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Policy Brief

Delivering on gender equality: the missing piece in climate and food systems policy

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Key messages

Food security, climate adaptation and agrifood system resilience largely depend on women producers – yet the policies, finance and institutions governing those systems are not designed to support.

A decade of gender provisions in climate agreements, agricultural programmes and finance instruments has produced gender language, not gender-responsive action. Structural, rather than symbolic inclusion is what the evidence demands and what this brief proposes.

Climate finance was built for formal economies and systematically excludes the informal sector and community networks where most women in agrifood systems operate. The just transition framework, which aims to protect workers bearing the greatest costs of economic and ecological transformation, offers the opening needed to reach them.

The arguments for change are established, but the political architecture to act on them is not. The Belém Action Mechanism, the Kampala Declaration and the UN Food Systems Summit follow-up process and its next review cycle offer distinct but complementary openings, and COP31 and COP32 provide the multilateral moments at which coordinated action can produce binding, funded commitments.

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1 Converging crises and unequal consequences

Agrifood systems face a convergence of global challenges: an accelerating climate crisis, rapid biodiversity and ecosystem loss, rising fragility and conflict and geopolitical shifts, all of which are reshaping the financial and political commitment underpinning international development cooperation.

The impact of these crises on countries and communities is not equally distributed. Rural populations and small producers, urban households with limited purchasing power and vulnerable

groups including women and youth are bearing the brunt of rising food, agricultural input and energy prices, while their capacity to cope with and respond to shocks is being steadily reduced.

Women are disproportionately represented among those hit hardest. Women make up 36% of the global agricultural labour force, rising to 48% in sub-Saharan Africa and over 60% in parts of Asia (FAO, 2023). A 24% productivity gap exists between female- and male-managed farms of comparable size, driven by differential access to land, inputs, credit, extension services and information. Women in agricultural wage employment earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by men (FAO, 2023).

A significant share of women's participation in agrifood systems takes place in the informal economy, including post-harvest handling, small-scale processing, local food trade and market vending (FAO, SDG Indicator 5.a.1). In many low- and middle-income countries, more than 90% of employed women in agriculture are in informal roles, lacking contracts, legal protections and access to insurance or social safety nets (FAO, 2023). Women in informal, climate-exposed agricultural work fall further behind men over time as hazards intensify because they have less access to land, assets and inputs to draw on when shocks hit – and fewer resources with which to recover (Lecoutere et al., 2023; FAO, 2024a).

The geopolitical context compounds these structural failures. Major donors have announced deep cuts, with finance for gender equality and climate among the first areas affected (Pettinotti et al., 2025). The US has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement. An organised coalition of states is working to weaken gender language in multilateral spaces, blocking consensus and diluting agreed commitments (Holmes, 2024; Craft et al., 2025). The pivot toward energy security is redirecting public and development finance away from climate adaptation, leaving agrifood systems critically underfunded (Pettinotti et al., 2025; UNEP, 2025). The effects extend into agrifood systems through volatile energy and fertiliser markets and disrupted supply chains, with compounding consequences for smallholder producers. For informal workers whose livelihoods depend directly on climate stability, this misallocation carries long-term costs that short-term energy investments do not address.

This brief examines the structural failures in climate and food systems policy and finance that leave women in climate-vulnerable agrifood contexts, from smallholder farmers to informal market vendors and post-harvest workers, most exposed and least supported. It makes the case that these same women are central to food system resilience, and that investing in their agency and participation is an effectiveness argument, not only an equity one. It identifies specific leverage points through which policy and finance can be redesigned to reach them, including the operationalisation of the Belém Action Mechanism and regional and national food systems architecture.

Its intended audience is climate, food systems and finance practitioners, multilateral negotiators and the researchers and civil society organisations working to influence them. What knits these audiences and issues together is a shared stake in whether the next generation of climate plans, finance instruments and just transition frameworks reach the people who need them most, and whether the political windows now available are used before they close.



