



Third Annual Conference, Luxor, 13 February 2016

## The Role of Women in Sustainable Rural Development

# Enhancing Women's Role in the Household Mother and Child Nutrition

Habiba Hassan-Wassef, MD

International Expert in Food and Nutrition Security  
and Mother and Child Health

e-mail: [bio\\_egypt@hotmail.com](mailto:bio_egypt@hotmail.com)

# ROAD MAP

- Challenges to women's role in household food security
- Women, first provider of food security in the human cycle
- Value chain analysis methodology allows us to identify women's role and input into food production, to food security in the home and in agri-food business
- How can we support women's role and increase her impact on family food security
- Follow up action and policy/strategy implications
- Multiplicity of various current initiatives and the need to network, share and integrate for optimal use of resources
- The advantages and added value of AL NIDAA/ENID's integrated approaches to community development

# Challenges to women's role in household food security

- Wide variation in the women's knowledge, attitudes, demographic characteristics, social and economic status, no generalization possible
- Variations in conditions of life, in access to basic infrastructure services and social protection, in health status & level of education
- Widespread poor housing standards and poor environmental hygiene with a high level of exposure to health and environmental risks
- Limited financial means and access to resources, difficulties in access to labor market for women and youth
- Inadequate/unsustained support for women in their role as food producers and for improving agri-food business entrepreneurial skills
- Low priority given to education of girls and women's literacy.
- Abandon of traditional food systems in favor of new and less nutritious food habits with loss of diversity and quality of diets
- Spread of alien unhealthy life styles and food habits among all ages.

# Women, the first providers of food security

- In spite of all these challenges, the responsibility for feeding her family remains with women and mothers
- Responsibility starts with the pregnant mother by ensuring the good nutrition and healthy development of the unborn child
- Later, it is the mother who produces the first food, mother's milk and continues to breast feed for the important 4-6 months of exclusive breast feeding.
- Protecting good health and nutrition during pregnancy and the first two years of life (the First 1000 Days of Life) provides a solid foundation for healthy growth and development of children into a healthy, socially active and productive adult who has a lower risk of diet related chronic non-communicable diseases (ex.: stunting; wasting; impaired brain function; obesity (all ages), cardio-vascular diseases; bone diseases; cancer, etc. )

