



Women's Environment & Development Organization

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The Women's Environment and Development Organization¹ welcomes the opportunity to present views and recommendations on options and ways to advance the goal of gender balance in bodies established pursuant to the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, in order to improve women's participation and inform more effective climate change policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally in accordance with para 11 of Decision 23/CP.18.

INTRODUCTION

During last year's 18th Conference of Parties (COP) in Doha, WEDO was encouraged by the strong will of Parties to engage in a critical dialogue on gender equality and ultimately, find consensus on Decision 23/CP.18 "Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol."

This Decision builds upon a set of decisions which have been taken at the UNFCCC over the last several years, recognizing the centrality of gender equality to effective climate change policy. It mandates the Parties of the UNFCCC to work towards a goal of gender balance, while crucially recognizing this goal as a means to an end, "to inform more effective climate change policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally."

Since 2007, WEDO has focused its programs, activities and advocacy at the national and international level on the cross-cutting issues of gender equality and climate change. WEDO aims to ensure gender equality and women's rights are at the heart of climate change policies and programs and promotes the equal participation of women and men in all levels of decision-making, while supporting capacity building efforts to strengthen the understanding and knowledge on the importance of including gender equality and women's rights in climate change solutions.

Equal Participation in Decision-Making at the UNFCCC

In 2012, working towards a goal of gender balance, the participation of women on national delegations reached an all-time high of 32%, and 19% of the Heads of Delegations were women. However, as reported in [WEDO's recent analysis of women's participation in the process from 2008-2012](#), women continue to be underrepresented in many delegations, particularly with respect to higher levels of leadership positions in the negotiations, and, in countries most vulnerable to climate impacts. Women's participation in Eastern and Western Europe, for example, is at around 42%, while it is around 21% in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. These differences can also be seen when looking at participation by UNFCCC negotiating blocks, with countries from the African Group, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and OPEC having less representation of women on national delegations. Additionally, women's participation in the boards and bodies of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol- bodies which

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contribute substantively towards the implementation of UNFCCC decisions such as adaptation, finance and technology- remains at just below 10%.

The Women Delegates Fund (WDF)

Recognizing these disparities, and in an effort to increase the direct participation of women from different regions, WEDO coordinates the Women Delegates Fund (WDF). A project of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA)², the WDF was launched in 2009 with support and leadership from the Government of Finland, and more recently, the Government of Iceland. The WDF is a comprehensive leadership program, recognizing that addressing structural barriers to gender disparities in decision-making requires moving beyond adding more 'seats at the table' to innovative actions (e.g. financial support, mentorship and networking opportunities) and capacity building.

The program prioritizes consistency in participation, networking, training and leadership development. This is implemented through organized networking events during intersessional meetings, outreach opportunities, and training on a range of issues, from technical climate change themes to diplomacy, legal language, negotiating techniques and media skills.

Although the number of women directly supported by the WDF is small relative to the number of participants in UNFCCC meetings, the impacts of the WDF are more widely evident. In quantitative terms, since 2009, 28 women who may not have otherwise been able to participate in UNFCCC meetings have been supported to attend intersessionals and annual COPs and around 50 women delegates have participated in capacity building activities. WDF participants have taken on lead roles within their delegations, been appointed to technical bodies, and contributed to groundbreaking text references and gender sensitive policies on women's rights and gender equality. Participants of the WDF have consistently stated that the most effective aspects of the initiative include:

- Support that networking opportunities provide, amongst WDF members and more broadly;
- Demand-led training tools and briefings provided, and;
- Travel support that ensures participants attend multiple UNFCCC meetings in any given year.

The equal participation of women and men in climate change decision making can help to strengthen the crosscutting experiences necessary for climate change policies that reflect and serve the needs of society equally. However, enhanced gender balance on delegations is only one step towards socially responsive climate policies and solutions. A more inclusive and participatory process requires mechanisms whereby multiple diverse perspectives can be represented- not only balanced by sex but also by multiple intersecting identities and perspectives including age, ethnicity, region, class- as well as those with diverse expertise, from scientific and technical to human rights and social justice.

