



GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice and LIFE

Joint Submission on Matters relating to Article 4, paragraph 8 and 9, of the Convention: Progress on the implementation of decision 1/CP.10 (SBI)

Gender Aspects and Action Points Concerning Articles 2 and 4 of the UNFCCC Convention

Article 2 - Food Production, Depletion of Agricultural Productivity and Availability of Water

Decline in food production

Food production, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia is drastically declining while international prices of food items are increasing resulting in much decreased food availability amongst the poorest (Fisher et al., 2003). Although rural women and men play complementary roles in guaranteeing food security, women tend to play a greater role in natural resource management and ensuring nutrition (FAO 2003). Women's involvement in agricultural production is most common in regions likely to be most adversely affected by the impacts of climate change, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. (CIDA, 2002). Women are responsible for 80% of household food production in Africa and Asia, 45% in Latin America and in the Caribbean. Despite women's hard work to ensure household food security through a very labour-intensive, low-emission subsistence agriculture, any decline in food availability under climate change will hit women hard due to disproportionate intra-household distribution. It will also increase malnutrition and hunger by an estimated 10% (Duncan, 2007). To address the productivity threats related to agricultural practices, the following measures are being recommended;

- Promote and support women and small scale farmers to adopt coping mechanisms that withstand climate variability through activities such as the use of drought-resistant or salt-resistant crop varieties, the more efficient use of water resources and improved pest management;
- Introduction and promotion of later-maturing crop varieties, switching cropping sequences, sowing earlier, adjusting timing of field operations, conserving soil moisture through appropriate tillage methods and improving irrigation efficiency. Irrigation may entail major investments while options such as switching crop varieties might not be expensive and hence more appropriate for the poor; and
- Promote and enforce sustainable land use policies and practices .

Depletion of natural resources and agricultural productivity

Depletion of natural resources and agricultural productivity places additional burdens on women who will have to spend more time scavenging plants and cultivating their crops for subsistence and

local markets. In many parts of the world women make up the majority of the agricultural workforce. Due to patrilineal inheritance, women's access to and control over land is often limited, and if they own or control land, it is often less fertile. Net depletion of soil productivity forces women to spend more time providing food for their families and thus less time to participate in income generating activities along with other household activities. Climate change will further exacerbate a vicious cycle of injustice.

Future adaptation and/or agriculture policies need to be informed by more research into the adaptation strategies of women in the face of existing climate change impacts on agricultural productivity and food security, including how these are manifested in different contexts. Barriers to women's access to new technologies need to be addressed, extension services and credit facilities need to be established. Aspects of their own agricultural knowledge that have been overlooked and could contribute to effective adaptation, what women are already doing and what do they identify as their needs and priorities have to be established in order to inform all policies and interventions. Introducing and supporting diversification of food crops and livestock depending on the local situation is equally important.

Decreased availability of water

Freshwater resources are highly sensitive to variations in weather and climate. The changes in climate will affect patterns of freshwater availability and will alter the frequencies and severity of floods and droughts. In addition, saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers is likely to become an increasing problem as a result of sea-level rise. In the recent past, the world at large has experienced shrinking fresh water sources, leading to local lack of water, crop failures, livestock deaths, collapsed fisheries, soil salinity, and increasing poverty especially among the most vulnerable members of the communities. Women are especially exposed to climate change related risks due to existing gender discrimination, inequality and inhibiting gender roles.

In most countries, women are primarily responsible for collecting and storing water for human needs. They are also responsible for providing food security. Decreased availability of water in terms of both quantity and quality, erratic rainfalls and more frequent events such as floods and droughts will further decrease availability of water and other productive resources. This decline in access will increase the workloads on women. Additionally, droughts and floods can be particularly detrimental to women who keep livestock as a source of income and food security (Lambrou and Piana 2005; Women's statement at COP 10/2004).

Adaptation measures should be taken to protect against loss of livelihoods of the most vulnerability, particularly poor women whose adaptive capacities are extremely low. Inadequate and inequitable access to water is a key factor to the low adaptive capacity of the local groups.

- Enhancing the adaptive capacities of poor women and men in order to reduce their vulnerabilities and climate change risks through the following
 - Identifying and upscaling the locally generated coping strategies;
 - Climate-specific interventions such as drought proofing, rainwater harvesting, awareness about available drought-resistant varieties, better access to medium- and long-range weather forecasts, and possibly early warning networks. For example, where possible, construction of sand-dams and shallow wells;
 - Broader capacity building through natural resource based education and sustainable water resource management; and
 - Developing technologies for rainwater harvesting and storage.