# Food value Chain Continuum

## Farm to Fork

سلسلة الغذاء - من المزرعة الى المستهلك

Consumers المستهلك

Nutrition التغذية

Processing التصنيع الغذائي

Safety سلامة الغذاء

Environment البيئة

*From Fork to Farm*

Health and well-being of consumers

Nutritional value / digestion / health impacts

Organoleptic impact

Safe, high-quality foods

Preparation

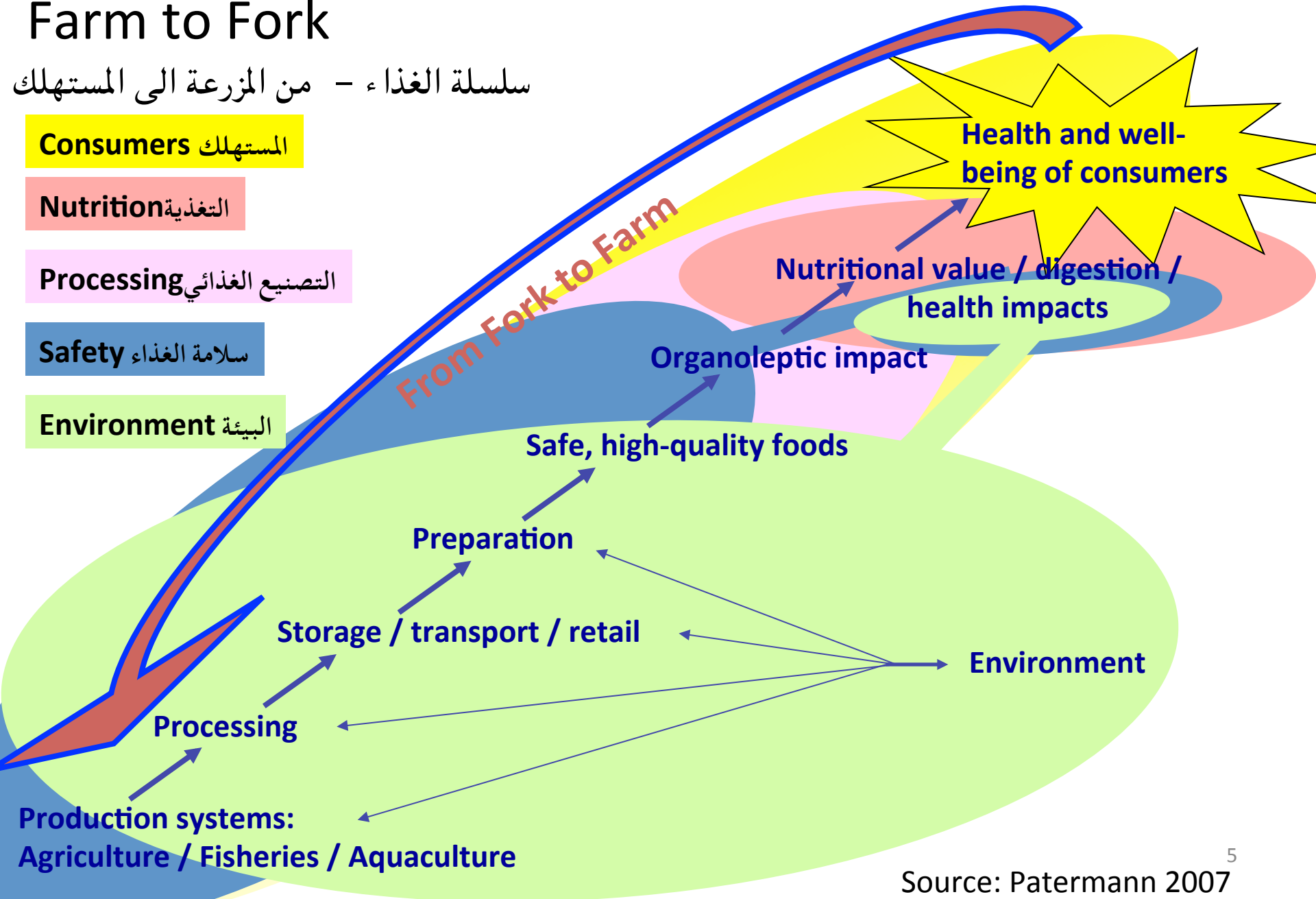
Storage / transport / retail

Processing

Environment

Production systems:  
Agriculture / Fisheries / Aquaculture

Source: Patermann 2007



# Women in the Food Chain Continuum

- **Food Value Chain (FVC)** analysis shows that women are actors and processors assuming several tasks at different levels and activity domains of the five areas covered in the FVC figure.
- The FVC analysis methodology allows identification of women's contribution to the Food Chain in areas that may not have been acknowledged before, as well as of the constraints to overcome.
- Enhancing and supporting women's inputs in the food chain represents an important support to better nutrition since **women are the strongest link between FS, health and nutrition.**
- Given that in Egypt, women traditionally dominate the artisanal food production scene, FVC analysis helps them to cost their role in terms of time and effort, and to calculate the market price for the food produced (FVC analysis (2014) of the role of women in Kishk Sa'eedi production in Minia was done within an EU-funded research project)
- The FVC analysis also identifies women's contribution to the environmental and food safety aspects of food and nutrition security.

# How do women contribute to better health and nutrition of children (1)

- Maintaining good health and nutrition during pregnancy; by breast feeding for 4-6m; correct and safe weaning/early childhood feeding practices;
- promotion of healthy lifestyles (personal hygiene, eating habits, sleep pattern, exercise, etc.);
- feeding the elderly of the family;
- respect of balanced diets and food diversity;
- coping with disruption of meal times;
- correction of faulty food habits and uncontrolled consumerism (sodas/snacks/refined foods/sweets).

