



# Gender and climate change: working towards gender-sensitive national climate policy



## IMPRINT

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## PREFACE

Climate change affects regions, generations, income groups and people of different genders differently. The gendered nature of climate change was officially recognised within the international climate negotiations in 2012 in Doha. The decision calls for greater gender parity in the negotiations and gender sensitive climate policies. Hailed as a victory for the gender and climate community, the Doha decision has been one step in the long process of bringing the link between gender and climate change to the fore.

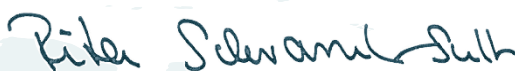
However, the link between gender and climate change remains unclear to many. Yet research shows that due to gender roles women and men contribute differently to climate change and the impacts of climate change are unevenly distributed. Additionally, many climate change policies do not acknowledge the gender effects of adaptation or mitigation policies and women receive little benefits.

With the Doha decision, gender has moved up on the climate agenda. Questions regarding what gender sensitive climate policies will look like – and whether nominal representation of women in formal bodies automatically translates into substantial policies – remain open. An additional challenge to developing and implementing gender sensitive climate policies is the complex and sometimes arduous process within the UNFCCC. The negotiations toward the 2015 climate agreement of Paris are speeding up, but still many questions remain unresolved, like the level of emission reductions. Despite this shortcoming, civil society and parties continue to be optimistic that gender considerations will be taken into account for a future climate regime. The presence of a variety of delegates and observers during an official gender workshop held in Warsaw has been a promising sign.

Those following gender in the UNFCCC process do well know that Doha has only been one stop on the rocky road to gender equality. The adoption of decision 23/CP.18 also has been the result of the increasing presence and engagement by women's and gender organisations in the UNFCCC process and the increasing acknowledgement of the issue by governments. Among the many organisations, GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice has worked for many years on gender sensitive climate policies. With the funding from the German Federal Environment & Building Ministry and the International Climate Initiative IKI, GenderCC and its partners have pursued a project on gender in adaptation and low carbon development, implemented in Bangladesh and the Pacific. The results from the project will hopefully serve as an inspiration as to how gender sensitive climate policies can be operationalised.

This publication takes a look at gender and climate change policies in a number of different countries, highlighting how countries' national climate policies vary according to the level, pace and effectiveness of gender integration. What might work well in one country may be ineffective in another, as institutions, actors and socio-political cultures provide the parameters within which gender advocates operate. Yet, a general understanding of which strategies and mechanisms have been successful can fruitfully inform the debate at the global level and serve as examples for best practices. The articles provide an overview of some countries' experience with gender integration into climate policies and will hopefully provide inspiration for others working at the national and international level.

I am convinced that integrating gender into national climate and energy policies will make a difference we all can contribute to.



*Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter*  
*Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for the Environment,*  
*Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety*



*Gotelind Alber*

This brochure is an outcome of GenderCC's project "Integration of Gender into Climate Change Adaptation and Low Carbon Development: Raising Awareness, Building Capacity, Supporting National and International Policy Processes". GenderCC's partners, the Center for Global Change in Bangladesh (CGC), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) have promoted gender sensitive approaches at national and community levels through awareness raising and dissemination of information, capacity building and training. Moreover, GenderCC has set up a Global Learning Platform (<http://comm.gendercc.net>) as an interactive tool to disseminate the results of these pilots and facilitate joint learning and exchange on gender and climate policy between climate change practitioners. It is open to anybody interested in gender and climate change, allowing participants to share knowledge and experiences, as well as to collaborate on the development of gender-sensitive adaptation and mitigation actions, training concepts and tools. Participants can contribute by providing documents, data, best practices and links. GenderCC is planning to expand the platform to include e-learning modules on gender and climate change.

The project was funded by the International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, and we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude for the generous support.

This compilation focuses on efforts to integrate gender into national climate policy, based on the experience of the project partners and further GenderCC members. It is primarily meant for people who have already been working on gender and climate change, for instance in the international context, and wish to advocate for gender-sensitive adaptation and mitigation at national level. What strategies and actions were undertaken by other activists in different world regions and countries? What approaches have been successful? How could decision makers be influenced? What was actually implemented? What kind of work was done at the grass-root level? And what were the impacts of these efforts?

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### Gender in the UNFCCC process

In the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, progress has been made in addressing gender issues, as demonstrated by the Gender Decision adopted at the 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP18) in Doha in 2012<sup>1</sup>. The decision established gender as an item on the COP agenda and defined steps to improve and monitor gender balance in UNFCCC bodies. Moreover, Parties were encouraged to strive for gender balance in their delegations and requested to prepare submissions on options and ways to advance the goal of gender balance; it was decided that an in-session-workshop on gender and climate change was to be held, which took place during COP19 in Warsaw in 2013.

This decision is definitely a milestone after years of awareness raising for the gender dimension of climate change and advocating for such issues to be taken into consideration. Gender balance in planning and decision-making is a matter of women's human rights

and can lead to more informed and sound decisions, which take women's perspectives and preferences into account. Yet, gender balance does not guarantee that gender issues are addressed or that gender expertise is available, because women are not necessarily sensitive to gender issues, just like their male counterparts. Therefore, GenderCC believes that in addition to gender parity, we need additional provisions to ensure that women get their equal share, be it information, resources, or finance; and genuine gender-sensitive approaches in all policies related to climate change.

## Why do we need gender-sensitive policies?

Gender differentials play a role in control over resources and carbon footprints, vulnerabilities, preferences and capabilities. Unequal power relations and cultural patterns codifying gender roles are the root causes of these gender inequalities, resulting in androcentric systems dominated by male perspectives, while women's identities, attitudes and behaviour are neglected or considered as deviations from the 'norm'. In most societies, gender roles mean that women face a lack of access to resources and information, mobility constraints and legal discrimination. Even in countries which are widely considered "champions" of gender equality, the gender pay gap and division of labour continue to exist. All over the world, women are more likely to be given the primary responsibility for family care, including the provision of food, caring for children, elderly and sick family members. With a lack of food security or insufficient access to energy, mobility and water services, these tasks can be extremely challenging and time-consuming.

If these differentials are not properly taken into consideration, policies will be less effective and existing gender based discrimination may be exacerbated. With a gender approach, climate policy will be more fair and equitable, taking into account that in most cases, those who emit the least are the most vulnerable and vice versa, and that women and men have different motivations and opportunities to contribute to solving the problem.

## What would gender sensitive policies look like?

To be effective, climate policy needs to respond to the different needs and capacities of all citizens – women and men, and including poor and marginalised groups. Climate policy needs to address and involve both women and men as decision-makers, and also as consumers, caregivers, commuters, entrepreneurs, educators, and so forth. It is particularly important that climate policy takes socio-economic impacts into account.

In many sectors, a gender perspective will lead to a change in priorities. For instance, taking women's preferences into consideration may lead to favouring low-risk mitigation options such as renewable energies, rather than technologies such as nuclear energy and





carbon capture and storage; improved public transport systems, rather than biofuel vehicles; and life-style changes, rather than only technology-based options. For adaptation, priorities might shift towards enhancing resilience of communities and improving infrastructure and services for water supply and sanitation instead of, e.g., building large dams.

Furthermore, the design of policies and measures may need to be altered after Gender Impact Assessments have been carried out. For instance, gender sensitive policies must take distributional effects into consideration, and address the care economy<sup>2</sup> and informal economy, for instance by improving and carefully designing infrastructure and services to accommodate family care and livelihoods.

## Overview on the articles

In the beginning of her contribution, Eunice Warue analyses the gender issues in terms of the different levels of current climate policies (adaptation, mitigation, etc.) with reference to Kenya. She then illustrates how gender mainstreaming was included in the Kenyan National Climate Change Response Strategy enacted in 2010. She sees the Doha Decision on gender as providing a fresh impetus, and explicates how it could be implemented.

The next two articles are two more extended contributions by authors involved in the project on gender-sensitive adaptation and low carbon development mentioned above: Kuini Rabo from the Secretariat of the Pacific Communities provides perspective based on a local institutions, looking at how they can be linked with informal groups, and highlighting the importance of a gender sensitive approach in the implementation of adaptation and mitigation projects.

Sharmin Neelormi from the Center for Global Change (CGC) in Bangladesh uses a gender lens to examine 2009 Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, with special attention to the position of women in her country. She concludes firstly that gender aspects are largely neglected, and secondly, she indicates which (other) aspects should be included in this continually to be revised programme. Finally, she describes the CGC's 'journey towards initiating gender just climate policies': the measures undertaken by her organisation to sensitise politicians, climate experts, media representatives, as well as individuals and organisations of civil society on the gender dimensions of climate change.

Like Bangladesh, Pakistan is one of the countries that suffers most severely from the consequences of climate change; in this context it is also notable that the vulnerability of women is particularly high due to socially constructed gender roles. Maira Zahur illustrates how the National Climate Change Policy was initially gender-blind, and how after lobbying for gender integration the responsible task force was led to introduce a gender section. Yet, here too, is valid that much remains to be done – not least the inclusion of women in decision-making, both within boards and through voices from the base.



Usha Nair of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) describes workshops on climate change with a gender lens at the grass-root level (while also in cooperation with politicians). Based on two campaigns (one in a coastal village, and the other in an urban centre) she explains how residents finally understood the changes in nature which they had been noticing within the last years as results of climate change. Thus in addition to gaining awareness, locally workable actions were developed with the participants.

