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Joint dialogue on advancing the leadership and highlighting the solutions of women from local communities and indigenous women in climate policy and action

Report by the secretariat*

Summary

This report outlines the proceedings of, and summarizes the discussions from, a joint dialogue held at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties. The dialogue was organized as an activity under the second workplan of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, for 2022–2024, and under the UNFCCC gender action plan priority area of gender balance, participation and women’s leadership. The action points set out in this report provide the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and Parties with information on practices that can advance the leadership of women from local communities and of indigenous women in the UNFCCC process.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter’s control.



Abbreviations and acronyms

COP	Conference of the Parties
FWG	Facilitative Working Group
LCIPP	Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform
LDC	least developed country
LEG	Least Developed Countries Expert Group
NAP	national adaptation plan
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts

I. Introduction

A. Mandate and overview

1. COP 25 adopted¹ the five-year enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan. Activity B.3 of the gender action plan invites the FWG of the LCIPP to collaborate with the secretariat and co-host a dialogue to discuss advancing the leadership and highlighting the solutions of local communities and indigenous women and ways of enhancing their effective participation in climate policy and action, to the extent that it is consistent with the workplan of the FWG and within existing resources.² The first deliverable under activity B.3 is the aforementioned dialogue. The FWG and the secretariat were invited to collaborate on this activity, and Parties and relevant organizations were invited to contribute. The timeline for the dialogue was the fifty-seventh sessions of the subsidiary bodies. The second deliverable under activity B.3 is this report by the secretariat, to be delivered at the fifty-eighth sessions of the subsidiary bodies.

2. COP 26 welcomed³ the second workplan of the LCIPP, for 2022–2024.⁴ One of the deliverables under activity 4 of that workplan is to co-organize the dialogue referred to in paragraph 1 above.

B. Scope

3. This report provides an overview of the proceedings of the joint dialogue, key messages, a summary of panel discussions that includes key takeaways, and key action points.

C. Possible action by the subsidiary body

4. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation may wish to consider the key takeaways and action points set out in this report and provide recommendations to the COP and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement on advancing the leadership and highlighting the solutions of women from local communities and indigenous women in climate policy and action.

II. Proceedings

5. The joint dialogue on advancing the leadership and highlighting the solutions of women from local communities and indigenous women in climate policy and action took place on 9 and 10 November 2022 at COP 27. The event was jointly organized by the FWG and the secretariat as an activity under the second three-year workplan of the LCIPP and the gender action plan.

6. The joint dialogue started with an indigenous invocation and included an opening panel and three main panel discussions on:

(a) Climate solutions led by women from local communities and indigenous women;

(b) Leadership of women from local communities and indigenous women in climate change policymaking at the national and international level, and associated challenges and opportunities;

¹ Decision 3/CP.25, para. 5.

² Decision 3/CP.25, annex, table 2.

³ Decision 16/CP.26, para. 6.

⁴ FCCC/SBSTA/2021/1, annex IV.

(c) Experience of women from local communities and indigenous women engaging with or as members of UNFCCC constituted bodies and the practices that enhance their effective and coherent engagement in the UNFCCC process.

7. The concept note for the joint dialogue and photos and recordings of the event are available on the UNFCCC website.⁵ The agenda of the joint dialogue is contained in the annex.

III. Key messages

8. Women from local communities and indigenous women lead in climate policy development and implementation at the local, national and international level. While often disproportionately affected by climate change, these women continuously demonstrate their resilience, and use their knowledge and their worldviews to find solutions to the climate crisis.

9. To advance the leadership of women from local communities and indigenous women, their equal, effective and meaningful participation in existing governance structures is needed in national and international climate policy and action. International climate negotiations should be strengthened by ensuring the provision of due respect, space and time needed for the participation of women from local communities and indigenous women.

10. It is critical that the leadership of and solutions promoted by women from local communities and indigenous women are recognized and incorporated in national and international climate policy and action so as to accelerate collective progress towards climate-resilient societies. These women, their networks and their organizations need support, including financial support, to continue exercising their role as agents of change.

