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## Achieving the goal of gender balance

### Technical paper by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

Drawing on relevant research, including consultation with Parties, this technical paper outlines key challenges to achieving gender-balanced representation and participation in climate-related processes and presents possible options to address these challenges. Parties may wish to use the information in this paper when formulating and implementing strategies to achieve the goal of gender-balanced representation and participation of women and men in climate-related processes, including in their delegations to UNFCCC sessions and with regard to their nominations to bodies constituted under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

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## **I. Background**

### **A. Mandate**

1. At its eighteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted a decision on promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established under the UNFCCC.<sup>1</sup> In relation to this decision, COP 22 requested the secretariat, among other things:<sup>2</sup>

(a) To undertake research and analysis on challenges to the full and equal participation of women in climate-related processes and activities;

(b) To prepare a technical paper on achieving the goal of gender balance as mandated by decisions 36/CP.7, 1/CP.16 and 23/CP.18 based on submissions and its own research for consideration at COP 23.

### **B. Objective and approach of the technical paper**

2. The objective of this technical paper is to provide Parties with a comprehensive overview and analysis of key challenges to achieving the goal of gender balance referred to in paragraph 1 above and to present possible options for addressing these challenges.

3. The research conducted to substantiate this paper includes an extensive literature review, an online survey (see annex I), interviews with Parties (see annex II) and interviews with relevant non-Party stakeholders. A review was also undertaken of existing initiatives created in response to internationally agreed frameworks to achieve gender balance and/or to increase the representation and participation of women in public policy and decision-making. Finally, good practices and lessons learned from existing experience and initiatives were applied to the challenges to identify a set of options for facilitating the development of strategies at a national and international level in the UNFCCC context.

### **C. Structure of the technical paper**

4. Chapter II below provides a summary of the key decisions by the COP that aim to address the issue of achieving gender balance and increasing the representation and participation of women in climate-related processes and activities under the UNFCCC. It also provides an analysis of the gender composition reports prepared by the secretariat since 2013 and concludes by identifying key challenges within UNFCCC processes.

5. Chapter III below provides an analysis of international frameworks that, among other things, promote women's rights to participation and representation in public life. The aim of this chapter is to provide the broader context of the issue of gender balance and women's increased representation and participation in public policy and decision-making, while reviewing cases of specific initiatives implemented in response to challenges faced in achieving the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This is followed by a comparative analysis of the other two Rio Conventions – the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – to identify good practices and lessons learned under these conventions and how these good practices could be mutually reinforcing.

6. Chapter IV below considers regional and national experience and provides examples of measures that have been successfully applied at this level to address the challenge of achieving gender balance. Although the previous chapters are mainly based on a literature review and research, chapter IV is based on the results of online surveys undertaken by the secretariat as well as the results of relevant surveys previously conducted by other United Nations agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision 23/CP.18.

<sup>2</sup> Decision 21/CP.22, paragraph 20.

7. In conclusion, chapter V below sets out possible options that Parties may wish to consider when developing strategies to achieve gender balance and/or increased representation and participation of women in their own delegations or their nominations to elected positions in bodies constituted under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

## **II. Framework for gender balance under the UNFCCC**

### **A. Overview of relevant decisions of the Conferences of the Parties**

8. Three conventions emanated from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio Earth Summit): the UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD. While UNCCD and CBD both recognized the role of women in achieving the objectives of the respective conventions, the Convention did not include a specific reference to either gender balance or the role of women.

9. Notwithstanding that the Convention did not include such a reference at the outset, subsequent COP decisions have focused on gender balance and the representation and participation of women in UNFCCC processes and climate-related policy and action:

(a) By decision 36/CP.7, the COP urged Parties to take the measures necessary to enable women to participate fully in all levels of decision-making relevant to climate change;

(b) By decision 1/CP.16, Parties recognized the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and children and thereby the need for gender-sensitive and participatory approaches to adaptation and mitigation policy and action, stating that climate change adaptation should follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach and that mitigation responses to climate change should take fully into account the consequences for vulnerable groups, in particular women and children;

(c) By decision 23/CP.18, Parties adopted the goal of gender balance in Party delegations and in constituted bodies to advance gender-responsive climate policy and to promote gender balance and improve the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol.

10. Further, the COP requested the secretariat to maintain information and report annually on the gender composition of constituted bodies and delegations,<sup>3</sup> and it created a standing agenda item under the COP on gender and climate change.<sup>4</sup>

11. In 2014, the two-year Lima work programme on gender was adopted.<sup>5</sup> The decision includes an invitation to Parties and other relevant stakeholders to support training and awareness-raising of all delegates on gender balance as well as a specific focus on building capacities and strengthening skills of female delegates.

12. In 2015, a historic agreement was reached at COP 21. In its preamble, the Paris Agreement acknowledges that as climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.

13. In 2016, Parties reviewed the progress of the implementation of the Lima work programme on gender. By decision 21/CP.22, the COP extended the work programme for a period of three years until November 2019. Decision 21/CP.22 will be considered in more detail in chapter III below.

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<sup>3</sup> Decision 23/CP.18, paragraph 8.

<sup>4</sup> Decision 23/CP.18, paragraph 9.

<sup>5</sup> Decision 18/CP.20.

## **B. Gender composition of national delegations to the UNFCCC**

### **1. Trends from 2008 to 2012**

14. Prior to the request from the COP referred to in paragraph 10 above for the secretariat to collect and report information annually on the gender composition of Party delegations, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) had been collecting and monitoring data based on official delegation participants' lists of COP sessions and intersessional meetings since 2008 (WEDO, 2013).

15. The average percentage of women participating in the sessions in the five-year period from 2008 to 2012 was around 31 per cent, with the highest percentage occurring in 2012 at 33 per cent.

16. In its analysis, WEDO (2013) noted that the number of women participating in subsidiary body meetings in the first sessional period of the year is generally higher than during COP sessions, which could be due to the fact that more senior representatives are nominated to delegations attending COP sessions. For example, the percentage of women attending the first sessional meeting in Bonn in 2008 was relatively high at 39 per cent, whereas for the session of the COP it was 32 per cent. However, the following years witnessed a decline for both sessional periods: the participation of women was 37 per cent in 2010 and 36 per cent in 2012 at the subsidiary body meetings in the first sessional period and 32 per cent and 33 per cent at the COP sessions in those years (WEDO, 2013).

17. In all monitored years, the rate of participation of women as heads of delegation is lower than their participation in delegations in general. From 2008 to 2012, the average percentage of women heads of delegation to UNFCCC sessions was 19 per cent, with the lowest being 10 per cent, at COP 15 (WEDO, 2013).

18. An analysis by region indicates that the region with the highest average percentage of women participants is Eastern Europe, with an average of 46 per cent participation of female delegates over the period from 2008 to 2012, reaching 55 per cent in 2012. Western Europe had the second highest average percentage at 40 per cent, while Asia-Pacific and Africa each had an average of 20 per cent (WEDO, 2013).