While also based on different experiences at the grass-roots level, Dorah Marema resumes a more national view, in this case from South Africa. Her organisation GenderCC Southern Africa, together with GenderCC and with the financial support of the German Ministry for Environment, could influence the national climate change policy in the special context of the UNFCCC COP17 in Durban in late 2011. Her article summarises the learning outcomes in detail, focusing on the key findings and lessons from this project and making them available to others.

Yvette Abrahams also writes from a South African point of view and takes a step back, analysing a knowledge system rooted in patriarchy and capitalism at the root of the matter which led to climate change. With energy and agriculture she discusses two areas where (eco-)feminism can posit alternative systems of knowledge which, she argues, are better suited to the challenges of accomplishing climate justice.

## Concluding Remarks

Without taking too much away from the more elaborate conclusions of the various authors, I would like to give three core statements to conclude:

Governments have started to move towards gender-sensitive policies in their countries, yet, most of these efforts still fall short of a comprehensive approach towards fully integrating gender considerations in overall action plans, or of engaging bodies and institutions in charge of gender equality and implementing gender-sensitive climate action.

The continued commitment of gender-aware civil society actors is essential. This involves the close monitoring of actions taken by governments and ongoing advocacy for the effective consideration of gender issues, even if action plans on gender and climate policy are already in place.

Equally important is the involvement of grassroots women and their movements, even though can still be a challenge to bridge the gap between policy-makers at various levels and the voices of local communities.

## Notes

- 1 [https://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced\\_search/items/6911.php?preref=600007318](https://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?preref=600007318)
- 2 Care economy: the care work for the family and community in which women are disproportionately involved, is the social and economic foundation of all economies.



Eunice Warue

## Introduction

The issue of gender cuts across various levels of climate action including adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and finance. Within all of these mechanisms, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the question of gender equality needs to be addressed, and a sustainable mechanism for enhancing it, to be adopted. It is apparent that women and children, particularly in developing countries, bear the burden of climate change impacts; which include floods, famines and droughts among others.

Because of this, the position of women in society has also been recognised as being key in spearheading climate action. More concretely, the following aspects are relevant, also in reference to Kenya:

In **Adaptation**, gender differences must be considered not just in terms of differential vulnerability, but also as differential adaptive capacity. Women play a key role in protecting, managing and recovering their household and assets during disasters. They are strong advocates for preparedness measures at the community level because they understand what disaster means for the day-to-day realities of life. Many women have the knowledge and capacity to contribute towards adapting to the changing nature of disasters, and they themselves continue to develop innovative strategies to address climate change impacts. Women in particular also take the lead in the attempt to find practical solutions to adapt to climate change. For example, the passing on of indigenous knowledge, innovative strategies and practice to alleviate poverty and to survive in the face of climate change.

In **Mitigation**, due to its seemingly 'technical' or 'scientific' nature (as being about reducing Green House Gases – GHGs), exploration of the gender aspects are still at the initial stages. Women are often seen only as victims or members of vulnerable groups, rather than experts or leaders. Women are poorly represented in planning and decision-making processes in climate change policies, limiting their capacity to engage in political decisions related to climate change. In developing countries, like Kenya, burning biomass for household cooking, heating and lighting represents a high percentage of overall energy use. Women are traditionally responsible for providing the fuel needed for daily life. They are already managing traditional biomass energy supplies, so they should be key players in the adoption of energy technologies that reduce GHGs.

In **Climate Change Financing**, there are persistent inequalities between women and men in access to financial services, especially credit facilities. Collateral requirements, high transaction costs, limited mobility and education, and other social and cultural barriers contribute to women's inability to obtain credit. Since they have less access to credit, financial assets and information than men, they often end up with higher interest and other costs than men for similar services. Women face adverse selection of insurance products and flow of investment funds and the allocation of economic resources. There is also an under-representation of women in financial decision making, and increased gender gaps in the economic positions of women and men. For these reasons, resource allocation in financial markets remains inefficient due to gender discrimination.

In **Technology**, in order to be highly effective, it is good to recognise that technological needs of men and women are not always the same. Technical needs assessment should always focus on the end-users. For example, in agriculture there is often an emphasis on the development of drought or flood-resistant crop varieties, to increase food security. However, in many developing countries, processing agricultural products is a time-consuming and laborious task undertaken almost entirely by women. Given the time constraints under which women already operate, it would be more appropriate to focus on developing varieties that will be easier to process, to invest in the development of appro-



*A presenter during a women's training*



appropriate tools for women such as simple threshing instruments, and identifying technologies that will lead to an increase in yields.<sup>1</sup> These technologies are mainly used by women, but they are hardly involved in any decision-making, such as design. Improvement of low carbon technologies for poor women and men should be put into consideration. Creating an enabling environment for technology transfer requires adequate technical, business, management and regulatory skills. Participation of all stakeholders including the private sector, public agencies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and grass-roots organisations, is important for effective technology transfer.<sup>2</sup> Participation of women within these groups is key.

In **Capacity Building**, there is a gap when dealing with impacts of climate change and gender roles. Training and capacity-building of implementers, decision-makers and negotiators, both men and women, should be done in order for them to apply gender mainstreaming in their daily programmes of work /activities. Improving adaptive capacity of both men and women is important in order to reduce vulnerability to climate change, and awareness-raising should also be directed at women given that they are more involved with activities that impact on climate change, both negatively and positively. Women need training on various uses of technologies, which they also pass on to the younger generation due to spending more time with them.

## Climate change legislation in Kenya

Kenya is a party within the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change (UNFCCC) which is committed to protecting the climate system for the benefit of the present and future generations. Kenya ratified the UNFCCC in August 1994 and its protocol (Kyoto protocol) in 2005, in determination to join the international community in combating the problem of climate change. In the recent past, the country has seen evidence of climate change such as rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns, and has experienced extensive climate related impacts. The photos show the manifestations of climate change impacts in Kenya.

The 2010 constitution of Kenya is committed to ecological sustainable development, while the Kenya's Vision 2030 has a goal of providing high quality of life to all its citizens by becoming a middle income country – which would not be achieved if climate change is not addressed in good time.<sup>3</sup> The Kenya's Vision 2030 Medium Term Plan 2 (MTP2) 2013 – 2017 review provides a singular opportunity to incorporate climate change and gender concerns into the national development plan.<sup>4</sup> Kenya recognised its vulnerability to climate change and has taken some steps to addressing climate change. In its effort to address climate change, the country developed a National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS) in 2010.<sup>5</sup> The NCCRS sets the foundation to inform nationwide climate change programmes and climate related development activities. The strategy also identified the need for a climate change policy in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which would be proactive, coherent and help in climate change response that would assist in reducing vulnerability of Kenya to climate change. The policy was developed to provide a clear, concise articulation of the government's overall climate change response priorities. The main goal of the policy was to advocate enhanced climate change resilience and low carbon development for the prosperity and sustainable development of Kenya. In 2000, Kenya established the National Gender and Development Policy which proposed mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies to be to mainstream gender. The 2010 constitution of Kenya also advocates for gender equality and the policy has considered a gender mainstreaming approach in climate change response. Cappello and Harcourt (2009) noted that even if climate change affects humanity, it is not gender neutral.<sup>6</sup> The constitution has adopted an affirmative action of having at least 30 percent representation of either gender in all elective and appointive positions. Women's participation in leadership, governance and decision-making has hence increased from 20.5 percent in 2008 to 38.6 percent in 2012 (MTP2 2013). An effort was also seen in implementing this affirmative action during the preparation of the National Climate Change Action Plan 2013 – 2017; the result being up to 29 percent female representation in the National Task Force.



*Animals die after a severe drought in 2009.  
(Photos by the Ministry of Environment)*



With gender disparities in property rights, in access to information, as well as in cultural, social and economic roles, women and men experience the effects of climate change differently. This is especially so in relation to food insecurity, loss of livelihood and hardship due to environmental degradation. As a result, women, particularly in vulnerable rural areas, will bear the adaptation burden despite their insignificant contribution to GHG emissions. The NCCRS was therefore geared to address the gender specific impacts of climate change in the key areas of energy, water, food security and agriculture (among others). This included assessing the implications for women and men of any planned climate change action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels to achieve gender equality.

#### The policy has committed to:

1. Ensure that climate change response is equally beneficial to both women and men and enhances gender equality;
2. Undertake systematic gender analysis of climate change response, through the collection and utilisation of gender disaggregated data, including in relation to budgetary processes;
3. Ensure that marginalisation and vulnerability arising from gender disparities are addressed at all stages of climate change response;
4. Adopt a gender mainstreaming approach at all stages of the climate change policy cycle from research, to analysis, to the design and implementation of actions.

When the bill was drafted, the draft was taken to parliament for introduction to the law makers. A series of climate change hearings were carried out to sensitise the public on the content of the draft bill. The bill was then tabled in parliament for debate and went through all parliamentary stages and was passed. It was later presented to the president for assent, however the bill was not assented due to lack of public participation – it is a requirement for the draft bill to go through a public participation stage where the public is informed about the draft bill and they give their views before it becomes a bill. After this failure, a task force was formed and the bill was given to

them to sensitise the general public and media for wider outreach and communication to all stakeholders and the general public on the progress of the bill deliberations. They would also hold a national stakeholders forum on the proposed bill for consensus building.

Many of the civil societies in Kenya have also taken up the role of sensitising the public on gender and climate change and about the contents of the Climate change policy. This ensures that the public supports the bill and more importantly that the public is aware about gender issues in climate change such as the different roles played in causing and curbing climate change.

