

Submission by Nepal on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group on options and ways to advance the goal of gender balance and gender equality under the Convention

The Least Developed Countries Group (LDC Group) welcomes the Decision 23/CP.18 and the invitation by the Secretariat to provide information and views on options and ways to advance gender balance and gender equality under the UNFCCC. This submission presents (i) general facts and selected examples on gender and climate change in LDCs, (ii) challenges faced and needs identified by LDCs in implementing previous decisions to promote gender equality in addressing climate change, and (iii) some suggestions for consideration by Parties based on LDC experience.

1. General gender and climate change facts related to LDC

In most of the LDCs women represent a large percentage of the poor, experience gender inequality and are faced with increasing vulnerabilities to climate change. Gender inequality related to land ownership, decision-making, control over other resources, and losses of assets and livelihoods due to climate change are likely to impact women more than men. This is also because rural women of LDCs are more responsible for managing basic needs in families such as farming, collection of firewood, drinking water and other household chores. As floods and droughts are predicted to increase, women will have to invest more time and energy for such activities resulting in less time for income generation activities.

However, women being vulnerable to climate change can act as agents of change in tackling climate change as they inherit indigenous knowledge and skills, are socially well connected and can be a medium of effective communication for positive change in the society and for next generation.

2. Challenges and needs in implementing previous decisions

In 2001 in Marrakesh, the first decision (Decision 36/CP.7) to recognize gender equality was adopted by the Conference of Parties, particularly noting the importance of women's participation in achieving progress on mitigating and adapting to climate change at all levels. This submission outlines challenges for LDCs both on gender in the UNFCCC processes and in formulating and implementing national policies.

UNFCCC process

Women continue to be under-represented in the delegations of many countries, particularly in high-level positions, as well as in the delegations of LDCs. A study by WEDO shows that five-year average (2008-2012) of women in national delegations in UNFCCC was 32 % women. Similarly, the five-year average of women as heads of national delegations in UNFCCC was 19 %.

Many LDCs do not have enough resources to finance sizable delegations, and designation of a small delegation generally affects efficiency and effective participation. The same study shows that the five-year average of women's participation in the LDC negotiating group was 20 %.

Gender and climate in national policies

At the national level, some LDCs have made progress, but the integration of gender into climate change issues remains a major challenge for many, as the issues compete with other pressing concerns such as meeting basic needs.

National strategies on climate change often lack policy coherence between international agreements on gender they have committed to and national adaptation or low carbon development planning. Disaster risk reduction policy tends to be more advanced on gender than climate change policy, as the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has taken steps to include gender in the national Disaster Risk Reduction Plans of Action formulated under the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Many NAPAs have included women only as beneficiaries, but they have not addressed gender inequality as an issue. Among them few NAPAs have mention the political, economic and social reasons for gender inequalities in climate change impact pathways. Very few demonstrate commitment to gender equality through their projects.

Gender (along with other social and pro-poor development concerns), has to date been poorly integrated into climate finance because most climate change finance is intended for large scale, technology focused and market based climate change mitigation initiatives.

Sharing best practices in LDCs

Gender equality is considered as one of the criteria for NAPA's priority setting in Bangladesh, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Malawi, Nepal, Niger, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Zambia. Several countries—among them Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Mali, Samoa, Senegal and Tanzania—have consulted women's groups including indigenous women, in preparing their NAPAs and some of them included women among the beneficiary group.

Similarly, National Committee on Climate Change (COMNAC) was set up in Senegal and employs women in leadership positions, a gender and climate change strategy has been developed in Liberia and gender is considered a core element on Africa Adaptation Programme (AAP).

3. Suggestions for further actions

As a way forward, the LDC Group is of the view that that the following actions may be needed for improving the participation of women and promote gender balance:

Inclusion in UNFCCC negotiation process

There is a clear need for further advancing gender equality in the UNFCCC process for LDCs. Among others, need for education, training, as well as logistics support such as support for travel is seen as key requirements for ensuring increased qualitative and quantitative participation by LDCs women in the UNFCCC negotiations. Most LDCs gender experts see the Women Delegate Fund by the Government of Finland as an excellent example for such enhanced support to the LDC Group.

Awareness and Capacity building

There is a need for capacity building efforts such as targeted training and general awareness raising on issues surrounding gender equality. Capacity building action should also be expanded to UNFCCC related negotiation skills and its associated bodies.

Participation and enabling environment for women in decision making

Ensure that women who take their place at the decision-making table as a result of special measures are able to contribute their full potential (and/or are not constrained to 'deputy' positions which provide limited decision-making power). Efforts to increase representation must be made alongside efforts like continued gender equality education, and effective gender mainstreaming in all policies, programmes, processes and actions.

Project planning and implementation

The Least Developed Countries Expert Group has advised the LDCs to consider regular updating and restructuring of NAPAs as per their requirements in order to better align them with national budgeting processes. Gender concerns could be included, refined or improved during this updating process.

Similarly, there is a need to expand the nascent gender initiatives within LDCF projects and integrate gender considerations into projects that lack gendered components.

The LDC Group is in a view that the UNFCCC should ensure that any programme funded within its structure should ensure gender inclusion – e.g. Adaptation Fund, LDC Fund, Special Climate Change Fund and Green Climate Fund (GCF). Implementing agencies should also develop measurable and verifiable quantitative and qualitative targets that demonstrate how projects address gender considerations and women's as well as men's needs and capabilities.

Request for development and implementation of gender and climate change strategy

Considering the women as the most vulnerable group within society in LDCs, developed countries are encouraged to provide full financial and technical support to develop and implement "Gender and Climate Change Strategy" in order to address gender related concerns associated with climate change.