11. The LEG, the Paris Committee on Capacity-building, and the WIM Executive Committee have been implementing actions to include gender-responsiveness, traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples' perspectives in their work. Coherence across the UNFCCC process can be further strengthened, including by applying the objectives of and undertaking the activities under the workplan of the LCIPP and the gender action plan.

IV. Summary of panel discussions

A. Opening panel

12. The joint dialogue started with an opening panel that provided context for the subsequent discussions by covering international developments under the workplan of the LCIPP and the gender action plan.

13. A representative of Canada recalled relevant international developments for indigenous women and girls in the context of climate change, such as the conclusions agreed at the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women⁶ and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women draft general recommendation no. 39.⁷

14. A representative of the Kanindé Ethno-Environmental Defense Association of Brazil and the Indigenous Youth Movement of the State of Rondônia, Brazil, led the indigenous invocation. After the invocation, she delivered a short intervention, highlighting that indigenous women have always been leaders in advocating for climate, social and environmental justice and that their equal, effective and meaningful participation in international climate negotiations is needed.

15. The Executive Secretary highlighted that the joint dialogue was at the heart of the aspiration to be ambitious in collectively making progress in addressing climate change. He

⁵ See <https://unfccc.int/gender/cop27#Joint-dialogue-LCIPP-GAP-Enhancing-indigenous-women-climate-leadership-in-the-UNFCCC-process>.

⁶ E/CN.6/2022/L.7.

⁷ CEDAW/C/GC/39.

affirmed that indigenous women need to be placed at the centre of climate decision-making and action, and presented the following suggestions for fostering their role and leadership in climate policy and action:

(a) Encourage Parties to ensure that their ministries responsible for issues related to gender, indigenous issues and civil society are included in climate change related planning, coordination and implementation;

(b) Encourage Parties to start building capacity within government institutions to engage and consult with local communities and indigenous peoples in an ethical and respectful way in climate policy and action;

(c) Encourage Parties and the global community to consider the knowledge and practices of local communities and indigenous peoples in efforts to close the adaptation gap, including by engaging them in formulating NAPs.

16. A member of the FWG recalled that the objective of the joint dialogue was to highlight climate solutions led by women from local communities and indigenous women in terms of local resilience and climate stability, as well as to understand how to advance their leadership in climate policy and action and highlight ways of enhancing their effective participation in national and international climate policy and action.

17. A representative of the secretariat highlighted the five priority areas under the gender action plan as key ways to identify opportunities for collaboration and for fostering the inclusion of the perspectives of women from local communities and indigenous women in national and international climate policy and action.

18. A member of the FWG mentioned that the key messages and takeaways from the joint dialogue will inform joint work under the gender action plan and the workplan of the LCIPP with a view to mainstreaming and highlighting the contribution of women from local communities and indigenous women to gender workstreams and the workplan of the LCIPP, and expressed hope that the dialogue will lead to more informed and impactful decision-making.

B. Panel I

19. Panel I presented examples of solutions to day-to-day climate issues, spearheaded by women from local communities and indigenous women. The examples from various countries related to themes such as weather forecasting and seed banks, as well as indigenous women's involvement in the elaboration of NAPs and nationally determined contributions. Key takeaways from the discussions included the following:

(a) Indigenous women have a significant role in bringing seeds from their seed banks to their community, and it is important that more women reclaim their role as seed caretakers;

(b) The decision by the desert city of Tucson, Arizona, United States of America, to involve indigenous peoples in the creation and implementation of a vision for its climate action and adaptation plan and a 10-year plan concerning access to water was mentioned as an example of good practice of indigenous peoples' participation in climate policymaking;

(c) Women in the Karamojong pastoralist community in Uganda make observations that alert about the arrival of livestock diseases and support weather forecasting, alerting the community about upcoming rain or drought. Climate-related conflict experienced by the community as well as climate and environmental changes disempower Karamojong women and weaken their own representative institutions;

(d) It is vital to support the leadership role of indigenous women and women from local communities in combating climate change and empower them to strengthen their own institutions. In particular, they should participate in decision-making regarding drought, conflict and hunger, and access to financial resources for women-led initiatives should be facilitated by decentralizing climate finance and applying the principle of equity;

