women’s pervasive disadvantage world-wide through a human rights framework, it is essential to recognise the interlocking inequalities facing women. Women’s disadvantage in the waged labour force reflects not just prejudice in the workforce itself, but also their unequal

¹ United Nations Development Programme *Gender and Human Development* (1995) 1
<<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1995/chapters>> (henceforth *Gender and Human Development*).

² S Fredman, ‘Engendering Socio-economic rights’ [2009] 25 *South African Journal of Human Rights* 1

³ S Fredman

access to power and resources more generally, whether in the family, in education, in health, in access to property, or personal security. Legal intervention, to be effective, should be capable of addressing the interaction between these factors. The challenge is also to find means to address inequalities and disadvantage in the great variety of productive activities engaged in by women. This requires a holistic human rights framework, where the right to substantive gender equality infuses both the familiar canon of civil and political rights and the equally important socio-economic rights.

In response to these challenges, much of my work has been devoted to developing a conception of substantive equality which can function as a framework to evaluate legislation, policies and practice for their impact on gendered disadvantage. Formal equality requires equality before the law. It is based on the Aristotelean principle that likes should be treated alike. The limits of this principle have been well recognised. However, the understanding of the alternative principle of substantive equality remains contested. I have developed a four dimensional framework which aims to build on and take forward existing approaches to substantive equality. Firstly substantive equality should aim to redress disadvantage. Rather than regarding gender as irrelevant in decision-making, it sees gender as highly relevant when it is a marker of disadvantage. This means that preferential treatment or affirmative action in favour of women is not a breach of equality, but a means for achieving it. Secondly, substantive equality aims to eliminate stigma, prejudice, stereotyping and violence. Thirdly, substantive equality does not expect conformity. It aims to respect difference, while removing the detriment attached to difference. This requires not just accommodation, but frequently transformation or structural change. In particular, child-care and parenting need to be recognised as a shared social responsibility, and working patterns need to be changed to accommodate this. Finally, substantive equality aims at facilitating participation and voice. The four dimensional framework is complemented by a recognition that to achieve equality and engendered human rights requires positive measures to facilitate and promote the enjoyment of these rights. Much of my work has addressed the challenges arising from such positive duties. Not least amongst these are to identify and ignite relevant triggers for change.

**Commitment to Sexual and Reproductive Health as a driver to Poverty Reduction: Using
National Human Rights Mechanisms to hold the Government to account: A case of a
public inquiry in Kenya
Commissioner Winfred Osimbo Lichuma (Chairperson National Gender and Equality
Commission Kenya)**

For more than half a century, many people in the development sector in Kenya have worked at alienating extreme poverty so that the poorest people can access basic goods and services like health, food, safe drinking water, sanitation, shelter and education. The disaggregated data in the last Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Services Survey of 2013 does indicate that the gap between the rich and the poor, urban and rural areas, among ethnic groups or between genders reveal huge disparities between those who are endowed and those who are deprived. In the world equality statistics, Kenya was ranked 103 out of 169 countries making it the 66th most unequal country in the world. Inequality in Kenya is driven by various factors among them social norms, behaviours and practices that fuel discrimination and inhibit access to essential services. The inequalities suffered require that the Kenyan government is held to account for its inability to protect, promote and fulfill its regional and international obligations. The 2009 estimates pointed to the fact that 45.2% of the Kenyan population live below the poverty line.

In April 2012, the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights, a national human rights body undertook a public inquiry into violations of Sexual and Reproductive Health rights in Kenya and returned the verdict that the sexual and reproductive health rights of Kenyans had been violated. This was in terms unavailability of essential health services, difficulties in accessing the services due to distance and cost, the high charges levied on these services making them beyond the reach of the majority poor, the poor quality of available services and the lack of sensitivity of cultural norms and beliefs of the people in service delivery. That the state had not complied with its regional and international commitment to dedicate the maximum of its availability resources to progressively realize the right to sexual and reproductive health thus rendered the targeted category very poor.

