

Mainstreaming gender in climate change

**Vulnerability, Impacts and
Adaptation Viewed Through
Gender Lenses**

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WHAT HAS GENDER GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Gender: the big absentee

- ☞ Absence from decision-making**
- ☞ Institutional absence**
- ☞ Representational absence**
- ☞ Semantic absence**
- ☞ Financial absence**
- ☞ Information-related absence**
- ☞ Gender= low priority**

Irony of the Climate Debate

- ✓ Sustainable development as a finality but unsustainable practices**
- ✓ Survival of the fittest**
- ✓ Poverty reduction become relegated to secondary status**
- ✓ Environmental management becomes more of a paper victory**
- ✓ Climate change = about human security yet driven by market interest**

The More or Less Equation

- Are women poorer than men?**
- Are they more vulnerable than men?**
- Do they have more control over resources?**
- Have they more capacity to adapt to environmental degradation and the climate related impacts?**
- Do they have a role to play?**
- Can their knowledge be utilised?**

Environmental Resource Management

- Environmental resource management is gendered**
- Both women and men use the forest as a main source of livelihood**
- Women also use plants and forest products for medicinal purposes**
- Involvement in reforestation projects**
- Agricultural and market gardening activities accentuate the strong link between women and the environment = natural environmental managers**

Vulnerability Issues

- ☞ Land degradation has huge environmental/ food security implications
- ☞ Dependency on biomass energy = increase greater drudgery with depletion of forests
- ☞ Climate Change will worsen climatic conditions = knock on effect on agriculture
- ☞ CC would result in the loss of biodiversity i.e. fish species
- ☞ Sahelian countries prone to drought and desertification will be hugely affected
- ☞ Women make up three quarters of the agricultural work force
- ☞ Consequently loss of revenue and livelihoods

Vulnerability

- Harsh environmental conditions will also cause population displacement
- Consequently more burden on women due to gendered division of labour
- Climatic conditions would affect water availability and women and children would resort to water supplies from dirty ponds
- Health risks are accentuated with increased temperatures

Adaptation Strategies

➤ Agriculture & Food Security

Subsistence agriculture, Market Gardening,
Household Activities

- Improve crop species
- Use of perennial crops to prevent soil erosion
- Improve agricultural practices (irrigation systems, water management)

Adaptation Strategies

- ✓ Water Resource Management (Productive and Domestic Use)
 - Improved water resource management by a more efficient use of existing supplies
 - New reservoirs and pipelines to boost supplies
 - Reduce water pollution

Adaptation

- Forest Resource Management (commercial/livelihoods purposes, household fuel, medicinal Purposes)
 - rational use of forest reserves
 - Clear enforcement regulations to protect local communities against illegal felling of trees
 - Reforestation programmes
 - Substitution fuels to curb the increase use of biomass
 - More energy efficient technologies

Adaptation Strategies

- ✓ Fisheries (commercial purposes, food processing, smoke fish
 - regulation of fish exploitation
 - Better and sustainable practices within the industry
 - Preservation and processing of fish products

Mitigation

- ✓ **Clean Development could accelerate sustainability by promoting cleaner fuels**
- ✓ **CDM projects could support existing energy projects (improved stoves, waste to energy project)**
- ✓ **CDM to support energy infrastructures**

Mitigation

But would lack of capacity affect women's abilities to take advantage of economic spin-offs from the CDM?

- Possibility of CDM opportunities going to entrepreneurs best able to take advantage of such potential**

Equity Dimension

- ☛ Climate Change has huge equity implications
- ☛ Climate change should help bridge the gap between rich and poor not make it wider
- ☛ Unequal power relations between women and men has huge income generating implication
- ☛ Women bear the brunt of environmental degradation, macro-economic policies, poor technologies, lack of credit and information

Institutional Support

- ☛ CDM - **should integrate gender in future projects**
- ☛ More incentives to encourage private sector involvement
- ☛ GEF – can support the development of new energy technologies and thus improve energy efficiency

Institutional Support

- ✔ **Build capacity in education, training and technology**
- ✔ **National governments – ensure that new activities build on existing initiatives taken (desertification, energy projects)**
- ✔ **National governments should include gender concerns in environmental management in key programmes (PRSP)**
- ✔ **International agencies could encourage more research on the linkages between gender and the 3 Conventions**



Women are central pillars of the sustainable development debate and as such should together with men participate in building a sustainable future