2 Why climate impacts on agrifood systems are not gender-neutral

The evidence on gender-differentiated climate harm in agrifood systems is clear and consistent across contexts. What remains debated in international food systems and climate policy and finance is whether the structural changes needed to address these inequalities will actually happen. Addressing these barriers would not only reduce the burden of climate-induced losses on women: it would also strengthen the resilience of agrifood systems.

2.1 Climate change amplifies structural exclusion

In an average year, heat stress and flooding together widen the income gap between female- and male-headed rural households by approximately \$53 billion across low- and middle-income countries. Drawing on data from over 109,000 rural households in 24 low- and middle-income countries, the evidence shows that each additional degree Celsius of long-term warming reduces the total incomes of female-headed households by 34% relative to male-headed households (FAO, 2024a). Yet female plot managers adopt climate-adaptive practices at roughly the same rate as men where resources allow. The losses are not explained by lower capacity or effort but by the structural conditions under which women farm: smaller plots of lower-quality land, less access to irrigation and inputs, weaker links to markets and extension services and greater exposure to informal, climate-vulnerable segments of value chains (FAO, 2015; Lecoutere et al., 2023).

What makes this pattern particularly damaging is that it compounds over time. As hazards intensify, women in climate-exposed agricultural work fall further behind relative to better-protected workers – not just in a single season, but cumulatively, as each shock erodes the assets, networks and financial reserves that make recovery possible (Lecoutere et al., 2023). The gender gap in financial inclusion, which has remained at 7% globally and 9% in developing economies for over a decade, intensifies this problem (Klapper et al., 2025). Without adequate access to banking, credit and insurance, women have fewer mechanisms to build reserves, smooth consumption or invest in recovery when shocks hit. The result is a self-reinforcing cycle in which structural exclusion and climate exposure deepen each other with each passing year.

This is not a problem that women-targeted adaptation programmes can fix if the underlying structural conditions remain unchanged. Programmes that distribute drought-resistant seeds to women farmers, train women in climate-smart practices or provide women with access to weather information – without also addressing secure land tenure, credit access or market links – have consistently shown limited sustained impact, because the structural conditions that constrain what women can do with those resources remain in place. In some cases, by increasing women's labour burden, they may deepen inequalities (Bryan et al., 2024; FAO, 2023). This is a problem of agricultural and land systems and financial systems that were not designed for the people who depend on them most, and of social norms, household power relations and cultural practices that determine who can access and use those systems even when formal barriers are removed.

2.2 Nature, biodiversity and the three conventions gap

In many low- and middle-income countries, women smallholders and Indigenous food producers play a central role in managing agrobiodiversity: the crop diversity, seed knowledge and local livestock management that underpin food system resilience. Studies across multiple contexts show that, where women have greater control over agricultural decisions, farm-level crop diversity is higher, household food security outcomes are stronger and networks are more diverse (Rao et al., 2019; Bryan et al., 2024). Closing the gender gap in access to agricultural

resources and inputs could increase yields on women-managed plots by 20–30% in low- and middle-income countries (IPCC AR6, 2022).

This connects to a broader analytical point: the gender–climate nexus in agrifood systems sits at the intersection of three multilateral frameworks that are governed in silos. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, food and agriculture workstream, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, land degradation neutrality agenda each address different dimensions of the same underlying system. Treating these as separate policy tracks produces fragmented commitments and fragmented finance. An integrated approach, in which gender-responsive agrifood investment is recognised simultaneously as climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation and land restoration, would be more coherent and more fundable across all three conventions (Marshall et al., 2023).



3 Fragility, conflict and compounding harm

A critical gap in the literature is the role of fragility and conflict in amplifying women's climate vulnerability. Its omission from programming is not a reflection of absent evidence, but of the institutional siloes that prevent evidence from being acted upon.

Around 60% of the world's undernourished people live in countries affected by conflict, and climate stress and food insecurity are most severe in these overlapping contexts (FAO et al., 2025). In these settings, women face compounded stressors including displacement from agricultural land,

loss of male household labour through death, conscription or migration, intensified gender-based violence and the collapse of the social networks on which adaptive capacity depends. Local food markets and informal value chains, where women are heavily concentrated, are highly exposed to disruption under conditions of fragility and conflict, with knock-on consequences for income, food access and the seed exchange networks that sustain crop diversity (FAO, 2018). Economic shocks can push households into distress strategies, including withdrawal of girls from school and early marriage, with long-term consequences for women's wellbeing and agency (CARE, 2023).

