

## **SUPPORTING WOMEN IN THE AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN**

In line with the core mandates of ACEIDEV centred on empowerment and creating viable business enabling environment for entrepreneurs at various level and sectors, the women agricultural entrepreneurship project targets a silent but focal group involved in active food production activities around the nation. Women groups in several states across the country especially in rural areas have been integral to production processes along several Agricultural value chains. According to research, in Nigeria about 60% of rural women play active roles in the production down to the point of sales of food items to end users. It will be important also to add that the agricultural sector as well as small businesses owned by these women have been greatly impeded leading to other problems like food insecurity which has become a national issue.

Despite the integral role played by women in the agricultural sector, findings show that these women like other entrepreneurs continue to face dynamic problems impeding the growth and competitiveness of businesses in this important sector. The fact that women entrepreneurs are silent producers whose efforts within this important economic sector cannot be adequately captured in the GDP of the country in itself is the problem. Most of these female farmers continue to live below poverty lines. Some of the problems unique to these group are lack of proper business management skills, poor knowledge on modern farming techniques and equipment, poor association structure, poor distribution chain structures, poor access to finance as well as other issues arising from gender imbalance.

Activities under this project hopes to strengthen and build the capacity of women group in the sector to ensure women are adequately empowered to run

agricultural businesses along several value chains to increase productivity of women in the agricultural sector as well as reduce the prevalence of national issues like food insecurity and poverty.