



Gender and Biofuels Development in Africa

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Outline of Presentation

- Introduction
- Conceptual overview
 - biofuels
 - What is gender
 - What is the interlink gender and biofuels
- General biofuels development trends
- Emerging gender issues
- Way forward



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**Who is/ will be the main producer of
biofuels feedstocks in Africa ???**



What do we mean by biofuels?

Liquid fuels produced from plant products, including pure plant oil, biodiesel and bioethanol.

Biodiesel – A replacement for petroleum-based diesel fuel made by processing plant oil, using alcohol (transesterification).

Bioethanol – A petrol replacement produced by fermentation or chemical processing of sugar or starch crops such as sugarcane, sugar beets, corn and wheat.



debate

- Biofuels has generated vigorous debates:
 - Economic
 - Social
 - Environmental grounds
 - The issue of biofuels is with us to stay
 - The potential is there in terms of:
 - Employment opportunities, reduce traditional biomass dependence
 - Wider growth multipliers & Energy price effects
- ❖ Yet it is also fragile

Overview of the Context - SSA

- Biofuels are a fairly modern, diverse and cross-cutting sub-sector that brings together land, food security and energy issues
- Biofuels are being developed in a very complex, dynamic and diverse context
 - creates a lot of challenges for policy makers in SSA.
- This is because the so called “biofuels portfolio” falls within two critical and powerful ministries in most African nations.
- These in most countries have created strong territorial issues (depending where the emphasis leans the pathway follows that (bio-energy/biofuels)).
- Energy poverty dominates the development agenda (energy for cooking and heating)

Sub-Saharan Crisis and Poverty

- 50-60 % survive on 1US\$ a day
- Unemployment and underemployment levels have risen - 70% is fairly common
- Most countries it is common to find rural electrification levels of >5%
- Disease, and War ravages most countries

Overview women situation

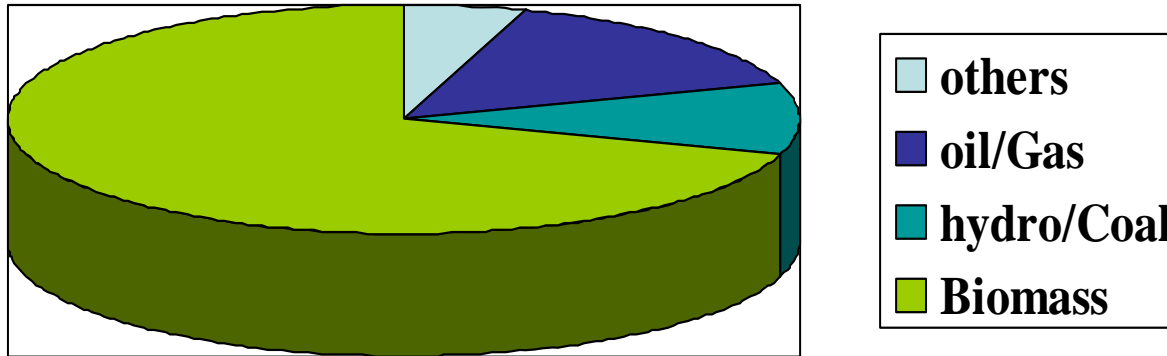
- Perpetuated reinforced by colonialism, capitalism, apartheid in other cases and now globalization
- The majority of the poor are women – feminization of poverty
- Lack of participation in decision-making process
- Technology does not suit women's needs
- Lack of information and education to make women – participate fully in sustainable development
- Policy in most countries are gender blind

Why involve Gender Concerns

Bearing in mind majority of the poor are women:

- In most rural areas of Africa 70% of the population depend on unmanaged and unsustainable biomass
- Majority of rural poor have no access to electricity
- There is health implications like respiratory diseases associated with wood / agricultural residue as an energy source

Typical National Energy Supply of Most African Countries



Biomass is the dominant Fuel

- The poor who are mostly women still depend on wood / other agricultural residue
 - Used in its traditional form
 - time in collection- rape, harassment
 - health implications
 - ecological consequences

Energy for Poverty Reduction

- Modest initiatives can realize large benefits
- minute amount of clean energy can transform livelihood of households
- US\$ 40 simple mechanical water-pump can quadruple household income
- US\$ 150 biofuel furnace can increase entrepreneur income tenfold

