

UN Women submission

Gender-responsive climate policy with a focus on adaptation and capacity-building, and training for delegates on gender issues

29 February 2016

Background

At its twentieth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP-20) adopted the Lima Work Programme on Gender (Decision 18/CP.20) to advance the implementation of existing gender equality mandates across all areas of climate negotiations. Decision 18/CP.20, among others, invited Parties to communicate views on gender-responsive climate policy with a focus on adaptation and capacity-building, and training for delegates on gender issues. This submission is provided in response to that invitation.

The present submission first sets out the context of recent intergovernmental gains and achievements on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It then elaborates on the nexus between gender equality and women's empowerment and climate change; followed by lessons learned and challenges for gender-responsive adaptation and capacity-building based on UN Women's programmes in the field. The submission ends with UN Women's views and recommendations on the scope and expected outcomes of the in-session workshop on the topics considered in this submission, scheduled to be held in conjunction with the forty-fourth session of the Subsidiary Bodies, 16 – 26 May 2016.

I. Introduction

2015 was a pivotal year towards the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Member States, in commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, adopted a political declaration¹ where they committed to accelerate the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through six key approaches, namely: strengthened laws, policies and strategies; strengthened and increased support for institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels; the transformation of discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes; significantly increased investment to close resource gaps, including through domestic resource mobilization and official development assistance; strengthened accountability for the implementation of existing commitments; and enhanced capacity-building, data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

¹ Adopted at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. See E/2015/27-E/CN.6/2015/10, resolution 59/1; http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2015/27

In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in July 2015, Member States committed to ensuring gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment. The Addis Agenda includes important new and transformative actions to realize gender equality, including a reaffirmation that achieving gender equality, empowering all women and girls, and the full realization of their human rights are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development; of the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies; and to adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation and transformative actions for the promotion of gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment at all levels, to ensure women’s equal rights, access and opportunities for participation and leadership in the economy and to eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination in all its forms.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,² adopted by Member States in September 2015, endorsed 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. Goal 5 includes six substantive targets and three means-of-implementation targets that go well beyond the Millennium Development Goal 3. In addition to the Goal 5 targets, gender-specific targets are also included in several other goals, such as those on poverty, hunger, health, education, water and sanitation, employment, safe cities, reducing inequalities, climate, peaceful and inclusive societies, and data. Goal 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” has a means-of-implementation target 13.b “Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing states, including focusing on **women**³, youth and local and marginalized communities.”

In December 2015, a historic moment for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of climate change was realized with the adoption by the Parties of the Paris Agreement to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, a universal and comprehensive framework to guide climate policy and actions from 2020 onwards. The Paris Agreement constitutes a breakthrough in that, for the first time, a climate treaty incorporates gender-specific references. Its preamble commits Parties, when taking action to address climate change, to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, as well as on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Agreement’s section on ‘Purpose’ specifies that the global response to the threat of climate change will be undertaken in the context of sustainable development in its three dimensions – social, economic and environmental.

Importantly, the Paris Agreement mandates gender-responsive adaptation actions and capacity-building activities. In Article 7.5, “Parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, **gender-responsive**⁴, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.”

² Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

³ Emphasis is UN Women’s.

⁴ Emphasis is UN Women’s.

Article 11.2 states that “Capacity-building should be country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs, and foster country ownership of Parties, in particular, for developing country Parties, including at the national, subnational and local levels. Capacity-building should be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building activities under the Convention, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and **gender-responsive**⁵.”

Within the UNFCCC context, even before the adoption of the Paris Agreement, about 20 decisions on adaptation and capacity-building that reflect gender perspectives had been adopted by Parties to the UNFCCC.

Taken together, these intergovernmental outcomes and most notably the Paris Agreement, have further solidified and strengthened the normative framework and accelerated political momentum towards the realization of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights. Implementation of this framework thus needs to be pursued on a priority basis, including on all aspects of climate change, so that measurable progress can be made by 2020.

The nexus between gender equality and women’s empowerment, and climate change

Climate change affects everyone but it has become increasingly evident that climate change affects various groups of the population differently. Poor women and girls are among those most affected. Existing gender inequalities limit women’s and girls’ access to and/or ownership of resources that are key to their sustainable livelihoods, such as land, water, other productive resources, and assets. Compounded by their often limited mobility and decision-making power, women and girls are more at risk of death in natural disasters, as was for example, the case in the December 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, where they comprised 70 per cent of the fatalities.