² The GGCA was founded in Bali at COP13 by IUCN, UNDP, UNEP and WEDO and now counts among its members more than 80 UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs from around the world. Visit <http://www.gender-climate.org> for more information.



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Gender Equality in Climate Policy

Gender equality and women's rights are instrumental to effective climate change policies and solutions. It is widely understood that gendered social norms dictate power relations, issues of access and ownership, division of labour and the burden of the 'care economy' (i.e. care for family/ household/ community, etc.), resulting in unique knowledge, preferences and needs among individuals across all regions. If climate policy and solutions are to meet the needs of women and men equally, it must understand these gendered dynamics.

As documented in WEDO's latest publication, [Gender Equality and The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: A Compilation of Decision Text](#), over the past several years there has been a marked increase in decisions coming out of the UNFCCC that address gender equality issues. Due to enhanced outreach, knowledge, capacity building and advocacy on the linkages, there is now language across all areas of the negotiations, from mitigation and adaptation to capacity building, technology and finance.

These gender-sensitive decisions present a foundation upon which to implement climate policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally—and which could help to transform existing inequalities. However the power of these words can only be judged through their effective implementation and impact on people's lives. There is a crucial need for tools and analysis to help translate what these decisions could mean at different levels, and how they can be effectively implemented. These implementation processes should be accompanied by robust monitoring and evaluating systems that report on the progress and provide feedback to improve the process in order to achieve a gender transformative implementation.

Words to Action- Gender Considerations in REDD+

At COP16 in Cancun, on the issue of REDD+, Parties requested countries "to address, inter alia, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards." In an effort to move these words to action, WEDO, in partnership with the [REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards Initiative](#), conducted action research across four REDD+ SES countries, to unpack the term "gender considerations" and generate suggestions for strengthening REDD+ from in-country research based on the lives of women and men in forest communities. The compilation of findings documented in, [From research to action, leaf by leaf](#) includes case studies of the research in each of the countries in addition to a series of action check lists to guide REDD+ policy-makers, program developers and all levels of practitioner in addressing the gender considerations of REDD+ through the use of social and environmental safeguards and standards.

Beyond this, several of the recent, gender-sensitive climate change decisions that have been agreed at the COPs, recognize that enhanced expertise on gender equality issues is needed to understand how these decisions can be implemented fully and effectively. This speaks both to the issue of balance and more effective policy – with the understanding that balance should also provide for a diversity of expertise on UNFCCC boards and bodies to include social and gender expertise across all issues, particularly for finance, technology and other 'technocratic' issues. Climate change must be recognized



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as a human-induced problem that requires responses that are informed by and decided by impacted populations.

Finally, though these decisions are an important step towards more effective and socially responsive climate policy, at present there is a lack of cohesion in the monitoring of implementation of these decisions, and/or of new decisions to ensure they contain promote gender equality and women's rights.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

With the above mentioned experiences in mind, WEDO puts forth the following key recommendations to build upon progress from Decision 23/CP.18:

- A comprehensive framework for action within the UNFCCC to address gender equality across all current and future decisions, including specific indicators and timelines for monitoring and reporting effective implementation;
- Support for regional workshops on gender equality and climate change that build capacity on gender-sensitive climate policies and contextualize implementation activities;
- Training and capacity building on the linkages between gender equality and climate change and applying a gender lens to climate policy for all stakeholders, including UNFCCC Secretariat staff, National Focal Points, and Chairs of UNFCCC boards and bodies;
- Funding for travel and capacity building to support countries in reaching the goal of gender balance on their national delegations and on boards/bodies;
- Mandates for policies, programs and research coming from the UNFCCC to include sex, gender-disaggregated data and gender differentiated social impact assessments;
- Enhanced gender-expertise throughout the UNFCCC infrastructure, and inclusion of gender experts on boards and bodies;
- Encouragement of Gender and Climate Change Focal Points at the national level.