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TECHNICAL BRIEF

Green Job Opportunities

Opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship for women in Senegal's green transition

This technical brief serves to highlight and promote gender-responsive green employment solutions that fit the situation of Senegal. Furthermore, it aims to recommend government officials that agriculture, forestry, energy, and waste management emerge as the four most promising sectors for creating green jobs and are intricately interconnected within the context of the Sahel and the Great Green Wall Initiative.

The global transition toward a green economy is anticipated to yield a substantial number of new job opportunities, particularly for women, within sub-Saharan Africa and across the world. The shift towards environmental sustainability is projected to generate 24 million employment opportunities on a global scale over the coming two decades. Consequently, various strategic plans have been implemented to facilitate the transition to a green recovery, including a renewed commitment to advance the Great Green Wall (GGW) Initiative in the Sahel region. The Great Green Wall Initiative aims to create 10 million jobs through green transition. In order to fully harness the potential of a green economy and address prevailing gender disparities, it is important to place women at the forefront of this green transition. However, women face Micro-economic, structural and cultural barriers as well as barriers to business development and effects of Climate Change that prevent them from fully benefiting from the transition to a green economy.

The green economy is key for Senegal's economic development, as the country is highly affected by environmental degradation and climate change, with a population that relies heavily on natural resources. The Government of Senegal is actively working towards addressing gender inequalities and promoting a greener economy through various national plans and programmes. However, policies lack a comprehensive approach that have set both green economy and gender objectives and more public policies are required in order to specifically target the primary barriers hindering women's participation in the green economy by supporting women's access to green jobs, green finance, and green entrepreneurial opportunities. On one hand, there are policies aimed at promoting the green economy, while on the other hand, there are separate gender-related policies indicating there is a siloed approach. As a result, there is a gap in public policies that specifically target the primary barriers hindering women's participation in the green economy by accessing green jobs and/or setting-up green MSMEs.

Senegalese women face important structural and cultural barriers that prevent them from fully benefiting from the transition to a green economy. The key barriers can be summarized as limited access to land, finance, infrastructure and technology, training and education, and information. To fully capitalize on the potential of a Green Economy, as well as to decrease the existing gender inequalities, women need to be put at the center of the green transition.

This policy brief summarizes the leveraging of the green transition towards the creation of gender-driven green jobs in Senegal and aims to inform policies to promote gender-responsive green entrepreneurship in Senegal. These findings are part of a study conducted by UN Women and UNCCD in two countries of West Africa—Burkina Faso and Senegal—with an aim to inform policies to promote gender-responsive green entrepreneurship.

1. The Great Green Wall Initiative in Senegal

Established in 2007 under the leadership of the African Union, the Great Green Wall initiative is dedicated to restore degraded landscapes across the Sahel region, with the ultimate goal of positively impacting the lives of millions on the continent. Today, the initiative's objective is to rehabilitate 100 million hectares of presently degraded land, capture 250 million tons of carbon, and generate 10 million environmentally sustainable employment opportunities by the year 2030.¹

Senegal, the Great Green Wall initiative covers the administrative areas of **Saint Louis, Matam, Louga, and the Bakel department (Tambacounda).**²

For implementing the Great Green Wall in Senegal, the Integrated Program for the Great Green Wall (PIGMV) was created.³

It further accelerates the development of the regions through the following aspects:

- **Protect** and restore the balance of ecosystems by increasing the productivity of agriculture and livestock, preserving biodiversity and making the economy of the Sahel zone more resilient to the effects of climate change.
- **Improve** food security for local populations by developing value chains
- **Boost** soil carbon stocks and reduce the pressure of migration by developing economic opportunities for the population, particularly young people and women.

The ambition of the Sahel initiative:



Rehabilitate **100 million** hectares of presently degraded land in all 11 countries

capture **250 million** tons of carbon



and generate **10 million** environmentally sustainable employment opportunities by 2030.

Figure 1. This infographic presents Senegal's cross-cutting strategy.



2. The Government of Senegal is prioritizing the shift towards a green and inclusive economy

The country's commitment is based on the conviction that a healthy natural environment with its ecosystem services constitutes the foundation for its sustainable and inclusive development for **climate resilience, food self-sufficiency, and the well-being of present and future generations**. This perspective is reflected in Senegal's overall strategic framework⁴:

- The Plan Sénégal Émergent (PSE) (Emerging Senegal Plan)⁵
- The Plan Sénégal Émergent Vert (PEV) (Green Emerging Senegal Plan)⁶
- The Stratégie Nationale pour la Promotion des Emplois Verts (National Strategy on Green Jobs)⁷

The **Lettre de politique du secteur de l'Environnement et du Développement durable et de la Transition écologique 2022-2026** (Policy letter for the environment, sustainable development and green transition 2022-2026) which addresses gender issues and the green economy.