Challenges

- Shift to energy sources that uplift women's quality of life - income generation
- Energy technology that frees women's labor - time
- Policy that push for investments efficiency of cleaner energy sources
- Biomass initiatives for more efficient fuel carriers

Production Patterns

Type of initiatives

- Small scale (women involved mainly here – community projects, Donor driven)
- Large scale (in case of SA, PPP,)

Crop

Jatropha

Palm oil

Sugar beet

Cassava, sweet sorghum

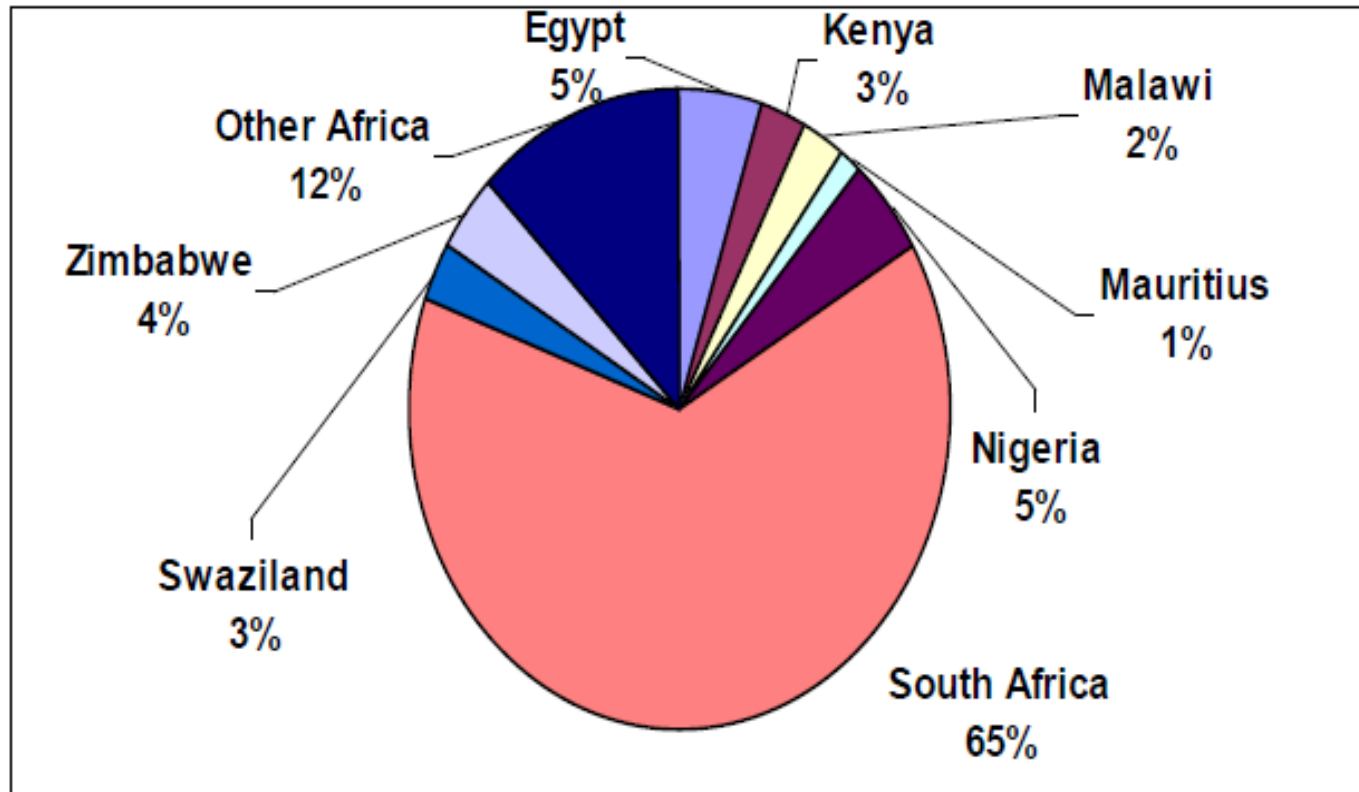
Soya, canola and sunflower

Context (mostly rural areas, agriculture has not performed well) Extension, services delivery finance etc

- “Marginal lands” arid and semi-arid) women though marginal are commons for fuel etc
- Arable lands (give threat to food security)



Biofuels production - SSA



- Production Africa 2006: 606,000 liters/1.2% global production (US + Brazil: 75% global production)
- Main feedstocks: sugarcane, corn, but also exploring cassava and (sweet) sorghum

