



GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Input from Women to Governments Preparing their Submissions Regarding Article 3.9 - Consideration of Commitments for Subsequent Periods for Annex I Parties of the Kyoto Protocol

February 2006

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based on consultations with women's organisations and gender experts
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Table of Contents

1. Issues, Conclusions and Suggested Actions	2
2. Examples: Some Gender Aspects of Climate Change	4
3. Glossary.....	6
4. References	9

1. Issues, Conclusions and Suggested Actions

Sustainable Development

The climate change debate in general, and the development of future commitments under the Kyoto Protocol needs to be set firmly into the context of Sustainable Development. Its three pillars – environmental, social and economic – and the Principles of the Rio Declaration should serve as the overall framework for developing fair and effective policies for mitigation and adaptation.

Therefore, the preparations for the 2nd commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol need to draw upon experiences, indicators, and other tools developed in international sustainable development processes as well as regional and national sustainable development strategies.

Actions:

- Set up a process / mechanism that ensures that all suggested commitments and mechanisms to help meet them are checked for their environmental, social and economic impacts.
- When preparing contributions to the post-2012 process, request inputs from relevant international bodies such as the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM, and invite womens organisations and networks as well as gender experts to comment on draft documents.

Gender-Sensitivity in the post-2012 process

Despite its status and development within the United Nations international system, climate change policy-making has failed to adopt a gender-sensitive strategy. This failure not only generates concern in terms of respect for gender equity at the international level, it also leads to shortcomings in the efficiency and effectiveness of climate related measures and instruments. Without a gender-sensitive method of analysis, it is impossible to determine the full set of causes and potential effects of climate change. Furthermore, studies have shown that women and men experience climate change differently in terms of their adaptability, responsibility, vulnerability and aptitude for mitigation.

Therefore, the international climate change negotiation process – as well as climate policies at regional, national and local levels - must adopt the principles of gender equity at all stages: from research, to analysis, and the design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies. This applies in particular to the process towards a post-2012 climate protection system or “regime”.

Actions:

- Ensure gender mainstreaming in all mitigation and adaptation policies, drawing on experiences with gender mainstreaming in environmental policy, eg regarding gender impacts assessment tools, affirmative action policies, etc.
- Invest in research to obtain more comprehensive data on gender aspects of climate change, both relating to
 - mitigation (e.g. analyse women’s and men’s energy use, transport use, other consumption patterns impacting climate), and
 - adaptation (e.g. effects of climate change on women’s and men’s lives, work, health, etc, and their abilities and capacities to cope and adapt: in what ways women and men are vulnerable to climate change? What are the strengths and skills of women and men that we need to build on?)
- Include gender analysis in all preparations of commitments and mechanisms to help meet commitments, addressing questions such as: What do climate policies mean for women and men? Are there

differences? And how can such differences be addressed to ensure gender and climate justice? Established methods such as gender impact assessments, gender budgeting, and the like should be used.

Women's participation in the post-2012 process

Participation of women and gender experts in the international climate change has been minimal at most COPs. However, in order to ensure gender mainstreaming in the post-2012 discussions, it is important to draw upon the expertise of women and gender experts.

Therefore, governments should aim to ensure the involvement of women and gender experts when they prepare their contributions for the international process, and ensure women's participation at international meetings.

Actions:

- Draw on the expertise of international institutions, such as the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW; serving CSW); UNIFEM; the CEDAW Committee, INSTRAW, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, and others, through inviting and supporting their active participation in the UNFCCC process;
- Draw on the expertise at national level, through including gender departments and experts within your environment / energy ministries and agencies, and inviting other relevant cabinet ministries (e.g. Women's / Gender Affairs) to actively participate in your work on the UNFCCC process;
- Provide funding for supporting the contributions and participation of women and gender experts in the international climate change process;
- Consider inviting representatives of women's organisations and gender experts to join national delegations to international meetings;
- Advise the UNFCCC Secretariat, the Chair and Bureau of international meetings relating to climate change to ensure that women can actively participate, e.g. through inviting statements in plenary, providing a meeting room for the Women's Climate Caucus, providing a booth in the exhibition area.

2. Examples: Some Gender Aspects of Climate Change

Mitigation

Looking at mitigation through a “gender lens”, for example, we can ask:

- Who is causing how many emissions, and for what purpose?
- How can we best inform women and men about the connections between their behaviour and climate change?
- How can we help women and men to change their behaviour and cause fewer emissions?
- What impacts do mitigation policies have on women and men in their work and their daily lives? Will rising energy prices, for example, affect women and men differently?

We do not have all necessary data to appropriately mainstream gender into mitigation policies and instruments. But we do know enough to a) be sure that gender mainstreaming is needed and b) invest in further research.