The disproportionate effects of energy poverty on women and girls include limits to their access to education and employment due to the time spent on biomass collection. They also include significant health and safety risks from household air pollution, carrying heavy fuel loads and the lack of exterior lighting. Gender inequalities, in turn, are further exacerbated by climate-related hazards, resulting in what the IPCC found to be “higher workloads, occupational hazards indoors and outdoors, psychological and emotional stress, and mortality” for women as compared to men.

At the same time, women can be the primary, and in some settings the leading actors in responding to threats or impacts of climate change. They are change agents, leaders and innovators. In devising climate responses, including those relating to adaptation and capacity-building, women should not be passive recipients but play an active role in identifying solutions. Their concerns, contributions and needs should be taken into account from the inception stage.

⁵ Emphasis is UN Women’s.

Gender analysis and gender mainstreaming⁶

Gender equality and women's empowerment concerns are easily overlooked, in particular, in the context of climate discussions given the argument that climate change impacts and responses are "gender-neutral". Taking this view thus perpetuates existing gender inequalities and violates the human rights of women to be equal participants in decisions on climate change responses that affect them and their societies. Realizing women's human rights implies recognizing and addressing the underlying and/or immediate causes of women's and men's human rights violations; challenging structural constraints to the equal rights and choices of women and girls;⁷ and putting in place appropriate policy and programmatic responses in line with human rights principles. A human rights-based approach to gender equality also calls for the participation of marginalized, disempowered and discriminated against groups of women and men in decisions that affect their livelihoods and overall sustainable development.

Gender mainstreaming is defined as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."⁸

By integrating gender equality components in national or local policies, and in services and sectoral programmes, it aims in the longer run at transforming discriminatory social institutions, recognizing that discrimination can be embedded in laws, cultural norms and community practices that, for example, limit women's access to natural resources and decision-making processes, thereby hindering them from being active contributors to climate solutions or to disaster response. Such progressive changes rely on access to data, appropriate information, gender expertise, supportive cultures, budgets, among others.⁹

Gender analysis¹⁰ is one of the cornerstones of gender mainstreaming and involves efforts to understand how and why issues affect women and men differently and unequally within a particular context or development sector, and what options exist to address them. Prerequisite resources for effective gender analysis include: specialized expertise in gender issues and sector-specific technical expertise to conduct or to use research; time for analysis of data; and access to adequate and flexible financial resources for new research. Gender analysis also relies upon access to national data such as gender statistics, operations research (i.e., findings derived from testing pilot projects, and from programme monitoring and evaluation) as well as qualitative data generated through policy and academic research and participation assessments.

⁶ For a comprehensive discussion on gender mainstreaming and gender analysis, refer to Guidance Note: Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming, UN Women, 2014. The Guidance Note also includes an Annex on Gender Mainstreaming Toolbox, which includes Gender Analysis Tools, Sector-Related Gender Mainstreaming Tools, Gender-Responsive Budgeting Tools, and Gender Mainstreaming in Programming Tools.

⁷ Chant and Sweetman (2012) in UN Women. *Guidance Note: Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming*. New York, 2014.

⁸ ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council). *Agreed conclusions*. E/1997/2. 1997.

⁹ UN Women (2014)

¹⁰ The discussion on gender analysis was taken from UN Women Guidance Note, 2014

As climate change impacts are not neutral, and women and children have been documented to suffer disproportionately from the impacts of climate change, a gender analysis framework (as above) and gender mainstreaming approach should be taken from the conceptualization stage of any climate action or response, including those relating to climate adaptation and capacity-building. This will help ensure that projects and policies, as well as finances to address climate change are gender-responsive.

Similarly, decisions on capacity-building support to developing country Parties mandate the need to take into account gender aspects. One of the most comprehensive decisions on capacity-building, i.e. the Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention, positions gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue in all six elements of Article 6, i.e., education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation. The Doha work programme is to be guided by: ... (d) Gender and an intergenerational approach... (Annex, paragraph 14). As part of their national programmes to implement the Convention, Parties are encouraged to “cooperate in, promote, facilitate, develop and implement formal and non-formal education and training programmes focused on climate change at all levels, targeting women and youth in particular...” (Annex, paragraph 16). Parties could also, inter alia, “seek input and public participation, including participation by youth, women...” (Annex, paragraph 22(i)) and “... enhance the active participation of youth, women... in climate change activities” (Annex, paragraph 22(j)).