### **2. Trends from 2012 to 2017**

19. As noted in paragraph 10 above, the secretariat has been reporting on the composition of national delegations since 2013.

20. The participation of women in national delegations to COP sessions and other meetings under the UNFCCC has varied from a low of 29 per cent women attending COP 18<sup>6</sup> in 2012 to a high of 42 per cent attending the forty-fourth and forty-sixth sessions of the subsidiary bodies in 2016<sup>7</sup> and 2017,<sup>8</sup> respectively. The highest participation of women at a COP was recorded after the adoption of decision 23/CP.18; at COP 19 and COP 20 the percentage of women attending was 36 per cent, up from 29 per cent at COP 18.<sup>9</sup> However, at COP 21 and COP 22 the percentage of women fell from the high of 36 per cent to 32 per cent.

21. The highest recorded percentage of female heads of delegation was at COP 22 with 27 per cent. This may reflect a lower number of women in senior positions in environment and climate ministries or departments at a national level, from which many Parties appoint their delegates to UNFCCC meetings.

### **3. Regional composition**

22. An analysis of delegations by region shows that the Eastern European region has consistently had the highest number of women participating in UNFCCC meetings, with percentages as high as 70 per cent at the session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the

<sup>6</sup> See document FCCC/CP/2013/4.

<sup>7</sup> See document FCCC/CP/2016/4.

<sup>8</sup> See document FCCC/CP/2017/6.

<sup>9</sup> See document FCCC/CP/2015/6.

Durban Platform for Enhanced Action that took place in Geneva in 2015. Delegations from Western Europe have also approached gender balance, with an average of around 50 per cent. Although steadily increasing, women's participation in delegations from the African and Asia-Pacific regions remains significantly lower.

23. In 2015, the countries that had the most gender-balanced delegations were Bulgaria, Croatia, Gambia, Hungary, Italy, Kiribati, Lesotho, Peru and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (WEDO, 2017). In 2013 and 2014, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Mali, Romania, Saint Lucia, Slovakia and Syrian Arab Republic were the top countries (WEDO, 2014).

### C. Gender composition of constituted bodies and bureaux of governing bodies

24. The secretariat has been reporting on the gender composition of constituted bodies established under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol since 2013 and under the Paris Agreement since 2017. The following section provides an overview of the trends in the representation of women in bodies constituted under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement as well as in the bureaux of the UNFCCC governing bodies during the reporting period from 2013 to 2017.

25. The latest gender composition report prepared by the secretariat indicates that the number of female members has declined in 5 out of 13 constituted bodies when compared with in 2016. The largest decline was by 14 per cent in the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE).<sup>10</sup>

26. Since the first gender composition report in 2013, most bodies have experienced a decreasing trend in the number of female members. An analysis of the data with a starting point of the 2013 report and an end point of the 2017 report revealed several trends, as reported in the table below:

(a) An increase in female membership in the case of three bodies: the Compliance Committee facilitative branch (from 11 per cent in 2013 to 40 per cent); the Technology Executive Committee (from 20 per cent in 2013 to 35 per cent); and the Adaptation Committee (from 20 per cent in 2013 to 44 per cent);

(b) No change in female membership in the case of two bodies: the Least Developed Countries Expert Group remained at 15 per cent throughout the reporting period; and the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts also remained static at around 6 per cent female representation in the last two years;

(c) A decline in female membership in the case of seven bodies:<sup>11</sup> the Executive Board of the clean development mechanism went from 20 per cent in 2013 and 2014 to only 10 per cent in 2015, 2016 and 2017; the Adaptation Fund Board went from 31 per cent in 2013 to 19 per cent in 2017; the Compliance Committee enforcement branch went from 20 per cent in 2013 to 10 per cent in 2017; the CGE declined by 14 per cent from 52 per cent to 38 per cent; and the Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee was at 40 per cent from 2013 to 2016, but dropped to 30 per cent in 2017.

27. The trend in the number of women in leadership positions within the constituted bodies has been mixed: while there was an increase from 2013 to 2016 with six female delegates elected as chair or co-chair, in 2017 only three female delegates filled such positions. In 2017, four female delegates were elected to the position of vice-chair of a constituted body, which was an increase of one from 2016.

28. The analysis of these trends highlights the unpredictability and variability of the gender composition of the constituted bodies. Even in the cases where gender balance was

<sup>10</sup> See document FCCC/CP/2017/6.

<sup>11</sup> No trend analysis was carried out for the newly constituted Paris Committee on Capacity-building.

achieved (CGE in 2013 and 2016), it is not necessarily maintained with consistency over time.

**Gender distribution of constituted bodies established under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol from 2013 to 2016<sup>a</sup>**

Body	Total number of members	Number of female members (%)					Overall trend
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Adaptation Committee	16	3 (20 %)	4 (25 %)	4 (25 %)	6 (40 %)	7 (44 %)	↑
Adaptation Fund Board	16	5 (31 %)	5 (31 %)	4 (28 %)	4 (25 %)	3 (19 %)	↓
Advisory Board of the Climate Technology Centre and Network	16	2 (13 %)	2 (13 %)	1 (6 %)	4 (25 %)	2 (12 %)	↓
Compliance Committee enforcement branch	10	2 (20 %)	1 (10 %)	1 (10 %)	1 (10 %)	1 (10 %)	↓
Compliance Committee facilitative branch	10	1 (11 %)	4 (40 %)	4 (40 %)	4 (40 %)	4 (40 %)	↑
Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention	21	11 (52 %)	9 (43 %)	7 (33 %)	11 (52 %)	8 (38 %)	↓
Executive Board of the clean development mechanism	10	2 (20 %)	2 (20 %)	1 (10 %)	1 (10 %)	1 (10 %)	↓
Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts	20	NA	3 of 10 interim members	7 (35 %)	6 (30 %)	6 (30 %)	↔
Least Developed Countries Expert Group	13	2 (15 %)	2 (15 %)	2 (15 %)	2 (15 %)	2 (15 %)	↔
Joint Implementation Supervisory committee	10	4 (40 %)	4 (40 %)	4 (40 %)	4 (40 %)	3 (30 %)	↓
Paris Committee on Capacity-building	12	NA	NA	NA	NA	6 (50 %)	
Standing Committee on Finance	20	5 (25 %)	7 (35 %)	7 (35 %)	6 (32 %)	5 (25 %)	↓
Technology Executive Committee	20	2 (10 %)	3 (15 %)	5 (25 %)	7 (35 %)	7 (35 %)	↑

Abbreviation: NA = not applicable.

<sup>a</sup> Adapted and updated from <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/full-view-ensuring-gender-balance-in-unfccc-processes.pdf?la=en&vs=3836>.

29. In response to the COP request<sup>12</sup> to bring to the attention of Parties information on the gender composition of each body with elective posts established under the UNFCCC whenever such a vacancy occurs, the information note sent by the secretariat to Parties at the time of nomination and election for the constituted bodies makes explicit reference to decisions 36/CP.7 and 23/CP.18.