Climate shocks are associated with increased domestic violence, driven by household economic stress, loss of assets and disruption of protective social networks. Women's land rights, already more precarious than men's in stable settings, erode further during and after conflict and are rarely restored without targeted legal and policy intervention (World Bank, 2022). Research on post-conflict agricultural recovery documents that women's land access and productivity tend to recover more slowly than men's, given more precarious pre-conflict tenure and limited access to legal redress (CGIAR Gender Program, 2022).

The concentration of fragility in climate-exposed regions means that the governance and institutional preconditions that climate finance and just transition programmes typically require – stable government intermediaries, functioning financial systems, legal frameworks for land and labour rights – are precisely what is absent or contested. Women in fragile and conflict-affected settings are therefore excluded, not only from standard adaptation finance but also from just transition programming, which relies on similar entry points. Addressing this requires joint financing instruments with gender analysis embedded from design, not added as a component after the main architecture is set.



4 Why climate and food systems policy and finance are failing

Gender provisions have multiplied across international climate agreements, national plans and finance frameworks over the past decade. They have rarely been matched by gender-responsive implementation of food systems and climate action, and have so far fallen short of delivering meaningful impact on the social and economic empowerment of women in agriculture and the food sector. Understanding why, and where the specific failure points are, is the precondition for closing the gap.

4.1 Gender in NDCs and NAPs: volume without substance

The expansion of gender language in climate agreements since the Paris Agreement is, on closer inspection, evidence of a problem rather than progress. Eighty-nine per cent of Parties now include gender in their NDCs, up from 29% in their initial submissions (M. Nyasimi, S. Huyer, 2017). But inclusion in negotiated text is not the same as integration into policy. Across the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) of 24 countries, only 6% of climate actions give women meaningful attention (FAO, 2024a).

More than three-quarters of NDCs acknowledge gender-specific climate risks and commit to gender-responsive action, but less than one-third do so comprehensively across the dimensions needed for meaningful implementation (UN Women, 2025). The UNFCCC's synthesis of national climate commitments finds that, while 89% of Parties mention gender, only 30% link it to key sectors such as agriculture, energy and health. The more specific domains where gender-differentiated harm is greatest – land tenure, seed governance and informal value chains – remain largely absent from these provisions. What's more, gender language accumulates in vision statements and cross-cutting sections – the parts of a plan that establish values without binding implementation – but rarely appears in the agricultural chapters, land tenure provisions or value chain programmes where it would translate into resources and accountability. Across 68 countries, only 19% of agricultural policy documents treat gender equality as an explicit policy objective, and just 13% promote rural women's participation (FAO, 2023).

There is also a deeper framing problem. When gender does appear in NDCs, women are positioned as vulnerable populations requiring protection, rather than as agents whose knowledge should shape policy design. This framing can mask both the structural roots of inequality and the agency of marginalised groups to lead climate action (Bryan et al., 2024). A decade of symbolic inclusion, with gender visible in strategy documents, yet weakly operationalised in practice, has demonstrated the limits of that approach.

4.2 Climate finance: built for the formal economy

The agrifood climate finance gap is a problem of structural misalignment, not only of insufficient funds. Agrifood systems received only 7.2% of global climate finance in 2023 (Thawaney, S.S., 2025): approximately \$95 billion annually, against an estimated need of \$1.1 trillion (CLIC, 2025). Within that, food security and nutrition received just 0.5% of agrifood climate finance (CLIC, 2025). The gap between available finance and actual need is compounded by a quality problem. What finance does flow to agrifood systems is poorly distributed across sectors and rarely gender-responsive (CPI and FAO, 2025).