Notably the most vulnerable are the marginalized, women, sexual minorities, people with disabilities, PLWHA, adolescents and the youth, internally displaced persons and refugees. The paper will discuss the various findings on violations indicating that the fulfillment of the commitment could enhance equality and reduce level of poverty among the target groups.

Moving beyond the promise: Actualizing the legal recognition of women's right to own and control land in Kenya

Ms Patricia Nyaundi, (The Secretary to the Commission Kenya National Commission on Human Rights)

At independence Kenya identified 3 challenges that needed to be addressed so as to realize its developmental aspirations, these were; poverty, illiteracy and tribalism. For women, these challenges were exacerbated by the application of a patriarchal based customary law which assumes that men, to the exclusion of women, are the ones vested with primary rights.

This relegation of women and their consignment to the margins of society has had the snow ball effect of negating the developmental goals of the country. There is a realization that this negates the sum growth and progress of communities. Consequently, there is now a drive towards a review of policies and legislation so as to reflect the changing role of women in society. Key policies and legislation that seek to address the challenge include the National Gender and Development Policy, 2000, the Economic blue print, Vision 2030 and the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Each of these demand equal treatment for women and prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender. Significantly the constitution of Kenya, 2010 whilst recognizing customary law subjugates it to Constitutional safeguards of equality and non discrimination.

Having achieved improved legal status for women the next necessary step is to actualise these gains and cause a transformation in the lived realities of women. Customary law has in the past been utilized to chip away at Women's rights. When this has happened customary law has been referenced as static. Historically courts have played a central role in seeking to resolve the tensions between customary law and human rights principles. It is envisaged that courts will increasingly adopt an interpretation of customary law that factors in the changed realities of modern society and in particular the changed gender roles thereby applying a 'living ' customary law that is not in conflict with the Bill of Rights.

Inheritance Rights, Customary Law and Feminization of Poverty Among Rural Women in South-West Nigeria
Olanrewaju Emmanuel Ajiboye, (Lagos State University)

Succession and inheritance rights are established procedures of transferring economic, social and even political powers in any given human societies. However, the problem in most patriarchal societies such as South-West Nigeria has been the unequal positioning of male and female children to inheritance. Although, essential to women's daily survival, economic security and physical safety, access to and control over land, property and housing is widely accepted to be one of the most critical factors in the struggle for women's emancipation. While the males are regarded as heirs and apparent successors to economic and social powers, the right of females in this regard has either been outright denied or in part relegated to the background. In spite of social change which has swept all over the continent of Africa including cultural changes, the inheritance rights remains resilient in this part of the society.

In the South-west Nigeria, women's right to inherit land and other property is severely limited. To worsen the already deepening conditions of women in South-West, Nigeria, the customary law stipulates that at a man's death, his property is either inherited by his adult sons or, if his children are minors, repossessed by his family. Customary laws, cultural practices and traditional norms are used to justify the disinheritance of widows and invoked to override statutory or constitutional provisions for women that may provide them with a legal right to inherit. In Nigeria, for example, customary law settles approximately 80 percent of land disputes at the expense of women's rights. So, the denial of inheritance rights to women results in the descent of millions of women and their families into extreme poverty, coupled with lack of means of empowerment and the cumulative effects of which resulted into feminization of poverty among rural women in South-West Nigeria.

It should therefore be said at this juncture that, this unchanging situation worsens the seemingly impoverished condition of the women folk and makes them more vulnerable to abject poverty compared to their male counterparts. While the economic situation or poverty level of a male child could be changed for better through inheritance, the situation of women is rather contrary and their situation could get worsen.