# How do women contribute to better health and nutrition of children (2)

- maintaining sustainability of food supplies;
- reducing food loss and waste in the home;
- ensuring food safety and protection from environmental pollutants;
- engaging in home based food production;
- preserving continuity of healthy traditional food habits;
- turning food heritage know how to artisanal income generation activities;
- and many more actions and activities .....

**are all areas where women have a role to play in maintaining good nutrition for the family.**



# Optimizing women's impact on health, nutrition and well being of the family

Some of the measures that have been identified by AL NIDAA/ENID and others for enhancing the role of women towards family health/nutrition:

- Improve the health of women and their children and other family members **(women's time utilization factor:**

**Health and well being of the family reduces the “caring” time of women and mothers thus sparing time for their productive roles)**

- Identify strategies and/or technologies that free extra time for women from household and family tasks
- Educate girls and women & raise capacity to cope with modern life
- Overcome barriers to economic empowerment, entry into the labor market, participation in public decision making, and eventually to political participation (and local government).
- Involve women in food/nutrition related technology transfer and capacity building activities, and facilitate access to markets.
- Encourage networking and cluster formation among women agri-food producers.
- Respect and draw on the positive aspects of the local culture, heritage and tradition.

# Follow up actions and policy implications

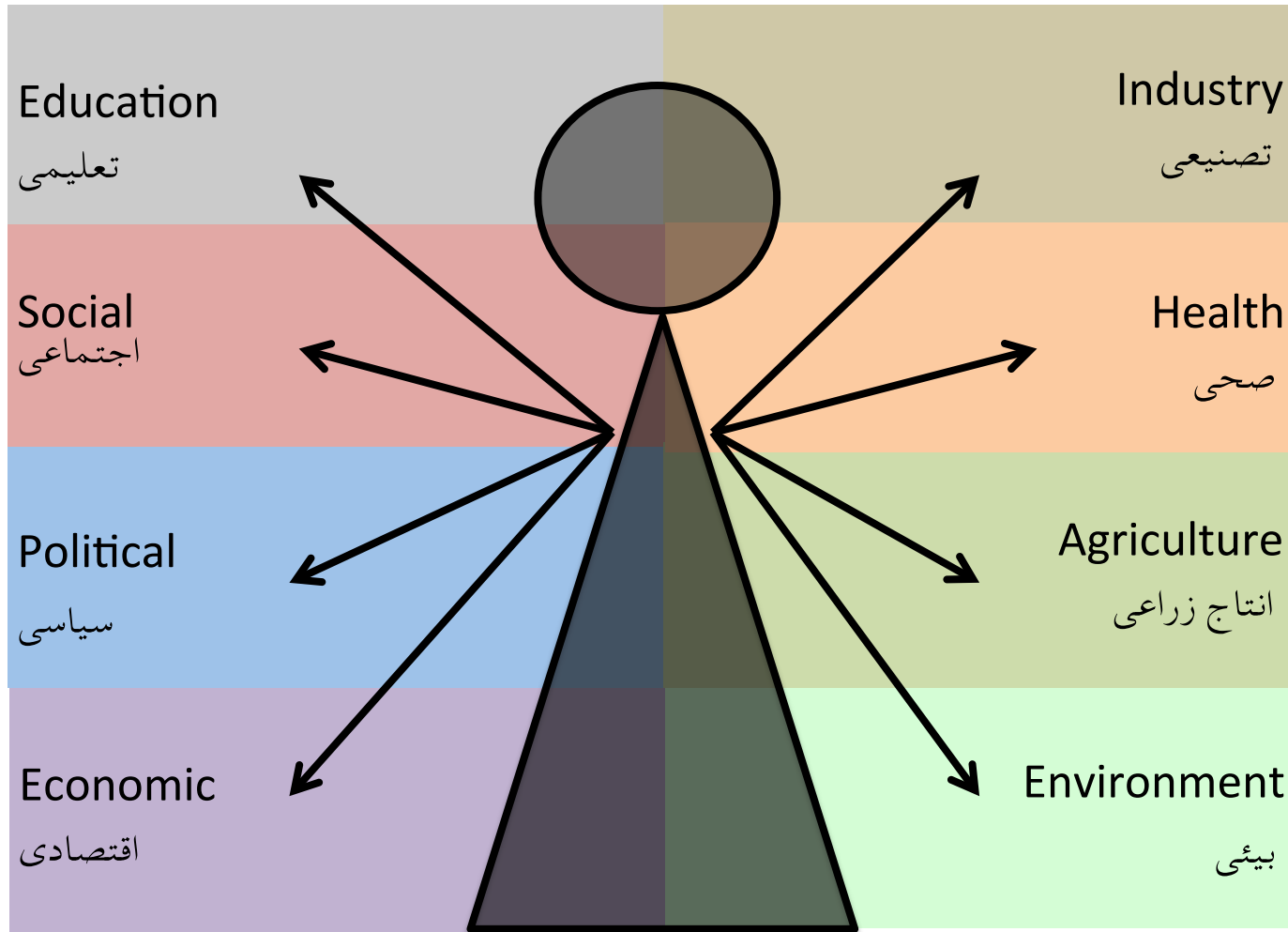
- Review and evaluate the many ongoing initiatives/projects/studies (past and present), and formulate recommendations for policies and strategies to enhance women's role in health and nutrition of the family. **CONNECT THE DOTS → ↑ SYNERGY → ↑ IMPACT.**
- Support a wider use and application of the FVC analysis methodology to better understand women's roles.
- Compile updated information from all past and ongoing programmes and initiatives that document women's contribution to sustainable food production systems.
- Analyze the inter-related factors that impact the food and nutrition role of women within the local socio-cultural context and use outcomes as a basis for formulation of evidence-based enabling and supportive policies and strategies.