### Implementation of the Doha gender balance decision in Kenya

During Conference of the Parties (COP) 18 of the UNFCCC, a great step was made when the UNFCCC recognised the need for women's leadership and full and equal engagement and participation in the global climate change negotiations; after many years of gender and women NGOs lobbying for gender to be integrated into the UNFCCC process. The decision was adopted to promote gender balance and improve the participation of women in the UNFCCC (Decision 23/CP.18). This decision, if implemented, will certainly see increased women's leadership and engagement in climate change decision-making, and that all policies and actions on adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology and capacity building, are gender-responsive.

Localisation of the gender decision into our local situation should be done by all the parties of the convention. In Kenya, the Gender and Climate change working group, which is a consortium of different civil societies working on gender and climate change, are in the forefront of seeing that the decision is taken up by the Kenyan government. Some members of the group called for a meeting with the Ministry of Environment to discuss the implementation of the Doha Gender decisions and learn more about the steps put in place by the Ministry in regard to this. It was recognised that Kenya had done better than some other countries in terms of female representation in COPs, but much more needs to be done to ensure that the



*Water shortage, women and children queuing for water*



team not only is gender balanced but is also knowledgeable. In regards to training and capacity building, the Ministry stated that some training initiatives are already in place and encouraged stakeholders to make use of them. For instance, it collaborates with other partners like the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) for an online course on climate change. The Climate change secretariat at the Ministry of Environment in Kenya made the following recommendations for the gender and climate change working group to undertake:

- The working group needs to work closely with the Ministry of Gender as well as the Ministry of Youth affairs to better address issues of gender and climate change;
- Close attention should be paid to the Constitution of Kenya to address gender and climate change;
- Understanding of the entire COP process as well as the custodian of policies in Kenya is important to understand the entry point into the national climate change system in Kenya;
- More organisations and vulnerable groups at the grass-root level should be involved as the group addresses gender and climate change.

In conclusion, the gender decision is as good as it can be, but if it will only exist in papers, then it is of no use. Implementation of the decision is key and not only at the international level, but also at the local level. Data should also be collected on how, and to what level, the decision is being implemented for future reference and also for monitoring and evaluation purposes. In order to address climate change issues, particularly with respect to equity and pro-poor development, mainstreaming of gender in climate change governance is essential for effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change. Effective and gender responsive climate change governance is essential in enhancing community resilience and sustainable low-carbon development.

## Notes

- 1 IUCN, UNDP, & GGCA: Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change; <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2009-012.pdf>.
- 2 Sathaye, J. (2002): Climate Change Mitigation. Barriers, Opportunities and Technology Transfer, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, University of California.
- 3 Government of Kenya (2010): The 2010 Constitution of Kenya, Nairobi.
- 4 Government of Kenya (2013): Vision 2030: Second Medium Term Plan (2013 – 2017), Nairobi.
- 5 Government of Kenya (2010): The National Climate Change Response Strategy, Nairobi.
- 6 Cappello, S. and Harcourt, W. (2009) 'Gender and climate justice', Int. J. Green Economics, Vol. 3, Nos. 3/4, pp.343–350.



Kuini Rabo

# Gender-sensitive Approach in Adaptation and Mitigation – Local Institutions' Perspective

12



Kuini Rabo

Climate change affects all members of society and its impacts can be different for men and women. Hence it is important to understand the gender dimension when working on climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, because of the different gender roles that women and men play in their society or community. In the Pacific these different gender roles are influenced by culture, social systems, local institutions and religion, and disabled and elderly across the Pacific Islands.

The Pacific region being the least carbon emitter encounters the full brunt of the impacts of climate change due to their geographical sizes, low atolls, limited resources and lack of capacity to adapt to climate change impacts, etc. This is evident in the recent extreme weather events in the Pacific. The majority of the vulnerable members of our community (i.e. women, children, disabled and elderly) suffer most from the impacts of climate change. The aftermath of any tropical cyclones or low depression always brings flash flooding for most villages, towns in low coastal areas and those mostly affected are the disadvantaged and the marginalised groups, who live below the poverty line and rely on natural resources for survival and source of income. A gender-sensitive approach is needed in order for these programs to be inclusive to the different situations of communities in particular the minority, disadvantaged and special needs groups who in most cases have the least resources available and therefore are the most vulnerable.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) implemented the project titled "Gender in Adaptation and Low Carbon Development" in collaboration with GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice. The project was funded by the

International Climate Change Initiative (ICI) of the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB). The project aimed to address gender dimensions in adaptation and low carbon development policies and projects.

This paper discusses experiences from the ICI Pacific project and the outcomes in particular with activities involving local institutions (formal and informal groups) in Small Island States (SIS) to drive the importance of a gender sensitive approach in the implementation of adaptation and mitigation projects.

## Adaptation

"Adaptation to climate change is highly local and its effectiveness depends on local and extra local institutions through which incentives for individuals and collective action are structured. Not only have existing institutions affected how rural residents responded to environmental challenges in the past, but they are also fundamental mediating mechanisms that will translate the impact of external interventions to facilitate adaptation to climate change in the future" (Arun Agrawal, 2010).

In the Pacific, most of the islands are patriarchal societies except for some countries such as Nauru, Republic of Marshall Islands and including some parts of Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands in terms of resources ownership. In most Pacific Islands, resources are communally owned and gender issues are revolving around our traditional roles, where in some households educated women gained influence and gradually changed these roles over time. Another key important aspect of the Pacific societies is our communal living (extended families) that can be referred to as "social capital", the common thread to achieve the common good of the society.

Women traditionally tend to have limited decision making in matters that concern households and society, including project design or implementation. The Pacific islands women gender roles involve caring for the family (house-

hold chores) and also subsistence farming, gathering of marine resources for family needs and sources of income. Hence women already have knowledge about the local conditions and resources of using land and marine life. Gender mainstreaming training and involving them in any adaptation or mitigation projects will enhance their knowledge and ability to contribute to better adapt to the impacts of climate change.

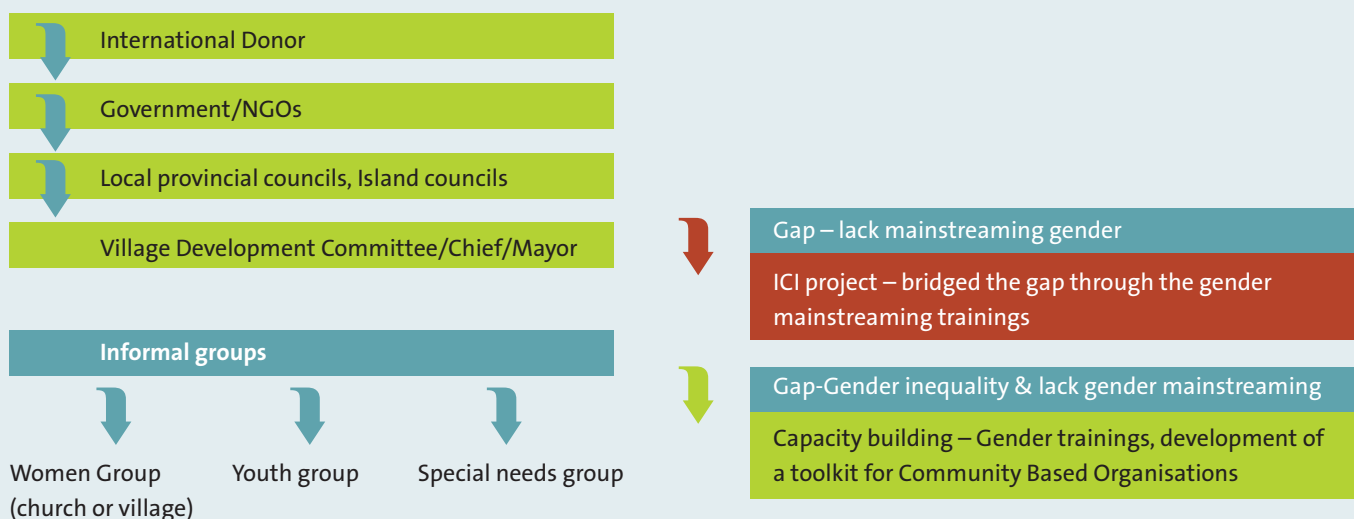
As Arun Agrawal (2010) stated above “... adaptation to climate change is highly local and its effectiveness depends on local and extra local institutions...” his view denotes that for any adaptation policy or intervention it needs to involve local mechanisms at the micro level. In most cases programs or projects are driven only by formal institutions such as local government, but there is often a gap in linking it to the informal groups that exist within a society, knowing that these informal groups are mostly Community Based Organisations (CBOs) such as women’s groups, youth groups, special needs groups and church groups. This gap needs to be bridged to ensure that interventions and project planning consider all members of the society and more importantly for the project sustainability.

The ICI project period ran for three years and focused on capacity building and awareness in the integration of gender into climate change adaptation and low carbon development projects and programs in SIS. Gender equality being a new learning concept introduced at the local level, especially for SIS, where women and men’s role are clearly demarcated based on the existing social structures, culture and religion, it is important to draw on the local institutional framework to drive gender equality at the local level and to find entry points to involve informal groups in the community.

Over the years, the emphasis of adopting a “bottom-up approach” has been overwhelming with some success stories, while others need a fine tuning or even the need to start to “walk the talk”. The impacts of climate change affect every member of the community, but it is evident that rural women, single mothers, elderly, children and youth are more vulnerable compared to those who are more involved with decision making processes, access to resources and who make up the formal sectors. A “bottom-up approach” means to have a model at the micro level that will influence policy at the macro level. Gender mainstreaming is a substantial ingredient and enabler in adopting this approach.