There has been some nominal progress on gender-targeted finance overall. Globally, gender-targeted climate finance grew from \$4.8 billion in 2010–2011 to \$37.2 billion in 2022–2023. But this figure conceals a critical sectoral skew. Gender-targeted climate finance has been

concentrated in energy transition and disaster risk reduction, which are the sectors where the gender-differentiated climate harm documented in this brief is least severe. The food systems, land tenure and informal value chain domains where women's exposure to climate harm is greatest have attracted the smallest share. Public climate finance for food systems has declined as a share of total climate finance, despite food systems accounting for approximately one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions (Global Alliance for the Future of Food, 2024). Private climate finance flows to agrifood systems have grown in absolute terms, but remain heavily concentrated in supply chain efficiency and agricultural commodity markets in middle-income countries, with minimal reach to smallholder systems or gender-responsive programming in low-income contexts (CPI and FAO, 2025). The New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance urges – but does not require – Parties to ensure climate finance reaches women and girls (UNFCCC, 2024).

Climate finance is not gender-neutral. The eligibility criteria governing most multilateral climate funds are premised on formal land ownership, employment contracts and registered businesses. The existing climate finance architecture is built around stable institutions, formal financial systems and accredited intermediaries, which structurally disadvantages informal actors, grassroots organisations and community-led initiatives (GIZ, 2025). Women and other structurally marginalised groups face persistent financial barriers, including stringent collateral and credit history requirements, insecure or absent land rights, limited formal documentation and discriminatory norms that restrict their control over income, assets and decision-making (GIZ, 2025; FAO, 2024b). In 43 of 49 countries with data, men in agricultural households are more likely than women to own or have secure rights to land, with the gender gap exceeding 20 percentage points in nearly half of them (FAO, 2024c). For climate finance to work, it must account for women's actual tenure realities and economic position, not those of an idealised formal-sector farmer (Wanjiku, 2024).

4.3 The missing bridge from commitment to funded action

The two failures described above persist together because there is no institutional mechanism connecting gender commitments in national climate plans to gender-responsive disbursement of climate finance. Countries can include gender provisions in NDCs and simultaneously receive climate finance that is entirely gender-blind, and no formal requirement, reporting standard or accountability body is responsible to bridge this gap. Without gender-disaggregated tracking of who benefits from climate finance flows, it is impossible to know whether women are being reached, or to hold any institution accountable when they are not (Nwamarah, U., Omolo, N. 2024). Closing this gap requires links between commitments and finance, mandatory disaggregated reporting and clear institutional responsibility for delivery. None of these currently exists at scale.



5 The case for gender-responsive investment

The evidence points to a consistent pattern: where structural constraints are removed and women have meaningful control over agricultural decisions, farm-level diversity increases, food security strengthens and land is managed with longer time horizons (Rao et al., 2019; Bryan et al., 2024; Meinzen-Dick, R., Quisumbing, A., Doss, C. and Theis, S., 2017). Closing the gender gap in access to agricultural resources could increase yields on women-managed plots by 20–30%, reduce food insecurity for 45 million people and add nearly \$1 trillion to global GDP (FAO, 2023). Africa – the continent most exposed to climate risks and most dependent

on agrifood systems – stands to gain most from this dividend (Piñeiro et al., 2025). Additional adaptive capacity becomes available when the structural barriers to women’s participation are removed, rather than worked around. The Belém Gender Action Plan, adopted at COP30 in November 2025, marks a genuine step in this direction by formally recognising Indigenous, Afro-descendant and rural women as agents of change, advancing gender-responsive budgeting and promoting their leadership in climate action (UNFCCC, 2025, Waskow, D., Garcia, M., Srouji, J., et al. 2025). But its food systems and agrobiodiversity provisions remain thin, its five food and agriculture indicators under the Global Goal on Adaptation are voluntary and non-binding, and the negotiations that produced it were contentious (Carbon Brief, 2025a).

Incentive structures in multilateral climate finance reward large-scale bankable projects over locally led adaptation (GIZ, 2025; CPI and FAO, 2025). Governments are cutting the budgets that would deliver change (Pettinotti et al., 2025; OECD, 2025). Formal economy assumptions in finance design exclude the informal workers who constitute a large share of women’s participation in agrifood systems (GIZ, 2025; FAO, 2024b). Section 6 identifies where, within this difficult context, specific leverage points exist.



