



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Cape Town to host global summit on gender equality in agri-food and water systems

- *Join over 500 scientists, researchers, and changemakers uniting to drive real solutions for gender equality in food, land and water systems.*
- *A call to co-create solutions that accelerate gender equality in agri-food and water systems. Register before 26 September 2025.*

[CGIAR](#), through the [Accelerator on Gender Equality and Inclusion](#), the [International Water Management Institute \(IWMI\)](#) and the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, will co-host the [Gender in Food, Land and Water Systems conference 2025](#) from **7 to 9 October 2025** at the **Century City Conference Centre** in **Cape Town**, South Africa.

Under the theme “*Accelerating Equality in Food, Land and Water Systems: Driving Solutions through Evidence and Learning*,” this conference arrives at a pivotal moment as the world marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - a comprehensive framework for advancing gender equality and women's rights globally. Convening a diverse global cohort including researchers, policymakers, practitioners, private sector leaders and representatives from Indigenous and socially excluded communities, this conference, on the sides of South Africa's G20 presidency will catalyse meaningful progress toward gender equality in agri-food and water systems. It aims to build solutions by bridging research, policy and practice to ensure inclusive and sustainable futures.

Focusing on five interrelated themes - **Shifting gender and social norms, Women's empowerment at scale, Resilience and livelihood innovations, Leadership and inclusion, and Youth empowerment** - the conference aims to present evidence-based strategies for equitable and inclusive food, water and land systems, foster collaboration among key stakeholders while driving innovation, policy influence and impact-driven learning at global and local levels.

The 2025 conference will feature leading voices in agriculture, gender and development. Speakers include Dr [Nicoline de Haan](#), Director for Gender Equality and Inclusion at CGIAR, **Dr. Mark Smith**, Director General at IWMI, **Dr. Mogale Sebopetsa**, HoD at the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, **H.E. Ambassador J Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile**, CFS chair and ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations Agencies in Rome, **Surita Sandosham**, President and CEO at Heifer International, **Dr. Michael O'Sullivan**, senior economist and head of the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab, **Dr. Medrine Muloza Banda**, principal secretary for Technical Services at the Ministry of Agriculture in Malawi, **Lynn Schneider**, senior program officer for Women's Empowerment in Agricultural Development at the Gates Foundation and **Dr. Lauren M. Phillips**, deputy director for Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Their diverse expertise spans inclusive agricultural research, empowerment strategies, and

participatory policy frameworks, bridging global leadership with Africa's pressing contexts, including climate resilience, water scarcity and development equity.

The CGIAR Gender Conference 2025, is more than a convening, it's a call to action. Whether you are a policymaker, researcher, practitioner, youth advocate, or private-sector leader, this conference offers a unique platform to co-create solutions that accelerate gender equality in food, land and water systems.

CGIAR brings critical science and innovation to feed the world and end inequality, while IWMI contributes global research excellence and practical expertise in water, land, and ecosystems - delivering evidence-based solutions that advance gender equality in food, land, and water systems. As host, the Western Cape Government's Department of Agriculture will provide deep local insight, policy leadership, and a strong commitment to building inclusive food systems in South Africa, ensuring the conference outcomes are rooted in regional priorities and create lasting local impact.

Registrations are open, with standard rates available until **Friday, 26 September 2025 (23:59 EDT)**. Attendees will gain priority access to cutting-edge research, practical policy tools and connection with a global network committed to accelerating gender equality in food, land, and water systems.

**Register [here](#) today** and be part of South Africa's pivotal contribution to global gender equality.

~ENDS~

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About CGIAR:**

CGIAR is a global research partnership dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems amid a global agricultural crisis. We aim to reduce poverty, enhance food and nutrition security, and improve natural resources and ecosystem services. [Find out more](#).

The international conference “Accelerating Equality in Food, Land, and Water Systems: Driving Solutions through Evidence and Learning” follows the tradition of the biennial CGIAR GENDER conferences. It will bring together researchers from various organizations (academia, NARES, NGOs, and CSOs), policy makers and development practitioners, and representatives of local communities and farmer organizations, who work toward creating innovations and generating evidence to transform agrifood systems. Discussions will focus on refreshing, innovating, and accelerating progress in gender equality and social inclusion within food, land, and water systems, crucial for a sustainable, climate-resilient world free from hunger and malnutrition

**About International Water Management Institute (IWMI):**

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is an international, research-for-development organization that works with governments, civil society and the private sector to solve water problems in developing countries and scale up solutions. Through partnership, IWMI combines research on the sustainable use of water and land resources, knowledge services and products with capacity strengthening, dialogue and policy analysis to support implementation of water management solutions for agriculture, ecosystems, climate change and inclusive economic growth. Headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, IWMI is a CGIAR Research Center with offices in 15 countries and a global network of scientists operating in more than 55 countries. [www.iwmi.org](http://www.iwmi.org).