Following the above logic, the ICI Pacific project in its capacity building activity, intended to bridge the gap between formal local institutions and informal groups. Awareness training on gender integration in climate change adaptation and energy projects and policies were conducted both for the formal local institution (Government officials, NGOs, village leaders) and the informal groups (women, youth and special needs groups). The training empowered women and climate change officials in taking an inclusive and gender-sensitive approach when implementing projects or developing climate change/energy policies. There are interesting and valuable lessons learnt from the training and information gathered from the participants in these countries (Kiribati, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru and Republic of Marshall Islands). These lessons learnt will be shared as case studies in this article.

**Figure 1: Institutional structure**







### Case study: Gender mainstreaming process in Narikoso village, Kadavu, Fiji

Narikoso village located in Ono, Kadavu, Fiji with the population of 100+ is one of the villages identified for relocation due to the impacts of climate change (rise in sea level, coastal erosion). At the Fiji National Climate Change Summit in August 2013, one of the participants shared that village meetings that used to be conducted in the morning or lunch time are now held in the evenings to ensure participation of women in the discussion of the “relocation” and any other development projects.

### Analysis

Changing the meeting times to enable women to participate in village meetings is a process of ensuring women’s needs are also addressed. The changes in the meeting time have engaged both women and men to segregate their traditional gender roles and build mutual support within households and village, develop workable solutions that address both women and men’s needs. This process also empowers women by building their confidence and both groups can develop ideas, skills, knowledge to benefit the household and village. Finally this process will enhance livelihoods of both men and women within their families and village because they will apply and implement a project/initiative that addresses both men’s and women’s needs.

### Support gender-sensitive adaptation projects and policy

In order to develop gender-sensitive projects and policy or review these programs to be gender inclusive, there is a need to engage both the national, local institutions (formal and informal sectors in a society). Adaptation projects often involve representatives from women and youth groups, however the interventions tend to lack of reflecting the needs of women, youth and disabled groups. The different needs and implications of any adaptation action or project to women, men and youths should be

considered within any community. A participatory approach needs to be adopted, that is the full participation of the intended beneficiaries, including women, youth and the minority groups in society in all aspects of the project cycle.

### Case study: Integration Gender Kiribati Adaptation Plan III (KAP III)

One of the key priorities identified in the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) is the Coastal Zone Management and Resilience Enhancement for Adaptation. Under this priority area, key activities include:

1. Awareness raising;
2. Protecting and enhancing resilience of coastal assets; and
3. Information and Data.

SPC Energy programme with support from the ICI-Pacific project conducted a gender mainstreaming training for government officials at the Environment and Conservation Division (ECD). The ECD has several thematic areas under its operation as identified in the Kiribati Integrated Environment Policy. These include:

1. Climate Change
2. Island Biodiversity Conservation and Management
3. Waste Management and Pollution Control
4. Resource Management
5. Environmental Governance

ECD Officials implementing the five thematic areas were trained on gender mainstreaming. One of the Gender Inclusive Practical Tools used was the “**problem-solving tree**”, this tool enables community practitioners to get an in-depth understanding of the environmental problems a woman or a man could encounter. The solution tree should assist the community practitioner to take action to strengthen the community’s resilience and empower the more vulnerable groups in the community.

Figure 2 shows an analysis of outcome from a group work at the training.



After identifying the problems, causes and its impacts groups developed solutions using the solution-tree tool. Solutions included mangrove planting to improve food security, resources for family and income; an awareness workshop to train and empower communities to practice best methods to adapt to climate change; and the revival of traditional knowledge and transfer to the younger generation.

### Case study: Inclusion of Kiribati women in adaptation measures during dry seasons in Ewena village, Abaiang Island, Kiribati

Ewena village is more of a patriarchal setting where men are decision makers, carry out heavy burden work such as carting of water, and provide income for the family through boat venture business and fishing. Women are more care givers, they care for the household needs (cooking, looking after the children) and plant vegetables for subsistence needs, weaving for source of income.

The major concern for all households in Ewena village is the access to safe drinking water. Prolonged droughts that last for more than six months without heavy rainfall have affected most of the villages in Kiribati, and for Ewena village, drinking water from the major reservoirs and their own wells has turned too saline for drinking and for practical activities such as cooking and washing and even productive activities such as vegetable gardening.

**Figure 2: Outcome of group work in Kiribati**

Problem	Impacts	Impact on women	Impact on men
Loss of biodiversity due to rise in sea level, changes in weather patterns, pollution and over harvesting	Threat to food security	Increased burden in looking for food for family	Less opportunities for income generation
	Less income generating activities	Increased burden in caring for family members	Migration to urban areas to search for employment
Coastal erosion mining due to artificial sea walls, rise in sea level and sea water intrusion	Threat to traditional knowledge and traditional medicines	Increased stress in looking for other income generating activity	
	Loss of land and dispute among villagers	Increased health bills	
	Water problems (unsafe)		



Women of Ewena village also have vegetable gardens for food for the family, they used to rely heavily in planting “baibai” (taro swamp) and breadfruit, but due to the increasing salinity and dry season this is difficult now.

## Analysis

During the drought season, safe and drinkable water are available far away from the village. To cart water from these sources, men of Ewena village use motorbikes and bicycles to collect clean water. However when men are out fishing and for extra supplements women and children of Ewena village collect water from the well which they usually do on foot. They boil the water a certain period of time and mix it with toddy and coffee so it is drinkable and does not have a salty taste. With this knowledge women are also able to have enough clean water and have supplements for the family to use during the dry season.

Women as vegetable farmers know that they cannot rely on taro swamps and breadfruit and vegetables such as cabbages and have now started to plant pumpkin and papaya as it grows well in dry season and will not require water. Women of Ewena are still able to secure food for their family during the dry seasons.

Women are active members of Pacific societies and their inclusion in Community Based Adaptation (CBA) work is necessary because of their knowledge of resources and habitats, their skills and familiarity with their immediate environment. Women can be community leaders and are often natural resource managers who can help develop strategies to cope with climate-related risks. The inclusion of both men and women in adaptation projects guarantees that the different knowledge and skills possessed by women and men are captured and utilised for adaptation work.



## Conclusion

In summary, initiatives like the ICI Pacific project have successfully managed to bridge the gender gap that exists between the local institutions (formal sectors) and the informal groups and adopted a “bottom-up approach”. Through the capacity building programmes, a total of 300 women and men were trained in gender inclusion in energy and climate change adaptation activities and programmes in the targeted SIS, Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu, and Kiribati. These men and women are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to integrate gender in the work they do at the macro and micro-local level.

The capacity building programmes under this project provided a window of opportunity to link the formal local institutions and the informal groups (community based women groups, youth groups and special needs). The lessons learnt and case studies collated during the gender trainings demonstrate the importance of understanding the local institutions’ framework and finding entry points to involve informal groups, and to achieve gender awareness and gender inclusion in all adaptation and mitigation work at the local level.

## Notes

- 1 Social capital- work as one big family for the common good of the people: “Pacific way”
- 2 Informal groups such as church women group, youth group etc.



# Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan – A Gender Review

## Introduction

Bangladesh is a low lying deltaic country. Because of this, as well as a number of further natural and man-made factors, the country is highly vulnerable to water-related extreme events.<sup>1</sup> A large population confined within a small landmass and proneness to natural hazards such as flooding (riverine, flash, coastal, urban), drought, salinity ingress, cyclonic storm surges and water logging, make Bangladesh one of the worst affected countries of climate variability and change.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the population density and high incidence of poverty and unemployment, the country has made significant strides towards sustainable development in the recent decades. This progress could be severely affected by the impacts of climate change, especially when the hydrological extreme events are likely to be exacerbated. Bangladesh was one of the first developing countries to prepare a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), published in 2009, thus acknowledging the need to address climate change as a national priority. The BCCSAP provided the backdrop against which all climate activities were prioritised. It was designed as a living document, as exact timings and magnitude of climatic events were uncertain; yet so far the document has undergone no amendments.

In 2011 the Centre for Global Change (CGC, a non government organisation based in Bangladesh) provided a gender review of the BCCSAP, emphasising the limited understanding of the gendered nature of climate change as well as the lack of direction towards gender sensitive climate safe programmes. Since then, advocacy at policy level to bring gender-sensitive changes to the BCCSAP has taken place in Bangladesh; resulting in a Gender Action Plan (GAP) in climate change activities by the government in 2013. This Gender Action Plan has provided a guideline towards gender responsive climate change initiatives based on BCCSAP. However, there is no specific suggestion on how to accommodate this document in the prioritised activity areas of BCCSAP.



Sharmind Neelormi

This article will provide an insight into how to address the climate change policy at the national level to be gender responsive and how advocacy initiatives can lead to changes. Lessons learned from this work are included below.

## Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

BCCSAP is a part of the overall development strategy of the country. Its objective is to formulate a strategy towards pro-poor, climate resilient and low carbon development, based on four building blocks of the Bali Action Plan (adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and adequate and timely flow of new and additional funds) within a framework of food, energy, water, livelihoods and health security. BCCSAP was expected to portray the “pro-poor climate change management strategy” (BCCSAP, 2009, Summary) through which the vision of poverty eradication in the Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP) can be achieved. BCCSAP developed a sustainable development strategy centered on climate change (SFYP, Part1, Page 205) which is supported by six thematic areas with 44 prioritised programmes.

## Six thematic areas in BCCSAP

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**Food Security, Social Protection and Health:** The first Thematic Area refers to ensuring food and livelihood security, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable in society, including women and children. It focuses on the needs of this group for food security, safe housing, employment and access to basic services, including health.

**Comprehensive Disaster Management:** This is to further strengthen the country's already proven disaster management systems to deal with increasingly frequent and severe natural calamities.

