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Gender-responsive climate policy with a focus on mitigation action and technology development and transfer

Submission by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung North America and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

At COP20, Parties adopted the Lima Work Programme on Gender, which aims to advance implementation of existing gender mandates across all areas of the climate negotiations. Parties are encouraged to actively engage in the development of the two year work programme on gender, including, submitting views on the matters to be addressed at an in-session workshop on gender-responsive climate policy related to mitigation action and technology development and transfer. The workshop is scheduled during the forty-second session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (June 2015).

The Heinrich Böll Stiftung North America and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) welcome the invitation to relevant UNFCCC observer organizations to submit views and information under the Lima Work Programme on Gender, as stated in paragraph 13 of the decision: "*Invites Parties and admitted observer organizations to submit to the secretariat, by 18 February 2015, their views on the matters to be addressed at the in-session workshop referred to in paragraph 11*;". In this submission Heinrich Böll Stiftung North America and WEDO share views on the scope, potential outcomes and information to be covered during the in-session workshop at SB42 in June, 2015, with a particular focus on recommendations for enhancing means of implementation for gender-responsive mitigation action and technology development, via strengthened institutional coordination and the provision of gender-responsive finance, especially through the Financial Mechanism of the UNFCCC.

Background

In order to bring about a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate resilient development pathways, globally and in individual countries, all climate change mitigation and adaptation actions need to also pursue broader environmental, social, economic, and development benefits in a gender-responsive way. Assessing and addressing the implications that any planned actions (policies, programs and projects) have on women and men so that they can benefit equally and existing inequality is not perpetuated[1] is an important strategy to make adaptation and mitigation projects and programs – irrespective of scale – more effective and to create multi-win scenarios[2] within and across sectors. This applies of course to climate areas and sectors traditionally considered more gender-relevant (such as adaptation interventions focusing on food security, health, or disaster risk reduction). Gender mainstreaming is equally important – although often neglected – in mitigation-focused interventions for example in sectors such as energy, infrastructure or transportation and with respect to the gender-equal access to and deployment of safe, appropriate, environmentally, economically and socially sound technology. It is therefore commendable and encouraging that the Lima Work Programme on Gender, in highlighting the equally important agency of men and women for successful mitigation and adaptation action, decided to focus its first in-session SBI work shop on mitigation action and technology development and transfer.

Workshop Organization and Outcomes

Such a workshop should be understood and structured as a learning experience, combining in an informal and open environment knowledge sharing and policy recommendations based on lessons learned from existing institutions, policies and structures as well as best-practice experiences and case studies.

The three hour workshop, presumably scheduled early in the second week of SB42, would benefit from being organized around key inputs and recommendations for a comprehensive and actionable report to be considered at SB43.

The workshop could be structured under two interlinked themes, each with a series of questions, with a brief set of individual expert inputs followed by a group discussion.

In addition to the experts, respondents from a wide range of institutional boards, bodies and expert groups of the UNFCCC would provide and support critical interactive dialogue, including colleagues from the Technology Mechanism, NAMA facility, or the Financial Mechanism, in addition to active Observers from environmental NGOs and research facilities. Additionally, it would be beneficial to have respondents share best practice experiences in implementation of gender-sensitive adaptation tools and guidelines via the Adaptation Committee.

The themes could be:

- **PART 1/ Setting the Stage**: Gender-responsive mitigation action and technology transfer and development in principle and in practice
- **PART 2/ Effective implementation**: Recommendations for more effective means of implementation of gender-responsive mitigation action and technology transfer and development

Some of the questions and presentations in **PART 1** of the workshop could include information on:

- What constitutes gender-responsive mitigation action and policy?
- What experiences do Parties/ Observers have at the national/ regional level on gender-responsive mitigation action?
- What is the role of safe, appropriate and environmentally and socially sound technology in implementing gender-responsive climate action?