<sup>12</sup> Decision 36/CP.7, paragraph 3.

## **D. Gender composition of the bureaux**

### **1. Bureaux of the three governing bodies**

30. The trend in the composition of the bureaux of the COP, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement has declined from 36 per cent female members (4 members out of 11) in 2013 to 27 per cent in 2014 and 2015, 18 per cent in 2016 and no female members in 2017.

### **2. Bureaux of the permanent subsidiary bodies**

31. In terms of gender distribution and leadership position of women within the bureaux of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, the percentage of female members was stable at 33 per cent from 2013 to 2015, while it dropped to no females in 2016. In 2013 and 2014, both Rapporteurs were female and one Chair was female. In 2017, the positions of women in the bureaux is as follows: one Vice-Chair and one Rapporteur.

### **3. Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement**

32. The Co-Chairs and the Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement are all women, which has been the case since the body was established.

## **E. Assessment of existing challenges within the UNFCCC processes**

33. Through successive COP decisions, Parties have indicated that gender balance in national delegations and in membership of constituted bodies is necessary and desirable. However, a review of the gender composition reports indicates that there has not been a consistent or sustained improvement in the numbers of women participating in Party delegations, constituted bodies or bureaux during the period from 2013 to 2017. In fact, the overall trend is a decline in women's participation.

34. In 2016, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) conducted a survey of selected delegations to develop a better understanding of the challenges facing delegations.<sup>13</sup> According to the majority of the responses received from the survey, several structural and institutional barriers still constitute obstacles for the full and equal participation of women (UN Women and Mary Robinson Foundation, 2016).

35. Following up on the 2016 survey and as research for this paper, the secretariat engaged with UNFCCC national focal points and delegates through an online survey seeking information on the existence of guidelines, policies or programmes that specifically support women's participation in decision-making bodies under the UNFCCC and/or at the national level (results are analysed in more detail in chapter IV below). The results of the survey indicated that there is an absence of specific guidelines, policies or programmes to support gender balance at the national level in UNFCCC delegations (only 15 per cent of survey responses indicated a specific strategy). However, the number of respondents who confirmed the existence of national policies supporting gender balance (such as gender policies at the local and/or national level) is higher (68 per cent).

36. The results of the UN Women survey, together with the latest survey conducted by the secretariat, provide insight into the challenges faced by the countries that participated in the surveys and may also be instructive for countries that did not participate in the surveys:

(a) The lower number of women participating at COP sessions as members of their national delegation may reflect the ratio of women to men working at mid- to senior-level positions at the national government level. Even though the share of women working

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<sup>13</sup> Delegations that provided responses to the questionnaire represented the following Parties: Belgium, Canada, Gambia, Malawi, Sudan, Switzerland, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

in national government globally is not yet quantified,<sup>14</sup> women held only 18.3 per cent of ministerial positions as of January 2017; however, in most countries, only 15–19 per cent of women held some form of ministerial position (UN Women, 2017);

(b) The lower number of senior positions occupied by women at a national level is reflected in the positions that women occupy in Party delegations (e.g. heads of delegation) and UNFCCC bodies (WEDO, 2014);

(c) At a regional level, delegations from countries in two regions are achieving, or close to achieving, gender balance, while delegations from countries in two other regions are not close to gender balance and/or have not been able to achieve a sustained increase in the numbers of women participating in their delegations. This may indicate that there are different challenges for delegations from different regions and that there may be good practices or lessons learned from regions that have higher participation rates;

(d) Despite regular reporting on gender composition since 2013 and information reminding Parties of the goal of gender balance during nomination and election of members of constituted bodies, there has not been a consistent increase in the average number of women across all Party delegations (notwithstanding that some delegations consistently achieve gender balance or close to gender balance and others have increased the participation of women), as heads of delegation or in UNFCCC bodies. This indicates that reporting and notifications on their own are not sufficient to raise awareness of the issue or to achieve the goal of gender balance in UNFCCC processes;

(e) The absence of specific guidelines, policies or programmes for Party delegations to achieve gender balance and increase the representation and participation of women in UNFCCC processes may be a factor in the varying degrees of gender balance in both delegations and UNFCCC bodies. As noted in paragraph 35 above, the results of the online survey conducted by the secretariat found that only 15 per cent of the responding countries (5 out of 32 countries) had a policy, guideline or initiative that supported the goal of equal representation of women and men on their country's UNFCCC delegation.

### III. International frameworks for women's participation

37. To understand the challenges faced in achieving the goal of gender balance and the equal participation and representation of women in climate-related processes and activities, it is useful to consider the wider international context that directly or indirectly impacts UNFCCC processes. This chapter sets out key international instruments, outcomes and initiatives and the ways these could inform the work of Parties in achieving gender balance and increased representation and participation of women in the UNFCCC process.

#### A. International legal framework: review of the developments in advancing women's participation rights from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to Beijing+20

38. The international legal framework designed to protect and promote women's rights recognizes equal participation as a *condicio sine qua non* for sustainable development. This section will provide a short overview of the historical foundation of the international legal framework that was designed to address the equality challenges that pose an obstacle to fair and just development. It will outline the broader international context and how it relates to the UNFCCC, as well as provide examples of lessons learned and good practices from member countries that have developed initiatives in response to the challenge of ensuring gender balance in public policy and national and international decision-making processes.

39. The Commission on the Status of Women was created in 1946 to promote the rights of women and was instrumental in the adoption of two significant international agreements:

<sup>14</sup> United Nations General Assembly document A/68/184.

the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA).

40. CEDAW was ratified by 189 countries and acknowledges that “the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields”. Articles 7 and 8 of CEDAW further determine the obligation of Parties to the convention to ensure women have the right to participate in the political life of their countries at all levels and to “take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations”.<sup>15</sup>

41. Acknowledging the presence of obstacles that may challenge the implementation of women’s full participation, CEDAW called for the use of temporary special measures to ensure the equal representation of women in all fields. These measures can encompass “a wide variety of legislative, executive, administrative and other regulatory instruments, policies and practices, such as outreach or support programmes; allocation and/or reallocation of resources; preferential treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion; numerical goals connected with time frames and quota systems”.<sup>16</sup>

42. The expert body that monitors the implementation of CEDAW, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, further recommends that temporary special measures be adopted to accelerate access to equal participation, power and resources and to change discriminatory cultural practices and stereotypical attitudes and be directed at women subject to multiple forms of discrimination, including rural women, when necessary.<sup>17</sup>

43. Acknowledging the slow progress in reaching equality and the need for a bolder and more ambitious plan of action that could allow stronger collaboration between civil society and governments at a global level, BPfA was adopted unanimously by 189 countries in 1995 at the conclusion of the Fourth World Conference on Women. BPfA recognizes that “women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace”.<sup>18</sup>

44. To improve the role of women in power and decision-making at all levels, BPfA calls on governmental bodies to commit to establishing the goal of gender balance, including through setting specific targets and implementing measures to increase the number of women substantially to achieve equal representation. Governments are called upon to review electoral systems and their impact on women’s participation, take measures to encourage political parties to include women in public positions and address discriminatory barriers and threats against women. BPfA makes concrete action recommendations to enhance women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership through the provision of skills and leadership training and mentoring support, particularly to women with disabilities and belonging to racial and ethnic minorities.<sup>19</sup>

45. The 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+20) concluded that progress for women remained “unacceptably slow”. The Beijing+20 findings also showed that despite a steady increase in women’s participation over the last two decades, factors such as gender-based discrimination and bias and the threat of violence in political institutions continued to contribute to low levels of participation.<sup>20</sup>

46. To accelerate the implementation of BPfA, the review report emphasizes that “the full and equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making to influence the

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<sup>15</sup> CEDAW, Article 8.

