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Country Profile- Ethiopia

Gender, Climate Change, and Nutrition Linkages

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Introduction

This brief provides an overview of Ethiopia's climate risks, gender dynamics, and nutrition challenges and includes discussion of how these issues are intertwined, an overview of the policy landscape, and recommendations for strengthening the integration of gender, climate change and nutrition in the country. With a population of approximately 126.5 million people as of 2023, Ethiopia ranks as the second most populous country in Africa and stands out as one of the region's fastest-growing economies, with an economic growth rate of almost 10% per year over the last 15 years (World Bank, 2024). Ethiopia's agrifood system accounted for 48% of Ethiopia's national GDP and 77.2% of employment in 2019. Primary agriculture alone contributed more than 1/3 of GDP and 2/3 of employment, while other parts of the agrifood system such as processing, trade, and input supply contributed 12.8 percent to GDP and 9.4 percent to employment (Diao et al., 2023). The sector is dominated by smallholder farmers who cultivate a diverse array of crops, including cereals, pulses, oilseeds, fruits, and vegetables (Dawid & Mohammed, 2021). Women make up more than 40% of the agriculture labor force and head approximately 25% of all farming households in the country (World Bank, 2019).

While agricultural productivity has been increasing rapidly, the sector faces major challenges, such as fragile livelihoods, vulnerability to climate change, degradation of natural resources, and limited opportunities for youth employment (Bouteska et al., 2024). Internal conflicts have exacerbated the fragility of rural livelihoods. The anticipated effects of climate change include an increase in the frequency and severity of droughts, floods, and pest infestations, which will have a negative impact on crop yields. These negative climatic effects will continue to put stress on -the food system which fails to ensure food security, both in terms of energy and micronutrient requirements, for its citizens. Due to climate change, conflict, and degradation of natural resource, among other factors, the number of food insecure households increased since 2020, with over 20 million Ethiopians food insecure in 2023 (IFAD, 2023). Ethiopians derive 72% of their daily energy from staple crops, significantly higher than the Eastern Africa average of 56%,

highlighting the reliance on low-cost, calorie-dense foods and providing context for why 54% of Ethiopians cannot afford a healthy diet.[1] Levels of undernutrition are among the highest in the world.

Despite progress in reducing stunting and undernutrition over the past decade, Ethiopia continues to face significant nutritional challenges. In 2019, 37% of children under five were stunted, 21% were underweight, and 7% were wasted (EPHI and ICF 2019). Micronutrient deficiencies, particularly in iron, vitamin A, and zinc, remain widespread, affecting both children and women of reproductive age, and contributing to poor health outcomes and reduced productivity (GAIN 2022). The high reliance on calorie-dense staple crops, coupled with limited dietary diversity, exacerbates malnutrition, particularly among rural populations and vulnerable groups, such as women and children (Bekele et al. 2023). Additionally, the prevalence of populations consuming a healthy diet remains low, with significant barriers to achieving optimal nutrition. These barriers include the high cost and limited availability of diverse, nutritious foods, as well as concerns regarding food safety—factors that all hinder access to a balanced diet (Bachewe F, Hirvonen K, Minten B, Yimer F., 2017; Baye et al., 2024; Haileselassie et al., 2020)

Men and women experience the effects of climate change differently, given gender-differentiated roles in agriculture. Women's limited access to agricultural resources, such as land, credit, and climate-resilient technologies, not only constrains their ability to adapt to climate change but also undermines their capacity to produce diverse, nutrient-rich crops, exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition in households already vulnerable to climate shocks (Quisumbing et al. 2015). In most regions, women lack decision-making power and access to resources and services (IFAD 2020), which makes it more difficult for them to respond to climate change in ways that they prefer and that benefit them. To promote gender equality and women's empowerment, Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture developed sector-specific gender mainstreaming guidelines in 2011, and the Gender Equality Strategy for the Agriculture Sector (GESA) in 2017, which was revised in 2023. However, tackling deep-rooted gender inequalities, such as patriarchal norms, remains a work in progress.

Climate Change

Ethiopia encompasses five climatic regions characterized by different altitudes and significant spatial and temporal fluctuations in precipitation patterns, which are summarized in Table 1. Ethiopia's expansive land area and diverse topography lead to varying climates across the country resulting in differences in average seasonal temperatures and precipitation. Climate extremes, like droughts and floods, and slow onset changes like rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns have become more prevalent. There has been a notable increase in both the frequency and severity of droughts over recent decades, especially in the lowland regions of the country (World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal).

