



Hard-working African rural women

1. INTRODUCTION



Women leaders across Africa gathered to honor the statue after the launch

The International Day of Rural Women celebration in Africa was held at the Burkina Faso town of Bobo Dioulasso under the auspices of the Commission for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission. The theme for this year is “Agricultural Mechanization for Rural Women”

Most significant of the celebration on October 15, 2019 was the unveiling of the statue “Retiring the Hoe to the Museum”, to symbolically mark the end of the use of the hoe, a major drudgery tool for agriculture production, and also signal the continental agenda of promoting agriculture mechanization among women to improve food production. The occasion was preceded on October 14 with the “Bobo-Dioulasso Declaration”, which officially launched the campaign on “Reducing the Drudgery of Rural Women” and the formation of the Platform for African Women in Agriculture (PAWA).

The International Day of Rural Women was adopted by the United Nations on December 18, 2007, for celebration on every October 15 as part of efforts to educate the general public about the invaluable contribution of rural women to humanity, in order to mobilize political will and resources to address problems that militate against their development.

2. “Bobo-Dioulasso Declaration” and Launch of the “Platform for African Women in Agriculture (PAWA): Monday 14th October 2019

The day was marked with a symposium which included panel discussions on “Women in Agriculture: Mechanization, Land Rights and the Value Chains” and “The Campaign to Retire the Hand held Hoe to the Museum”. The opening ceremony of the symposium was addressed by a number of dignitaries, including; Mrs Dabire Clementine, spouse of the Prime Minister, HE Ambassador Josefa Sacko, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Mrs Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of AUC for Women, Peace And Security and Mr Salifou Quedraogo, Burkina Faso Minister of Agriculture and Hydro-Agricultural Developments among others.



Some participants at the symposium spoke about their challenges and equally proposed solutions, mostly financial support and land acquisition



“ ...It is no longer a secret that when the woman is happy it reflects on the whole family. Empowering them is, therefore, a guarantee for the sustainable development of any society. Therefore, I call for continued efforts for sustainable agricultural mechanization in Africa and for the development and implementation of appropriate national strategies with emphasis on women...”

Mrs. Dabire Clementine

*Spouse of the Prime Minister,
Guest of Honor*

“...The contribution of rural women to the development of the continent is inestimable ... today, we cannot talk meaningfully about agricultural production, food security and nutrition, land management and natural resources without referring to the indigenous know-how acquired by rural women from a generation after generation....It is obvious that to transform agriculture will require the modernization of the working conditions of the rural woman...”

H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko
African Union Commissioner
for Rural Economy and Agriculture



“There is nothing micro in the African woman..... It defies logic that women and youth, who constitute more than 70 percent of the population are left out of the development paradigm in Africa. This is a huge cost that the continent will not be able to continue to afford”

Mrs. Bineta Diop
Special Envoy of the Chairperson of AUC
for women, peace, and security

“...Rural women represent more than a quarter of the world’s population and contribute significantly to food security and nutrition to their respective communities and homes. I shudder to think of a rural community where women refuse to contribute to the sustainability of the people. It is therefore fair that the world is recognizing their effort with an international day...”

Mr. Salifou Ouedraogo
Burkina Faso Minister Of Agriculture and
Hydro-Agricultural Developments



The day was climaxed with the reading of the “Bobo-Dioulasso Declaration” on reducing the drudgery of rural women in agriculture by 2030, with the request for the following:

- The development of a clear roadmap for the implementation of the AU Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization Framework for Africa;
- Compliance with commitments of the African Union to allocate at least 30% of land to women;
- Promulgation and enforcement of laws to ensure women’s participation and representation in decision-making on land and natural resource governance, from the local to the national level;
- Strengthening the institutions involved in agricultural mechanization; and
- Increased financial support to promote the agri-business value chain.

The participants, in the declaration, also acknowledged the magnitude of the challenges and declared their commitment to the following:

- Development of a strong African alliance around a continental programme to reduce the drudgery of rural women;
- Advocate for the creation of a platform for the empowerment of African women- Platform for African Women in Agriculture (PAWA), with the aim of harnessing all existing initiatives to improve productivity; and
- Give impetus to PAWA for a sustained campaign “Retiring the Hand Hoe to the Museum” to reduce the drudgery of rural women through agriculture mechanization.