**Infrastructure:** The action plan is to ensure that existing assets (e.g. coastal and river embankments) are well maintained and fit-for-purpose and that urgently needed infrastructure (e.g. cyclone shelters and urban drainage) is put in place to deal with the likely impacts of climate change.

**Research and Knowledge Management:** This aims to predict the likely scale and timing of climate change impacts on different sectors of the economy and socioeconomic groups in order to underpin future investment strategies; and to ensure that Bangladesh is networked with the latest global thinking on sciences, and the best practices of climate change management.

**Migration and Low Carbon Development:** This is to evolve low carbon development options and implement these as the country's economy grows over the coming decades and the demand for energy increases.

**Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening:** This aims to enhance the capacity of government ministries and agencies, civil society and the private sector to meet the challenge of climate change and mainstream them as part of development actions.

## Women in Bangladesh

Patriarchy controls women's spheres of influence in Bangladesh; however, gender relations have been undergoing a process of considerable transformation over the last three decades as part of the broader economic transition and social change.<sup>3</sup> In Bangladesh, women's experience and interests are strongly differentiated by their class position, with poor women being more marginalised.<sup>4</sup> However, available statistics on health, nutrition, education, employment and political participation reveal continuing struggles to achieve equality.<sup>5</sup> Despite many of the affirmative policies and steps to facilitate stronger gender parity in the economic and social sphere, Bangladeshi women are lagging far behind their male counterparts under the prevailing economic and social circumstances. Significant disparities in employment and wage rates persist which, combined with considerable gaps in asset ownership, seriously limit women's economic opportunities, as well as restricting their social sphere.

## Rationale for revisiting BCCSAP with a gender lens

There is already a primary understanding of gender differential vulnerability and capabilities to adapt to climate variability and change in a given hydro-geo-physical context in Bangladesh. However a new impetus, with adequate support, is necessary to build on these findings and to devise a climate change strategy to help the cause of women and men in the volatile future. The review of BCCSAP with a gender lens contributes to the planning, designing, and implementation of the country's climate change related activities in a gender-just way, which eventually will be an integral part of sustainable development initiatives.

## Great vision, blurred focus

BCCSAP acknowledges the fact that climate change is likely to affect women more than men (pp. 14). It has also added that extremely poor households throughout the country, including many female-headed households, will suffer from climate change (pp.16). Yet, the following analysis will shade light on how far the vision does mainstream the concerns of women and other vulnerable groups and how this is reflected through the action plan.



## Food security, social protection and health

About half of the population in Bangladesh lives below the 'food-based' poverty line and about one in four Bangladeshi is considered to be "ultra-poor". After China and India, Bangladesh holds the third largest hungry population, with over 60 million people having inadequate food resources, leading to growth stunting and reduced mental and physical capacities. While Bangladesh is nearly self-sufficient in rice production, food security remains an elusive goal. Rice is the main staple food source and constitutes the lion's share (96%) of total food grain produced in Bangladesh.

Under this thematic pillar, it is expected that the actions taken will increase the resilience of vulnerable groups (including women and children) by developing a climate change resilient cropping system, implementing surveillance systems for existing and new disease risks, and implementing water and sanitation programmes in areas at risk from climate change. This thematic pillar prioritises nine programmes, and under each, a number of actions have been drafted. Out of these nine programmes, two programmes have direct action plans with women ('Livelihood protection in ecologically fragile areas' and 'Livelihood protection of vulnerable socio-economic groups'). Also, in order to protect livelihoods in ecologically fragile areas, it has been mentioned that special attention will be paid to impacts on women and children. To translate this statement into action, comprehensive and participatory planning and investment for climate resilience have been proposed.

As well as this, a "comprehensive study of the impact of climate change on women and gender relations and the development of recommendations to address these in all sectors under BCCSAP" has been suggested as an action point under thematic pillar 1, so as to protect livelihoods of vulnerable socio-economic groups. The activities necessary to carry out this study have been defined and require capacity and interministerial coordination.

This thematic pillar includes women as part of the vulnerable group and the recognition of an increasing female participation in the agriculture sector is completely lacking.<sup>6</sup> Involvement of the Agricultural Extension Service (under the Ministry of Agriculture) trains female farmers with climate resilient cropping systems which seem to be effective for female farmers, especially for the female-headed households. Female members of fisheries communities, especially widows or females of missing fishermen families, are also to be given livelihood training.

Thematic pillar 1 is completely ignorant about the issue of access to food; it gives emphasis only on climate-safe production.

In Bangladesh, access to property for women is restricted due to existing laws and many socio-cultural factors; their potential to earn money is also restricted. However, on the backdrop of male migration as a continuum, an increasing trend in female participation in the agriculture sector, and the pivotal role of women as a manager of food in the household, must be acknowledged. Their access to different institutional facilities like credit and a farmers' card (cards issued to farmers by the government for the access to agriculture subsidy on fertiliser, irrigation etc.) must also be ensured. Coherence of other relevant policies (for example 'Women Development Policy') is needed in this regard and BCCSAP must provide more insight.

## Theme 2

### Comprehensive Disaster Management

Bangladesh is a millennia old disaster-prone country. Women in Bangladesh possess little financial capital – it is negligible to low.<sup>7</sup> This is why their ability to take the necessary hazard-reducing steps, as well as stress avoidance measures, is much lower than their male equivalents. The poor human capital of women interplays with lesser exposure to and understanding of early warning systems. Due to limited education and restricted access to information sources as a consequence of patriarchal norms and practices, women's ability to take necessary safety measures before and during disasters reduces their resilience, and thus increases their vulnerability to extreme weather events.<sup>8</sup>

Theme 2 provides insight on the strategy to tackle disaster through comprehensive disaster management. It outlines four programmes under which a number of actions have been identified. Theme 2 focuses on the improvement of early warning dissemination to local communities (in cases of flood and cyclone) through an awareness-raising campaign. However, no specific focus has been given on how to disseminate an early warning system to the most vulnerable communities, including women. The current system of information dissemination in the public sphere often does not reach the women in every household, and women often do not have any lead time to react – even if adequate lead time is provided. The present reality suggests a separate dissemination mechanism is needed in order to reach women in a given geo-physical context. Bangladesh and BCCSAP 2009 has miserably failed to give any directive in relation to this, despite having a wealth of knowledge on disaster management.

In this thematic area, awareness raising and public education towards climate resilience has been given emphasis. However, awareness raising programmes among local communities about the impacts of climate change must

have a focus on women activities, which is completely missing in BCCSAP so far. Women often do not get the benefit from generic capacity building programmes; their participation is subject to time suitability and cultural/religious sensitivity, etc.

Occasional food insecurity occurs when food production is affected by hazards such as flooding and flash floods, drought, salinity ingress, saline water surge following a cyclone and water logging.<sup>9</sup> In case of food insecurity, women tend to take extraordinary measures such as eating less, resorting to poor quality food items or cheaper foods and quitting meals.<sup>10</sup> This adversely affects their nourishment and overall health condition. The latter is a long-term damage caused by climate variability and change-related hazards in subsistence-poor agricultural households. BCCSAP seems to be completely ignorant about these facts. Emphasis should be given to the issues of food insecurity of women and other vulnerable groups at the advent of a disastrous event and must try to improve the situation. A major limitation of the activities under this thematic area is that there is no mentioning about the slow onset of disasters, and no activity has been proposed to combat such disasters. Different documents and literature indicate the varieties of issues regarding the slow onset of events, and since proper emphasis is not given to them, a major thrust towards comprehensive disaster management is missing.

### Theme 3

#### Infrastructure

The activities under this thematic area directs the “imperative that existing infrastructure (e.g. coastal and river embankments) is well maintained and fit for purpose and that urgently needed infrastructure (e.g. cyclone shelters, urban drainage) is put in place to deal with the likely short and medium-term impacts of climate change”. Eight programmes have been identified under this theme.

In BCCSAP 2009, there is no directive to involve communities at risk in the process of building future structural measures. As men and women living in a given hydro geo-physical context have a wealth of knowledge on the location specific physical vulnerabilities as well as coping strategies to combat extreme weather events, their experiences and knowledge must be consulted for proper designing and implementation of a structure.

Globally Bangladesh’s model of cyclone shelters is accepted. However, the design of cyclone shelters was found to be insensitive to women’s particular needs, which acted as barriers for women not to relocate to the shelters even after receiving early warnings.<sup>11</sup> Such issues have resulted in

higher death rates and injuries involving women along the coastal area in Bangladesh.

BCCSAP acknowledges the urgency of redesigning cyclone shelters where necessary. However, it is a missed opportunity that gender sensitive design criteria for cyclone shelter is not mentioned at all. Also, under the programme “adaptation against flood”, planning and implementation of non-structural flood-proofing measures have been included as an activity. Yet, these could have been created as specifically sensitive to gender-based concerns, which are missing.

### Theme 4

#### Research and knowledge management

BCCSAP acknowledges the urgency to carry out research and collate knowledge “to estimate the likely scale and timing of climate change impacts on different sectors of the economy, to inform planning of future investment strategies” (pp. 28). As a living document, BCCSAP is expected to be reviewed periodically based on cutting edge research knowledge and development priorities.

The state of the art of knowledge regarding the gender differential vulnerability and capability to adapt to climate change, the gendered nature of emission, differential energy access, impacts on reproductive health, impacts of slow onset of disasters, and mitigation is very limited. BCCSAP has envisioned “developing training programmes for high and mid-level officials of the Government, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and private organizations/associations and providing training...” (T4P1A4). Gender sensitive training materials, capacity building, and programmes can be designed and implemented through this guideline. Sporadically, there have been initiatives to arrange training on climate change and gender, among which CGC organised a number of trainings with government officials, members of parliament, NGO practitioners, and students.