<sup>16</sup> CEDAW, general recommendation no. 25.

<sup>17</sup> CEDAW, Article 8.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations General Assembly document A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations General Assembly document A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, paragraph 195.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council document E/CN.6/2015/3.

planning, implementation and monitoring of policies is essential”.<sup>21</sup> In this regard, it calls for an expansion of the use of temporary special measures as a proven strategy as well as greater efforts to address the barriers to women’s full and equal participation in decision-making, including the discriminatory culture of political institutions, financial constraints, the lack of family-friendly provisions and threats of violence and intimidation.<sup>22</sup> Box 1 provides examples of national action taken to advance women’s representation and participation in decision-making that were illustrated under their BPfA national reports.

#### Box 1

#### **Examples from national reports submitted to the 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

Germany has promoted the participation of women in environmental decision-making processes through the systematic funding of associations and projects. From 2011 to 2012, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety funded the Green Economy project, which aimed to involve women and women’s organizations actively in the country in the process of shaping a green economy. The ministry has also provided support for women’s start-up businesses as models for a green economy as well as the participation of international women’s organizations in United Nations processes. The Development Policy Plan on Gender Action (2009–2012) of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development also included gender-specific challenges and responses to climate change as one of its key topics and encouraged the integration of gender aspects in relevant programmes and measures (Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations, 2014).

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ministries and municipalities that work on issues of women and the environment focus their activities on women’s participation in decision-making, training and facilitating access to information and strategies for sustainable development. Examples include the appointment of women as members of the council on environment conservation, national and subnational seminars on the role of women in the environment and support for women’s organizations that work to protect the environment (The Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs, 2014).

In Malawi, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change Management has been implementing 50/50 gender parity in its Village Natural Resources Management Committees throughout the country. Women participate as committee members in activities concerning natural resources, water resources and sanitation and conservation agriculture (Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, 2014).

## **B. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

47. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly mandated the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to assess the achievements and impact of the Millennium Development Goals to define an agenda that could be built on the progress and address the remaining challenges. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group concluded that considerable progress had been made towards meeting goal 3, promote gender equity and empower women, in the 15 years of implementation of tailored policies and programmes by member countries.

48. However, it also remarked that the overall progress had been too slow in other significant areas, such as participation, with only a 10 per cent increase in the number of women occupying position at decision-making levels<sup>23</sup> over the period assessed. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was therefore defined to be more ambitious, including goal 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

<sup>21</sup> As footnote 16 above, paragraph 397.

<sup>22</sup> As footnote 16 above, paragraph 397.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council document E/2017/66.

49. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development creates a more inclusive and holistic approach with a wide-reaching plan that realizes “gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets” and notes the following:

“The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. We will work for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels. All forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls will be eliminated, including through the engagement of men and boys. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial”.<sup>24</sup>

50. Particularly relevant in this context is indicator 5.5, which will monitor progress by Member States in promoting and implementing policies by looking at increasing women’s participation. The indicator will monitor the achievement of “women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”.

51. The commitment shown by Member States in specifically addressing the need to increase women’s participation in decision-making through a dedicated indicator in the sustainable development goals provides a strong signal on the direction that the international community is taking to guarantee that decisions taken at international, national and local levels are inclusive and representative.

52. The preamble to the Paris Agreement explicitly acknowledges the link to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and emphasizes the intrinsic relationship that all programmes addressing climate change have with equitable access to sustainable development and eradication of poverty. The preamble to the Paris Agreement further explicitly recognizes that gender equality and empowerment of women should be respected, promoted and considered when addressing climate change, as noted in paragraph 12 above.

53. Furthermore, decision 21/CP.22 highlights the importance of coherence between gender-responsive climate policies and the balanced participation of women and men in the UNFCCC process and the provisions of international instruments and outcomes referred to above. In addition, as a concrete measure to address the issue, the COP invited Parties to continue their efforts in promoting training and capacity-building programmes aimed at the effective participation of women in UNFCCC meetings and encouraged more consistent integration of gender concerns into the work on the implementation for the Convention.

## **C. Experience from international processes and mechanisms**

54. The issue of gender balance and women’s participation has been considered in several other international processes. As such, experience gained in addressing these issues may provide good practices that could be adapted to the UNFCCC context.

55. This section sets out examples that are at different stages of implementation. The experiences describe a variety of responses to challenges that are similar to those identified in the previous section on achieving gender balance in UNFCCC processes.

### **1. United Nations peace processes**

56. United Nations peace negotiation processes provide examples of action taken at different levels to increase the number of women participating in these processes. These

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<sup>24</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1, paragraph 20.

examples highlight the urgency and necessity of including women at all level of decision-making processes to ensure long-lasting and sustainable outcomes.

57. The landmark resolution on women, peace and security, United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (from 2000), acknowledges the importance of participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding and urges all actors to increase women's participation and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts.<sup>25</sup>

58. To facilitate and monitor the implementation of the resolution, an enhanced framework of targets, indicators and dedicated funding was designed. UNSCR 1889 requested the development of a set of global indicators to track implementation of the four goals of UNSCR 1325: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. Seven indicators specific to monitoring progress of the goal of participation were proposed, including indicators to track women's participation in politics, peacekeeping, informal peace negotiations, peacebuilding processes and United Nations leadership. A strategic results framework that aligned with the set of indicators was developed to guide implementation of UNSCR 1325 that identified outcomes, outputs and targets for each of the four goals.

59. The specific focus on improving women's participation provided some positive results: senior positions in peace processes held by women increased from 36 per cent in 2011 to 75 per cent in 2014 (UN Women, 2015). However, overall participation remains limited: in 2008 only 4 per cent of women were involved in United Nations peace negotiation processes; in 2012, women still comprised 4 per cent of signatories, 2 per cent of chief mediators and 9 per cent of negotiators.

60. The impact of women on the likelihood of reaching an agreement and on its ongoing success is considerable. An analysis of 40 peace processes shows that in cases of women's participation and strong influence in negotiations, an agreement was more likely to be reached than in cases of weak or no influence by women (UN Women, 2015). Women's strong influence also correlated with a greater likelihood of implementation and sustainability of agreements. The analysis also found that women's participation further enhanced civil society's influence on negotiation outcomes as well as ensured broader social acceptance and commitment to agreements from communities and affected parties. Moreover, since UNSCR 1325, there has been an appreciable increase in the number of gender-specific references in peace agreements.