Overview

- In terms of financing biofuels:
 - there is relatively low-level investment,
 - proliferation of a number of low cost uncoordinated projects and programmes scattered all over the region and run by various organisation (mostly women involved).
 - Large scale big companies (more male participation)
 - This is with the exceptions of countries like South Africa (Dynes, 2008)
- An overview of project reveal that most of the projects in the region are at various stages of development, but generally they are all in infancy stage
- General lack of a harmonized efforts towards an explicit criterion for sustainable dev. of biofuels for SSA.
- Arguably, policy directions in sub-Saharan Africa are emanating more from country driven initiatives, than a regional policy drive.

Background to Biofuels - Africa

- Response to the increase in the promotion of biofuels, several African countries are making efforts to introduce policies that specifically deal with biofuels – sustainability (poverty) – increase access to modern energy.
- South Africa and Nigeria are the most active although a number of activities are spreading fast throughout the continent.
- **Experimental jatropha plantations** used for the production of bio-diesel are the most promoted interventions in sub Saharan Africa (e.g. Ghana, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe)
- Most of these initiatives are still in the planting and growing stages.
- **“practice is running faster than the policy development”**.

Discussion in the country

- In the country, discussion around biofuels have been active and have created platforms for debate, discussion (biofuels association – more activities noted on SADC, than ECOWAS, EAC).
- Rapid developments – have made people to question a lot of issue (food, land, employment, gender, water – mainly social issues)
- **This is because biofuels development in Africa like elsewhere in the world is evidently magnifying inherent inequalities that currently exist in access to land and resources across geography gender and race.**

Expected benefits from biofuels for developing countries

- diversified national energy sources
- increased incomes and markets in rural areas
- new opportunities for farm-based exports – for example to the European Union to meet their renewable energy targets for transportation
- reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- home-grown energy for rural development



Social criticisms of biofuels production

- Links to food shortages and increased poverty in developing countries
- Neo-colonialism in establishment of huge biofuels plantations
- Displacement of small farmers and indigenous people from their lands
- Loss of access and rights to land and resources for food crops, fuel, water, fodder, medicinal plants and wild food



Why Gender Issues?

- Developed in rural areas
- Most vulnerable (yet active) reside – in terms of poverty
- Impacts on household men and women
- Rural development
- Use of traditional biomass
- Majority are engaged in crop production – small-scale agriculture

Why Gender Issues?

- Women have the will for accomplishment
- Women are determined and committed and usually – outpace their limits
- Women in most cases get more involved than men in projects and programmes
- Adapt easily to new ideas see opportunities and challenges that are interlinked to family and community concerns

Rationale for gender in Biofuels development agendas

- The human rights perspective
 - Women have as much right to participate in the production of knowledge in Africa, and right to be part of that knowledge
 - The power to know and power to have one's knowledge influence mainstream knowledge should be considered as part of human rights
 - Development in Africa has been based on what is termed as a “sexist definition”
 - We cannot afford to waste human resource – right to intellectual input in re-conceptualizing new development models
- The economic rationale
 - The intellectual and labor input of men and women in important to realize “meaningful” development

Why women and biofuels?

- Women have a will for the accomplishment of their obligations at family and social level for the achievement of the specific needs (*practical/vital, social, productive and strategic*).
- Women have a determined commitment and outpace their limits.
- Women are more involved than men with household food and nutritional issues within their families for their own needs and the family needs
- Small scale women's projects are on the average sustainable, good at financial management.

Women of the Region (Africa)

- Who are these women:
- Daughters, wives, grandmothers, Aunties and girls of the region
- women age (young, old)
- The one's you remember cooking your meal
- Washing clothes and plate
- Cleaning kitchens and scrubbing floors
- With hoes planting and ploughing fields
- Carrying water on their heads back and forth walking kilometers which may be extended if resources are depleted in marginal environments
- Selling wares at street corners
- Carrying firewood and brewing beer

Who is this women?

- Leaders for companies
- Coordinating multiples roles, caring, Working and looking after families
- Happy and celebrating childbirth
- Singing for male party leaders



Key Concepts

- Women: biological – female/male
- **GENDER**
 - is the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behaviour of women and men, boys and girls and the relationship between them.
 - Therefore gender refers to socially constructed and culturally variable roles that women and men play in their daily lives.
 - It refers to the structural relationship of inequality between men and women as manifested in households, labour markets and in political structures



Contd...