This study focuses on the nexus of interaction between inheritance rights, customary law and poverty among rural women in South-West, Nigeria. Triangulation method was used for data collection. Both primary and secondary sources of data were exploited. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select respondents included in the survey. Logistic regression technique was used to test the only hypothesis for the study. The study found positive relationship between inheritance denial and the deepening poverty among rural women in the South-West Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that all obnoxious provisions of our customary laws should be expunged to allow for equal right between the male and female children.

Using A Gender Equality Analysis to Improve the Well-Being of Prostitutes
Dr. Barbara Havelková Lecturer in Law (University of Oxford)

Most feminist literature is divided on how to approach prostitution - some writers see it as sex work that should be normalized, some as inherently violent and exploitative practice that should be abolished. Connected to these positions, many normative debates about the response to prostitution concentrate on a legislative overhaul of current systems and either propose legalization (the 'Dutch model') or the criminalization of demand (the 'Swedish model'). Based on the finding that many national responses to prostitution fall in between the two models and the recognition that not all jurisdictions might chose a legislative overhaul in either the Dutch or the Swedish direction, this paper tries to construct a framework for gender equality analysis that could be used to improve the position of prostitutes in (existing or proposed) regulatory regimes in which the well-being of prostitutes has not been an important legislative aim.

The paper submits that the treatment of clients and prostitutes needs to be compared, as they are parties to the same transaction, and that any regime in which the treatment is asymmetric to the detriment of the prostitute is indirectly discriminatory (has a disparate impact) on the basis of sex. It presents three aspects of prostitution relevant for a gender equality analysis: 1) the social meaning of prostitution, 2) the risk of harm to the prostitute, and 3) the de facto inequalities between the client and the prostitute. It argues that these need to be weighed against any justification for asymmetric treatment benefiting the client and that they are also in their own right justifications for symmetric treatment of client and prostitute and even for an asymmetric treatment benefiting the prostitute.

**Gender-related Cultural Practices that Violate Human Rights and Perpetuate Women's
Poverty: An African Perspective**
Professor John C Mubangizi DVC & Head of the College of Law and Management Studies
(University of KwaZulu-Natal)

There is a whole range of gender-related cultural practices and traditions that violate basic human rights norms across many African societies. These practices are generally rooted in a culture of discrimination against women and they function as instruments for socialising women into prescribed gender roles in society. They are also linked to the unequal position of women in political, social and economic structures of the societies where they are practised. As a result, they represent a particular society's control over women with the inevitable consequence of perpetuating women's poverty. The cultural practices and traditions under review in this paper include polygamy and the payment of bride price. They also include practices that affect women's health such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and those that violate children's rights such as marriage by abduction which sometimes targets girls as young as 12 years of age. Also under review are cultural practices which limit or prohibit women's access to, and ownership of property such as land, particularly in the context of inheritance and the practice of primogeniture. The paper shows how all these practices do not only violate the human rights of African women but are also linked to their poverty.

Given the deep entrenchment of culture in many traditional African communities and the concomitant prevalence of women's poverty in those communities, the question is posed as to what can be done – and what is being done – to address this complex interplay between culture, human rights and women's poverty. In answer to that question, the role of governments and civil society in human rights education, public awareness campaigns and community mobilisation in attempts to address, minimise or eradicate gender-related cultural practices that perpetuate women's poverty is examined. The paper concludes with two schools of thought, one which supports the notion that efforts to end cultural and traditional practices harmful to women must involve and address men; and the other which supports the systematic encouragement and support of collective action among the women themselves. Whichever school of thought is preferred requires that women's voices be heard and that useful cultural practices that traditionally protected women and girls be considered in designing programmes to address gender inequality and reduce women's poverty.

Impoverishing Women; Lessons Learnt from *Ramantele v Mmusi and Others*
Tabeth Masengu, (University of Cape Town)

This paper explores the lessons learnt from the landmark decision of *Ramantele v Mmusi and Others* in a bid to examine the interaction of Women, Poverty and Customary Law. In October 2012, the High Court of Botswana held that the Ngwaketse custom that dictates that the family home be reserved for the last born male heir, excluding all females was unconstitutional. This position was later confirmed by the Court of Appeal on the 3rd of September 2013 albeit through a different analysis, allaying fears that there would be retrogression in the matter. Had the courts found against Ms Mmusi, the judgement would not only have deprived her of a home but of a substantial financial investment that she had in the property that she had built with her personal finances.