This framework aims at creating green job opportunities, building capacities and developing an appropriate financing strategy.

At the regional level, Senegal has adopted:

- The roadmap for the implementation of the final document of the ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Strategy and Action Plan in West Africa, and

- Point 2 of the Action Plan of the Roadmap of the final document of the ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Strategy.⁸



National strategies and policies

In addition, aligned on the PSE:

- The Stratégie Nationale pour l'Équité et l'Égalité de Genre 2016-2026 (SNEEG) (National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality 2016-2026) aims to establish a sociocultural and institutional environment conducive to the realization of gender equality and to mainstream the gender perspective in all central and local public institutions by 2026, and
- The Stratégie Nationale pour l'Autonomisation Économique des Femmes (SNAEF) (National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women) aims to unleash the participation of women in the economy as entrepreneurs and wage workers, while removing structural barriers faced by women and girls for an equal participation in the economy.



3. Women's participation in the labour force in Senegal

Although the Government of Senegal is putting emphasis on gender equality, the reality on the ground shows great disparities when it comes to women and work in Senegal.

High levels of informality:

Women are overrepresented in the informal economy. In Senegal, 97% of the economy is informal, engaging around 96.4% of the working population,⁹ especially in agriculture (23.4%), retail trade (22.4%), and manufacturing (12.5%) sectors.¹⁰

Women's entrepreneurship:

Women exhibit leading roles in entrepreneurship in Senegal. The self-employment rate is higher among women than men (73.7% for women against 56.5% for men). Regarding women-led businesses, the majority are micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). These businesses are mostly found in the service and the agricultural sectors.¹¹

Limited access to finance:

The gender gap in access to finance in the continent is estimated at \$42 billion. In Senegal, 92% of micro-enterprises and 90% of small businesses face difficulties in financing.¹² Also, access to green finance and the ability to mobilize resources for private sector actors remain very limited.

Unpaid care work:

Women are responsible for more than 90% of the workforce in domestic and care work. More specifically, they spend 4 hours 9 minutes per day on domestic activities and childcare, compared to 30 minutes for men.¹³ The discrepancy is even more pronounced in rural areas, where women do up to 12 hours of unpaid work per day.¹⁴



Approach & methods

Approach based on (i) the analysis of the enabling environment for a green economy, (ii) the identification and analysis of the green economy opportunities in specific sectors, and (iii) the constraints, the potential and the participation of women in the green economy.

This study focuses on four sectors for (i) the relevance for the TBC economy in the context of the GGW area and (ii) the potential for Green Jobs creation with a specific focus on women and (iii) scaling potential across the country.

Methods:

- Documentary research based on the review of more than 160 reports and publications.
- In-depth interviews with subject-matter experts, public institutions, economic actors, women-owned and women-led companies, civil society and other actors.
- Finally, a validation workshop was held to validate the results of the study and gather recommendations to improve the brief.



Agriculture



Forestry



Energy







Waste management
(including repairing, recycling and reuse activities)

4. Study results: Green opportunities for women in Senegal

Overview of the main green job creation opportunities for women in the region covered by the GGW for each key sector.

Figure 2. Mapping of green job opportunities for women in the GGW initiative area in Senegal.

Note: This table presents the mapping exercise to identify opportunities for green jobs for women in Senegal in the context of the GGW. An overall score is provided based on the average score of each of the three categories in the final "Opportunity score".

Sector	Green economy opportunities		Women's participation in the green economy						Enabling environment				Opportunity score	Quick wins (yes/no)
	Greening the economy	New products and services	Skills		Type		Level of employment		Strategic and legal framework	Socio-cultural context	Existing best practices	Strategic and legal framework		
			Low	High	Employed	Self-employed	Current	Projected						
Forestry 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes
Agriculture 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes
Energy 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes
Waste management 	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Yes

● Low ● Medium ● High



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From green jobs to green entrepreneurship

The study identified a strong potential for green jobs creation for women in four key sectors which are crucial to the success of the Great Green Wall initiative.

In the short term, most opportunities for green jobs will arise through women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses in agriculture, forestry, waste management, circular economy or renewable energy.

4.1 Forestry



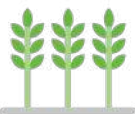
The sector presents promising opportunities for women green job creation.

The **Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)** offers multiple high-value opportunities (shea, acacia, moringa, baobab) that are still to be developed and would need active support (funding, R&D, marketing) to meet their full potential. Ecosystem restoration efforts have a job-creation potential, with close to 40 jobs for every \$1 million dollar invested, providing safety networks for rural families with low incomes.

