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Center for International Environmental Law and Human Rights Watch

Submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat on the integration of obligations under CEDAW and other relevant human rights treaties in the design, planning, and implementation of adaptation and capacity building in climate actions

At the 20th Conference of the Parties, the States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Lima Work Programme on Gender (Decision 18/CP.20) to advance the implementation of existing gender equality mandates across all areas of the climate negotiations. The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) and Human Rights Watch welcome the invitation to relevant UNFCCC observer organizations to submit views and information under the Lima Work Programme on Gender as referred to in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the decision.

Gender equality and women's and girls' human rights and their empowerment are fundamental for pursuing sustainable and effective climate change policies. As such, the Cancun Agreements, UNFCCC decisions (e.g. 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17, 15/CP.18, 2/CP.20) and the Paris Agreement have all reiterated the centrality of advancing gender equality and women's rights for effective climate policies. Conversely, several human rights bodies including the UN Human Rights Council, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) have emphasized the obligation to respect and protect women's rights when responding to climate change and other threats to the natural environment.

In a 2012 decision, the States Parties to the UNFCCC “[c]onsider[ed] the importance of ensuring coherence between the participation of women in the UNFCCC process and the principles and objectives of international instruments and relevant multilateral processes, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW] and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.”¹ Last year's workshop on gender-responsive climate policy, as requested by the Lima Work Programme on Gender, highlighted that “[t]he protection of human rights – enshrined, for example, in Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other human rights covenants – ..., should be an ongoing consideration in the conceptualization and implementation of gender-responsive policies and projects.”²

CIEL and Human Rights Watch therefore propose that the second in-session workshop on the Lima Work Programme on Gender during the 44th session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation includes a more detailed discussion on the integration of obligations under CEDAW and other relevant human rights treaties in the design, planning, and implementation of adaptation and capacity building in climate actions and the value of recognizing these existing human rights standards under the UNFCCC.

¹ UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP 18). December 2012. Doha, Qatar, Decision 23/CP.18.

² Subsidiary Body for Implementation, Gender and Climate Change, Report on the in-session workshop, September 2015, FCCC/SBI/2015/12, para. 90.

Specifically, we propose that the UNFCCC Secretariat invite civil society representatives and experts from the CEDAW Committee to report about the parallel discussions at the CEDAW Committee. On 29 February 2016, the CEDAW Committee will hold a half-day of general discussion on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change in the context of the provisions of CEDAW. The purpose of the half-day of general discussion is to prepare a "*General Recommendation on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change*" (see [concept note](#)). The general recommendation can provide guidance to States Parties to the UNFCCC on the measures they should adopt to ensure full compliance with their obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill women's human rights in the context of climate change.