6 Openings: just transition and other leverage points

The case for investment is well-established. What has consistently failed is not the argument, but the political conditions and institutional architecture for acting on it. Three openings are currently available, each requiring a different but complementary approach. The most significant is the just transition agenda, whose institutional architecture is currently being defined. The others are the African food systems architecture emerging from the Kampala Declaration and the UN Food Systems Summit transformation pathway process, both of which provide country-led political legitimacy for the gender-responsive agrifood investment agenda at a moment when multilateral frameworks are under pressure.

6.1 The BAM: an architecture still being defined

Just transition – the principle that the shift to a low-carbon economy must be fair and inclusive, protecting workers and communities through social protection, decent work and investment in alternative livelihoods – has gained formal international recognition through the UNFCCC process, most recently in the Belém Action Mechanism (BAM) agreed at COP30. This marked the first time workers have had a formal institutional role in shaping just transition policies through the UNFCCC. It was achieved after years of persistent advocacy by trade unions, climate justice organisations, feminist groups, youth and Indigenous peoples’ organisations (ITUC, 2025). The mechanism is explicitly rights-based and people-centred. Crucially, however, it has not yet been operationalised. The subsidiary bodies are set to develop a draft decision on operationalisation for adoption at COP31 in November 2026 (Kuehl, J. 2025). Who the mechanism serves, and for what kinds of work and transition contexts, is not yet fixed, which means it can still be shaped.

The analytical case for extending the BAM to women and youth in agrifood systems is direct. Agrifood systems are already undergoing transitions driven by climate change, market restructuring, energy price volatility and ecosystem degradation. These transitions create new risks for smallholder farmers, informal market vendors and agricultural wage workers, among whom women and youth are disproportionately concentrated. Women in informal agrifood value chains face precisely the kinds of risk just transition was designed to address, including income loss, asset erosion and exclusion from the new economic structures. Mitigation action in agrifood systems is growing in ambition but remains poorly designed for gender equity; most interventions do not yet involve women as agents of climate action, and barriers to their equitable participation are rarely addressed (Nassif et al., 2025).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has documented growing integration of just transition principles in national environmental plans (ILO, 2025), but integration remains concentrated in formal sectors. Extending the BAM’s scope to informal agrifood workers requires active engagement with the operationalisation process now underway. In practice this means placing this constituency into UNFCCC submissions and technical processes and making the evidence-based case for why their inclusion is consistent with the mechanism’s stated purpose. The operational framework will be tabled at COP31. Early decisions on scope tend to set the direction of travel, hence making the period between now and Antalya the most direct opportunity to shape who the mechanism serves.

6.2 The Kampala Declaration: an Africa-led opening

A second, underused opening is the African food systems architecture. The African Union’s Kampala Declaration, adopted in January 2025, sets a 10-year strategy (2026–2035) for Africa’s agrifood systems transformation, with explicit commitments to resilience and inclusivity through six strategic objectives (African Union, 2025). This is a continent-led framework, owned by African governments, with the African Union Commission and implementing bodies, making it structurally

more resistant to external political pressures. Early evidence from Eastern Africa – covering Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda – shows that food systems transformation pathways now include context-specific gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) commitments, from improving women’s access to land and agricultural finance to strengthening extension services for youth. These commitments provide a foundation for accountability, but the gap between stated provisions and funded implementation remains significant (Jomo s., 2026). The Africa Food Systems Forum, which has explicitly addressed gender equality and climate resilience at successive summits, provides the annual convening architecture through which gender provisions can be developed, tracked and amplified. Embedding gender-responsive climate finance as a core component implementation is achievable within the current political moment and provides a model for other regional frameworks.