Tree nurseries hold a good potential for creating employment for women, building upon their local knowledge of endemic species appropriate to their area while increasing the success rate of plantations as they are made in similar conditions/climate.

Ecotourism offers immense potential for sustainable development, showcasing the country's rich natural and cultural heritage. The active promotion of the ecotourism development for a responsible travel experience could provide opportunities for women's employment in the formal sector.

4.2 Agriculture



Most opportunities are closely linked to agriculture, dominated by subsistence farming and income-generating activities corresponding to low-end types of green job opportunities.

Improved opportunities tend to be located in the cotton, horticulture or organic grains value chains, with strong potential for job creation in the inputs activities (inputs, water efficiency, fodder), in transformation (canned food, treatment of organic waste to energy) or in commercialization (packaging, storage, transport, marketing).



4.3 Energy



Access to energy is an important precondition that triggers the creation of green jobs in other sectors and value chains, such as agriculture and services.

For green jobs, the potential in the areas of bioenergy and access to clean fuels, and to a lesser extent, solar energy is relatively high. However, the biggest potential for developing green jobs for women lies in related value chains and access to energy.



4.4 Waste Management



Waste management in Senegal holds promising green job opportunities for women in several subsectors, especially composting activities, as women are already highly involved in such related sustainable agriculture practices.



5. Recommendations and way forward

1

Getting women entrepreneurs ready for the green economy

- Promote women's participation in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.
- Implement active market labour policies and strategies with a focus on skilling and reskilling of women.
- Develop women's networks and business associations in male-dominated sectors of the green economy with higher barriers to entry by women (e.g., construction, energy and transportation).
- Establish incentives to support the formalization of women's informal economic activity and adopt gender-responsive policies and programmes to foster women's participation in green jobs and entrepreneurship.

2

Getting grassroots women/cooperatives ready for the green economy

- Support the women organizations and cooperatives, and strengthen their institutional capacities, including through aggregation into federations to facilitate collective action, access to inputs, finance and markets.
- Increase access to time-saving equipment and other labour-saving solutions to reduce work hardness for grassroots women to decrease time spent on domestic work.
- Ensure women's and girls' rights to land ownership.

3

Leveraging women entrepreneurs' access to green finance

- Develop financial products adapted to the needs of women's cooperatives and micro-enterprises, including using digital solutions to access finance.
- Develop facilities to support women's green financial inclusion and access to green finance mechanisms, improving women's information, knowledge and capacity to access complex processes around green finance, and collecting sex-disaggregated data to track women's access to green finance.
- Foster networking and collaboration among women to connect with peers' entrepreneurs, mentors, and potential employers in the green economy and forge partnerships with businesses operating in the key sectors to create opportunities.



4

Address the difficult working conditions, heavy workload and unpaid care work of women

- Advocate balancing men's and women's responsibilities for care through leveraging investment in care services and infrastructure and implementing policies to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. Addressing inequalities in the distribution of unpaid care work will have a significant impact on enabling women to take paid jobs, including in the green economy.

5

Advocacy of women's networks in the green economy

- Improve women's advocacy and participation in decision-making processes around the formulation and monitoring of green transition policies at the national level.
- Strengthen existing national platforms (Plateforme de l'économie verte, National Coalition of GGW, etc.) involving women to facilitate and increase consultation, monitoring, and coordination of gender and green economy actions at the country level. This will ensure stakeholder engagement (civil society, private sector engagement, women entrepreneurs, etc.)
- Advocate and build capacities to improve policies and ensure effective law enforcement to create an enabling environment for developing green gender-inclusive sectors in Senegal and the Green Great Wall.

6

Foster Green jobs for women in the context of the Great Green Wall

- Develop and implement programmes that address the key gender-related barriers faced by women entrepreneurs, as well as rural cooperatives and other grassroots organizations, particularly in the agriculture and renewable energy sectors.
- Implement innovative public-private partnership programmes to develop financing products that are tailored to the needs of women-led businesses.
- Design programmes that provide both financial and technical support to women-led green businesses and that mobilize finance, through the design of lines of credit from commercial banks that will be injected into women-led businesses, of specific guarantee funds that will be tailored to support these lines of credit, as well as of sovereign funds from government institutions and other financial mechanisms, leveraging green and climate finance.

Acknowledgement

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UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), adopted in 1994, is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.

The objective of UNCCD is to support countries and communities with the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions. With 197 Parties, the UNCCD unites decision makers, scientists, civil society and the private sector around a shared vision and framework for action to transform how land resources are used and managed to ensure healthy lives and sustainable livelihoods. It is critical that these efforts continue to promote gender equality and gender-responsive approaches to the control and access to land.

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