- Gender, therefore, refers not simply to women or men, **but to the relationship between them**, and the way it is socially constructed.
- **Gender is an analytical tool for understanding societal socio-economic processes.**



Gender Issues

The majority of women in developing countries are engaged in crop production – small-scale agriculture

Gender inequalities in terms of access to and control over land and productive assets



Key resource issues

- Land (tenure regimes)
- Fuel (biomass use for cooking/development)
- Water – (access, quality)
- Finance
- Human resource – skills
- Technologies
- Infrastructure
- Extension

Land issue and biofuels

- land is central to women
- Has multiple value and meaning to women
- Creates autonomy
- Self esteem
- It can be used to negotiate to get other resources
- Security for them and their children
- It is part of who they are – some of their ancestors are buried on the land they live on
- It is a source of income, food, fuel, water and medicines (in some cases)
- It is what they fall back on when they have lost jobs, or divorced

Gender network are saying:

Through network consultations:

- Environmental and social impact assessments of proposed biofuels projects or programmes should include an evaluation of gender-differentiated impacts.
- Consultative processes should be designed to ensure substantial participation of women.
- Gender equity should be one of the principles considered in sustainability assessments.

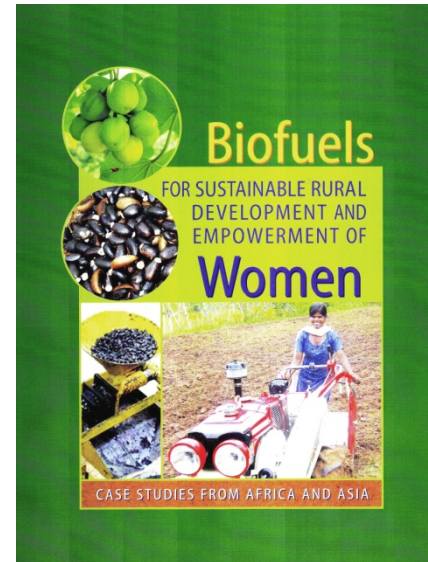
recommendations

- Governments, managers and investors in biofuels projects should incorporate gender equity as a key element in assessing potential benefits and impacts.
- Need for comprehensive data that shows that:
 - differences between the roles and interests on men and women is often unavailable,
 - new initiatives and pilot projects should make an effort to capture gender-specific information as one of the factors in determining whether or not biofuels projects are sustainable.



Conclusions from case studies

- On a small scale, locally produced plant oils and biodiesel can successfully be used to power engines and generators in rural villages (use local before export orientation)
 - for agricultural processing;
 - easing the burdens of women
 - new enterprises and income generation
 - fostering women's participation in decision-making processes.



Emerging from studies

- On a small scale, locally produced plant oils and biodiesel can successfully be used to power diesel engines and generators in rural villages –
- for agricultural processing,
- easing the burdens of women
- new enterprises and income generation.
- fostering women's participation in decision-making processes.
- Most of the threats related to biofuel production come from the operations of large-scale plantations run on an agro-business model.
- But it is possible to try to protect the interests of small landowners and engage them as producers and processors of biofuels as part of a larger value production and supply chain.
- Governments should develop and promote biofuels policies, regulations and programmes that take into account the needs and interests of small farmers and women in rural communities.

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Position

- For biofuels to promote the empowerment of women, it is important for women to be involved in planning and managerial decisions, and to have shares as co-owners or investors in biofuels production companies and processing operations, rather than simply providing labour as growers of biofuels feedstock.
- Governments, managers and investors in biofuels projects should also incorporate gender equity as a key element in assessing potential benefits and impacts.
- Since comprehensive data that shows the differences between the roles and interests on men and women is often unavailable, new initiatives and pilot projects should make an effort to capture gender-specific information as one of the factors in determining whether or not biofuels projects are sustainable.

Thought

- Gender biofuels policy (SANERI)
- it can be argued that to unravel the policy complexity of biofuels will require;
 - historical analysis
 - domestic interest alignment in investment planning leanings, and attempts at putting people (women) at the centre of the dialogue.
- If this is so, one questions how to make sustainable principles that will do justice in capturing the dynamics and complex livelihoods in SSA (gendered analysis is critical).
- It is also important to have a gender and biofuels policy for national governments



Thank you for listening