



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Women's Role in Agriculture-North Africa

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- ❖ According to UN Women for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, poverty in North Africa, “accelerated by high population growth, drought, poor infrastructure, and globalization, has driven more women into the agricultural wage labor, including post-harvest activities and agro-processing industries.”¹
- ❖ The 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development indicated that 46% of Egypt’s female work force is employed in agriculture.²
- ❖ In the 1990s, approximately 57% of the female population participated in agricultural activities, with greater involvement in animal processing (68%) as opposed to vegetable production (46%), in Morocco.³
- ❖ In 2010, women comprised 26% of the Tunisian labor force and a quarter of economically-active women were working in agriculture. However, because women primarily work in the unpaid family labor, women’s agricultural contributions have been underestimated.⁴
- ❖ Based on 2005 statistics covering the share of female and male agricultural holders in developing regions, the female share of the agricultural labor force in Algeria is less than 25%.⁵
- ❖ According to a Food and Agriculture UN report, the “extensive out-migration of men from rural areas in Libya has resulted in the effective ‘feminisation’ of agriculture, with women receiving more and more responsibility for agricultural production” in the region.⁶
- ❖ In June 2012, the International Fund for Agricultural Development created the Promotion of Rural Incomes through Market Enhancement Project, which aims to reduce rural poverty among unemployed youth, landless laborers, and women and woman-headed households in Lower and Upper Egypt, over a span of eight years.⁷
- ❖ MADRE, a non-profit organization based in the United States, launched Women Farmers Unite in 2009, in collaboration with a Sudanese organization called Zenab for Women in Development. It is Sudan's first and only women farmers union.⁸
- ❖ In 1990, the National Union of Agriculture and Fishing of Tunisia (UNAP) established a National Federation of Women Agriculturalists with 18 regional delegations.⁹

¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/Martini-EP-9-EGM-RW-Sep-2011.pdf>

² http://www.unwomen.org/mdgf/B/Egypt_B.html

³ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0250e/x0250e03.htm>

⁴ http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/300580/AARINENA%20women%20empowerment%20study_final_29.pdf

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3137e/i3137e.pdf>

⁶ <http://spring-forward.unwomen.org/en/countries/libya>

⁷ <http://www.ifad.org/operations/pipeline/pn/egypt.htm>

⁸ <http://www.madre.org/page/sudan-women-farmers-unite-41.html>

⁹ http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/300580/AARINENA%20women%20empowerment%20study_final_29.pdf