

Submission by Malawi on incorporating an integrated gender perspective in the Green Climate Fund

Rationale and background for this submission

Malawi recognizes that women and men are differently affected by climate change because of political, social and economic inequalities. Women and men also contribute to the problem of climate change in different ways. They have different experiences, expertise and knowledge. This is why an effective response to climate change must incorporate an integrated gender perspective and both women and men must be involved in the debate, decision-making and implementation regarding all aspects of climate change.

Decision 1/CP.16 (article 7) recognises that gender equality and the effective participation of women are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change. The creation of the Green Climate Fund presents a unique opportunity to ensure that projects to address climate change benefit both women and men and that the fund takes a gender perspective into account in all its work. This would not only strengthen the work of the fund and make the response to climate change more effective, but also contribute towards greater gender equality worldwide.

Malawi encourages the Transitional Committee, in making its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties regarding the design of the Green Climate Fund and the Rules of procedure of the Green Climate Fund Board, to:

- Ensure that Gender Equity will be a cross cutting issue in the work of the Green Climate Fund and that the fund and its board will maintain an integrated gender perspective in its work.
- Encourage gender-balanced participation in the Green Climate Fund Board and in other decision-making related to the Fund, in accordance with decision 36.CP/7.
- Ensure that **expertise is provided to the** Board in relation to gender and social aspects of climate change.
- Ensure that gender considerations will be fully integrated into criteria considered for the approval of grants to guarantee that both women and men will benefit from and have access to climate related financial assistance.

Gender and climate finance – the benefits of an integrated perspective

- To ensure that climate change finance responds equitably and effectively to the urgent needs of all members of society, gender issues must be promoted in the various stages of implementation of climate finance, including decision-making, equitable benefits and access to funds, as well as during planning, monitoring and evaluation. In order to achieve this, both women and men must be included in the debate, decision-making and implementation regarding all aspects of climate change and a gender analysis must be used when assessing the social impact of the financial assistance provided.
- Policies and projects can have unexpected gender dimensions which can inadvertently contribute to structural inequalities and negatively impact women in particular. On the other hand, socially responsible investments can help foster equity and ensure all members of society can constructively contribute to climate responses.

Gender equality in decision-making– the importance of women as stakeholders

- The gender distribution in climate decision-making processes is currently out of balance. Women and men are unequally represented in international climate negotiation delegations and climate-related industries have a similar record. When women are not represented in political decision-making processes, their interests are not being taken into account on par with those of men.
- The Transitional Committee is encouraged to take into careful consideration the principle of equal participation and the importance of including women as stakeholders. Addressing gender inequalities and the concerns of women on climate change will provide more sustainable adaptation and mitigation strategies that take the needs of all citizens into account.
- Decision 36/CP.7 “invites Parties to give active consideration to the nomination of women for elective posts in any bodies established under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol” and “urges Parties to take the measures necessary to enable women to participate fully in all levels of decision making relevant to climate change.”
- Resolution on mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies, adopted at the 55th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, calls for an integrated gender perspective in climate change policies and that women’s full and equal participation will be ensured in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues. Article 6 of the resolution encourages governments and international financial facilities and institutions that provide climate and environment related assistance to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated into the design, approval, execution and monitoring of projects.
- Both women and men must have equal access to power and influence in the decision-making that takes place at the highest level of society. This is recognised in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which urges Member States to increase representation of women at all decision-making levels and mechanism for *inter alia* the prevention of conflict. There are worries that the effects and consequences of climate change can in the future lead to conflicts. Ensuring women a seat at the decision-making table will make societies more sustainable and less prone to conflict.

Gender and climate change – Differing experiences and contributions

- The IPCC has noted in its assessment reports that “climate change impacts will be differently distributed among different regions [...] and genders.” It has also been noted that women in developing countries in particular are more vulnerable to climate change than men. First and foremost, this is because women are generally poorer than men, more dependent on primary resources such as fishing and farming, and are subject to a gender-based division of labour that disadvantages women when the physical environment and natural conditions change.
- Women should, however, not only be portrayed as victims of climate change, but as fundamental actors in action against climate change. Women can be effective agents of change through their roles as consumers, breadwinners, caretakers, entrepreneurs and

educators. Women possess important knowledge on sustainable practices and coping strategies for their households, communities and their societies.

- Gender-sensitive capacity building allows women to contribute to climate change solutions, to adopt more environmentally friendly practices for household activities and to influence the behaviour of the people around them.
- Gender-sensitive disaster preparedness projects have provided an insight into the benefits of an integrated gender perspective when dealing with risks associated with climate change.