Examples of existing knowledge:

Relating to the different roles they fulfil in society, there seem to be significant differences in energy use between women and men. Existing data, and gender roles, suggest that men produce more emissions, and more “selfish” ones – that is, related to maintaining and exercising their social status, whereas women produce emissions when caring and catering for other people (children, elderly, sick). For example, men more often drive cars, and bigger ones, and more often use them for work outside the home and for leisure.

In the case of mobility, substantial work has already been done to analyse the gender dimension of policies and measures. Existing transport systems in many countries have been designed with a specific view to middle-aged full-time working men, neglecting women’s higher dependency on public transport and their specific needs when they look after children and elderly. Integrating a gender perspective would make transport systems both more user-friendly and more climate-friendly.

Adaptation

Vulnerability and adaptation are largely social issues.

We are learning, for example, how natural disasters affect women and men. Examples include: Following the cyclone and flood of 1991 in Bangladesh the death rate was almost five times as high for women as for men. Warning information was transmitted by men to men in public spaces but rarely communicated to the rest of the family. Many women are not allowed to leave their homes without a male relative, and they waited for their relatives to return home and take them to a safe place. Moreover, as in many Asian countries, most Bengali women have never learned to swim.

Another illustration of the differences in vulnerability is the fact that more men than women died during Hurricane Mitch in Central America. It has been suggested that this was due to existing gender norms in which ideas about masculinity encouraged ‘heroic’ – in this case: risky - action in a disaster.

It is widely acknowledged that the negative effects of climate change are likely to hit the poorest people in the poorest countries hardest. Since women form a disproportionate share of the poor in developing countries and communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources, women are likely to be disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

More examples can be found when looking at the effects of drought or deforestation. In many developing countries, women are responsible for fetching water and firewood – tasks that become ever more burden-

some and time-consuming due to widespread environmental changes. It is girls, more often than boys, who will drop out of school to fulfil these tasks. It is women who will be further limited in their opportunities to engage in work outside the home.

As evident in the latest, albeit still preliminary research presented here in Montreal, successful adaptation will have to be context-specific, and participatory. All members of affected communities must be part of a climate change planning and governance process. Without fully involving women in planning and decision-making, the quality of adaptive measures will be limited, and their successful implementation will remain doubtful.

Climate change will also affect people's health, and it is women who look after their children and elderly family members when they are sick. If such demands on women increase, they will, for example, be less able to pursue income-generating activities.

3. Glossary

Gender: The term 'gender' explains the socially constructed identities, roles and expectations associated with males and females. These beliefs have shaped how men and women have been valued, classified and assigned roles and expectations over time. 'Gender' describes the unequal relationship between men and women and makes clear that the prevailing unequal gender roles and relations help to limit women's participation and contribution. As a result of this inequity, local government projects have not had the full benefit of women's perspectives and have therefore often not adequately responded to societal needs. By understanding gender as a socially constructed relationship between men and women, the possibility of changing the nature of male-female relations becomes evident. It is important to note that working towards gender equality does not mean sameness between women and men, but rather that both can exercise their rights in an equitable process which recognizes that their starting points are different, but nevertheless equal. (Budhu 2002)

It has also been pointed out that gender issues are not the same as women's issues. Understanding gender means understanding opportunities, constraints and the impacts of change as they affect both men and women. Partnerships and equality between men and women is the basis of strong families and viable societies in a rapidly changing world. Yet misogynistic views lie at the heart of continued discrimination against women. Women have been consistently excluded from decision-making across history and societies. They are not the only group that has been underrepresented, since many governance systems have been based on the dominance of one or a few elite social groups. However, such power structures cause imbalance, marginalisation, suffering and conflict. Creating greater gender equity will contribute to building peaceful, democratic and prosperous societies.

(Hemmati & Gardiner, 2002, p1)

Gender roles: In most societies gender inequity derives from the fact that women must fulfill three main roles, which are largely unrecognized and undervalued. Women in societies around the world are mainly responsible for the following roles: Reproductive: This refers to women's child bearing as well as to their child rearing roles. In these nurturing and caring roles, women are responsible for contributing workers - born, raised and sustained within the private sphere or 'families' - to the public productive sphere. Women are therefore responsible for numerous activities related to the reproduction and maintenance of the public sector labor force. Productive: This refers to women's role as income earners in both formal and informal sectors. Though they are often regarded as secondary income earners, there are growing numbers of women assuming the role of sole income earners, such as in female-headed households. Community: This refers to women's collective work at the community level. As primary care givers in the family, women's responsibilities often extend into the immediate community, such as local health, safety, and education infrastructures. Women must balance these three roles, whereas men generally only have a productive role and may be involved in 'community politics' mostly at the formal level. (Budhu 2002)

