



**Decision 23/CP.18**  
**Submission from the Global Gender Office**  
**of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN GGO)**

*“The surprise was that **gender is the glue** that pulls all of the sectors together around the human dimension of climate change...”*  
– Participant in a ccGAP<sup>1</sup> workshop, 2011

Last December in Doha, at the eighteenth Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP18), Parties took an important step toward ensuring that climate change responses and mechanisms are effective, equitable and efficient. Building on significant gender equality provisions from COP16 and COP17, and reaffirming a COP7 decision, in particular, on promoting women’s participation, Parties to the UNFCCC agreed to **“promot[e] gender balance and improv[e] the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol”** through Decision 23/CP.18.

As comprehensive and complex a challenge as climate change presents to the global community, all perspectives, needs, ideas, capacities and expertise must be harnessed to find, fund, and enact its solutions: women’s and men’s participation and leadership alike is vital. Decision 23/CP.18 helps to bring efforts made under the UNFCCC into alignment with countless relevant agreed global goals and mandates, including ECOSOC Resolution 2005/31<sup>2</sup> among many others, going beyond solely mandating Parties to ensure gender-balanced representation in discussions and bodies; crucially, it describes gender-balanced representation as a means to an end. The Decision explicitly notes the importance of *“informing more effective climate change policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally.”*

Decision 23/CP.18, therefore, is not only significant at the global policy-making level, i.e. in UNFCCC decision-making spheres; it indicates an essential aspect of the other half of the equation: *gender-responsive implementation*. A critical step in the implementation process is anchoring global agreements within national contexts and finding real, practical, appropriate methods for turning ‘words’ into ‘action’.

Since 2010, the Global Gender Office of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN GGO) has supported countries in implementing their commitments to mainstreaming gender through their national climate strategies. Through participatory, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder processes, a dozen countries have now created **Climate Change and Gender Action Plans (ccGAPS)**. An additional 20 governments have submitted official requests to IUCN to conduct ccGAPs, and plans are underway to embark upon several new processes in 2014. The ccGAPS have been made possible through financial support of the Government of Finland through the Global Gender and Climate Alliance

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<sup>1</sup> **ccGAPS** are the Climate Change and Gender Action Plans, or climate change and gender national strategies and action plans, which IUCN has been supporting since 2010

<sup>2</sup> *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system*; accessible at <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2005/resolution%202005-31.pdf>

(GGCA)<sup>3</sup> umbrella program, and with additional support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The experiences, best practices and lessons learned from the ccGAPS to date have been compiled in a publication, which was launched last year at COP18. [\*The Art of Implementation: gender strategies transforming national and regional climate change decision making\*](#)<sup>4</sup> reveals the path to creating a ccGAP, and explores challenges, ideas, and identified next steps along the way.

IUCN is proud to collaborate with the GGCA Secretariat and membership and especially WEDO, which is the partner organization responsible for implementing the Women Delegates Fund (WDF), a GGCA project that supports women negotiators from the global South with travel resources, extensive capacity building and a women delegate community network. Numerous ccGAPS, e.g. in Nepal, Bangladesh, Haiti and Tanzania, have been conducted in partnership with WDF participants. These complementary projects of the GGCA demonstrate the impact that investing in women can have – not only for them as individuals, but also for their communities and countries.

While the above-mentioned publication goes into great detail on each ccGAP, including effective practices, challenges, and needs going forward, a few key ideas, while not exhaustive, are noted below for the purposes of this submission.

### ***Practice***<sup>5</sup>

The ccGAP process has been rooted in a critical practice: cross-sectoral dialogue that promotes the participation of women and men from multiple levels (i.e. grassroots women's organizations through Ministerial level.) Gender equality is a crosscutting topic that is pertinent to diverse sectors; likewise is the case for climate change. The women's and national multi-stakeholder workshops conducted during the ccGAP process are most often a unique, and sometimes the only, opportunity for representatives from diverse government departments and ministries to discuss these cross-cutting issues, learn from each other and consider the linkages among them. New connections are forged between government and non-government stakeholders, creating opportunities to address gender equality issues in the context of climate change comprehensively, and in nationally and more locally specific/appropriate ways. Time and again, participants have expressed their surprise in discovering that gender equality is central to development and not just a sideline issue 'for feminists'; thus, gender equality is newly recognized and prioritized as a precondition for sustainable development. The presence of diverse viewpoints and experiences makes for a more holistic and ecosystem-wide approach to both gender and climate change and is more institutionally realistic for the ccGAP itself.

### ***Challenges***

Governments, donors, and institutions at all levels express significant interest in addressing the gender dimension in their climate change programming, but they also express limited understanding of what steps to take or how to orient their overall approach for optimal impact. Thus, the ccGAP development process is underpinned by targeted capacity building that guides stakeholders' preliminary steps. Participants come away with enhanced knowledge of climate change and/or gender themes, as well as

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<sup>3</sup> 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 [www.gender-climate.org](http://www.gender-climate.org) for more information.

<sup>4</sup> [http://cms.iucn.org/knowledge/publications\\_doc/publications/?uPubsID=4824](http://cms.iucn.org/knowledge/publications_doc/publications/?uPubsID=4824)

<sup>5</sup> The following sections are drawn and/or adapted from *The Art of Implementation*; more can be found in that publication.

an enhanced understanding of gender and development. Depending on the country and institutional context, the training content may focus heavily on the technical components of mitigation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, REDD+, or other topics. Those familiar with climate change have the opportunity to understand the impact of socioeconomic processes, and those familiar with the broader realm of women's empowerment build their understanding of gender-differentiated roles in the specific context of climate change and natural resources. The participation of all staff, from administrative posts to top management, is also key to capturing diverse viewpoints and ensuring comprehensive institutional understanding and cooperation in the strategy's implementation.

### **Needs**

*“We have plenty of good, gender-sensitive policies. But how can we make them reality without the resources?”*

*- Government partner, Mozambique, 2013*

The development of a ccGAP is a key moment in a country's acknowledgement that gender equality is central to climate change decision-making and implementation, but it is only an initial step. While strategies and roadmaps include short-term actions, any legislative and institutional reforms will take time. Importantly, the ccGAP is a long-term placeholder for the moment in time when policy and planning opportunities emerge. Participants note that having the ccGAP in place can be most useful at the moment a country is ready to undertake the next phase of adaptation planning, set emissions reductions goals, prepare REDD+ plans, or to reform policy in any climate-related sector. In one case, the ccGAP turned the attention of an international institution to gender and catalysed the inclusion of a gender approach in a major regional report.

Perhaps most importantly of all, however, is the need for gender-responsive funding. The ccGAPS offer another opportunity for investors and donors to empower a country's identified priorities – especially those that might have an impact for sections of the population most at-risk. From fisheries to forestry, the ccGAPs provide innovative activities that can drive gender-responsive – even –transformative – implementation.