## 2. The Inter-Parliamentary Union

61. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the international organization of parliaments and was established in 1889. IPU has played an important role in promoting the participation of women parliamentarians to strengthen representative democracy through worldwide parliamentary dialogue.

62. IPU was one of the first organizations to promote an enabling environment for women's participation within its own structures to generate best practices for national parliaments. An amendment adopted in 1990 stipulated that parliaments with female members must include at least one woman in their delegations to IPU statutory meetings.

63. The website of IPU also hosts a comprehensive database that reflects the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and publishes annual reports on women in parliament. The website has served as a monitoring tool for governments, civil society and other actors.

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<sup>25</sup> Subsequent resolutions deepen the commitments under UNSCR 1325 to improve women's participation in all peace processes. UNSCR 1889 (2009) focuses on enhancing early engagement of women in political and economic decision-making through promoting women's leadership and capacity, supporting women's organisations and countering negative societal attitudes regarding women's capacity. UNSCR 2122 (2013) calls for stronger measures to consult and include women in peace talks, including through the use of dedicated funding mechanisms toward capacity-building. UNSCR 2242 (2015) encourages greater numbers of women peacekeepers and senior leaders in all levels of decision-making and highlights the need to address the critical funding gap for women's organizations.

64. To achieve a better balance in the composition of its main bodies, IPU has adopted the following series of measures:

(a) Executive Committee membership must be at least 20 per cent women;<sup>26</sup>

(b) Governing Council: delegations of each IPU member to the Governing Council include three members if they are composed of both men and women but two members if composed of a single gender;<sup>27</sup>

(c) A delegation composed exclusively of parliamentarians of the same sex for three consecutive sessions is reduced in the number of members (by one person) as well as votes.<sup>28</sup>

65. IPU statutes state that “members shall include men and women parliamentarians in their delegations and shall strive to ensure their equal representation”. The rules of the standing committees call for the selection of rapporteurs and drafting committee members to consider gender equality and gender balance. The measures outlined above are partly attributable to the establishment and results of the IPU Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, a whole-day gathering held on the eve of each session of the IPU Assembly.

### 3. United Nations System-wide Action Plan

66. In 1997, the Economic and Social Council agreed on conclusions 1997/2, which called upon the United Nations system to mainstream a gender perspective throughout its work. To strengthen the response to these conclusions, the United Nations system established the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

67. UN-SWAP provides an overarching accountability framework to accelerate mainstreaming of gender equality and the empowerment of women in all institutional functions of United Nations entities.

68. By promoting a common understanding of gender equality and the empowerment of women and providing a common method to achieve this goal, UN-SWAP facilitates a common and progressive sliding scale of performance standards against which to monitor progress.

69. UN-SWAP (from 2012 to 2017) includes 15 common performance indicators,<sup>29</sup> including the following:

(a) The development of a policy plan on gender mainstreaming and equal representation of women;

(b) The entity’s central strategic planning document includes an outcome and indicator on gender equality and women’s empowerment;

(c) Sex-disaggregated reporting and analysis of key entity data;

(d) Financial benchmarks for resource allocation for gender equality and women’s empowerment mandates and a financial resource tracking mechanism to quantify disbursement of funds that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment;

(e) Capacity assessment of staff in gender equality and women’s empowerment;

(f) Public sharing and documentation of knowledge on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

70. In its 2016 annual report, UN Women reported that since the roll-out of UN-SWAP in 2012, all 15 performance indicators have registered improvement, with two thirds of indicators (10 out of 15) showing that 74 per cent or more of ratings meet or exceed requirements. The largest gains were registered by gender-responsive auditing, knowledge

<sup>26</sup> Statutes of the IPU, Article 23.2.

<sup>27</sup> Rules of the Governing Council, rule 1.2.

<sup>28</sup> Statutes of the IPU, Articles 10.3 and 15.2(c).

<sup>29</sup> See <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>.

generation and communication, capacity development, programme review, and monitoring and reporting.<sup>30</sup>

71. The secretariat reports annually under UN-SWAP on the performance of the secretariat as an organization and the programmatic work under the UNFCCC with respect to 13 applicable performance indicators. During the period from 2012 to 2016, the secretariat improved its performance against the requirements of seven indicators. In 2012, the UNFCCC met or exceeded requirements for one indicator, compared with currently meeting or exceeding seven, for an overall increase of 40 per cent.

#### 4. International Gender Champions

72. International Gender Champions (IGC) is a network of senior leaders including permanent representatives, permanent observers, heads of United Nations agencies and other international organizations and leaders from civil society organizations and the private sector. The network was first launched in Geneva in June 2015, reaching out to 122 leaders representing the key sectors, committing to promote change and break down promoting gender equality through leadership, public advocacy and accountability in the offices, organizations or companies they lead.<sup>31</sup> It now has chapters in New York, Bonn–Berlin and Vienna.

73. One of the first concrete challenges IGC identified was gender representation in panels and discussions. By signing the Panel Parity Pledge, champions committed to ensuring that a conscious effort was made to address the noticeable gap of women speakers in the majority of panels and discussions. Participation in panel discussions as an expert is often an entry point into the professional pipeline and a critical mechanism to develop peer recognition.

74. As leaders in their organizations, IGC also commits to develop two additional specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and results-based and time-bound commitments focused on advancing gender equality, either in executive management or in programmatic work of the organization.

75. One of the most visible impacts of the IGC initiative has been the raised awareness on the importance of addressing gender balance in the composition of delegations across the United Nations system. For instance, the annual meeting of the United Nations Governing Bodies Secretariat has endorsed a number of recommended actions, including awareness-raising and information dissemination on the importance of women's participation in governing bodies' meetings; organization of training sessions for women delegates; exploring ways to track the number of women participating in governing body meetings, including as chairs and publishing information on women's participation in governing bodies of United Nations entities and in major conferences.

76. Another concrete outcome of an IGC commitment was the launch of the Gender Policy for the United Nations Office in Geneva by its Director-General as an international gender champion. The Gender Policy's action areas include gender parity, gender-responsive performance management, resource allocation and tracking, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge generation and communications.

77. In May 2017, the UNFCCC Executive Secretary became an international gender champion and launched the Bonn–Berlin chapter of the initiative. One of her first commitments was to pledge that all senior managers in the secretariat will champion gender equality. She also committed to request organizers of any event at which she is speaking to ensure gender balance among the panellists and noted that she would encourage others to follow her lead by recruiting a strong and diverse range of people to sign the Panel Parity Pledge and make their own commitments.

<sup>30</sup> See <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/unsystemcoordination/un-swap-brochure.pdf?la=en&vs=1831>.

<sup>31</sup> International Gender Champions, annual report, 2016.

## **D. Rio Conventions: brief comparison of gender balance in participation policies and procedures and experience in implementation**

78. As noted above, the UNFCCC was the only Rio Convention not to include a reference to gender or women from the outset. This section sets out the efforts undertaken within the framework of the other two Rio Conventions, UNCCD and CBD, highlighting good practices in promoting gender balance and more inclusive participation at all levels.