Through “modelling and predicting the socio-economic and health impacts of sea level rise” (T4P3A3) gender issues can be integrated, using the knowledge gained to design gender-sensitive adaptation plans in coastal areas. “Assessment of impacts of climate change on poverty and on people living in vulnerable areas” has been identified as one of the activities under this thematic area (T4P5A3). Gender differential vulnerability must be assessed, and to do that capacity building is needed within the research community as well as at the Union Parishad level (the lowest tier of the governance). Proliferation of slums in urban areas, following the major high intensity events in the recent past, clearly suggest that the “push factor” in the

unprecedented urbanisation processes in Bangladesh can easily be attributed to failed livelihoods, caused by hazards and disasters. Climate change tends to add additional elements of vulnerability to livelihoods at risk, especially for the poorer section of the society, causing forced out migration.

In Research and Knowledge Management thematic programmes, a programme has been identified for “monitoring of internal and external migration of adversely impacted population and providing support to them through capacity building for their rehabilitation in new environment”. In the advent of forced migration it is observed that the number of female headed households has been increasing as males (generally) are migrating from the climate hot spots.<sup>12</sup> However, BCCSAP has failed to give any special focus on this fact through “development of a protocol to provide adequate support for re-settlement and rehabilitation of such female headed household” (T4P6A2).

#### Theme 5

### Mitigation and Low Carbon Development

Mitigation discussion is centered within technological aspects of greenhouse gas production with human behaviour being almost absent. In a bid to reiterate the commitment of the Bangladesh Government for low carbon development, BCCSAP has identified programmes for mitigation. As an energy hungry country, it must be recognised that women in Bangladesh (especially the poor women in rural areas) are lacking basic energy services. In order to have their right to access basic energy services fulfilled, an adoption of improved biomass stoves and other technologies (like solar home systems) must be given priority (as indicated in T5P4A4: “Study of the techno-economic, social and institutional constraints to adoption of improved biomass stoves and other technologies”).

Mitigation through afforestation and reforestation programmes focuses on providing support to existing and new homestead and social forestry programmes. It is expected that women will particularly benefit from such arrangements. However, there is no mentioning of the institutional arrangements of benefit sharing in BCCSAP.

Mitigation from different sectors (for example, brick making sector, the largest GHG emitting sector in Bangladesh) is not adequately addressed in this document. There is scope to improve the socio-economic conditions of labour involved in such industries through shifting towards improved technologies as well as making new arrangements for employment. The enhancement of a green economy is completely missing while greater participation of women

in an enhanced green economy could be a major thrust in the mitigation component of this document. Also, there is no clear position for REDD in BCCSAP, which requires further assessment with gender considerations in a REDD programme.

#### Theme 6

### Capacity building and institutional strengthening

Under this thematic area, one programme has been identified as “Strengthening gender consideration in climate change management”. This programme “aims to establish links between gender consideration for their appropriate measures in cooperation in all adaptation, mitigation strategies, and component programme T6P2 (mainstreaming climate change in national, sectoral, and spatial development programme)”. It has been a bold step that BCCSAP is envisaged to develop criteria and approaches for the inclusion of gender considerations in all climate response activities. However, there is hardly any capacity within the NGOs, research community and the Government to undertake such important and huge activities. BCCSAP has also given a directive to “build the capacity of gender focal points in all ministries and agencies to incorporate gender issues in all climate response activities” (T6P4A2). Both these activities are useful and should have been considered irrespective of any specific programme. However, no specific strategy is envisioned to enhance capacity of women at all levels.

### Institutional Approach and way forward

Eleven Ministries have been identified in the BCCSAP 2009 as main ministries involved in climate change. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) is not one of those.

It would not be appropriate to infer that only mentioning the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs as one of the main ministries involved in climate change could uphold the issues of women and other vulnerable groups. However, the approach of BCCSAP towards tackling climate change focuses on the scientific and technological aspects of the problem. In at-risk resource-dependent communities, men and women have distinct roles and responsibilities, which give rise to differential vulnerability and ability to cope with climate change.

As the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is officially responsible to oversee women’s issues, it would be best suited to allow the MOWCA to get involved with other ministries in terms of tackling relevant threats and issues.



MOWCA can provide a policy guideline, technical support and above all help to integrate a 'gender lens' in all the activities undertaken by different Ministries and Agencies.

The government has taken initiative to include climate change concerns in its development programmes through a project, called Poverty Environment Climate Mainstreaming, of the Planning Commission, the custodian of development planning. Gender concerns can be integrated in this process. CGC worked with the Planning Commission in this regard.

Under the thematic programme "Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening", where the inclusion of gender consideration in all climate change aspects has been envisaged, MOWCA can play the pivotal role. The official responsibility has been bestowed upon MOWCA, Poverty Environment Climate Mainstreaming (PECM), and the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF). MOWCA can be the focal point to ensure gender sensitivity is undertaken by all other Ministries and Agencies.<sup>13</sup> Capacity building of MOWCA and other Climate Change focal points and Gender focal points in different ministries in this regard is vital.

MOWCA has been implementing an adaptation project addressing the drinking water problem at the South Central region. However, it is apparent that MOWCA, including the Department of Women Affairs, do not have technical expertise on climate change issues.

BCCSAP 2009 has provided a strategic direction for all climate change related activities in Bangladesh. Despite certain limitations, it has acknowledged the fact of gender differential impacts of climate change and lack of understanding of socio-economic impacts of climate change on different segments of population. It has given a thrust to incorporate gender considerations in all aspects of climate change related activities and also focuses on the urgency of capacity building.

BCCSAP is completely ignorant to give any directive toward the prioritisation of gender-sensitive climate safe programmes. However, being a living document, it is expected that with further understanding on social aspects of climate change, initiatives and strategies will be developed and implemented towards climate and gender justice.

## Journey towards initiating gender just climate policies

The CGC, in collaboration with GenderCC and support from the International Climate Initiative (ICI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) initiated a process in 2010 to integrate gender into climate change policies in Bangladesh. This process involved lobbying and sensitisation events with policy makers (Member of Parliaments, Ministers), meetings with government officials at different tiers, capacity building of government officials, non-government professionals, addressing media, sensitising local government and local people, and organising events with civil society organisations.

The initiative could grasp the emerging climate change issues and react to those issues, collaborating with Bangladesh government on different issues. For example, while the Second National Communication was undergoing in Bangladesh in 2010, CGC contributed the "gender concerns in adaptation for Bangladesh". While in 2012, "Loss and Damage" emerged as a new concept under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process and Bangladesh had to submit a framework of action on loss and damage; CGC was the only actor to sensitise and mobilise the Bangladesh government towards integrating gender issues into this discourse. Also CGC personnel contributed to a global level discussion paper on this issue which was the first of its kind. As new issues are coming up in climate change discussions, it has always been important to grasp the current issues and contribute to those. CGC in its journey towards policy shifts has always been keen to contribute beyond the project frame. If a climate change project is designed for a longer time, i.e. several years, the project might miss to address the upcoming emerging issues and might not prioritise its activities accordingly. However, during this project experience with ICI, CGC was watchful to ongoing and changing issues in climate change and could contribute to some of the discussions at local and global level.

Dissemination of technical papers has always been a key strategy to sensitise different actors in climate change. The review of Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009 with a gender lens was shared in 2011 with government officials, Member of Parliaments, NGO professionals, and civil society organisations among others. Issue papers on different thematic issues (adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer, finance, REDD+, food security) were developed and widely disseminated. A number of sensitisation events at local and national level were also hosted. It is expected that the government would consult these policy documents while framing the national policy



stances on different thematic areas on climate change. Organising meetings with Members of Parliaments (MPs) seemed to be effective to sensitise and bring expected changes in policies. It seemed important to involve those policy makers/MPs who used to be interested in climate change issues. CGC could convene meetings with MPs where the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and the active MPs in climate change issues were present. However, one stand-alone event cannot bring such changes; it must be a culmination of different efforts such as linking and liaising with policy makers at different times and occasions. For example, apart from the meeting with MPs, CGC organised events where Ministers, MPs were invited and CGC took the advantage to lobby for policy shifts. Even CGC worked with different actors like the Chairman of Human Rights Commission, Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Women Affairs, Minister of Women and Child Affairs, and Chief climate change negotiator of Bangladesh Delegation to the Conference of the Parties (COP) process among others. The Planning Commission considered climate change as an integral part in its development process while formulating the Sixth Five Year plan for 2011 to 2015. There were initiatives by the Planning Commission to mainstream climate change in its Annual Development Programs (ADP). CGC could convene meetings with the concerned officials from the Planning Commission and contributed at the technical level on how to integrate gender issues. The Planning Commission has come up with a manual to integrate climate change in development activities where gender screening tools have been considered.

This process also involved academia and youth to make the future generation aware of gender and climate change

issues. The meetings with faculty members at different universities was expected to carry special focus on gender issues while lecturing on climate change discourses by these faculty members. In some of the universities, climate change was a completely new concept and they seemed to be interested to integrate it into their future curricula. Most importantly, the events with youths and students at different educational institutions attracted a good number of audiences and the response was good. It is expected that the awareness regarding gender and climate change would be borne by those future policy makers, academia, activists, and researchers.

Training sessions with the 'Women in Development' (WID) focal points at different Ministries, NGOs and Climate Change professionals would eventually build a critical mass to contribute in the process of gender sensitive climate change discussions and actions. Last but not least, during the project period, CGC organised regular sessions with journalists and media personalities, often in its own capacity and sometimes using its local networking strengths. Writing articles for newspapers and giving interviews to the digital and printed media, was considered as one of the most effective tools to address policy makers.