- Climate change should be considered in the context of all of the other stresses impinging on our water resources, including non-climatic changes such as water policy and management practice which may have significant effects.
- It is important to support the right to water and ensure that policies and measures aim to place women at the centre of water governance in order to increase their ability to participate in decision making as regards water resources.

Article 4.1 - Gender Implications of Adaptation Measures

The International Conference on Population and Development (1994), The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), The World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), and the 2005 World Summit recognized the essential role women play in sustainable development. In its recent follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, The General Assembly highlighted the need to “involve women in environmental decision-making at all levels; integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development; and strengthen or establish mechanisms at national, regional and international levels to assess the impacts of development and environmental policies on women’ (A/C.3/62/L89).

Under the UNFCCC process, parties must ensure mainstreaming of gender perspectives into their national policies, action plans and other response measures on sustainable development and climate change by carrying out systematic gender analysis, collecting and utilizing sex-disaggregated data, establishing gender-sensitive indicators, criteria and benchmarks, and developing practical tools to support and monitor the programs in a gender-sensitive way. For every conceived adaptation measure, a gender-sensitivity analysis must be made mandatory to ensure that women’s differential needs and priorities are adequately addressed along with those of the rest of the community.

To ensure this, the following steps need to be taken:

- Address the lack of disaggregated data by gender in the area of climate change. International human rights standards and principles underline the need to adequately assess and address the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change. In the context of negotiations on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, States have highlighted gender-specific vulnerability assessments as important elements in determining adaptation options.
- Building the capacity of women to have the skills and confidence to engage with climate change debates at the local, national, regional and international levels (for example through advocacy training) in order to entrench gender in local, national and international policies and measures.
- Identify the contributions of women as agents of change in adaptation to climate change at the local level.
- Assess women’s differential vulnerability within a given geo-physical, socio-economic and institutional context.
- Take steps to reduce the differential vulnerability of women.
- Increase the participation of women representing vulnerable communities or vulnerable women in assessing their vulnerability and in decision making on climate change adaptation at different levels.
- Build the capacity of women to design and implement adaptation programs beyond their household activities.
- Ensure that adaptation policies and measures are directly targeting and benefiting vulnerable women and as such, ensure that no less than 20% of the adaptation fund is earmarked for the programs directly targeting and benefiting vulnerable women?

- Build the capacity of organizations working on “gender and adaptation issues” at the local level, particularly local government institutions where women’s direct participation is ensured.
- Monitor the status of vulnerable women and respond to their changing needs and priorities.

Article 4.4 - The Adaptation Fund and Vulnerability Assessment

Geographical mapping of vulnerability is suggested by many as the most useful tool for identifying vulnerable groups. It refers to identification of a vulnerable community according to their physical setting in a geographic location irrespective of gender differential vulnerability. Women, as a community can not be identified if geographic location specificity is the criteria for identifying the most vulnerable communities. Vulnerability should be assessed through the eyes of vulnerables themselves and here separate consultations with the women in a vulnerable community appear extremely important to unearth gender-differential vulnerability and gender-sensitive adaptive responses.

The Draft Provisional Operational Policies and Guidelines for Parties (tB/B.5/4, Agenda Item 8) which proposes operational policies and guidelines for eligible developing country parties to access resources from the Fund, is still incomplete with respect to eligibility criteria. The draft provisional guidelines are expected to evolve further based on subsequent decisions of the board, reflecting future guidance from the parties.

To ensure a gendered approach to adaptation funding and vulnerability assessment the following amendments of these Draft Provisional Operational Policies should be taken into consideration:

- For the Operational Principle, under Strategic Priorities, point 6 should be revised so that, in accordance with decision 5/CMP.2, paragraph 2(c), projects and programs funded under the Adaptation Fund will take into account, inter alia, national sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction strategies, national communication and national adaptation programs of action. The programs should be matched with the national Women’s Policies and International Commitments for Women (for example CEDAW, MDG 3).
- For the Operational Principle, under Strategic Priorities, point 8 should be revised so that in developing projects and programs, special attention shall be given by eligible parties to the particular needs of the most vulnerable communities. Women should be specified as the most vulnerable segment within vulnerable communities.
- Parties or the entities chosen by the governments approaching the Board for funding must incorporate gender-perspectives and gender-sensitive benchmarks built into the design of the program. The checklist should involve the steps referring to Article 4.1. mentioned in this text.

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