Some of the questions and presentations in **PART 2** of the workshop could include information on:

- What are the main formal and informal structural barriers to gender-responsive mitigation and technology action and policy? (on the global/UNFCCC level; in countries)
- How to better integrate gender-responsive mitigation and technology actions and policy in:
    - Climate policy instruments and communications under the Convention (NAPAs, NAMAs, National Communications, TNAs), including through updated guidelines and guidance by the Secretariat
    - Mechanisms under the Convention
        - Financial Mechanism (GEF and GCF as operating entities; SCF; AF)

- Technology Mechanism (work of the Technology Executive Committee, TEC, and the Climate Technology Centre and Network, CTCN)

The workshop could end with a closing session on actionable recommendations to take forward, and to be included in the workshop report for consideration at SB43. These recommendations could include, for example the following action points:

- Review and report on gender aspects of existing technology needs assessments (TNAs);
- Develop a methodology and guidelines for the development of a gender-responsive nationally appropriate mitigation action plan (NAMA);
- Hold an exploratory workshop, outside of the in-session meetings, with Parties and experts from the TEC, NAMA and entities under the Finance Mechanism on gender-responsive tools and methodologies –similar to the 2014 Joint Meeting of the Adaptation Committee and Nairobi Work Programme;
- Invite gender experts to showcase best practice on gender-responsive mitigation actions in the Technical Expert Meetings under the ADP;
- Enhance links between the TechMech, the Finance Mechanism and Article 6 of the Convention, particularly on education, participation and information sharing, to encourage more women in STEM, and in turn, a more effective and just energy transition.

Workshop Inputs

In this section, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung North America and WEDO share information on key inputs into both part 1 and part 2 of the workshop outlined above. The organizations would recommend that this information could be presented as expert input, particularly on enhanced means of implementation.

PART 1- Making the Case for Gender-Responsive Mitigation and Technology Actions and Policies[3]

In most countries there are differences in the economic activities, access to resources and decision-making power of men and women. Women still face unequal access to political power, economic resources, legal rights, land ownership, bank credit, and technical training. Constraints affecting women's incomes, resources and power due to gender inequality exacerbate the effects of climate change and hamper the effectiveness of their responses to climate change. [4] As a result, women are more vulnerable to climate change[5], and the impacts of gender inequalities affect the larger community's potential to address climate change effectively.[6]

Nevertheless, women should not be viewed primarily in terms of their vulnerability. In many cases, women are already engaged in strategies to cope with and adapt to climate change, for example by leading community-based reforestation and restoration efforts. Through their roles as community leaders, farmers, entrepreneurs, producers, and household managers, women are powerful agents of change in addressing climate change, and important stakeholders in implementing low-carbon pathways in both developed and developing countries. However, they often require additional and/or targeted financing, resources, technology, training and support.

In the energy sector, for example, women and men have different energy roles, needs and priorities. Men's energy needs tend to involve commercial and large-scale industrial development whereas women's needs generally prioritize energy access for cooking, family or community needs or home-based small and often informal enterprises.[7] Low-emission energy investments and technologies that are gender-responsive

contribute to increasing men and women's access to modern and clean forms of energy for lighting, cooking, heating and cooling, pumping, transportation, communication and other productive uses. They increase economic efficiency and productivity gains with less time and physical exertion spent on basic subsistence activities such as wood fuel collection by focusing not on high-tech, high-cost solutions but instead on appropriate, safe, environmentally and socially sound technologies that respond to women's and communities' needs and build on already existing traditional technologies and capacities. They also create entrepreneurial opportunities and new markets for private investors, particularly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises owned by women. Overall, low-emissions development pathways will be more effective and equitable where they are designed using a gender-informed approach.[8]

Take an area of huge mitigation potential where cost-effective low-tech technologies exist, but lack of gender-responsive provision to financial services (including local, patient, low-cost access to small highly concessional credits or grants) remains a main barrier: **Addressing cooking energy needs is crucial because for nearly 3 billion people each day cooking is done by inefficiently burning coal or solid biomass such as wood.**