Gender-responsive adaptation and capacity-building: Key lessons and challenges

Drawing from UN Women’s work to address climate change through its programme work and field experience, this section highlights key observations, lessons and challenges for implementing gender-responsive adaptation and capacity-building.

UN Women’s climate change-related work is guided by the Entity’s mandate of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is positioned within UN Women’s key areas of work of women’s economic empowerment, and women’s leadership and political participation. The key lessons aim to encourage and support the consistent implementation of gender-responsive climate change adaptation and capacity-building programmes by all actors.

Key Lessons:

➤ ***The role and support of government is key to achieving gender equality results and broadening impacts***

In Bangladesh, the project “**Reducing Vulnerability of Women Affected by Climate Change through Livelihood Options**” had the government as its key partner and also a project beneficiary. Under the programme, 141 government officials, specifically gender equality, climate change and planning focal point from 32 ministries, departments and agencies were trained on mainstreaming gender equality in climate change adaptation programmes. In addition, some 30 practitioners were trained on Gender in Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction, of which 18 benefited from in-depth or ‘master class’ training on gender mainstreaming in DRR and climate adaptation programmes. The programme also trained and supported the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) to integrate gender equality considerations in their national survey on the ‘Impact of climate change on human lives’. It supported the Planning Commission in incorporating gender perspectives in the chapter on climate change and environment of the seventh five-year plan.

The project has been considered a flagship project for the country on gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction as it successfully built the capacity of government officials for gender mainstreaming in a significant number of government agencies. Over the four-year project period, the project's outcomes have contributed to enhanced understanding of government officials, development partners and NGOs about gender equality and the incorporation of gender perspectives in relevant programmes, policies and initiatives, including in the development of directives such as the Cyclone Shelter Guideline and the draft national plan for disaster management which have integrated gender considerations.

In **Ecuador**, through the project **“Strengthening communities’ capacity of resilience to the adverse effects of climate change with emphasis on food security”**, UN Women provided technical assistance and inputs for the Government’s draft climate change policy (with an emphasis on adaptation to the effects of climate change) with the view to strengthening the reflection of a gender perspective. In what was initially intended to be used to guide one national programme, the government is now considering to develop a gender and climate change national policy.

- ***Women should not be seen as passive project beneficiaries. They possess skills and knowledge on natural resources management and are often frontline actors in disaster and crisis response. Through capacity-building and other measures, they can become decision-makers, their agency is affirmed and they become key actors in climate action.***

“Strengthening women's capacity in disaster risk reduction to cope with climate change”, a UN Women programme in Viet Nam, demonstrated how through training and awareness-raising on disaster risk reduction and management activities, local women acquired the knowledge and skills needed to help them better prepare for natural disasters, thereby reducing the negative consequences of climate change and natural disasters to them, their families and their community as a whole.

As these women gained more knowledge on disaster risk reduction (DRR), they have also articulated their specific concerns as women and girls. Organizing themselves within the Viet Nam Women’s Union, they obtained a seat and a voice in the Central Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, the country’s inter-Ministry committee for all disaster management policies and activities. From being mere recipients of the country’s plans and programmes on disaster management, local women assumed their place in decision-making on and planning for disasters where they now also bring in their specific concerns as women and their contributions to solutions from a gender perspective. The programme also developed a number of practical tools: Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction training manuals for Viet Nam Women’s Union staff; and a Policy Brief on Gender and DRR which included policy advice for decision-makers.

- ***Gender-responsive programmes, by their very nature, bring multiple benefits – social, economic and environmental***

The goal of UN Women’s **“Rural Women Light Up Africa”**-project in Tanzania, was to empower women and train them to install and maintain solar energy panels so that they can be part of the solution to the critical need for reliable energy in African villages. Trained for six months at the Barefoot College in India, the six Tanzanian women recipients of the project returned to their villages with the responsibility of installing solar technologies that provide electricity to households. They also

provide repair and maintenance services. The beneficiaries included 460 households and schools, where students can now learn and read after dark, and women and men can pursue productive activities with the help of solar-powered electricity.

Conceived as an effort that mitigates climate change, 'Rural Women Light Up Africa' also had spill-over benefits to the women-trainees. With their new knowledge and the recognition of their contribution to their society¹¹ came an improved sense of self-worth and empowerment as these women now receive monthly stipends. The solar engineers and other women members of the village solar energy committees have also become more active participants in village meetings. They have become role models for their peers, their daughters and young village girls and have demonstrated that women, when afforded the opportunity to build their capacities, can play active roles in community responses to climate change.