The paper will commence with an analysis of the arguments made for and against the use of Ngwaketse custom in both courts. It will thereafter argue that the Mmusi case revealed four important lessons that are critical, if we are to have a better understanding of balancing customary law with human rights. The lessons focus on evidence regarding the existence of customary law, whether a constitutional question always exists in regards to matters of customary law, the governance of customary law and the issue of culture and identity.

Gender Equality and Economic Opportunities: An Overview of Patterns, Constraints and Emerging Solutions

Dr. Jeni Klugman (Sector Director-Gender and Development, Poverty Reduction & Economic Management Network, World Bank)

Today, many more girls are going to school and living longer, healthier lives than 30 or even 10 years ago. Yet this has not translated sufficiently into broader gains in economic opportunities. Too many women still lack basic freedoms and opportunities and face huge inequalities in the world of work. Globally, fewer than half of women have jobs, compared with almost four-fifths of men. Girls and women still learn less, earn less, and have far fewer assets and opportunities. They farm smaller plots, work in less profitable sectors, and face discriminatory laws and norms that constrain their time and choices, as well as their ability to own or inherit property, open a bank account, access technology or take out a loan—to buy fertilizer, for example, that would boost food production for whole communities. In order to close these gaps, we need to examine existing constraints and understand the policies and practices that can bring about gender equality in the world of work.

This presentation will highlight insights from a new World Bank publication, *Gender at Work*, which finds sizeable, persistent gender gaps at work around the world, and advances our understanding of the key trends, patterns, and constraints that underlie these inequities. In addition to underscoring the importance of a multidimensional perspective, the nature of constraints, which include social norms, overlapping disadvantages and extensive formal barriers will be explored. Emerging solutions will also be presented; these include levelling the playing field through government policies, a lifecycle approach to policy actions, and promoting proactive private sector leadership to address the global jobs challenge.

Unblocking the Barriers: Making the EAC Regime Beneficial to Female Labour Migrants
Dr Juliana Masanbo (University of Dar es Salaam)

Female labour migrants have become more and more present in the global labour market and Africa is no exception. The number of women traversing international borders in search of better employment opportunities has significantly grown in the past two decades. Currently women constitute nearly half (48 per cent) of the global migration total. In Africa, women migrants account for 45.9 per cent of the region's total migration stock. Although these trends are increasingly attracting scholarly attention worldwide, they are yet to attract significant attention from the region's policy making bodies. The laws and policies aimed at facilitating labour mobility in Africa's sub-regions are largely gender neutral carrying forward the fault assumption that women migrants are predominantly the wives and children of male migrants and that the exceptionally few women who migrate on their own as sole bread winners have similar experiences with male counterparts. With these assumptions, the structural and social barriers inhibiting the employability and mobility of women in the sub-region's labour market are made to flourish and limit further the ability of women to access the opportunities available in their respective sub-regions. In this paper we examine the extent to which the unique experiences and needs of female labour migrants are reflected in the EAC labour migration framework. While doing that, the paper will explore the available opportunities and suggest viable ways of unblocking the existing barriers so that women can also enjoy the opportunities and the benefits of intra-regional labour migration.

Future Developments in research into the role of human rights law in relation to women and poverty

Professor Gertrude M.N.Fester (Research and Publication Coordinator of the Rwandan Association of University Women)

In this paper I will explore the inter-relationship between power, patriarchy and the ongoing feminisation of poverty. On the eve of 2015 when the Millennium Development Goals were to have been attained, this critical analysis questions why governments are so eager to sign international instruments and what happens after this ratification? Is it a case of being tardy to implement them, what are the material realities and contexts and what precisely are some of the reasons for the continuing women's poverty?