The resulting pollutants damage the health of women and children, contribute to millions of premature deaths each year, and deplete forests. Black carbon from these fires is a short-lived climate forcer estimated to contribute the equivalent of up to 50 percent of CO_2 warming globally.[9] In the aggregate, cleaner cookstoves – when designed and disseminated appropriately, i.e. with the input of women as users, customers, innovators and producers such as in the Upesi Cook Stoves Project in Kenya[10] – have a significant emissions reductions impact. So do other community or household based clean energy projects, many of them off-grid, such as biogas digesters, home solar systems or small hydro-generators that can provide electricity and motorized power for equipment to ease women's drudgery (for example water pumps and grain mills), and which can be bundled for emissions reduction credits under the Kyoto Protocol Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).[11] The Nepal Biogas Support Programme which has developed a gender mainstreaming plan to target women's ownership of biogas digesters and trains women to build and manage these digesters, is one successful example.[12] Another is the experience of Grameen Shakti in Bangladesh which trains female engineers to build, install and maintain solar home systems, with a plan to install close to one million systems by 2015 in off-grid rural areas.[13]

Gender-responsiveness can also improve the efficiency of large-scale energy infrastructure projects, for example by maximizing the number of electrical grid connections through targeted financing options, expanding the labour pool for construction and maintenance operations to include women as well as men, taking advantage of their differentiated capabilities and skills, and increasing the social acceptance of potentially disruptive projects within affected communities through compensation and shared benefit plans. Women are also often the primary decision-makers concerning household consumption, due to their family roles, and tend to make more sustainable consumption choices than men.[14] The OECD and others have documented women's increasing spending power worldwide and the huge influence of gender on sustainable consumption.[15] For example, women in developing countries represent close to half of the buyers of solar lighting systems.[16]

PART 2- Effective Means of Implementation and the Critical Role of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism

Fundamentally, implementation of gender-responsive mitigation actions and technology development and transfer is reliant upon the proper means in terms of education, access and finance.

Part of this is policies and programmes to address structural barriers in terms of access and educations. The next five years are essential for the transition to renewables as investments in new infrastructures will be made to last for the next 50 years. Thus it is important for these newer infrastructures to be energy efficient and socially just, setting the tone for future investments. Women and men have a right to be equal and active participants in the value chain of climate responsive technologies and beneficiaries of economic opportunities that may arise from enhanced mitigation initiatives. In order to achieve the above, it is necessary to overcome a series of barriers to facilitate women's engagement in the sector. For example, technology innovation and use is widely viewed as 'men's work'. However, in many developing countries, it is traditionally women's work to gather wood, provide food, and generate income for their own and their children's needs. It therefore makes sense to enlist women in designing and producing locally-appropriate energy technologies, customized to fit their household and income needs (ENERGIA and WEDO, n.d.) Even in countries where there is educational parity[17] at the higher levels of education, women's participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) remains relatively low to that of men. (ECLAC, 2013).

Most critically, to be effective in bringing about transformational change, it is crucial for that climate finance mechanisms are designed to respond to the roles women play in national economies, as well as the constraints they face in undertaking adaptation and mitigation initiatives, and the larger contributions they could make if they had greater access to necessary resources and opportunities. Here the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism with its two operating entities, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which channels incremental cost funding for mitigation actions to developing countries, and the newly capitalized Green Climate Fund (GCF), which after a successful initial resource mobilization efforts with US$ 10 billion in pledges is now the largest multilateral climate fund and is scheduled to allocate 50 percent of its funding for actions supportive of a low-carbon development paradigm shift, are of crucial importance. The fact that both of these operating entities in the past few years have made significant strides in integrating gender considerations into their approach to funding is crucial in this regard.[18]