### **1. Convention on Biological Diversity**

79. The preamble of CBD recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirming the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation”.<sup>32</sup> Against this background, the secretariat has been able to formulate several strategies to promote gender equality, including the CBD Gender Plan of Action.

80. One of the proposed objectives of the CBD 2015–2020 Gender Plan of Action is to “gain the full and effective participation of both men and women in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020” and to identify possible actions for Parties. These actions include ensuring gender balance in capacity-building to enable effective participation (such as providing dedicated capacity-building for women’s groups), developing and disseminating information and material in accessible languages and forms and monitoring and reporting on the participation of men and women in implementation processes.<sup>33</sup>

81. The processes promoted under CBD have been successful in engaging women and women’s groups, with women’s participation rates as high as 38 per cent at the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in 2014 (UN Women and Mary Robinson Foundation, 2016). Women in the bureaux of CBD are also almost equally represented, with percentages as high as 45 per cent.

### **2. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**

82. UNCCD requests Parties to, inter alia, provide for effective participation of non-governmental organizations and local populations in policy planning, decision-making, and implementation and review of national action programmes at the local, national and regional levels.<sup>34</sup> In this regard, it specifies both women and men, particularly resource users, including farmers and pastoralists and their representative organizations.<sup>35</sup> It also emphasizes the full participation of local people, “especially women”.<sup>36</sup>

83. Since the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD in 2000 and as recently as the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD in 2017, parliamentarians, ministers and civil society organizations have called attention to the critical role of women in the implementation of the convention and expressed commitment to strengthening their capacities and participation in decision-making.<sup>37</sup> Recognizing that financial constraints are among the main challenges to supporting women’s participation, the framework further supports establishing a special fund for promoting women’s participation and explicitly identifies the Women Delegates Fund created to support women delegates to the UNFCCC process as an example to follow (see box 2).

84. An analysis conducted in 2017 at the request of Parties took into consideration national reports submitted on the implementation of the Convention (national action plans). Most reports submitted before 2010 identified women’s participation as a main challenge to

<sup>32</sup> CBD, paragraph 13.

<sup>33</sup> CBD, *2015–2020 Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity*, annex, section I(C), paragraph 6.

<sup>34</sup> UNCCD, Article 19, subparagraphs 1(a) and 3(e).

<sup>35</sup> UNCCD, Article 10, paragraph 2(f).

<sup>36</sup> UNCCD, Article 19, subparagraphs 1(a) and 3(e).

<sup>37</sup> See the Ministerial Dialogues of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD; and the Declarations of Parliamentarians at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

achieving gender balance in the composition of the national committees for the implementation of national action plans.<sup>38</sup> The reports submitted after the adoption of the 10-year strategy (2008–2018) showed a shift of focus to the implementation of capacity-building programmes and awareness-raising strategies aimed at increasing the number of women participating in processes.<sup>39</sup>

85. During its last meeting in China in September 2017, the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD approved the Gender Plan of Action<sup>40</sup> and decided that in:

“implementing the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, all UNCCD stakeholders and partners should take into account the need for gender-responsive policies and measures; they will strive to ensure the full and effective participation of both men and women in planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels, and enhance the empowerment of women, girls and youth in the affected areas”.<sup>41</sup>

#### Box 2

##### **The Women Delegates Fund: achievements and challenges**

Recognizing the need to support women’s participation and leadership in the UNFCCC, the Government of Finland partnered with the Women’s Environment and Development Organization, United Nations Development Programme and International Union for Conservation of Nature in 2009 to form the Global Gender and Climate Alliance and launch the Women Delegates Fund (WDF). Since 2009, the fund has received support from the Governments of Finland, Iceland, Australia, Canada, Netherlands and Switzerland.

Building on the analysis of submissions from Parties that followed decision 23/CP.18, which highlighted the need to address in a sustainable manner the disparities in the participation of women and men in UNFCCC processes, WDF decided to focus its priorities on travel support, capacity-building and networking, and outreach and advocacy.

Travel support was deemed essential, as many delegations, especially from developing countries, have limited financial capacity to participate in climate negotiations. From 2009 to 2016, WDF supported 218 trips for 54 women across 40 countries to attend 25 sessions of the UNFCCC. Among these, over 40 per cent of funded delegates were the only women on their national delegations.

To address the capacity needs of female delegates, a comprehensive leadership skills capacity training programme was developed that, by the end of 2016, had supported 270 women through sessions of training courses in technical language and negotiations skills. The training courses took place immediately prior to the main negotiating sessions of the UNFCCC.

WDF has also focused on advocacy, highlighting the importance of innovative strategies to enhance women’s leadership and to provide a platform for wider discussion on women’s leadership in decision-making, as well as to promote policy change at national and international levels.

Despite the success of WDF, a key challenge is ensuring sufficient, sustained, long-term funding to administer the fund and enhance travel support.

<sup>38</sup> UNCCD document ICCD/COP(13)/CRP.1.

<sup>39</sup> As footnote 36 above.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www2.unccd.int/official-documents/cop-13-ordos-china-2017>.

<sup>41</sup> UNCCD document ICCD/COP(13)/L.18.

## **E. Lessons learned from international frameworks for enhancing women's participation**

86. Despite a comprehensive international legal framework and the existence of implementation and monitoring mechanisms, the progress in increasing women's participation in decision-making processes is reported to be slow. Nevertheless, the achievements since the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women are measurable and can provide insights that could be instructive in the UNFCCC context:

(a) International frameworks designed and developed since the adoption of CEDAW have been increasingly acknowledging and addressing the need to specifically target women's participation at all stages for programmes to be successful, impactful and sustainable. To this end, more explicit special measures have been adopted and encouraged, including targets and quotas, such as the ones illustrated above in the specific cases of IPU, and at the country level, such as in Malawi (more specific cases will be considered in paras. 87–91 below). Data indicate that the most successful cases were where quotas and targets had been implemented within a broader context that promotes awareness and development of capacities at all levels on the needs and benefits of gender balance and the increased representation and participation of women;

(b) The development of specific indicators to monitor progress towards established goals has been very effective in the case of UN-SWAP, where it has also contributed to promoting cohesion in the narrative around gender equality;

(c) The express commitment of senior management and leaders in organizations and public life has also had a strong potential in providing leadership to guide gender balance choices, as demonstrated by the IGC initiative;

(d) Capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes have played a critical role in increasing the participation of women and in promoting the understanding of its importance at the implementation level under UNCCD and CBD. Reviews of the Beijing Platform, as well as the programmes developed under the United Nations peace processes, also provide evidence of the need to strengthen the capacities and skills of women and the awareness of women and men to increase and improve balanced participation in decision-making processes.

## **IV. Experience at the regional and national levels**

### **A. Overview of existing policies at the national level**

87. In accordance with decision 21/CP.22 and to obtain more specific information on existing policies at the national level, the secretariat engaged with delegations through an online survey sent to all national focal points in September 2017.