(e) Women from local communities, indigenous women and girls, and their worldviews, can provide solutions to the climate crisis. Policymakers should consider indigenous peoples' contributions to climate action and biodiversity conservation and their relationship with nature. Indigenous women are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis, including loss and damage, owing to their livelihoods and patterns of migration. Indigenous languages, many of which are endangered, are vital for transmitting indigenous women's knowledge. The participation of indigenous women and women from local communities in decision-making processes across the local, national, regional and international level is vital for achieving collective progress towards climate-resilient societies, and the gender action plan has an important role in contributing to increased participation;

(f) The LEG has been promoting the use of indigenous knowledge and gender sensitivity by including these aspects in technical guidelines on the process to formulate and implement NAPs and recognizing the role of indigenous women in a climate-resilient future. Some good practices in incorporating indigenous women's considerations into NAPs were presented in the following LDCs:

(i) Burkina Faso's NAP includes a project to develop adaptation technologies, which involves considering the challenges faced by women's associations built on traditional knowledge;

(ii) Chad has appointed the President of the Association of Peul Women and Autochthonous Peoples of Chad, who is a human rights and climate activist, as a goodwill ambassador to the Presidency of Chad, with the aim of facilitating the inclusion of indigenous people in its national adaptation efforts;

(iii) The Democratic Republic of the Congo's nationally determined contribution includes a risk and vulnerability analysis of climate change impacts on indigenous women and information on the preparation of a plan to build the resilience of indigenous women to the effects of climate change in the process to develop its NAP;

(g) The statement on indigenous peoples' and local communities' forest tenure given by joint donors at COP 26⁸ emphasized the need for indigenous women, members of Afro-descendant communities, and women and girls from local communities to access climate finance. Community land rights, forest rights, territorial rights and women's rights deserve recognition by governments at all levels. The assurance of the physical safety of women, environmental defenders and land defenders is essential for these people to lead climate solutions.

C. Panels II and III

20. Panels II and III were combined for scheduling reasons. Panellists presented examples of the leadership of women from local communities and indigenous women in climate change policymaking at the local, national, regional and international level, as well as good practices and suggestions for promoting their effective engagement in the UNFCCC process. Key takeaways from the discussions included the following:

(a) Other intergovernmental negotiation processes have a full day dedicated to building the capacity of women from local communities and indigenous women to better understand intergovernmental negotiations, which is a practice that could also be developed in the UNFCCC process. Access to information should also be improved to ensure the meaningful participation of indigenous women and women from local communities in negotiation processes. The UNFCCC process should support holding regular consultations with women from local communities and indigenous women and recognize the importance of their networks;

⁸ In the statement, leaders pledged USD 1.7 billion in financing, from 2021 to 2025, to support the advancement of forest tenure rights for indigenous peoples and local communities, and greater recognition of and rewards in their role as guardians of forests and nature. The statement is available at <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-iplc-forest-tenure-joint-donor-statement/>.

(b) Capacity-building for women from local communities and indigenous women should be strengthened, for example by increasing their representation in international climate negotiations, to include perspectives on local realities and to protect the lives of the leaders and defenders of indigenous peoples;

(c) Indigenous women and women from local communities are at the front line of loss and damage relating to climate change, and collective progress in climate action is only possible with their meaningful engagement in its planning and implementation. Furthermore, issues relating to vulnerability and gender need to be addressed together while avoiding a top-down approach. An important part of the work of the WIM Executive Committee on collecting data relating to loss and damage is listening to the voices of indigenous women and women from local communities. Expert groups are working to overcome barriers that hinder the participation of indigenous women and women from local communities, for instance by having meetings of thematic expert groups that do not require in-person participation for extended periods;

(d) Three solutions to challenges involved in adopting climate change laws were highlighted using the example of the climate change legislation from Peru. The first solution was to develop a normative framework that includes proposals from indigenous peoples and local communities, including women. The second was to implement it with the meaningful and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, using their existing governance structures. The third was to include indigenous women and women from local communities in debates and discussions without discriminating against them. The knowledge of indigenous women and women from local communities is decisive with regard to regulating climate change. The capacities of indigenous peoples' organizations should be strengthened, and indigenous women and women from local communities should be able to participate in decision-making processes using their own languages. Parties should ensure the security of indigenous peoples and their territories to enable current and future generations to thrive;

(e) Indigenous women and women from local communities are at the frontlines of climate change but are not being consulted, including regarding climate change-related relocation. Governments at all levels must ensure adequate consultation processes that facilitate inputs from indigenous women and women from local communities into responses to climate change. Pilot climate action initiatives led by indigenous women on the ground and gender-responsive climate finance opportunities are also needed.

