

Submission to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation concerning views 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, pursuant to Decision 23/CP.18

Submitted by LIFE e.V.

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Introduction

The SBI at its thirty seventh session invited Parties and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as relevant stakeholders, to submit to the secretariat views 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.

LIFE e.V. welcomes the opportunity to submit their perspective on the implementation of Decision 23/CP18

We very much appreciate the growing amount of research, knowledge, awareness and sensitivity for gender impacts of climate change in developing countries, as well as the support for addressing these impacts. However, similar attention is lacking when it comes to gender and climate change issues in developed countries. Though the status of gender equality and respective policy might differ, it is important to recognize that in developed countries climate change policy is also driven by androcentrism¹, thereby hindering necessary extensive emission cuts and fundamental changes in climate change policy and in people's lifestyles in these regions.

Given the situation described above, we focus our submission on a developed countries' perspective, and here in particular on Europe.

There is little in the way of data or case studies on gendered dimensions of climate change in European countries, but it is possible to observe that the attention of researchers and research institutions on these issues is increasing.

¹ The term "androcentrism" is understood to embrace certain patterns of thought, observation and action in regard to political, economic, scientific and societal issues. These patterns place men and maleness at the center or deem them to be the yardstick and standard while seeing women and femaleness as a "peculiarity", as a deviation from the standard (genanet/AG Frauen 2008, <http://bit.ly/16Wh5dU> accessed 28.8.2013).

Gender and Climate Change in Europe: Main dimensions / key messages

Participation of women in climate change decision making is low all over Europe. Additionally, although gender mainstreaming is an adopted strategy in Europe, it is not implemented in this policy field. Research recently undertaken for the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE²) pointed out that none of the measures undertaken to mitigate climate change, reported to the UNFCCC and/or to the European Environment Agency's database of climate change policies and measures in Europe, addressed any gender issues – even if these were obvious.

In the light of this we briefly want to bring to attention some key messages from the analysis of climate policy in EU Member States :

Impacts of climate change: gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities, as well as gender-segregated labor markets and income gaps, play a major role in how climate change affect women and men in Europe, like in most countries of the world.

Emission levels and capabilities to mitigate climate change at an individual level: gendered roles and identities are drivers for greenhouse gas emissions, thus are significant for analyzing the causes of climate change. Moreover, the portfolio of options women and men have to convert their lifestyles to low-carbon ones, or to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy, is shaped by education and income – which are both highly gendered in most European countries.

Perceptions and attitudes towards climate change in general are also highly gendered, as documented by polls in several European countries and the EU Commission. Preferences for climate change mitigation and adaptation policy differ between women and men due to education and income gaps, and gendered risk awareness.

Impacts of policies and measures might reinforce traditional gender roles and thereby increase discrimination and current gender gaps. The existing climate policy in European countries has been largely gender-blind, reducing the effectiveness and efficiency of low-carbon, climate resilient development.

And finally, decision making in climate change policy is highly male dominated in the EU Member States.

Gender balance – a first step towards gender equality

Although climate change decision making is highly male dominated, gender balance is only a first though important step towards gender equality. While equal representation is a right in itself, it is not necessarily a step towards gender responsive or gender sensitive climate policy. Gender responsive or gender sensitive climate policy could – or should – be implemented by both male and female climate experts, it is not (only) about supporting women in receiving their fundamental rights. It is about rethinking policy from a gender perspective: does the policy impact women and men

². Gender Equality and Climate Change: Report. Review of the Implementation in the EU of area K of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and the Environment.

Download: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-equality-and-climate-change-report> (accessed 28.8.2013)

differently, if so, how do we need to address this? Does it address the attitudes, responsibilities and needs of both sexes in their respective roles equally? Is it driven by androcentric thinking?

Thus, although gender balanced teams, boards, delegations might provide better opportunities for addressing gender issues, they are not automatically more gender sensitive than unbalanced ones. It depends on the sensitivity and experience of the individuals involved and their willingness to question their own roles.

Gender equality – next steps needed

Given the situation described above, there are some fundamental requirements for implementing gender equality meaningfully:

1. Increase gender expertise of male and female climate change experts and staff in institutions, by offering (preferably mandatory) gender training.
Gender training provides basic understanding of gender inequality, as well as helping participants rethink' gendered attitudes and structures.
2. Include gender experts on boards and delegations at least for a transition phase, to provide the floor and ensure that gender dimensions are seriously addressed.
In the current absence of gender expertise or gender trained climate change experts, it is highly recommended to include external gender expertise, which might also sensitize the experts on gender issues in their ongoing work.
3. Make sure that research about gender dimensions of climate policy is undertaken.
It is not only sex- or gender-disaggregated data which is lacking, it is also fundamental research on the different ways climate change instruments and structures affect gender relations and vice versa. Additionally it is important to make available research operational, and to overcome current unwillingness to acknowledge and use it.
4. Use available instruments and further develop these instruments
There are gender analysis instruments available which should be applied, like gender budgeting or gender impact assessment. Additionally these instruments must be further developed or new ones created, which fit different circumstances. Undertaking gender analysis needs time and resources, it can't be done by non-experts, nor merely 'on the side'.
5. Last, but not least: Provide funding to fulfill or implement the requirements mentioned above.