Most of Ethiopia's croplands are located in the highlands where rainfall is generally reliable and temperatures are cool. Warming associated with climate change will generally boost yields in the cool highlands. Thomas and Robertson (2024) found that between 2005 and 2050, climate change will boost production of maize yields in the aggregate by 3.1 percent in Ethiopia. Figure 1 shows location-specific yield changes, with many sites showing projected increases in yield. However, in areas that are already warm, additional warming lowers yields.

[1] See: https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/countries/eth

Table 1: Characteristics of climatic regions of Ethiopia

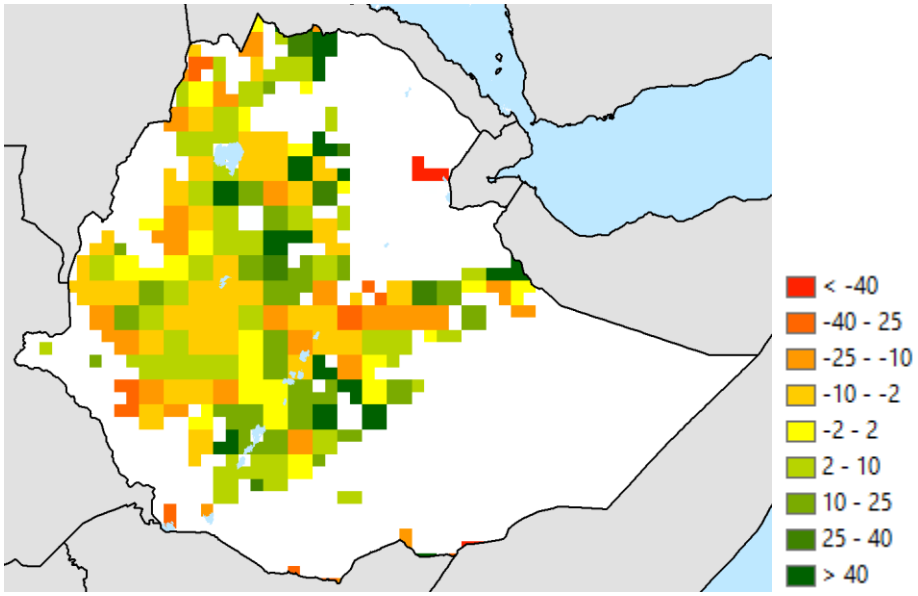
No.	Climatic Zone	Altitude	Annual Temperature	Rainfall
1	Bereha (hot and arid, desert)	below 500m	28°C - 34°C or higher	less than 400mm
2	Kolla (warm and semi-arid)	500 - 1,500m	20°- 28°C	600mm
3	Dega (cool and humid)	1,500 - 2,500m	16°C - 20°C	1,200 - 2,400mm
4	Weyna Dega (cool and sub-humid)	2,500 - 3,200m	10°C - 16°C	1,000 - 2,000mm
5	Wurch (cold and moist temperate)	3,200 - 3,500m	below 10°C	800 – 2,000mm

Source: Temesgen G. et al., 2023

Wheat prefers cooler temperatures than maize, and, therefore, climate-induced warming lowers wheat yields in Ethiopia by 12%. However, many scientists believe that the higher levels of CO_2 in the atmosphere under climate change will boost the yields of C3 crops, which rely on a specific pathway for CO_2, and wheat is one of them. Thomas and Robertson (2024) measure the CO_2 fertilization effect on Ethiopian wheat to be 12.6%, resulting in a net 0.6% increase in wheat yields.

Teff is the most important crop and major staple food in Ethiopia, and it is projected to be adversely impacted by climate change in every region of the country, with steeper losses than those projected for wheat (Murgatroyd et al. 2024). Developing heat-tolerant varieties of teff would likely bring the greatest improvement to yields and resilience to climate change, but increasing fertilizer could be helpful, as well, to compensate for yield reductions from temperature increases (Murgatroyd et al. 2024).

Figure 1: Median yield change in rainfed maize, percent, 2005 to 2050



Source: Thomas and Robertson (2024).

While some crops may benefit from warming in highland areas, the overall impact of climate change remains highly variable and region specific, as demonstrated by the projected impacts of climate change on maize yields shown in Figure 1. Hotspots, where current temperatures are higher and droughts are more frequent, warrant special focus to see if alternative crops or heat-tolerant cultivars might be developed to help mitigate negative climate impacts. Furthermore, very little work has been done on the effects of potentially more variable climates of the future, and these could have a severe impact on food security, infrastructure, and health (human and livestock) during the drought and flood years.

