

Charter of the Women's and Gender Constituency under the UNFCCC

Introductory note:

After having discussed about assets and drawbacks of becoming a constituency in the UNFCCC process during COP13 in Bali and COP14 in Poznan, the women's caucus mandated GenderCC – a network whose members have long been involved in the climate change negotiations process – to submit an application to form a gender/women's NGO constituency under the UNFCCC. During the "Bonn-II" negotiation session of the UNFCCC, the women's caucus participants agreed to form a working group who would make recommendations on the goal, principles and criteria for participation in this potential constituency. Representatives from five active women's organizations, WECF, ENERGIA, GenderCC, LIFE and WEDO, have held meetings by phone and in person for the last 2 months to address major questions concerning the constituency and its representation. The following is a draft compilation of inputs for wide consideration and feedback. Starting by the Barcelona session the UNFCCC Secretariat has provided the provisional constituency status which will extend up to COP 17, when a final decision on the constituency status will be made by the Secretariat.

Article 1. Goal

The goal of the Women's and Gender Constituency is to formalize the voice of the women's and gender civil society organizations present and regularly active in UNFCCC processes, and to debate, streamline and strengthen the positions which these organizations put forth. The Constituency aims to bring together as many NGO observer accredited to the UNFCCC as possible to democratically contribute to its goals. Individuals and organizations who are not accredited to the UNFCCC are encouraged to work through those accredited members.

The Constituency draws upon global commitments to gender equality and women's rights, especially as they relate to climate change, and toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and related commitments and Conventions. The Constituency works to ensure human rights and a gender perspective is incorporated into UNFCCC negotiations, plans and actions.

Article 2. Principles

The principles of the Gender and Women Constituency are:

- a. Democratic and participatory governance
- b. Participatory and respectful (between members and of diverging positions)
- c. Wide and inclusive membership of registered NGO observers to the UNFCCC
- d. Equitable (in terms of representation, affiliation, age, and ability)
- e. Encouraging of regional balance in its membership, participation processes and structures
- f. Transparent procedures and clear, timely and flexible communication
- g. Ensure working methodologies allow for effective participation of members from all regions
- h. Building on history (collectively and individually)
- i. Mentoring (of younger generations and other newcomers)
- j. Goal-oriented
- k. Provide a platform for women's leadership with broad and participatory access.

Article 3. Objectives

The main objectives of the Women and Gender Constituency include:

- a. to regularly review developments in the climate change discourse within and around the official negotiations
- b. to ensure representation of women's voices, experiences, needs and capacities and to ensure a gender perspective in all discussions
- c. to feed women and gender sensitive perspectives and situations into the discourse
- d. to help foster communication between women and gender organizations/actions and national- or global-level negotiations
- e. to support and contribute to the women's and gender caucus(es) –which are daily coordination meetings- during formal meetings
- f. to liaise with other caucuses and constituencies, especially to identify common ground

Article 4. Framework

The coordination and work of the constituency will be made within the framework and guidance of the following key considerations:

- a. Fostering the wide participation of women and women's issues in these processes and supporting their views and perspectives
- b. Ensure climate change policies are in line with global commitments such as sustainable development and poverty eradication
- c. Equitable actions to urgently respond to those most in need
- d. Upholding the principles of common but differentiated, historical responsibilities;
- e. Pushing for a sustainable energy paradigm and the recognition of women's role as energy managers.
- f. Going beyond the focus on carbon to look toward other issues of environmental, social, or economic relevance

Article 5. Membership

Participation in the Women and Gender Constituency is the choice of an individual or individual organization, and is neither official nor binding. It does not preclude direct communication with the Secretariat by any observer organization, nor does it imply any 'sovereignty' over the constituency on the part of the focal point organization.

Article 6. Governance structure

The constituency will adjust its governance structure to best meet the demands of its membership and ensure proper international and regional coordination and guidance. The bodies which constitute the governance structure are accountable to the members. The constituency will establish appropriate transparency and

accountability mechanisms through its Operational Guidelines, including the use of performance assessments and conflict resolution mechanisms.

The Constituency will organize working groups/thematic groups to generate and facilitate substantive contributions to the UNFCCC processes. Each working group should elect a coordinator who would regularly facilitate communication among members, between each other, and from/to the Focal Point¹. Coordinators for groups will rotate among the membership; coordinators will represent global South and North.

The Constituency will communicate through a listserv established and maintained by the Focal Point. The listserv will serve as the forum for information-sharing specific to the Constituency, positions, speaking opportunities, requests, etc. The list and contact information of the Constituency members will be made public and available to the members electronically. All members of the Constituency will be included in the Constituency's listserv.

¹ Please note that the role of the Focal Point for Constituencies under the UNFCCC have specific responsibilities and opportunities. Guidelines for the Women's/Gender Constituency Focal Point, the constituency procedures, and the Caucus Meetings will be included in the Operational Guidelines and disseminated separately from this document.