6.3 The UNFSS follow-up: national pathways as leverage

A third opening is the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) follow-up process and its new cycle. More than 100 countries have developed food systems transformation pathways in response to the summit, and these pathways are due for review and strengthening over the period 2025–2027. Research on East African countries’ pathways finds that, while GESI provisions appear in many documents, few translate them into funded implementation plans (Jomo S., 2026). This gap is both a diagnosis and an opportunity. The architecture for embedding gender-responsive food system investment exists in national documents and has legitimate political ownership. The task is to use the UNFSS follow-up process to strengthen the gender and climate provisions of those pathways and connect them to climate finance flows. Aligning UNFSS national pathway reviews with UNFCCC NDC revision cycles and BAM operationalisation is the connection that could make pathway improvements durable.



7 Pathways for change

The evidence base for gender-responsive agrifood investment is well-established. The structural barriers are well-documented. The windows identified in Section 6 are open but time-limited. What is needed now is a programme of action focused on the specific pathways through which the conditions for change can be created.

The following recommendations address four questions: how could the evidence be made usable by those in a position to act on it (7.1)? How should the just transition framework be extended to agrifood systems (7.2)? How can gender-transformative rather than additive approaches be embedded in policy and finance design (7.3)? How should multiple policy windows be used in a coordinated way (7.4 and 7.5)?

7.1 Translate evidence into negotiator-ready instruments

One of the most consistent failures in translating gender and food systems research into policy outcomes is the gap between research outputs and the forms in which they are useful to negotiators. NDC language, UNFCCC decision text, board submissions and CBD guidance documents are specific instruments and procedural contexts. Evidence that has not been translated into these forms, with specific textual proposals rather than general arguments, rarely reaches the people who could act on it. Translating evidence into policy instruments is where independent research institutions can make their most distinctive contribution.

7.2 Extend just transition to agrifood systems

The BAM operationalisation process is the most time-sensitive leverage point. The UNFCCC subsidiary bodies are meeting in June 2026, concurrent with this brief's publication, to begin drafting the operational framework for adoption at COP31 in November 2026. This is a window. Making the case for agrifood systems and informal workers requires three simultaneous moves: first, formal UNFCCC submissions during the operationalisation process; second, a coalition linking agrifood organisations to the trade union structures, particularly ILO, that already have UNFCCC process access; and third, the revision of national just transition plans in key countries to include women and youth across agrifood value chains, with social protection provisions and gender-disaggregated eligibility. The Belém Declaration's commitment to linking climate action to social justice and smallholder finance provides the textual foundation; BAM operationalisation is the procedural vehicle.

7.3 Move from mainstreaming to transformation

The evidence on gender mainstreaming in food and climate systems consistently shows that it produces symbolic inclusion rather than structural change (Bryan et al., 2024; McDougall, C., Elias, M., Zwanck, D., et al. 2023). Gender-transformative approaches address the structural causes of gender inequality by reshaping the formal and informal systems that perpetuate it, in practice combining the land tenure reform, finance eligibility redesign and community-based access pathways described in Sections 4 and 6 rather than treating each as a standalone intervention. Research identifies a multilevel strategy of scaling out (to more people), scaling up (to policy) and scaling in (to institutional culture and norms) as the pathway to meaningful change in food systems (McDougall, C., Elias, M., Zwanck, D., et al., 2023). Foresight studies that assess the potential impact of interventions have yet to fully explore gender equality and social inclusion as both goals and drivers of food system change (CGIAR, 2025).