Gender Profile

Ethiopia has made notable strides in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality, including passing progressive policies, such as the 2017 Gender Equality Strategy for the Agriculture Sector (GESA), and increasing representation of women in political leadership (MoANR, 2017). The country has also endorsed multiple international and regional agreements on gender equality and women's empowerment, reflecting a strengthened political commitment to addressing gender disparities (Drucza et al., 2020). Recent government initiatives have focused on increasing women's representation in political and economic spheres, signaling a shift toward greater inclusivity. Ethiopia has achieved greater outcomes for women and girls in health and education compared to progress in the agricultural sector, where persistent gender gaps in access to resources, decision-making power, and economic opportunities continue to hinder women's empowerment.

Other persistent challenges include deeply-rooted cultural norms, such as early marriage and male-dominated land ownership, which continue to perpetuate gender disparities and gender-based violence, particularly in rural areas. While progress has been made, sustained efforts are needed to address these entrenched challenges and ensure that advancements in policy translate into tangible improvements in the lives of women and girls across Ethiopia.

Table 2: Gender Inequality Index (2025)

	Reproductive health		Empowerment			Labor market	
Gender Inequality Index	Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19)	Share of parliament seats held by women	Population with at least some secondary education (25 and older)		Labor force participation rate (15 and older)	
				Male	Female	Male	Female
0.497	267	69.9	38.8	12.7	7.4	78.1	55.6

Source: UNDP 2025

Different measures of gender inequality show uneven progress towards achieving gender equality across the country. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is a composite measure, reflecting inequalities in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. A GII[2] value of 0.497 reflects notable gender inequality in these areas in Ethiopia, affecting women's access to health, education, and employment opportunities (Table 2). This score

[2] Scores range from 0 to 1, where a GII score of 0 represents full gender equality while a score of 1 represents significant gender inequality across all dimensions.

places Ethiopia in the lower middle tier globally, suggesting that while some progress may have been made, there are still substantial disparities to address.

The Gender Development Index (GDI)[3] measures gender inequalities in achievements in three basic dimensions of human development: reproductive health, education, and command over economic resources (Table 3). Ethiopia's GDI score of 0.886 places it in the fifth of five country groups based on absolute deviation from gender parity, suggesting that the country must address significant gender inequalities related to health, schooling, and income outcomes. The dimensions used to calculate the GDI are the same as those used to calculate the Human Development Index, when aggregated by gender. Thus, both indices are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender Development Index (2025)

Gender Development Index	Human Development Index		Health		Education				Command over economic resources	
			Life expectancy at birth (years)		Expected years of schooling		Mean years of schooling		Estimated Gross National Income Per Capita ($)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0.886	0.525	0.465	64.1	70.7	9.7	8.6	3.2	1.7	3,531	2,056

Source: UNDP 2025

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (or WEAI) is a comprehensive tool designed to measure women's empowerment in the agricultural sector and assess gender parity.[4] In 2015, Ethiopia's overall WEAI score was 0.72, reflecting a 3 percent increase from the 2013 baseline and indicating modest progress in the empowerment of women in agricultural households. The indicators within the index which contributed the most to women's disempowerment were group membership and speaking in public. Limited progress was observed in other critical domains, such as control over income, participation in agricultural decision-making, autonomy in production, community leadership, and time allocation (Feed the Future 2018).

The same survey also found a positive correlation between women's empowerment and children's and women's dietary diversity, which suggests that supporting women's empowerment leads to other positive outcomes. Later versions of the WEAI including the Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (A-WEAI) and the Project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Pro-WEAI) were applied to the Ethiopian context and revealed scores of 0.86 and 0.65, respectively, which indicate a moderate level of women's empowerment in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia, reflecting some level of engagement and agency in various agricultural activities and decision-making processes (Seymour et al., 2023).

Despite progress on reducing gender inequalities and increasing women's empowerment, structural inequalities remain. In Ethiopia, 40% of girls are married before the age of 18, and 14% are married before

[3] GDI scores range from 0 to 1 with 1 representing perfect gender parity.