This presentation also juxtaposes the strategies from above: The Women's Protocol to the African Charter for Human and People's Rights and the African Union Gender and Development Commitments, Constitutions and the legislative frameworks and the strategies from below: The Africa Feminist Charter which has been drawn up by African Feminists representing most African countries and the Diaspora. This will be done with reference to Rwanda and South Africa, both which are celebrating 20 years of freedom (1994-2014) after horrendous pasts. Rwanda has experienced one of the most intense genocides in a short period (April to July 1994 in which almost a million people were slaughtered). South African has had a protracted 400 years of exploitation and apartheid (even though the latter was legal only since 1948). What has been remarkable in the case of these two countries is the commitment to a human rights and gender sensitive culture. Rwanda leads the world with the representation of 64% women in government and South Africa is always amongst the top four globally. However, despite these remarkable feats, poverty amongst women continues. The question we thus confront is: Are human rights, laws and international instruments ratified enough to challenge centuries of patriarchy, male power and privilege? In response to these, issues around tradition, culture and religion and the interrelated economic repercussions are deliberated. In conclusion some strategies and best practices to eradicate women's poverty are explored.

What on earth is the realization of women's rights and gender equality in Africa without a role for traditional leaders?

Dr Serges Djoyou Kamga (University of South Africa)

Gender-based violence and particularly violence against women has gained international recognition as a serious social, human rights and development problem affecting almost all societies. In some African countries gender based violence and violation of women's rights are usually culture related. In these sites, customs and traditions are the backbone of gender based violence, the violation of women's rights through female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage of the girl child and the denial of property rights to women to name just a few. Thus the global and regional responses to women's rights violation include taking legal, legislative and administrative measures to ensure equality. They also include gender mainstreaming in all aspects of societies and the criminalization or abolition of cultural practices that underpin gender inequality. Yet traditional institutions which are the custodians of cultures and traditions that violate women's rights are not involved in solving the problem. On the contrary some have called for such cultures and traditions to be abolished as prescribed by international human rights standards.

This paper questions the wisdom of such an approach and calls for the involvement of traditional leaders in the fight against gender based violence. From a "receptor approach" perspective, this paper seeks solutions to tackle gender based violence, starting from its traditional and customary sources. The receptor approach entails the recognition of traditional leaders as receptors and implementers of human rights. In achieving its objective, the paper will address the following question: How to ensure gender equality through established traditional institutions? In answering this vital question, the paper questions the globalization of human rights approaches to violence against women and calls for the use of the "receptor approach" in dealing with gender-based violence. In this perspective, it highlights the need to examine both global women's rights standards and their implementation through the lens of local realities.

From an ethnographic perspective the paper examines how the "sacred traditional institutions" upon which women's rights abuses find their 'legitimacy' can be used to address culture-based gender violence and ensure the realisation of women's rights in Africa. The paper argues that traditional leaders have a fundamental role to play in ensuring women's dignity on the continent. It demonstrates how traditional leaders can in practice become the most important machine to improve the status of women, an improvement which may be considered 'sacrilege' if it comes from outside traditional institutions.

Education as a Leverage to Alleviate Women's Poverty in Burundi
Ms Yvonne Matuturu (UNESCO Maison de la Culture de la Paix, UNESCO : Burundi)

Poverty and especially extreme poverty is a “denial “of basic human rights that right holders need to claim for and duty bearers have to provide. Meanwhile, to claim for your rights, one needs to be aware of that, but in most of our developing countries women constitute the majority of illiterate people who need strong awareness in terms of their rights and process to have their constituencies and member states accountable for that. One of the key strategies is to promote education for all ; gender equity and equality as well as literacy programmes for girls and women who did not get the chance to go through the classic education systems. As indicated in the 2013-2014 EFA Global Monitoring Report “Treaties and laws worldwide recognize that education is a fundamental human right. In addition, education imparts knowledge and skills that enable people to realize their full potential, and so it becomes a catalyst for the achievement of other development goals. Education reduces poverty, boosts job opportunities and fosters economic prosperity. It also increases people’s chances of leading a healthy life, deepens the foundations of democracy, and changes attitudes to protect the environment and empower women” (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013-2014).