V. Key action points

21. Panellists proposed various action points for consideration by Parties, non-Party stakeholders, and the secretariat, including:

(a) Strengthening implementation mechanisms and structures so that international laws and policies relevant for women from local communities and indigenous women are effective and consider the importance of free, prior and informed consent;⁹

(b) Sharing insights from the joint dialogue with the LEG, which the LEG could use to develop strategies in line with the workplan of the LCIPP and the gender action plan to support the LDCs in enhancing the participation and leadership of women from local communities and indigenous women in adaptation planning and implementation;

(c) Communicating effectively about commitments and pledges made during sessions of the COP regarding women from local communities and indigenous women so as they can be incorporated into climate policy;

(d) Enhancing capacity-building for women from local communities and indigenous women regarding international climate negotiations and increasing their representation therein;

⁹ More information on the principle of free, prior and informed consent, set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is available in United Nations General Assembly document A/HRC/39/62.

(e) Identifying lessons learned on and opportunities for replicating pilot initiatives led by women from local communities and indigenous women, including with regard to enhancing gender-responsive climate finance for the implementation of such initiatives;

(f) Using the key takeaways from this dialogue to inform further collaboration in the context of the workplan of the LCIPP and the gender action plan, as well as in other workstreams of the secretariat, including the global stocktake and the development of a work programme on just transition.¹⁰

¹⁰ Decision 1/CMA.4

Annex

Agenda

I. Opening of the joint dialogue

Moderator: Emily Vallée Watt (Canada)

Indigenous invocation by Txai Suruí, Suruí people, Counsellor at the Kanindé Ethno-Environmental Defense Association of Brazil and Coordinator at the Indigenous Youth Movement of the State of Rondônia, Brazil

Intervention by Simon Stiell, UNFCCC Executive Secretary

Introduction to the dialogue by Daria Egereva, FWG member, representative of the United Nations indigenous sociocultural region of Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia

Introduction to the gender action plan by Fleur Newman, Action Empowerment unit Lead, UNFCCC gender focal point

Introduction to the LCIPP by Tiana Carter, FWG member, representative of the Western European and other States

II. Panel I on climate solutions led by women from local communities and indigenous women

Moderator: Rubén Ábrego (Panama)

Amy Juan, International Indian Treaty Council, indigenous knowledge holder from the United Nations indigenous sociocultural region of North America

Paul Lokol, District Chairperson of Nabilatuk (Uganda), United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples

Archana Soreng, member of the United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change

Comment by Jamie Ovia, LEG representative

Question and answer session

III. Panel II on the leadership of women from local communities and indigenous women in climate change policymaking at the national and international level, and associated challenges and opportunities

Moderator: Donna Lagdameo (Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform unit, Adaptation division, UNFCCC secretariat)

Melania Canales, coordinator of the southern region of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women

Safaira Tagivuni, General Secretary, Soqosoqo Vakamarama (Women Forum), Lau Province, Fiji

Comment by Rosibel Martínez, representative of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building

Question and answer session

IV. Panel III on the experience of women from local communities and indigenous women in UNFCCC constituted bodies and the practices that enhance their effective engagement in the UNFCCC process

Edna Kaptoyo, FWG member, representative of the United Nations indigenous sociocultural region of Africa

Ei Ei Naw, representative of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

Comment by Camila Rodriguez, representative of the WIM Executive Committee

Question and answer session

V. Closing

Indigenous invocation by Olga Kostrova, representative of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Tomsk Region and indigenous knowledge holder from the United Nations indigenous sociocultural region of Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia.¹¹

VI. Reception and networking

¹¹ The indigenous invocation was not delivered owing to time constraints.