[4] The WEAI consists of the 5 Domains of Empowerment (5DE), which tracks women's empowerment in agriculture in the domains of production, resources, income, leadership and time use, as well as the Gender Parity Index (GPI), which measures the parity between men and women in the same household.

their 15th birthday. The Amhara region has the highest rates of child marriage in Ethiopia, with approximately 45% of girls getting married before the age of 18. Gender inequalities within both the household and community contribute to the high level of vulnerability of women and girls to the negative impacts of climate change in Ethiopia.

Gender inequalities and gaps in empowerment have significant implications for nutrition. For instance, limited control over income and decision-making reduces women's ability to invest in diverse, nutrient-rich crops or adopt sustainable farming practices, exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition. Similarly, a lack of autonomy in production and time constraints often prevent women from engaging in climate-smart agriculture or diversifying livelihoods, leaving households more vulnerable to climate shocks, such as droughts or floods. At the same time, climate change impacts, such as reduced crop yields and increased food prices, further strain women's ability to allocate resources effectively, perpetuating cycles of disempowerment and poor nutrition.

Nutrition Profile

Ethiopia has shown increased agricultural productivity in recent years, particularly in wheat (Shikur, 2022), yet vulnerable populations still lack access to healthy diets (Gebru M, Remans R, Brouwer ID, Baye K, Melesse MB, Covic N, Habtamu F, Abay AH, Hailu T, Hirvonen K, Kassaye T., 2018). According to the 2022 national survey, only 8% of young children and 7% of women had a minimally diverse diet - among the lowest in Africa - with rural areas faring worse (MOH, EPHI, UNICEF 2023; Eshete et al., 2018). Longitudinal data reveal a concerning decline in children's dietary diversity, from 13.8% in 2016 to 13.5% in 2019 and further dropping to 8% in 2022 (2015a; Gebretsadik et al., 2023; Potts et al., 2019, 2019). The cost of a healthy diet has increased more rapidly than general inflation, with the percentage of wages needed for manual laborers to afford it rising from 30% to 31% between 2020 and 2022 (Alemayehu et al., 2023). This economic inaccessibility drives reliance on calorie-dense staple foods, which far exceeds the regional average and exacerbates micronutrient deficiencies. These trends underscore that despite agricultural growth, affordability and diet quality remain significant barriers to nutrition security, particularly for rural and low-income households. Addressing these challenges requires policies that tackle both economic and systemic barriers to accessing diverse, nutrient-rich foods.

Micronutrient deficiencies pose a significant public health challenge, with two in three women of reproductive age deficient in one or more micronutrients, such as iron, folate, vitamin B12, and vitamin D (USAID 2021). Although there has been some progress, over half of children under five are affected by malnutrition, with prevalence varying across regions. These trends highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve access to diverse, nutrient-rich foods, particularly for women and children in rural areas, who face persistent food insecurity and malnutrition.

Stunting remains a major public health problem in Ethiopia affecting 39% of children under five. The proportion of stunted children is higher in rural areas (43%) compared to urban areas (29%). Stunting rates are highest in Afar (42%), Oromia (41%), Amhara (40%), and SNNP (40%) regions. Oromia and Amhara have the highest number of stunted children in absolute terms. The national prevalence of wasting in children under 5 years of age is 11%. The national prevalence of overweight among children under five years is 6% and among adults is 19%. This has led to an increase in Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes (MOH, EPHI, UNICEF 2023)

Food safety is a significant public health concern in Ethiopia, as foodborne diseases disrupt the lives of consumers due to high rates of adulteration and unhygienic food handling practices throughout the food value chain. The country's constitution acknowledges the significance of food safety, recognizing it as a fundamental human right (USAID, FTF, 2022). However, the responsibility for food safety regulations, compliance, and inspection in Ethiopia is fragmented across various ministries and executive governing bodies, notably the Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority within the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Agriculture, along with their respective regional offices, local authorities, and municipalities.

Integration of Gender, Climate, and Nutrition

Ethiopia's agricultural sector is extremely susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Increased temperatures and the high variability of rainfall patterns are expected to reduce crop production and water availability for irrigation, particularly in the North, Northeast, and Eastern lowlands of the country. Increased temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns will have negative direct impacts on the production and yield of many staple crops, though these effects vary by area and by crop.