Burundi is among the 11 countries from the Great Lakes Region where women comprise at least 51% of the population. One of the biggest challenges for gender equality is mainly due to customary practices, laws and religious belief systems in patriarchal societies that place women in low socio-economic and political positions. Burundi is currently one of the poorest countries in the world with 67% of the population living below the national poverty line and 81% living on less than \$ 1.25 per day

Education is considered by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights not only as a right in itself but also as a means and mechanism of promoting peace and respect for human dignity and fundamental freedoms. Thus, here is where the role of UNESCO comes in. UNESCO’s Constitution requires the Organization to contribute to peace and security through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of race or sex. Women’s poverty needs to be addressed in a human rights perspective. Africa and Gender Equality are the 2 priorities of UNESCO’s Mid Term Strategy, the issues at stake are therefore of paramount importance for our organization.

Ensuring education for women would open doors for their access to many more other political, civil and economic rights. Concrete gender transformative actions need to be undertaken to close the big gap with the feminization of poverty in Burundi as well as in most of the Sub Saharan African countries.

Socioeconomic Development, Gendered Inequalities in Agriculture and Women's Rights in Rwanda

Pamela Abbott (University of Aberdeen) and Dixon Malunda, (Institute of Policy Analysis and Research(Rwanda))

Rwanda has been widely commended for its progressive legislative framework for gender equality and for being the first country in the world to achieve the MDG target of 50 per cent of the members of parliament being female. Rwanda is experiencing the beginnings of economic transformation and there has been a substantial reduction in poverty with it falling from 57 per cent to 45 per cent between 2005/6 and 2010/11. The lives of women have improved with a sharp reduction in maternal mortality, a decline in the number of children they have, increased access to improved sanitation and clean and in child health.. There has been a growth in non-farm employment, an increase in the sale of surplus agricultural produce and some improvement in nutrition with the country now being food securer.

However, the reality of the lived experience of women in Rwanda, especially those living in rural areas is in sharp contrast to the legal position. Rwanda remains a deeply patriarchal society with everyday taken for granted practices reinforcing gender inequalities. This is most strongly evidenced by the acceptance by women as well as men that it is a man's responsibility to make certain that his wife behaves appropriately and if necessary use physical punishment. Men have benefitted more than women from the increase in non-farm employment and generally control the cash income from the sale of agricultural products. Although Rwanda as a country has achieved food security many women struggle to feed their families with 44 per cent of infants and young children being stunted.

This paper will explore gender inequalities in agriculture and the impact they have on women's right to social and economic development. It will draw on secondary analysis of the Integrated Household and Living Conditions Survey (EICV3), the Women Economic Empowerment Survey, FinScope 2012, and a series of qualitative studies undertaken by the authors to look in detail at women's situation in agriculture in Rwanda. It will argue that women generally continue to be disadvantaged in agriculture and that women are not able to fully participate in, and benefit from economic, development.

Women are significantly more likely to be employed in agriculture than men; 82 per cent of employed women 16 years and over have their main employment in agriculture compared with 62.5 per cent of men. A majority of women in the sector are dependent family workers - in effect doing unpaid productive as well as reproductive work. Seventy-six per cent of female heads of household run a small farm compared with 62 per cent of male ones. Whilst there is no evidence that women headed households are at greater risk of poverty than male ones women living in male headed households are spending considerably longer hours labouring than men and have little control over the product of their labour.