HE Ambassador Josefa Sacko, officially launch the Platform for African Women in Agriculture (PAWA) to kick start the Campaign “Retiring the Hand Hoe to the Museum”

3. Unveiling Of Statue “Retiring the Hoe to the Museum”: Tuesday 15th October 2019

The unveiling of the statue “Retiring the Hoe to the Museum” on October 15, 2019, was the major highlight of the celebration of the International Rural Women Day. “Retiring the Hoe to the Museum”, symbolically means that the hoe which has been a major drudgery tool for agriculture production since medieval times should now be abandoned in Africa for more effective means of agricultural production- mechanization.

The FAO estimates that only 15% of farm power is provided by mechanized services in the continent, 25% is provided by animals, with the bulk of the 60% provided by human muscles, out of which, 50% of that is provided by women using drudgery tools like the hoe, hence the theme for the celebration “Agriculture Mechanization for Rural Women”.

In a speech to launch the Campaign, HE Ambassador Josefa Sacko, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture stated that agriculture mechanization was indispensable requirement for the attainment of the Malabo Declaration of 2014 by African Heads of State to improve agriculture production in their respective countries, as well as, Goal 2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030.

She commended FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Empowering Women in Agriculture (EWA), the Pan Africa Women Organisation (PAWO), the Government of Burkina Faso, OCP AFRICA and all AU agencies, among others, for supporting the campaign.

Hon. Cynthia Mamle Morrison (MP), Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection who represented President of Ghana, H.E. Nana Akufo Addo- AUC Champion for Gender and Development; urged the involvement of the private sector in the campaign to provide financial support, such as, loans and other financial support, since most women, on their own, could not afford the mechanized equipment.

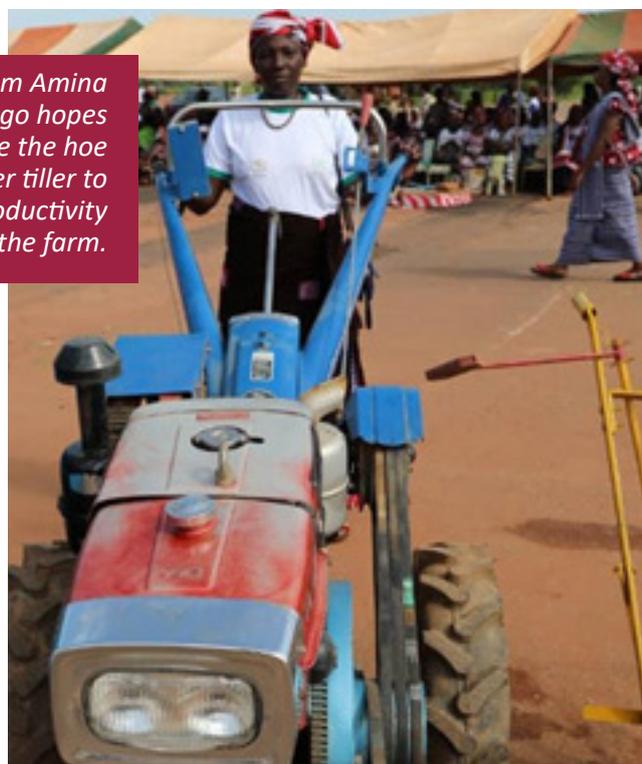


H E Amb. Josefa Sacko (middle) is joined by Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, Joseph Marie Dabire, and other dignitaries to unveil and pose with the statue "Retiring the Hoe to the Museum", which is symbolically expected to start the campaign to end the use of the drudgery tool (Hoe) by rural women in Africa for improved mechanized ones.



Madam Tiendrebeogo Bingba 61, a rural woman farmer in Bama-Bobo Dioulasso displays the hoe, which she has been using all her life.

Madam Amina Quadreggo hopes to replace the hoe with the power tiller to enhance her productivity on the farm.





As a sign of appreciation for hosting the International Year of the Rural Women, Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, Joseph Marie Dabire received on behalf of the people and government of Burkina Faso a painted frame of the statue “Retiring the Hoe to the Museum” presented on behalf of the UAC Chair by HE Amb. Josefa Sacko, AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

4. Partners and Collaboration



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



AU COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

IBAR (Kenya) | NEPAD (South Africa) | SAFGRAD (Burkina Faso)

PHOTOS

Department of Information and Communication (DIC): AUC