Cereal crops dominate diets in Ethiopia and are a significant source of energy, fiber, and some vitamins and minerals (MOH, EPHI, UNICEF 2023; Eshete et al., 2018). However, they are generally poor in essential nutrients like vitamin A, folate, zinc, and high-quality protein. This highlights the need for greater dietary diversity to meet nutritional requirements. While productivity gains in wheat provide a vital buffer against the negative effects of climate change (Shikur, 2022), Ethiopia's food system should shift its focus from merely meeting basic needs to ensuring access to a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet. This can be achieved through increased dietary diversity and improved affordability of nutrient-rich foods.

Furthermore, climate change makes staple crops (teff, maize, wheat, barely, and sorghum) less nutritious. Elevated temperatures and CO_2 levels reduce the nutrient density, particularly the zinc and iron content, of these crops. With the increasing impact of climate change, crops partially lose their capacity to absorb nitrate, which is the most common form of nitrogen in the soil and is converted into organic compounds such as protein. Climate change may also increase the incidence and prevalence of vector-borne diseases (such as chikungunya, dengue fever, malaria and yellow fever) in Ethiopia, expanding the geographic scope towards the highlands and increasing transmission with longer favorable warm conditions, with implications for health and nutrition (Devonald et al., 2022).

Gender inequalities in access to resources and services, restrictive social and cultural norms, and women's more limited decision-making authority make it more difficult for women to respond to the negative impacts of climate change and contribute to household food security (Aryal et al. 2022; Assefa and Gebrehiwot 2023). Gender roles and relationships shape the division of labor, resource utilization, and the distribution of production benefits between men and women. Women typically work between 10–12 hours per day, with half of that time dedicated to household tasks, such as fetching water and firewood, preparing and cooking food, and caring for children (Aregu et al., 2010), yet women are less likely to

benefit from their labor input given the dominance of men over productive decisions, income decisions, and resources, such as land. Female-headed households (FHH) face extra challenges as they must single-handedly manage both agricultural duties and household responsibilities, which places additional strain on their resources and time. Climate change exacerbates these challenges for women by adding to their labor burden (FAO 2024). Anbacha and Kjosavik (2021) found that the ongoing livelihood diversification efforts being undertaken by Borana pastoralists the south of the country in response to climate stress increase women's workloads on the one hand but also increase their household decision-making power on the other. Additionally, the role played by women in livelihood diversification in that context underscores their position as agents capable of adapting to climate change, rather than merely victims of its effects. Other studies demonstrate that when women are empowered, they not only enhance their own well-being but also bolster their communities' resilience, allowing them to better adapt to and recover from shocks and stressors, including climate change, economic hardship, and natural disasters (Glazebrook et al., 2020; Tadesse et al. 2016).

Gender gaps in agriculture, particularly in value chains like horticulture and livestock, are intricately linked to climate change (Thakur, Kumari, and Kumar, 2024), as women often face disproportionate challenges due to limited access to resources, information, and decision-making power. In horticulture, women are key in managing household gardens and small-scale production, but they typically lack control over land and water resources, impacting their ability to adapt to climate change (Eftekhari, 2022). In livestock farming, women often shoulder the responsibility of animal care, yet face barriers in accessing climate-smart technologies or financial services, which limits their capacity to mitigate climate risks (Cheng et al., 2022; Glazebrook et al., 2020). Addressing these gender-specific constraints is crucial to fostering resilience in the face of climate change, by ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for both men and women in agriculture.

Women also face specific nutritional challenges. Major risk factors for malnutrition in women include women's heavy workloads, insufficient food intake during pregnancy and lactation, and inadequate access to safe drinking water (Girma et al., 2023). As a result, 24% of women aged 15-49 and 29% of pregnant women are anemic due to micronutrient deficiencies (MOH, EPHI, UNICEF 2023). In most regions of Ethiopia, traditional practices exacerbate this issue by disadvantaging women in intra-household food allocation: children eat first, followed by men, and women consume whatever remains, if anything. Thus, the impact of climate change on crop yields and income has negative implications for women's food security and nutrition. In the pastoral areas, where livelihoods are based on livestock, intake of animal-sourced food, protein, and calcium is affected by higher mortality rates of livestock due to drought, feed deficiency, and water scarcity.

Climate change is not the only crisis exacerbating gender inequalities. The 2024 Humanitarian Resource Plan (HRP) highlighted the disproportionate and gender-specific impacts of multiple shocks and compounded crises on girls and women, as well as the increased risk of largely unreported and unaddressed Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Ethiopia. According to the 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), the number of people requiring GBV response rose from 3.5 million in 2021 to 7.2 million in 2023, spread across conflict, drought, and flood-affected regions. GBV is highly prevalent in Ethiopia, with 35% of married women aged 15-49 experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual violence from their husband or partner.