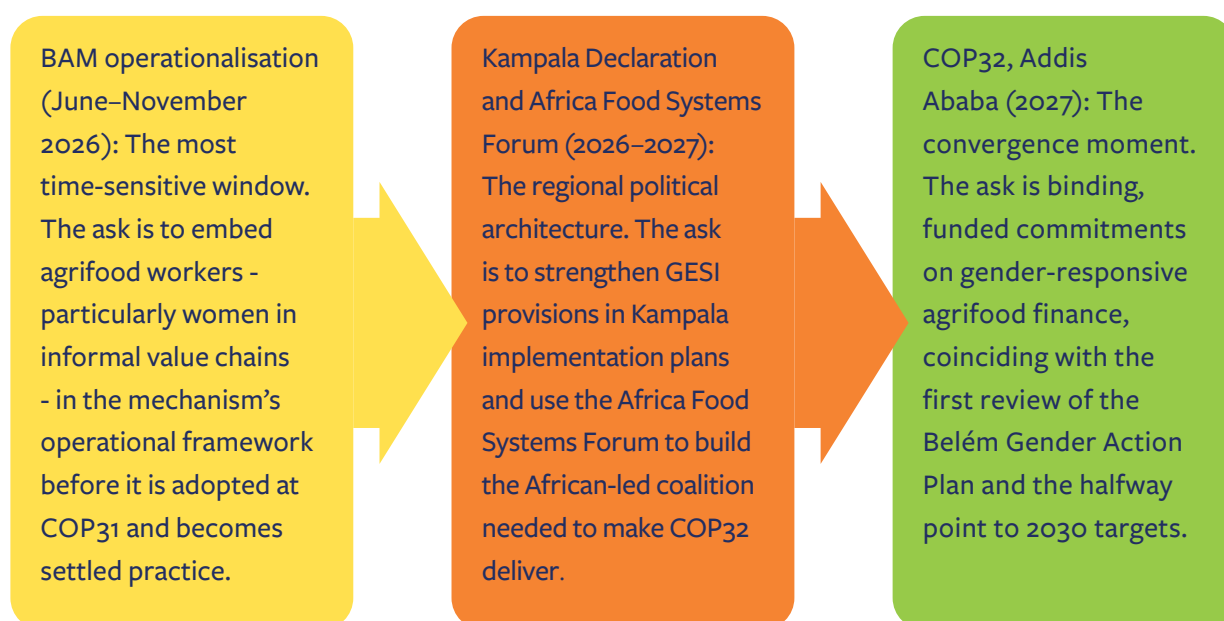
7.4 Close the accountability gap

Section 4.3 identified the missing bridge between gender commitments in national climate plans and gender-responsive disbursement of climate finance. Closing it requires two specific institutional interventions. The first is mandatory gender-disaggregated data and reporting across all major climate and biodiversity funds: without knowing who actually benefits from finance flows, accountability is impossible and progress unverifiable (Nwamarah, U., Omolo, N., 2024). The second is binding links between NDC gender provisions and climate finance eligibility, so that gender-responsive commitments in national plans create obligations, not merely aspirations, for the finance instruments that implement them. The UN Women Gender Equality and Climate Policy Scorecard, the first systematic tool to assess the gender-responsiveness of updated NDCs (UN Women, 2026), provides both a model and a starting point for this accountability architecture. Making its use mandatory, rather than optional, in climate finance processes is a specific and achievable step that can be tabled at COP31 and COP32.

7.5 Build coalitions and use multiple windows for coordination

Engagement of the coalition of trade unions in securing the BAM at COP30 is instructive: years of sustained advocacy, specific textual proposals and a broad alliance that combined formal trade union structures with informal worker organisations and feminist networks (ITUC, 2025). Extending that coalition to include workers – particularly women – requires deliberate investment in connecting women farmers’ organisations, market vendor associations and informal worker networks to the UNFCCC process. The Africa Food Systems Forum and regional women’s agriculture networks provide the convening architecture; connecting those platforms to the UNFCCC and ILO processes is the coalition-building investment.

The three windows identified in Section 6 – BAM operationalisation, the Kampala Declaration and the UNFSS follow-up – should be engaged as a coordinated sequence rather than separate tracks:



Conclusion

The evidence in this brief points in one direction. Climate change is not a new challenge for women in agrifood systems; it is an accelerant and multiplier of existing inequalities. Yet the policy and finance architecture to address climate risks continues to rest on assumptions that exclude many of the people most affected. What has changed is not the nature of the problem, but the opportunity to act. A series of upcoming multilateral processes, alongside identifiable policy and financing entry points, creates a window through which the changes outlined in this brief can be translated into funded commitments and institutional reform.

Closing the gap between what the evidence demands and what policy currently delivers will require more than data alone. But rigorous research and evidence, strategically applied in the right forums and at the right moments, can help shape decisions while the political space for action remains open. That is where the work begins.

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