The "**African Women in Technology (AWIT) initiative**", a UN Women programme in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, is an example of how a climate mitigation programme, by targeting women beneficiaries, realized gains not only for the women themselves but for their families and communities. By ensuring rural women's access to productive resources (farming technology), the women beneficiaries experienced greater agricultural yield, earned more income and gained food security. Using farming technology means less manual labour for these women and more time for leisure or to undertake productive activities. This initiative is an example of an intervention built around empowering women as they contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation and represents a new and innovative approach for gender-responsive development.

- ***Evidenced-based programmes that offer gender mainstreaming tools for work in climate action are more likely to gain buy-in from stakeholders and have a better chance of being replicated and scaled up***

In **Bangladesh**, UN Women's project on "**Reducing vulnerability of women affected by climate change through livelihood options**", addresses climate adaptation, resilience, mitigation and capacity-building. It has supported close to 20,000 women in three of Bangladesh's poorest eco-zones through disaster preparedness training, livelihood skills training, livelihood support, and psycho-social training to support each other to cope with disaster related losses. The provision of fruit tree saplings made a contribution to carbon sequestration.

The programme gained government buy-in and support as it was based on research that included the review of relevant national policies from a gender equality perspective. It supported policy advocacy and the development of tools such as a Cyclone Shelter Guideline, the Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change adaptation by the Department of Women Affairs, and the draft national plan for disaster management, all of which integrated gender equality considerations.

¹¹ Building on the success of the project, the Government of Tanzania partnered with the Government of India to establish a regional training centre in Zanzibar which opened in August 2015. It is currently training its first group of 11 solar engineers to further up-scale the technology.

In Ecuador, the programme **“Strengthening communities’ capacity of resilience to the adverse effects of climate change with emphasis on food security”** was supported by: a strategy approved by the Government; the identification of gaps in climate change responses from a gender perspective; a set of gender-responsive indicators for programme follow-up and monitoring; and the identification of lessons from the implementation of the strategy.

- ***Programmes that include a gender equality perspective are more likely to recognize structural inequalities and address those in their interventions***

In Pakistan, the **project approach of involving both men and women of the same family** in different interventions helped in dealing with men’s initial reluctance to women’s participation in group and other activities.

In the **Maldives’ UN Joint Programme on Low Emissions and Climate Resilient Development (LECReD)**, after observing that women’s participation in trainings and workshops was very low, UN Women organized workshops and trainings specifically for women, which took into consideration constraints such as timing and location or venue of the activities. Women’s participation and engagement in these capacity-building efforts was critical to adapt and build resilience to climate change impacts.

- ***Capacity-building programmes that target project implementors, government officials and other stakeholders for gender-responsive climate action are equally crucial***

UN Women’s experience confirms the need to target climate change programmes through capacity-building efforts to ensure that they reflect gender perspectives and are gender-responsive. UN-Women’s **Pacific Multi-Country Office’s Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction** programme, which covers 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs), aims to ensure that Pacific women become full and equal partners in, and leaders and beneficiaries of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts and overall sustainable development. Towards this end, UN Women works with governments, regional development partners and NGOs to ensure that the needs and priorities of women are considered in all stages of climate policy development and project or programme implementation. The programme currently focuses on capacity building and the provision of support to partners and stakeholders to implement gender-responsive climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

UN Women has been a key partner in mainstreaming gender perspectives into the Pacific Climate and Disaster Resilience Strategy, a first regional strategy that provides an integrated approach to address climate and disaster risks. At the national level, the programme has engaged climate change stakeholders and national governments to raise awareness and acquire better understanding of how climate finance can contribute to strengthening gender equality.

In Maldives, the **UN Joint Programme on Low Emissions and Climate Resilient Development (LECReD)** ***aims to enhance capacities at national and local levels to support low carbon life-styles, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.*** The programme’s target community is the

Laamu Atoll and its inhabitants. It aims to assist the Atoll and its islands to realize and work towards LECReD through reflecting these issues in local level development planning and service delivery. Given the country's vulnerabilities as a small island state, adaptation, mitigation, and building resilience are regarded as key in the planning of programme activities. To this end, capacity development and advocacy has been undertaken to ensure that the communities are able to support this foreseen change and development at the local level. Capacity at local level needs to be built and strengthened in order to turn policy into action.