Policy Analysis

The Government of Ethiopia has articulated several key policy priorities that focus on sustainable development, climate resilience, gender equality, food safety, and food security and nutrition. These priorities aim to foster economic growth while addressing environmental sustainability and social equity. By 2025, the country aims to achieve a climate-resilient green economy, focusing on renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and forestry (FDRE, CRGE, 2011). The government has also committed to enhance climate resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by implementing robust adaptation measures and pursuing ambitious mitigation strategies (FDRE Updated NDC 2021).

Gender equality is a central pillar of Ethiopia's development agenda, with commitments to ensure women's equal participation in economic, social, and political spheres and to eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence (MOWA, NAP-GE, 2006). Additionally, reducing malnutrition and stunting among children and improving overall nutritional status are critical goals, as outlined in the Food and Nutrition Policy (FDRE, Food & Nutrition Policy, 2018). The Seqota Declaration (2015b) aims to end child undernutrition by 2030 through targeted interventions, while the National Nutrition Program (NNP II, 2016-2020) prioritizes improving access to diverse and nutritious foods. The Agricultural Growth Program (AGP II, 2016-2020) further supports these efforts by promoting the production and availability of nutrient-dense crops, and the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) plays a critical role in improving food access for vulnerable households.

To strengthen food safety, Ethiopia has also adopted a comprehensive approach, including the National Food Safety and Quality Strategy for Primary Agricultural Produce (MoA, 2024b) and the Food Safety Master Plan (MoA, 2024a). These frameworks aim to improve regulations, enhance monitoring and enforcement, and promote safer agricultural practices. Strengthening capacity building, improving food safety education, and developing robust traceability systems are essential for ensuring public health and sustaining food security in the country. Together, these policies aim to create an enabling environment for making nutrient-dense foods safer, more affordable, and accessible to all, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Renewable energy projects and sustainable agriculture practices are designed not only to address climate change but also to enhance food security (FDRE, LT- LEDS, 2023). Gender-focused investments in education, healthcare, and economic empowerment for women simultaneously promote gender equality and improve nutritional outcomes. Furthermore, nutrition investments, such as those in climate-smart agriculture and food security initiatives, are closely aligned with climate strategies, demonstrating an integrated approach (FDRE, Food & Nutrition Policy, 2018).

Climate change, gender, food security, and nutrition policies increasingly identify synergies between climate change, gender equality, and nutrition goals, however, greater efforts are needed to support integration of these issues in policy processes. While the 2011 Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy emphasized balancing transformation to a green economy with other development objectives, such as improving food security; gender equality and nutrition goals were not well integrated into the strategy apart from promoting clean cookstoves to benefit women. The sector-based policies and strategies that followed, such as the 2015 Climate Resilience Strategy for Agriculture and Forestry and the 2017 National Health Adaptation Plan to Climate Change, similarly fail to address the gender dimensions of climate change, although the Health Adaptation Plan does highlight the impacts of climate change on nutrition and identify actions to improve nutrition outcomes under climate change.

The 2019 CRGE National Adaptation Plan (NAP) goes further to integrate gender by highlighting not only women's vulnerability to climate change but also the essential role of women in climate adaptation and resilience. This policy ensures that women are not just beneficiaries but active participants in climate actions, thereby linking gender equity directly with climate goals (FDRE CRGE NAP, 2019). The NAP also prioritizes food security, but only mentions the nutrition and disease risks posed by climate change. The 2021 Updated Nationally Determined Contribution also mentions the importance of developing gender-responsive strategies to address climate change and highlights several priority adaptation actions to enhance food security, but does not include specific goals related to nutrition.

The 2018 National Food & Nutrition Policy aligns closely with climate policies to build food systems resilient to the negative impacts of climate change. This alignment ensures that efforts to combat climate change also support nutritional outcomes, creating a framework where climate action and nutrition improvement go hand-in-hand. Through these strategies, Ethiopia demonstrates its commitment to a holistic and interconnected policy approach, leveraging each sector to advance overall national development. Further refining the goal of transforming the food system in Ethiopia into one which provides healthy, sustainable, and accessible diets to all, the 2022 Food-Based Dietary Guidelines directly address the inadequate diversity of Ethiopian diets, citing affordability, availability, and market access as the key challenges in implementing the guidelines. The guidelines reference the importance of climate-smart technology in transforming the food system, as well as the need to target harmful social norms with deep roots in the food system (FGE, Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, 2022).