88. The questions contained in the survey sought information on the existence of policies, guidelines or initiatives to promote women's participation in decision-making bodies and their relevance to the UNFCCC. A total of 15 per cent of the respondents (5 out of 32 delegations) confirmed that there is a policy, guideline or initiative that supports the goal of equal representation of women and men on their country's UNFCCC delegation. Specifically, the delegation of Gabon mentioned an initiative geared at increasing women's capacities in negotiation skills in view of their participation at COP sessions. In the case of one of the respondent delegations, the responsibility to encourage equal participation is left to the national focal point, while in another one the national government specifically requests gender-balanced nominations to the delegations.

89. As far as having a policy or guideline promoting the participation of women as representatives of the delegate's country or regional group in bodies established under the UNFCCC, 31 per cent (or 10 out of 32 respondents) of delegates responded positively. In the case of one delegation, for example, it is included in the strategic plan of the national climate change office.

90. In total, 68 per cent of respondents confirmed having a policy, guideline or initiative that supports equal representation of women and men in government processes and/or activities (e.g. elected officials, positions in government departments) at a national, regional/provincial/state or local level in their country. Some delegations responded to the follow-up surveys providing more detailed examples, as illustrated in box 3.

**Box 3**

**Measures in place to achieve gender balance: examples from delegations responding to UNFCCC survey**

Gabon is addressing the challenges of achieving gender balance in the composition of the UNFCCC delegation and constituted bodies by appointing a gender national focal point negotiator and a deputy who are mandated to develop a gender strategy. At the national level, a presidential law was passed to guarantee that 30 per cent of posts at the administration level are assigned to women. However, the delegates responding to the UNFCCC survey pointed out the need and urgency to provide financial support to the institutional machinery mandated to promote gender balance.

In another delegation, the delegates responding to the UNFCCC survey confirmed that there is a conscious effort from the head of the delegation to increase the number of women, even though it is not regulated or promoted by any written policy or guidelines. At the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties, 17 per cent of the participants were women; however, the current deputy president of the delegation (Minister of Environment) is a woman committed to increasing the gender balance of the delegation to UNFCCC sessions. The government is composed of 34 ministers and two state secretaries, of whom six ministers are women and one is a deputy speaker for the government. The general assembly is composed of 255 members, of whom 21 are women (8 per cent).

**B. Assessment of mechanisms and their impacts**

91. Special measures are normally taken when the obstacles to the achievement of the agreed goals or objectives are difficult to overcome and a more determined and resolute approach is sought. The establishment of quotas and targets are measures that have been applied to address the challenges of promoting equal participation and representation between women and men. The following examples illustrate how these measures have had an impact and resulted in different contexts (UN Women and Mary Robinson Foundation, 2016).

92. Recent research has increasingly supported the application of quotas and targets as an impactful means to achieve gender balance at institutional levels. Analysis of available data highlights that the countries with the highest number of women in parliament are based in the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa (Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa) and Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Mexico and Nicaragua), which are the regions that apply the highest rates of electoral quotas.<sup>42</sup> The same analysis indicates that women remain mostly underrepresented in regions where special measures have not been applied.

93. It has also been noted that countries that have started with quotas tend to increase the level of women’s participation over time: Rwanda, which started with a 30 per cent quota/target in 2003, recently achieved a historical 64 per cent. The progress in Sub-Saharan Africa, which witnessed an increase of women’s representation in parliament from 10 per cent in 1995 to 24 per cent in 2014, may also be attributable to the 50 per cent gender targets adopted by African Union leaders at the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union in 2002 and the Southern African Development Community’s *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development* (2008).

94. Across the European Union, women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, particularly in politics, even if the situation varies among European Union

<sup>42</sup> IPU database, July 2017.

countries (European Union, 2016). In May 2016, women accounted for 29 per cent of members of the single or lower houses of parliaments in the European Union countries. To address the imbalance, the European Union adopted a *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equity 2016–2019*, which aims, among other things, to reach the target of 40 per cent women in the senior and middle management by the end of its mandate. Twenty-three member countries adopted voluntary party quotas, while nine are using both legislative and voluntary quotas.

95. Several mechanisms have been designed to improve the application of quotas and targets. In some cases, sanctions have been introduced and monitored by independent bodies, as well as the use of public funding as penalties or incentives. For example, in Togo, the candidate nomination fee is reduced if female candidates are included in party lists. Additionally, many countries require political parties to earmark public funds received towards training and other actions to enhance women's participation.<sup>43</sup> The Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo provide examples of the importance of additional measures to ensure the effectiveness of quotas. Although both countries have candidate list quotas of 50 per cent, the former has 53 per cent participation of women, while the latter has just 9 per cent. This drastic difference in participation is attributable to the differences in implementation and enforcement: the Plurinational State of Bolivia requires parties to alternate genders on candidate lists, and failure to comply results in rejection of the list, but the Democratic Republic of the Congo's law provides for no sanctions (World Bank, 2015).

96. To determine the progress and impact of temporary special measures (and to know when to cease special measures), special measures should be monitored and evaluated against baseline data that should be gathered at the time that the measures are established. Indexes and/or indicators are a tool to estimate the impact and provide feedback for adjusting the special measures, for example, to raise the level of ambition by establishing higher targets and quotas until balance is achieved, at which time the special measures cease. Indexes can also be an efficient means to rank and determine progress, as shown by the Environment and Gender Index (see box 4).

#### Box 4

##### **Monitoring progress: the Environment and Gender Index**

The Environment and Gender Index was launched by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in collaboration with United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in 2013 and brought a new data set on women's participation in environmental decision-making.<sup>a</sup> The index compiles indicators of women's involvement in international environmental delegations and leadership of large environmental institutions, green parties and environmental ministries at the national level. The analysis concluded that, in 7 out of 10 variables<sup>b</sup> of decision-making processes, women were underrepresented (less than 30 per cent), with the notable exception of the green parties, where women's participation is around 45 per cent.

<sup>a</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature, Environment & Gender Index. 2015. *Gender and Climate Finance: New Data on Women in Decision-Making Positions*. Available at [https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/egi\\_finance\\_indicators\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/egi_finance_indicators_fact_sheet.pdf).

<sup>b</sup> The composite index included environment and gender variables that scored and ranked 73 countries worldwide along 27 dimensions in six categories: ecosystem, gender-based education and assets, governance, country-reported activities, livelihood and gender-based rights and participation.

### **C. Lessons learned at the national and regional levels**

97. The online survey and the selected interviews conducted with targeted delegations and relevant stakeholders have outlined the weak presence of guidelines or policies promoting the participation of women in decision-making processes at different levels.

<sup>43</sup> United Nations General Assembly document A/68/184, paragraphs 43-44.