UN Women works to ensure that the joint programme is gender-responsive. It is developing a Gender and Climate Change manual to strengthen the evidence base on the impacts of climate change on women and their livelihoods, to inform policy-makers and those in leadership positions in crafting gender-responsive policies at the national and local levels. The manual can also serve as a resource in supporting and facilitating the implementation of gender-responsive adaptation and capacity-building actions and policies. It can serve as basis for training of key stakeholders including the local councils, Laamu Working Group (LWG) members, Women's development committees, NGOs and technical and programme personnel of all stakeholders.

The twenty-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, conducted in 2013 – 2014 provided **additional important lessons** on gender mainstreaming in climate action.¹²

- **Gender equality considerations must be incorporated into relevant government policies and budgets** and steps taken to ensure that planning, decision-making, policy action and budgeting on climate change reflect gender equality considerations and benefit all women and girls.
- **National gender equality mechanisms must be adequately resourced** to allow them to carry out their useful function of ensuring policy coordination for gender equality and women's empowerment and enjoyment of their human rights across government ministries, including those in charge of climate change. In many countries, however, gender equality mechanisms are seldom engaged in discussions relating to climate change, hence are not able to carry out their gender mainstreaming mandates in policies and efforts on this thematic area.
- **Climate programmes that target women as beneficiaries or engage them as leaders and actors must be adequately supported.** Climate finance institutions, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) should be urged to implement their gender-related mandates, including by ensuring that grants awarded to intermediary institutions respond to the gender-related mandates of the funds and/or award projects by women or benefit women, in particular women in developing countries.
- **Governments must be encouraged to use gender-responsive budgeting as a tool to ensure that resources are channeled** towards the implementation of climate change policies and programmes that deliver on commitments to gender equality and women's human rights.

¹² E/CN.6/2015/3

Challenges:

UN Women's climate change-related programmes and analysis revealed a number of challenges in incorporating gender equality considerations consistently in national and local climate responses. In particular:

- ***The integration of gender equality perspective remains marginal in climate policy and responses.*** Gender issues in disaster risk reduction or climate change receive little attention in shaping climate policy and in devising climate responses and actions. Lack of knowledge about how to use the gender mainstreaming strategy in climate policy and action, combined with inadequate tools and practical guidelines, as well as data gaps and insufficient assessments of the impact of climate policy on women are persistent challenges.
- ***Funding for programmes*** that aim to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of climate change and to build the evidence remains inadequate.
- ***The participation of women*** in national and local planning and decision making, as well as in capacity-building programmes for climate action ***remains limited.***
- ***There is a lack of evidence*** on the impacts of climate policies and programmes on women and girls, as well as insufficient evaluation and analysis of the results of programmes that are gender-responsive on women and girls.

Recommendations on the scope and expected outcomes of the in-session workshop to be held in conjunction with the 44th session of the Subsidiary Bodies, May 2016

For the in-session workshop to be held in May 2016, UN Women proposes the following:

SCOPE OF THE WORKSHOP

Issues to be considered:

1. Reviewing national-level actions – success stories and limitations/challenges in applying a gender perspective or in mainstreaming a gender perspective in climate change adaptation and capacity-building policies and actions;
 - a. Include examples of gender mainstreaming in Parties' NAPs, NAPAs, capacity-building activities; discussion should cover all stages, from design/conceptualization, to implementation of programmes;
 - b. Examples of good practices by Parties and other stakeholders on engaging women in the conceptualization, development, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes on climate change adaptation and capacity-building;
2. Areas for additional research and evidence
3. The role of global institutions, including climate finance mechanisms in setting and implementing guidelines and frameworks that promote gender-responsive climate change adaptation and capacity-building policies and actions;

4. Discussion of institutional mechanisms required (global, regional, national) to support the implementation of a gender-responsive climate change adaptation and capacity-building policies and programmes
5. Role of the UNFCCC Secretariat, Parties and observers to the UNFCCC, UN system entities, other international and regional organizations, women's groups and other civil society organizations, think tanks and researchers, and private sectors and foundations in promoting a gender-responsive climate policy and action, in particular on climate change adaptation and capacity-building

PROPOSED OUTCOMES:

- 1) **In-session workshop report**, which would summarize and synthesize the presentations of panelists and discussions, to be made available online;
- 2) **Conclusions of the in-session workshop** agreed on by Parties. The Conclusions should include the key lessons that emanated from the workshop, and include follow-up recommendations for implementation; as well as next steps on the follow-up to the Lima Work Programme on Gender and related decisions on adaptation and capacity-building.