Ethiopia's implementation of its policy priorities has yielded some progress towards its policy objectives in the areas of climate resilience, gender equality, and nutrition. It has also established monitoring frameworks, such as the CRGE Facility for climate projects and sector-specific systems for gender and nutrition programs, to measure outcomes effectively. In terms of gender equality, there has been a marked improvement in female enrollment in education and vocational training, along with better access to maternal health services (FDRE Country Gender Equality Profile 2024). On the nutrition front, widespread implementation of school feeding programs and expansion of community-based nutrition education initiatives have been achieved (EPHI National Nutrition Program 2020).

While some progress has been made towards integrating climate change, gender equality, and nutrition in policy processes, many challenges remain. Budget constraints, including a heavy reliance on donor funding and limited domestic resources, pose a significant challenge to implementation and sustainability, particularly in an environment of reduced foreign assistance. Furthermore, variability in implementation effectiveness and lack of coordination across sectors and at regional and local levels leads to uneven outcomes, undermining the overall effectiveness of the policies. Despite these challenges, Ethiopia's strategy presents a promising path forward, balancing immediate needs with sustainable development goals.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Government of Ethiopia is making commendable strides towards ensuring gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive policies and programs, as evidenced by initiatives, such as the Gender Equality Strategy for the Agriculture Sector (GESA) and the National Food and Nutrition Policy. However, significant challenges remain in fully embedding climate change, gender, social inclusion, and nutrition considerations into policy processes. While there is growing interest in integrating gender within the climate change sector, the lack of institutionalization has hindered effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of gender-responsive initiatives, particularly in rural areas where women bear the brunt of climate impacts

Additionally, existing gender, climate, and nutrition-related policies, such as the Seqota Declaration and the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy, have not been adequately cascaded to the zonal, district, and community levels, impeding their effective implementation. Climate change continues to disproportionately impact women and girls, exacerbating food insecurity and resource scarcity, particularly in drought-prone regions like Afar and Somali. To address these issues, there is a need for greater policy coherence, institutional collaboration, ensuring sustainable funding, and capacity development to integrate gender, climate change, and nutrition considerations into all levels of policy and practice, ensuring that Ethiopia's most vulnerable populations are not left behind. Key recommendations include the following:

- ***Policy Integration***: Promote coherence and integration among Ethiopia's climate change, agriculture, gender, nutrition and food security policies, such as the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy, the National Food and Nutrition Policy, and the Gender Equality Strategy for the Agriculture Sector (GESA). Ensure that national and regional leadership designs and implements integrated policy approaches that mainstream gender considerations into broader public policy, expenditures, and planning processes, particularly in drought-prone regions like Afar and Somali.
- ***Institutional Strengthening and Coordination***: Develop and enhance institutional arrangements to ensure that gender-responsive climate policies, such as the Updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC, 2021), are effectively cascaded to all administrative levels and support the development of regional climate change policies and action plans. Strengthen inter-sectoral coordination and build institutional collaboration to advance integration of gender, climate, and nutrition considerations in existing and upcoming policies and frameworks, such as the Seqota Declaration and the Agricultural Growth Program (AGP II).
- ***Capacity Building***: Invest in capacity development programs that include knowledge sharing on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, emphasizing the co-benefits of integrating a gender and nutrition lens in climate actions. Policymakers in Ethiopia should encourage and support gender-related research to inform policy formulation, monitor progress, and use disaggregated data to address the specific needs of men and women in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, particularly in rural areas where women are disproportionately affected.
- ***Monitoring and Accountability***: Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress of gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive policies, like the NNP II and the PSNP. Ensure accountability in the implementation of these policies through regular assessments and stakeholder engagement, including civil society organizations and local communities.
- ***Community Engagement***: Involve communities at the grassroots level in the formulation and implementation of gender-responsive policies ensuring that women and girls are represented in discussions and decision-making bodies concerning climate change in Ethiopia. Leverage platforms like the Women's Development Army to amplify women's voices in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- ***Social Norms Change***: Address deeply entrenched gendered social norms that limit women's access to extension services, agricultural inputs, and credit in Ethiopia. Implement targeted campaigns and programs, such as community dialogues and media initiatives, to challenge norms about women's roles in agriculture and climate resilience, particularly in patriarchal rural communities.

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