

- **References**

- **Special chapters of**  
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# THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

2010-11

Women make significant contributions to the rural economy in all developing country regions. Their roles differ across regions, yet they consistently have less access than men to the resources and opportunities they need to be more productive. Increasing women's access to land, livestock, education, financial services, extension, technology and rural employment would boost their productivity and generate gains in terms of agricultural production, food security, economic growth and social welfare. Closing the gender gap in agricultural inputs alone could lift 100--150 million people out of hunger. No blueprint exists for closing the gender gap, but some basic principles are universal: governments, the international community and civil society should work together to eliminate discrimination under the law, to promote equal access to resources and opportunities, to ensure that agricultural policies and programmes are gender-aware, and to make women's voices heard as equal partners for sustainable development. Achieving gender equality and empowering women in agriculture is not only the right thing to do. It is also crucial for agricultural development and food security.

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