Recognizing the importance of taking gender differences into account, the **Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) s**pecifically calls for taking a "gender-sensitive approach", making it the first fund to mandate the integration of gender-based perspectives from the outset of its operations. Close to its full operationalization, the GCF now takes gender into account in key operational policies, including its investment framework, its performance measurement framework and by requiring the ability of agencies seeking accreditation to the GCF as implementers or financial intermediaries to address gender mainstreaming in GCF-funded programs and projects.[19]

Climate financing approaches will be more effective and provide broader benefits if they address rather than reinforce gender inequalities that increase the vulnerability of women to climate change and adversely affect their ability to contribute to mitigation and adaptation efforts. The GCF can promote gender equality by establishing structures and operating procedures that are careful to include women as well as men in decision-making roles, respond to the particular needs of women for climate-related financing, and enable women's enterprises to benefit from new low-carbon technologies and economic opportunities. The new private sector facility of the GCF could play a role in this respect by focusing its business advisory services and its work with

international, national and local financial intermediaries such as commercial banks on reducing formal and informal barriers (including cultural biases) to women entrepreneurs, which are predominantly engaged in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in most countries. The provision of long-term, patient and deeply concessional credit lines to women entrepreneurs and to address community needs for mitigation-related investments is an important cornerstone of such a gender-responsive climate financing approach. In this context, climate funds and financial intermediaries have to redress an inherent bias toward expensive, large-scale, high-tech projects (necessitated by banks' need to "push money") in favour of scaling up the provision of smaller-scale financing options, focused on the empowerment of women, with a fit-for-purpose simplified approval procedure to support smaller-scale mitigation interventions at the community level.

Both the GCF and the GEF as operating entities under the Financial Mechanism draw on national climate plans, including those requested by the Convention such as National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), to determine Parties' funding priorities and to establish country ownership. It is therefore paramount that the guidelines and best-practise recommendations for these plans encourage the early and comprehensive participation of women, including via the engagement of gender experts, national women's machineries and women's civil society groups, in their development and updating.

Lastly, both the GEF and the GCF as operating entities of the Financial Mechanism are under the guidance of and are accountable to the COP, including through the provision of annual progress reports to the COP. The COP in reviewing those reports and providing guidance to both the GEF and the GCF should mandate – in accordance with Decision 23/CP.18, paragraph 4 – that both bodies regularly report on progress toward more effective climate finance disbursement and implementation that address the needs of men and women in recipient countries equally, including by responding to their technology needs and building on existing traditional knowledge and technologies where appropriate.

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Endnotes and Literature References:

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[2] Multi-win solutions could be defined as interventions that provide measurable direct climate results (GHG emissions reduced and avoided or improved resilience and increased adaptive capacity), but in addition also several of the following: economic benefits and livelihood support for targeted beneficiaries with a view to poverty alleviation; ecosystem or biodiversity protection in line with traditional access or usage rights; improved capacity, access to information, participation and decision-making by local stakeholders; and improvements toward gender equality.

[3] This sections draws on: Schalatek, L. and Burns, K. (2013). *Operationalizing a Gender-Sensitive Approach in the Green Climate Fund.* Washington, DC. Available at: http://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/schalatek_burns_gcf_gender-sensitive-approach.pdf.

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[12] Ibid, p. 114.

[13] Schalatek, L. (2009). *Gender and Climate Finance: Double Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development.* Heinrich Böll Foundation. Washington, DC, p. 14.

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[15] Quoted in: European Institute for Gender Equality (2012). Review of the Implementation in the EU of area K of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and the Environment. Gender Equality and Climate Change – Report. Belgium: Publications Office of the European Union, p.21.

[16] Thorsen, K. and E. Cecelski, C. Wiik, S Oparaocha (2011). "Gender Equality in Financing Energy for All. Gender-responsive energy financing can contribute to basic human rights and economic efficiency". NORAD. Oslo, p.5. Available at: http://www.norad.no/en/thematic-areas/energy/gender-in-energy/_attachment/390271?_ts=1367c9a4bd6.

[17] In the USA alone, 60% of master's degrees are held by women, while in 2011, less than 4% of clean energy jobs were held by women.

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