# Follow up on Intersectoral Action - Policy implications

- Identify and remove any conflict of interest between laws, regulations and policies of concerned sectors that interfere with (or constrain) women's contribution to health & nutrition of the family.
- Propose measures for policy harmonization and synergy creation among the legal and policy frameworks of various involved sectors.
- Identify institutional, procedural, and capacity building needs to facilitate an integrated vision in policy formulation and in the design of comprehensive multi-disciplinary programmes to support women's contribution to better health and nutrition of the family.
- Identify the awareness raising/knowledge/training needs for professionals of other concerned sectors so as to better understand the different roles and contributions of women to the realization of the respective shared food, nutrition and health objectives.
- We must go beyond limitations of the notion of simple “mainstreaming of women's concerns” towards addressing specific implications for institutional and policy reform that allow for **establishment of trans-sectoral mechanisms at the policy level** to harmonize, coordinate and support the multiple inter-related and inter-dependent roles that women embody.

# Women's multiple and interdependent roles are viewed as part of an indivisible "whole"


مجالات الأدوار المختلفة للمرأة



# We need to go from mainstreaming of gender concerns...

لا يكفي ادماج متطلبات المرأة و احتياجاتها في كل قطاع على حدة .... بل

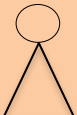
Education  التعليم

Social  الاجتماع

Poltical  السياسة

Economic  الاقتصاد

Industry  الصناعة

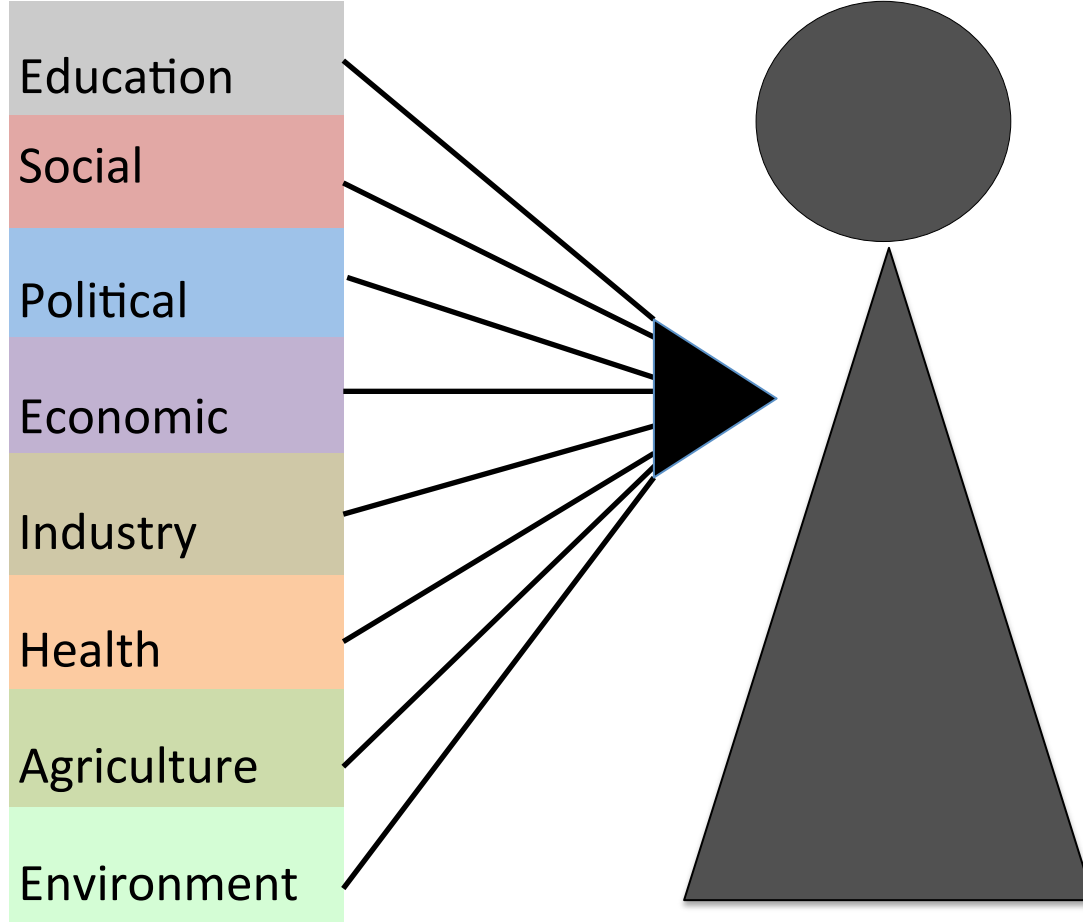
Health  الصحة

Agriculture  الزراعة

Environment  البيئة

# to creation of programmes capable of addressing women's interdependent gender issues in an integrated manner

... يجب وضع برامج مدمجة قادرة على التعامل مع المتطلبات المترابطة لتنمية للمرأة وفقاً لمنظور متكامل



# Investing in AL NIDAA/ENID's experience in sustainable development

- The successful achievement of expectations/expected outcomes of AL NIDAA/ENID's work in Qena has contributed to building a solid partnership for development with the local communities.
- AL NIDAA/ENID has gained the valued trust and confidence of the people of Qena as well as of the Administration and the funders.
- The experience gained to date by the multidisciplinary ENID teams in the design and implementation of integrated community based approaches to comprehensive sustainable development is an added value that is particular to AL NIDAA/ENID
- It is believed that the capacity of AL NIDAA/ENID for integrated multi-sectoral people centered development planning can now be used to advise on and guide a wider scale level of development planning in the Governorate of Qena.
- The eventual success of planning for governorate level integrated development in Qena can serve as a model for other governorates.

**THANK YOU**