Gender equality: a women's issue?

Very often gender issues are perceived as women's issues, aiming at increasing the participation of women in the current structures and systems. That means, women have to adapt to rules set (usually by men) to become part of the structures. The consideration that the structures and systems might be the wrong ones, is not addressed. Furthermore, experiences with many years of gender equality policy clearly shows that without including men and without encouraging them to rethink their own roles, there will be no gender equality. Thus, sensitizing men to gender equality means to engage them in gender debates, and to encourage them to think, discuss, and change gender relations and in particular their own (male, masculine) roles and respective activities in society.

Traps in working towards gender equality

Socially constructed roles and identities and underlying power dynamics affect the way women and men experience climate change and respond to it. It is important to recognize that these differences – which may relate to emission levels or to attitudes towards certain solutions, for example – result when men and women are pushed by gender role norms into corresponding behavioral patterns, leading to a continuous replication of gender roles ('doing gender').

Such gender patterns have been widely observed in many different countries and cultures, and are often used to identify gender differences between women and men in their perceptions and attitudes, needs, vulnerabilities and use of resources as an entry point for addressing gender issues in climate change – like in any other area of environmental policy.

However, simply noting these differences without analyzing the underlying societal dynamics that give rise to them runs the risk of reproducing traditional gender roles and stereotypes, instead of contributing to gender equality and innovative climate solutions.

Additionally, it is quite important to use the gender terms meaningfully and to explain what is meant: if gender is not about women, what is the definition of 'gender'? What is the ultimate goal when talking about gender sensitivity or gender responsiveness? (See glossary of terms below)

Don't add gender and stir, rather change the patriarchal fundament

From our point of view, the ultimate goal of addressing gender in climate change policy is a fundamental transition to a low carbon development in a just society, a society based on (gender) equality and on caring – for people and the environment/climate.

Thus, in all our activities it is important not to lose track of this ultimate goal, even if it still seems far away. It is needed to check each of the measure undertaken, even small steps, if they contribute to the ultimate goal or if they consolidate the status quo.

On that note, we want to reaffirm the 11 steps for a gender just climate policy, developed by LIFE and GenderCC in the run-up to COP13 in Bali 2007³:

1. Recognize the vital urgency of gender equality in the growing crises of climate change issues and demonstrate leadership through top-level support for gender mainstreaming.
2. Ensure that women participate in all decisions related to climate change at all levels, in order to build a truly global and effective alliance for climate protection and climate justice informed by a gender perspective.
3. Ensure gender mainstreaming – from UNFCCC to IPCC to national and local institutions dealing with climate change – including installing a 'gender watch system' within UNFCCC and related processes.
4. Collect and publish gender-disaggregated data taken at every level and wherever possible.
5. Undertake gender analysis of all climate change policies, programs, projects and budgets – from research programs to mitigation measures and adaptation plans.
6. Agree on measurable gender-related targets and create practical tools that help integrate gender equality in climate protection.
7. Develop gender-sensitive indicators to use in national governments, local and international communications.

³ <http://www.gendercc.net/policy/conferences/cop13.html> (accessed 28.8.2013)

8. Design capacity building, education, and training in a gender-sensitive way and enhance women's access.
9. Invest in gender trainings to support processes of change towards gender equality, sensitizing both men and women about the importance of a gender analysis in the work they are doing.
10. Appropriately and sustainably support all aspects of gender mainstreaming.
11. Ensure that adaptation and mitigation strategies uphold basic human rights and the right to sustainable development.

Glossary of gender terms

Gender stereotypes: images, beliefs, attitudes or assumptions about certain groups of women and men. Stereotypes are usually negative and based on assumed gender norms, roles and relations.

Gender sensitive: indicates gender awareness, although no remedial action is developed.

Gender responsive: a policy or program that considers gender norms, roles and inequality with measures taken to actively reduce their harmful effects.

Gender transformative: addresses the causes of gender-based inequities by including ways to transform harmful gender norms, roles and relations. The objective of such policy or programs is to promote gender equality and foster progressive changes in power relationships between women and men

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