

Decision 23/CP.18 Ghana Submission

Decision 23/CP.18 calls for the promotion of gender balance and an improvement in the participation of women in UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol negotiations. It also calls for the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol. Paragraph 11 of the same decision invites Parties and Observer organizations to submit their 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 in decision-making more effective climate change policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally.

It has been recognised that there is a direct link between gender and climate change. While climate change impacts affects all, there is a differential impact on women and men, due to their social roles and their livelihood activities. Given these differential impacts, it is important that the perspectives of women and men are equally taken into account in climate change decision-making.

In Ghana, the impacts of climate change are experienced by women and men in climate sensitive sectors including agriculture, water, energy, forestry and fisheries. These impacts include among others increased water scarcity, loss of livelihoods, inadequate access to safe and sustainable energy sources, deforestation, health issues, vulnerability to extreme and slow onset weather events, as well as conflict over natural resources.

Ghana's Vulnerability Assessment considered Climate Change and Women and revealed a number of impacts.

Ghana as a result of this study among other considerations has developed a national climate change adaptation strategy and a national climate change policy both of which include gender perspectives. Additionally, the country has also developed a road map to mainstreaming gender considerations into Ghana's REDD+ process in order to strengthen women's voices in forest resource management and governance and to encourage more equitable benefit distribution throughout the forest landscape.

The effective implementation of this climate policy and the adaptation strategy would contribute immensely to the restoration of fragile and vulnerable ecosystems, improvement of existing infrastructure, development of appropriate technology, securing of land tenure, improved livelihoods and ensure a balanced participation of both women and men in decision-making process and policy dialogue at all levels.

It is crucial to recognize these efforts and also address the challenges to do with the effective implementation of all the policies and strategies and how they relate to the overall goal addressed in Decision 23/CP.18 which aims to inform more effective climate change policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally.

The decision calls for gender balance with the view that international climate policy will address the needs of women and men, in order to achieve the goal and specific strategies to enhance gender balance at the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol bodies, as well as developing a mechanism which would facilitate the review of a gender-sensitive climate policy.

An effective implementation of Decision 23/CP.18 that calls for strategies to enhance gender balance in bodies is directly related to strengthening the participation of women in the overall negotiations. Beyond the specific call that UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol bodies be gender balanced, there is a need for similar mandates for gender balance at the regional level. Recommended strategies for advancing this goal are proposed as follows:

1. The need to make connections between global, continental and national instruments on the issue of women participation to enable linkages with existing instruments.
2. Develop tools, knowledge, research and strategies for implementing gender-sensitive and responsive climate policy at the international, regional and national level.
3. Ensure women's participation and representation from developing countries in national delegations at UNFCCC meetings and other relevant forums, particularly from Africa.
4. Develop and facilitate capacity building for women delegates already participating in the UNFCCC process to enhance leadership and negotiating skills and knowledge on technical areas such as finance, technology, mitigation, as well as social and development dimensions, including gender; in addition to technical support and opportunities for networking and dialogue.
5. Develop general tools and methods to facilitate the assessment of the impacts of climate change and the implementation of climate change policies and actions.
6. Need to monitor the effectiveness of advancing the goal of gender balance, beyond the numbers, ensuring qualitative analysis of women and men's leadership roles within the negotiations.