In conclusion, multiple and simultaneous activities contributed to the process of policy shifts. Different actors working at the same time could contribute to mainstreaming gender, however ultimately it is the policy makers which have the most influence to bring changes. A culmination of efforts from different sectors is essential in creating and addressing policies to make changes in a gender-just way.

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Maira Zahur

# The Evolvment of Pakistan's Climate Change Policy – Lobbying for Gender Integration

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Maira Zahur

## Context – Climate Change, Gender and Pakistan

Pakistan is a negligible contributor to global carbon emissions, contributing only 0.4 percent to the total. Despite this, Pakistan is turning out to be one of the worst casualties of the effects of Climate Change (CC). The 2010 Columbia University vulnerability index placed Pakistan at the top of the list of countries at risk from climate change. Various data sets and historical records have shown that the most serious and visible effects of climate change in Pakistan are the increase in both the frequency and severity of climate-related extreme events such as floods, droughts, cyclones and heat waves.

**Research has shown that due to climate change by the end of 21st Century in Pakistan:**

- cereal crops yields could decrease by up to 30%;
- agricultural productivity may decline up to 16% by 2080;
- livestock production could decline by 20–30%;
- agriculture sector of Pakistan would lose \$2 billion USD to \$16 billion USD per year.

Research indicates that in the past 40 years, nine out of the top ten disasters in Pakistan have been climate triggered which clearly points to the magnitude of the challenge. This is particularly apparent in the past four years in which Pakistan experienced formation of glacial lakes, a dengue epidemic, as well as catastrophic floods in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. According to a World Bank report, around

23 percent of the country's land and nearly 50 percent of the entire population is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Climate change poses a major threat, directly as well as indirectly, to food, water and energy security in the country.

**Over 1.2 million women were affected by the 2011 floods in Balochistan and Sindh; a little over five percent of affected households were headed by women.<sup>1</sup>**

Climate change impacts are not gender-neutral. The unequal risk and exposure are well reflected by the greater proportion of women victims from cyclones, floods and other climate change related disasters.<sup>2</sup> Various analyses using the gender approach help explain how and why the effects of climate change and gender inequality are closely linked with one another, and how women and men face different risks relating to climate vulnerability. Studies have shown that this relationship is rooted in the various processes of society i.e. environmental, social, economic, cultural and political; and are therefore contextual and vary between regions, as well as within countries.<sup>3</sup> Differential power relations and access to resources between men and women in Pakistan result in different levels of vulnerability and adaptive capacity to the effects of climate change risks such as droughts, floods, and storms. Women often have fewer rights to land, credit, and capital that would facilitate adaptation to climate change.<sup>4</sup> Women's vulnerability is higher in both the short term, due to recurring climatic events, and in the long term due to socially constructed gender differences in roles that affect their mobility, social networks and access to information, services and local institutions, as well as access to control and ownership of assets. Social inequalities, in particular, have serious repercussions on many women's lives, limiting their access to land ownership, housing, education, health care and participation in policy-making and decision-making, in other words, limiting their human freedoms and options.

For example, with changes in climate, traditional food sources become more unpredictable and scarce. This exposes women to loss of harvests, often their sole sources of food and income. With cash crops becoming scarce, food prices increase and make the situation even worse. In

Pakistan, women's livelihoods are extremely dependent on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. For instance, sea level rise affects the fishing community (both men and women) not only in terms of fish catch but also with regard to water scarcity, as seawater pollutes fresh water supplies as well as damaging infrastructure such as roads and housing. Large scale migration is expected as a result of this, and much of the burden of migration falls on women who, as custodians of the house, feel the pain of leaving behind their homes, cattle etc. often more than men. During the period of migration, they are also totally dependent on men; in this process their economic, social, and cultural vulnerabilities are all the more critical. Following migration, the adjustment to a new place is again a particular burden to women keeping in mind the religious and social norms they are subjected to. Various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders are working on the climate change issues in Pakistan. Given the complexity of climate change issues, a ministry has been formed recently, the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC). This Ministry with its implementation arms: National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan Meteorological Department, Flood Forecasting Division, Global Change Impact Study Centre, and Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, have worked on a range of policies. Lead Pakistan, Social Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Social Policy Development Centre (SPDC), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Oxfam, Practical Action and many other local as well as international Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are playing a role in the work around research and adaptation at the grassroots level.

The Government of Pakistan (GoP) has approved its National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) in September 2012. Aiming to steer Pakistan towards climate resilient development, its policy will be working towards 'sustained economic growth' by integrating climate change in the existing policies. Especially relevant are sectors related to water, food and energy security. Its major focus is also to minimise the risk of disasters in the country from extreme weather events such as floods, drought, tropical storms etc. Further to working on the over-arching climate change policy the GoP is also working on more specific policy responses to climate change including adaptation, mitigation, energy etc. The country has been a regular participant in international climate conventions and negotiations that have increasingly recognised the importance of gender equality and women's participation to effective climate strategies from policy to grassroots activities.<sup>5</sup> That the GoP has generally been a supporter of the integration of gender concerns at United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes is attributed to Pakistan's strong women's movement along with active lobbying.

## The process of national climate change policy formulation

The NCCP is an outcome of the efforts of Task Force on Climate Change (TFCC) that was set up by the Planning Commission of Pakistan (PC) in October 2008. The TFCC comprises over 18 members belonging to the GoP, academia, and civil society. Nine working groups, comprising 42 experts were established. Each working group was headed by a Task Force member.

It is very important to acknowledge that NCCP was formulated after extensive consultations were held at both national and provincial levels. Twelve consultation workshops took place in all the provinces, including Azad Kashmir during 2011–2012. The consultations involved participation from a range of stakeholders including federal ministries, provincial governments, civil society organisations, academia, the corporate sector, UN agencies, research institutes and the media.

NCCP has mainly divided the policy into the paradigms of adaptation and mitigation. Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening, Awareness Raising, Cooperation, Finance, Technology Transfer and Policy Implementation Mechanisms are other pillars. NCCP recognises that women are powerful agents of change and it is therefore essential to ensure their participation in all policies, initiatives and decisions relating to climate change. It is interesting to note that NCCP will be focusing on 'pro-poor gender sensitive adaptation' while also promoting 'mitigation to the extent possible in a cost-efficient manner' (pp. 1). The focus areas under 'adaptation' will be water, agriculture, health, forestry, biodiversity, vulnerable ecosystems, disaster management and socio-economic measures (covering poverty and gender). The policy measures for these focus areas look into legislative frameworks, capacity enhancement strategies, research, and general management; they are strictly technical with little or no reference to social aspects. Disaster management is the only exception, in which there is dialogue relating to vulnerable groups like women, children and the disabled. The references to pro-people adaptation are clubbed together under socio-economic measures which talk about poverty and gender.

The NCCP policy measures related to mitigation (mainly revolved around energy, transport, town planning, industries, agriculture, carbon sequestration and forestry) have taken into account people's vulnerabilities and capacities but there is no direct reference to gender. Mitigation is still considered a complex process and it is mostly about technical and scientific interventions, hardware solutions and large scale projects.

Technology transfer, finance, international and regional co-operation, as well as policy implementation mechanisms are the other contours of the policy which are mainly looking into the possibilities of hardware solutions with little or no reference to the softer side. Gender is, again, not represented within this section.

To conclude: while NCCP has a separate section on gender measures which calls for mainstreaming at national and regional levels, research, development of gender-sensitive criteria and indicators, reduction in women's vulnerability and recognition of their critical roles in decision making –, this mainstreaming is not in fact taking place.

#### The common critique of the NCCP and its process of formation is:

- The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of TFCC is a one pager with a 7-point agenda mainly narrating the outputs for the task force. The TORs did not highlight the process, structures, or the major guiding principles. Climate change impact on people and especially on the most vulnerable population is not a part of TORs.
- In the 18 members TFCC team, there was not even a single woman representative. Among eight working groups none focused on the marginalised groups. In the 42 experts, a mid-level woman bureaucrat represented the climate change cell from the environment ministry.
- The composition of TFCC and experts consulted during the NCCP formulation process was greatly government focused. Hence, NCCP lacked fair representation from groups other than government.
- Some of the recommendations proposed lack scientific scrutiny. There are instances where recommendations are unnecessary, overzealous or contradict dealing with a large spectrum of issues.
- The policy does not look into the institutional mechanisms and also fails to give an adequate provision for the policy implementation (who will do it and how it will be done). It needs a concrete action plan to back it up, with details, budgets and timelines.
- After the 18th amendment (the system was devolved from federal towards provinces) agriculture, health, forestry and environment are the provincial subjects. Yet, approving a national policy may not be adequate to create provincial buy-in. Provincial climate change policy, aligning itself with the NCCP, can be more useful.
- The human elements or the softer components under adaptation are merged into socio-economic measures, and the rest of the interventions are all technical and hardcore scientific; disaster management is the only exception – which also talks about the vulnerable groups like women, children and disabled.
- Gender was not on the agenda of TFCC initially.

As the process went along, its gender-blindness came to the forefront. The issues related to the vulnerable groups were discussed in great detail in the provincial consultations. This feedback pushed the TFCC to engage with a few experts for feedback on the NCCP's draft. The standalone section on gender in the NCCP is a result of that. It is important to note that the section on gender has touched all the right 'buzz-words' but has not thrown any light on the relationship it has with other policy implications.