Although women farmers agree that their life had improved over the last five years they generally feel trapped in poverty, are generally dissatisfied with their lives, concerned about the long hours they have to work and the struggle they have to feed their families. They have seen an increase in productivity of some priority crops as a result of land consolidation and the supply of

improved seed and chemical fertiliser and the taking of measures to prevent soil erosion. Many are producing a surplus for sale on local markets, they have planted kitchen gardens and food security has generally improved. However, husbands are responsible for the marketing of surplus produce and control the cash income. While legally married women are co-owners of family land, in practice men continue to be seen as the *de facto* owners. Although yields have improved for crops where subsidised fertilizers and improved seeds have been used women farmers are concerned that the return on the crops is not sufficient for purchasing improved inputs on the open market or, for many, to adequately feed their families.

Security for women working informally: between labour law, urban regulation and social protection

Professor Frances Lund Director of the Social Protection Programme of Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing and a Senior Research Associate in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

In order to address the poverty of women, and thereby to address women's economic empowerment, it is imperative to address women's employment. In developing countries, the majority of working women are informal workers, whether they are self-employed or waged workers. Informal work is without legal or social protection. Thus (with a few exceptions), labour law does not reach women in the informal economy. Women who work informally fall through cracks between different regulatory regimes – especially between national and municipal levels, and with regard to urban regulations. The presentation gives examples of interventions at national and local levels that are potentially positive for informal workers, including giving them vitally needed recognition as workers, which is necessary in order for them to participate in enduring platforms for negotiations about access to secure livelihoods.

Gender Equality and Sustainable development – Rwanda’s experience

Power point presentation by Dr. Rose Mukankomeje (DG REMA)

With a sex ratio of 52% women and 48% men (NISR, 2014), the so much aspired vision of a knowledge based and middle income Rwanda by 2020 and a green economy by 2050 would never see bright day without full involvement of women and men altogether.

The cultural background and mind set highly defies the above aspiration as women tend to be contented by “home care” activities and are not that much active in the formal economic development sectors. Much as “home care” duties are also vital to the well-being of their families, Rwanda has been aspiring to have more women involved in formal development sectors such as market-oriented agriculture, trade, energy and also in decision-making levels. To reverse the cultural trend, Rwanda opted for several strategies, from making gender issues as cross-cutting matters to reviewing policies and laws to mainstream better gender equality in education, decision making levels and development sectors and informal training and capacity building with special targets to women in both rural and urban areas; Rwanda has managed commendable efforts as far as mindset change is concerned.

However, todate the issue is progressively shifting from the gender equality awareness to gender equality in concrete actions. This combined with the aspired shift from “business as usual” to “environment conscient and sustainable development”, Rwanda confronts a multi-dimensional challenge.

To lay a foundation, Rwanda decided to make both gender equality and environment and Climate change cross-cutting issues along with HIV&AIDS, meteorology, disaster management, disability and social inclusion capacity building and regional integration, in all its strategic development programmes.

With environment and Climate change portraying sustainable and climate resilient development practices, gender equality and sustainable development are meant to be mainstreamed in all development sectors (15) from the planning to the implementation levels.

Much as the foundation is well set and applauses on gender inclusiveness are in rise, Rwanda has still a long way to go to ensure the well narrated policies are successfully transitioned from papers to actions and effectively implemented at the ground level.

Indeed efforts are still needed to build capacity of women, who are mostly exposed to pollution and suffer most from Climate change impacts, and avail to them technologies that would boost their social and economic welfare in many areas such as: green energy sources, especially for cooking and lighting, that are less polluting; sustainable agriculture techniques that rely less on chemicals for soil and water resources better management; faster and efficient trade tricks to facilitate their access to regional markets; affordable financing mechanisms to promote their entrepreneurial skills especially in climate resilient related activities.

The power point presentation reiterates the above information with a special focus on some best practices and specific challenges, from a regulatory authority perspective and as far as Rwanda's Sustainable and climate resilient development is concerned.