However, some experience is particularly helpful in identifying possible strategies that could be replicated in selected cases, such as the following:

(a) The development of broader policies and guidelines (such as a national gender policy) that provide the background context for more specific measures to be implemented while building on the necessary awareness for policies to be agreed;

(b) A direct correlation between the application of quotas and targets and the increase in the number of women in decision-making processes is evident and has been documented through national and regional experience: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), European Union, Rwanda and Togo are evident examples. However, it is also clear that these measures should not be isolated from broader comprehensive programmes and policies aimed at raising awareness and strengthening skills and capacities that will enable sustained and balanced participation in effective and successful decision-making processes and representational mechanisms;

(c) As noted in the analysis of the composition reports, regional platforms have been effective in creating opportunities for networking, exchanging best practices and lessons learned and providing solid ground for partnership and resource mobilization.

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

98. There has been gradual but sustained progress in the last decades in recognizing and acknowledging the need for equal representation and participation of men and women in decision-making processes to sustainably address climate change. Women bring different perspectives into policymaking processes and programme development. It is recognized that their participation in every step of the process is essential to ensure the development of inclusive policies and programmes that are sustainable, are equitable and have long-lasting impact.

99. Significant steps have been taken to promote more balanced participation and representation in the UNFCCC processes and constituted bodies. However, progress in achieving the goal of gender balance remains slow and challenges remain.

100. Based on the research presented in this paper and the lessons learned that have been drawn under each section, the following are options that have been identified to address the challenges in achieving gender balance and the increased representation and participation of women in climate-related processes and activities.

### A. Capacity-building and awareness-raising

101. Delegates have identified the need to create and strengthen existing capacities at the national level as the most important challenge to address to increase women's participation. In this regard, capacity programmes that strengthen the skills and confidence of female delegates to be active members of national delegations have proven to be effective. In addition, awareness-raising and capacity development of male and female delegates has been identified as critical in creating an inclusive environment that will enable sustainable gender-balanced representation and participation.

102. Possible options to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 101 above include the following:

(a) Technical and negotiation skills training within broader capacity-building programmes targeting female delegates as well as grassroots women's organizations could enable a diverse group of women to be included in national delegations as well as to be nominated for elective positions on constituted bodies;

(b) Awareness-raising and training sessions targeting male and female delegates on the importance of gender-balanced participation and its contribution to gender-responsive climate action has been effective in increasing the number of female delegates. These sessions could be encouraged to target wider audiences to increase their reach and effectiveness;

(c) Regional group chairs could request the secretariat to provide an annual briefing on the status of the gender composition of constituted bodies before consulting on nominations and elections for those constituted bodies;

(d) The secretariat could enhance existing awareness-raising measures regarding the goal of gender balance for nominations and elections to constituted bodies by, for example, providing data on the latest gender composition of each constituted body in the notification to Parties and via the UNFCCC web page containing information on the election and membership of the bodies of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

## **B. Networking and sharing experience**

103. It has been noted that the establishment of regional platforms, even when informal, has been instrumental in facilitating networking, the exchange of good practices and lessons learned and mentoring. Therefore, creating regular opportunities for female delegates to network during COP sessions and/or subsidiary body sessions could be an effective tool for strengthening existing, and creating new, supportive networks.

## **C. Funding**

104. The allocation of resources to fund programmes has been identified in many contexts as a necessary step in achieving gender balance. The Women Delegates Fund provides a good example of targeted financial support as well capacity-building programmes that could be enhanced and/or replicated at the national and regional levels.

105. Partnerships between Parties and non-Party stakeholders could provide a means of creating new platforms for sharing of good practices or networking as well as delivering training and capacity-building programmes.

## **D. Temporary special measures**

106. Targeted and temporary special measures, such as quotas and targets, have been effective in a variety of situations to increase the number of women participating in decision-making processes. The measures that appear to have been most effective are those implemented gradually and with a specific time frame to be reviewed. These measures were not as impactful if applied in isolation of capacity-building and awareness-raising measures, such as those referred to in chapter V.A above.

107. Lessons learned from national and regional experience also highlight that the establishment of monitoring mechanisms with specific indicators is the most effective means to enable timely evaluation and efficient regular review and update of programmes implementing temporary special measures.

## Annex I

### Online questionnaire sent to national focal points

[English]

1. Is there a policy/guideline/initiative that supports the goal of equal representation of women and men on your country's UNFCCC delegation?
2. Is there a policy/guideline/initiative that supports the goal of increasing the participation of women as representatives of your country or regional group, as applicable, in bodies established under the UNFCCC?
3. Is there a policy/guideline/initiative that supports equal representation of women and men in government processes and/or activities (e.g. elected officials, positions in government departments) at a national, regional/provincial/state or local level in your country?

[French]

1. Existe-t-il une politique / ligne directrice / initiative qui appuie l'objectif d'une représentation égale des femmes et des hommes dans la délégation de la CCNUCC de votre pays?
2. Existe-t-il une politique / ligne directrice / initiative qui appuie l'objectif d'accroître la participation des femmes en tant que représentants de votre pays ou de votre groupe régional, selon le cas, dans les organismes créés dans le cadre de la CCNUCC?
3. Existe-t-il une politique / ligne directrice / initiative qui appuie une représentation égale des femmes et des hommes dans les processus et / ou les activités gouvernementales (par exemple, les élus, les postes dans les ministères) au niveau national, régional, provincial / national ou local dans votre pays?

[Spanish]

1. ¿Existe una política / directriz / iniciativa que apoye el objetivo de la igualdad de representación de mujeres y hombres en la delegación de la CMNUCC de su país?
2. ¿Existe una política / directriz / iniciativa que apoye el objetivo de aumentar la participación de las mujeres como representantes de su país o grupo regional, según proceda, en los órganos establecidos en virtud de la CMNUCC?
3. ¿Existe una política / directriz / iniciativa que apoye la representación equitativa de mujeres y hombres en los procesos y / o actividades gubernamentales (por ejemplo, funcionarios electos, cargos en los departamentos gubernamentales) a nivel nacional, regional, provincial, estatal o local en su país?

## Annex II

### Follow-up questionnaire sent to delegates

#### Questionnaire on women's participation<sup>1</sup>

1. How is your delegation contributing to the achievement of the goal of gender balance in the compositions of delegations as well as of constituted bodies? Is there a conscious effort to identify equally qualified women to be part of the delegation or to head the delegation?
2. What do you think are the particular challenges faced by your government in achieving the goal of gender balance? How are these obstacles being addressed?
3. Are you aware of any specific policy, programme or measure – regional, subregional, national or subnational – aimed at ensuring the full and equal participation of women in climate change or other related intergovernmental processes in your country?
4. In your opinion, what measures could be taken to improve women's representation? Please provide specific recommendations (e.g. policies, temporary special measures, capacity-building, campaigns, budgetary/financial allocations, etc.):
  - a. As members of government delegations to intergovernmental processes;
  - b. As members of constituted bodies;
  - c. As co-chairs or co-facilitators of contact groups.
5. In your opinion, what is the single most important factor that could make a difference in advancing the goal of gender balance in the UNFCCC context in line with decision 23/CP.18?

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the survey sent from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for *The Full View* report – second edition.

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