

**Women and Gender Constituency Statement on REDD+
SBSTA Closing Session**

Thank you, Chair.

On behalf of the Women and Gender Constituency, we appreciate this opportunity to address the floor. REDD - in order to not *worsen* the lives and livelihoods of women - must *directly* engage women and respect their rights to, among other things, land, property and information.

We recognize the great potential of forests for capturing and storing carbon, and the profound contribution of forests – *and those who care for them* – to global emissions reductions. Forests play a role in resilience to climate change, preserving biodiversity, ensuring food security and sustaining essential ecosystem services.

To this end, women must be directly involved. But so far, REDD discussions have only begun to address gender aspects.

Women's participation in the forestry sector is valuable – economically and otherwise. Activities that are already underway by women, local and indigenous communities – which are sustainable and contribute to global mitigation, such as tree planting, building nurseries, saving and protecting seeds – are integral to a successful policy for conserving and restoring forests. At the same time, unsustainable activities, such as large-scale logging, continue to be undertaken by large companies and local elites who are far more likely to benefit from REDD opportunities and payments. Therefore, policies to conserve and restore forests must be inclusive of small-scale forestry activities in which women are predominantly engaged already.

As the work of the SBSTA is focused on the scientific and technical underlining aspects, it remains important for the *effectiveness* of this work to recall fundamental principles of accountability at both national and international levels, fairness, inclusiveness, transparency, broad participation of stakeholders and rights holders, and gender equality.

We fully support the proposal to increase the number of experts trained in the use of IPCC guidelines and suggest that gender-balance is integral for long-term sustainability and efficacy, as well as for sharing of knowledge and information. Further, we suggest enhancing collaboration with research organizations examining not only environmental issues, but social issues, as well. This research would deeply benefit from a gendered approach and should generate sex-disaggregated data. Assessments must be multi-disciplinary and, of course, include gender experts as well as women scientists.

Thank you.