Beliefs and values: Traditional beliefs and values of women and men are deep seated and ingrained in the social and cultural fabric of most societies, and serve to justify deep systemic inequities between women and men. Such beliefs too often link our socially defined roles with our biological roles, leading to commonly held views of woman as only having naturalized 'womanly' traits associated with nurturing and caring roles. These traditional beliefs and values serve to justify women's inferior economic, political and social status within the wider society. By obscuring the fact that social and historical processes have limited women's access to the public sphere, as in access to economic and political decision-making roles, traditional belief systems make it difficult to challenge women's subordination and marginalization. This is

compounded by a general lack of awareness and knowledge of gender inequities throughout the society, from government officials and media executives to educators and health workers. (Budhu 2002)

Gender-based analysis: Gender analysis is a tool used in the understanding of social processes and provides a method for responding with informed and equitable options. Gender analysis helps us to recognize and understand how the lives of women and men are shaped more by socially defined values and perceptions, than by biological differences. It helps us to understand how socially constructed roles assigned to men and women, which are based on traditional values, lead to experiences, needs, interests and priorities that are different, diverse and unequal. Gender-based analysis challenges the assumption that everyone is affected by policies and programs in the same way regardless of their sex, a notion often referred to as 'gender-neutral policy'. Gender neutral policies and programs are designed on the assumption that men and women have similar needs and interests, and as a result they fail to recognize that equal treatment does not produce equitable results. Gender-based analysis makes visible the different needs and perspectives of women, identifies barriers facing women in carrying out their daily multiple roles, and illuminates the socially constructed relationships between men and women. But gender-based analysis, if it is effective, goes beyond just identifying the differences and inequities that limit women's full participation in local government initiatives. It examines and makes visible the underlying value systems that breed such inequities between men and women. It compares how and why women and men are affected differentially by government initiatives and questions the values and assumptions on which decisions are based. Also, it raises questions about how community resources are allocated and managed, and how the benefits of government initiatives are shared. Gender analysis takes into consideration the differences between women's and men's lives as well as other differences within these groups, recognizing that different approaches may be needed to produce outcomes that are equitable. Gender-based analysis provides a means with which to ensure that the perspectives of both men and women are factored into the design and implementation of government initiatives. (Budhu 2002)

Gender analysis & gender-sensitive indicators: Effective gender analysis to monitor progress on gender equity and sustainable development requires good gender-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive research and indicators. However, there is a severe lack of adequate data available. For example, in work assessment, caring activities are still categorised as leisure, and few gender-disaggregated environment & health indicators exist. Gender expertise also needs to be further integrated into research. Scientific advisory bodies and environmental impact assessments (EIA's), for example, through participation of women and women's NGOs in the development of social-environmental information systems. Integrating social and environmental monitoring is another important strategy.

At the international level a gender review of the current of sustainability indicators should be carried out. A consistent comparable reporting methodology could be instituted within the UN system to track progress of women in decision-making roles for sustainable development in countries worldwide. Such mechanisms should be promoted among national governments and stakeholders. Progress would be reviewed within the sustainable development process every 5 years, using a common framework. Existing examples of sets of gender indicators includes the Gender Development Index (GDI) of the HDR, which differentiates the traditional human development index of countries by gender. Also the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), looks at the number of women with a seat in parliament, the proportion of administrators and managers who are women; proportion of professional and technical workers who are women; women's share or earned income. The Gender Equality Index, developed by the International Statistical Unit, is the perhaps the most comprehensive. (Hemmati & Gardiner 2002)

Gender mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming policies and procedural rules need to be integrated into the work of all government departments, and adequate monitoring mechanisms should be established. Strategies to encourage gender balance in governance and sustainable development include:

- full and equal participation of women in the formulation of all policies and decision-making;
- evaluating institutions for gender balance and action on gender issues;
- overcoming women's apathy and lack of understanding of government processes with innovative types of outreach;
- awareness-raising, capacity-building, education and training of women and men; and of all people in decision-making positions in all sectors and at all levels (incl. changing curricula; public campaigns; developing gender sensitivity training; guidelines for gender mainstreaming, etc);
- institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women e.g. legislation (CEDAW, national legislation);
- making gender disaggregated information available and supporting relevant research ;
- guiding young women towards careers as decision-makers in sustainable development; establishing joint women & environment task forces.
- collecting and sharing good practices at local, national and international levels; including peer group review of (good) practice and promoting successful strategies.
- All such efforts must be backed by adequate funding and support, and should be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness and replicability.

(Hemmati & Gardiner 2002)

Sex: Sex identifies the biological differences between women and men.

Subordination: "Subordination" of women within gender relationships can take various forms, ranging from limited access to certain kinds of work, to the absence of women in the decision-making process. Subordination results in the marginalization of women from both the planning and benefits of local government initiatives. Gender subordination can lead to a planning process that does not consider the needs and interests of women or value their contributions through the various roles they hold. (Budhu 2002)

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