## Lessons learned and recommendations

A range of stakeholders are involved in "genderising" the climate change debate in Pakistan. Various United Nations agencies (UN Women, UNDP) and NGOs (IUCN, SDPI, Oxfam etc.) are at the forefront. All the actors are contributing in providing strong and coherent support to national priorities and efforts. UN Women, UNDP, UN Habitat etc. are all working closely with the MoCC to provide technical assistance on gender integration. Various research institutes, such as SDPI, are also following on gender as a main theme to bring out in the grassroots realities. Civil society (Oxfam, IUCN, Practical Action, Concern etc.) are working with the communities to address their gender needs induced by the climate change effects. Lots of small NGOs/Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are also involved throughout Pakistan and are working with both vulnerable men and women on water, agriculture, energy etc.

Following are some of the lessons learnt from the NCCP process and climate change and gender debate in Pakistan:

### Involvement of the civil society

The process of NCCP formulation was mainly initiated and run by the governmental stakeholders. Later in the process, civil society stakeholders were involved. Research has shown that governments in the developing world usually have a disconnect from the grassroots realities and it's the representatives of the civil society who push for the people's agenda. Same was the case with the NCCP. Gender becomes visible with the help of civil society in the provincial consultations. Involvement of civil society is very important in any policy formation process. It helps governments to hear the realities of and from the grassroots level. The mapping of stakeholders and their participation in the policy formulation process should be the very first step.

## Gender sensitivity within governmental quarters

The government of Pakistan, including MoCC, has acknowledged the importance of gender mainstreaming by ratifying various conventions and advocating it both nationally and internationally. Yet, the acknowledgment of an issue internationally and creating political will for it at home are two different things. Pakistan is a huge supporter of gender and climate change in the international forums, still at home among government circles, it is seen as another factor adding a level of complexity to the whole debate. Some important stakeholders see climate change impact as 'gender neutral', something that is going to affect communities, men and women, rich and poor in the same way. The whole process carried out around TFCC formation and NCCP drafting is a clear indication in this regard. A very important lesson which climate change stakeholders have learnt in Pakistan is that there is a need to work continuously with the government on gender mainstreaming with the help of a systematic and coherent approach. The approach which has worked in Pakistan is to provide the technical assistance to the governmental counterparts in the form of a human resource, capacity enhancement opportunities (trainings) and resources (funds especially for the integration of gender).

## From ceremonial to functional

Gender mainstreaming usually operates in many policy documents under the assumption that simply having section(s) on the topic offers the insight and competence for planning and implementation. Same is the case with NCCP, gender is mainly limited to one section. This can be regarded as an initial sensitivity. Yet, currently MoCC has no capacity around gender. The ministry is looking towards UN agencies and international NGOs to work with them on the issue as a side theme. To cater to the needs of the vulnerable women, more efforts are required to make it functional from ceremonial. A very important lesson learnt is that gender is needed to be accepted as a technical competency, not just something that anyone can do. There is a



dire need to provide specific capacity development programs on gender because without these, gender mainstreaming will not lead to the transformation of gender inequalities especially in the case of climate change. To enhance the Gender Equality mechanisms in regard to climate change, requires long term commitment and resources.

## Greater participation of women

As discussed above, TFCC has no representation of women. Among the experts, there was only one female representative, and only later in the process, when the gender-blindness came to the fore-front, a whole section on gender was added. A lesson learnt in this regard, is that a greater participation of women is instrumental in policy-related issues as it brings in diverse perspectives to the decision-making process. Also, the principle of gender equality is very important for any decision making process/system, but it may not be successful in bringing any meaningful change until and unless voices and issues from the grass-roots are heard and addressed. Of course, ceremonial representation does not serve this purpose; female participation should be made meaningful in the policy formulation processes. Efforts should be made to engage women at not only at the policy circles, but also using the grass roots level to guide this process.

## Notes

- 1 Cf. Multi-Sector Flood Impact Assessment October 2011 Key Findings: <http://www.pakresponse.info/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=XGBgV29nnss%3D&tabid=88&mid=709>
- 2 Cf. the International Disaster Database EM-DAT: <http://www.emdat.be>.
- 3 Cf. [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate\\_change/downloads/Women\\_and\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Factsheet.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf)
- 4 Cf. Khawar Mumtaz and Meher M. Noshirwani (n.d.): Women's Access and Rights to Land and Property in Pakistan (Scoping Study); [http://www.shirkatgah.org/\\_uploads/\\_files/f\\_17-Women\\_access-rights-to\\_land\\_property\\_in\\_Pakistan.pdf](http://www.shirkatgah.org/_uploads/_files/f_17-Women_access-rights-to_land_property_in_Pakistan.pdf).
- 5 Cf. Cancun Agreements (Conference of the Parties (COP)-16) and Durban Platform (COP-17).



Usha Nair

## Grassroot Level Advocacy on Climate Change: Case Studies from India

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Usha Nair (left) with Manju

### Women and climate change: the gender decision 23 at COP18 in Doha

The Conference of Parties (COP18) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at Doha in November, 2012 took a significant decision – Decision 23/CP.18, promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations and in the representation of parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol. The decision is a significant milestone in the struggle of women's groups to highlight the importance of involving women in climate negotiations. It builds on important gender equality provisions from COP16 and COP17, and reaffirms the COP7 decision on women's participation taken over a decade ago.

However, gender-balanced representation can be seen only as a means to an end. The ultimate goal should be to ensure that gender equality is achieved in every aspect and action in meeting the challenge of climate change. In the global processes of development and equity, gender equality is newly recognised and prioritised as a precondition for sustainable development. Hence all agencies and organisations working for women need to keep this important goal in constant view and strive towards a better world for all through ensuring justice to both genders in all aspects of development and growth.

All India Women's Conference (AIWC), established in 1927, is a premier national women's organisation in India. Spanning over eight decades, the organisation has been working for empowerment of women through programmes and projects on literacy, health, legislation, legal awareness, energy (alternate energy and energy efficiency) etc. as well as workshops, surveys, reports. With membership of over 150,000 across more than 600 branches all over the country, it strives to inculcate awareness about current problems at the grass-roots and tries to design and implement strategies with participation of local women. Climate Change Advocacy involving women and youth is one of the new initiatives taken up by AIWC.

### The AIWC initiative for advocacy

AIWC has a rich legacy of striving for social change and gender justice through lobbying for suitable legislations and reforms. However, advocacy for an issue such as climate change, especially in the context of gender, was a new challenge. We started by defining advocacy as "Persuading others (citizens, government) to adopt our ideas and proposals". Deciding the means, we found words and actions equally useful.

Previous experience with solar energy, energy efficiency etc. had taught us that awareness about issues is lacking among common people. Also, they are unable to take their voices of concern to the authorities. Hence as a first step, AIWC focussed on bringing people and authorities to the same platform.

For the past several decades AIWC has been working in partnership with the government in different areas such as literacy, health, energy etc. Therefore, an atmosphere of trust and faith in the organisation has been built and hence we could get the government representatives to actively engage with us in this program.

A pilot project was drawn up to spread awareness about climate change and to bring grass-roots voices to the policy makers at a sub-national level. AIWC has been working with women at the grass-root level for several decades.



This initiative too was directed at women and through them, the families.

**AIWC selected two centres where it had been actively involved:**

- Komaragiri, a coastal village in Andhra Pradesh, and
- Allahabad, an urban centre in the plains of Uttar Pradesh.

**The following programmes formed components of the project:**

- Awareness Programmes
- Advocacy Seminars
- Survey in Komaragiri

## Komaragiri

Komaragiri is a charming village on the east coast of India, known for its temples, ponds and Uppada weavers. A few years back, when most of the weavers had abandoned their traditional livelihood of weaving due to the high cost of raw materials and lack of marketing facilities (as well as exploitation at the hands of middle men), AIWC had stepped in to upgrade the skills of a few women and helped them to set up weaving units by offering financial assistance. The experiment was a huge success and today several women have set up weaving units in their homes and are marketing exquisite sarees, nationally and internationally, even making use of internet marketing.

Komaragiri was chosen for the climate change advocacy programme since the villagers faced several threats and challenges but lacked knowledge and leadership.

## Survey

A survey was conducted in the village to gauge the level of awareness and preparedness. The village has a population of about 8000. It covers 2252 acres of land of which 280 acres are barren. A Special Economic Zone for export-oriented industries is proposed to be set up by the government in 630 acres of land in the village. The villagers rely mainly on agriculture, weaving and fishing for their livelihood. The survey sample consisted of farmers, fishermen, weavers, farm labour, employed persons, businessmen, students, housewives, senior citizens.

Analysis of the data revealed that there was a lack of public awareness and sense of individual responsibility for combating the issue of climate change. Therefore, there was an urgent need for awareness programs and campaigns through mass media; also, educational institutions



can be involved to rope in youth to spread the message of sustainable development. Especially, there was necessity to educate people about conservation methods for water, other resources; encourage use of renewable energy; popularise methods of safe waste management and to train villagers to be vigilant about degradation of environment by proposed industries and the existing power plant.

## Awareness programme

An awareness programme was organised at the local government school. The target group was local villagers comprising of fishermen, agriculture workers, weavers and general public of the village. Women formed a major part of the audience. Resource persons were drawn from academicians, Government officials, and social workers.

## Feed-back from villagers

Though the terminology of climate change was unknown to most villagers, they were eager to discuss the changes that had taken place in their environment. For example, over the past few years, vultures, owls, bats and sparrows have disappeared. Fish wealth has dwindled. A variety of small fish, earlier abundant in the local ponds and a main component of their diet, is not seen now. Water table has receded and the quality of water is affected. Women reported that many families have switched from sea fish to river fish in their daily diet due to non-availability of sea fish. A major concern was an increase in thyroid cases in the area which could be linked to the change in diet pattern. An increase in joint pains was also reported, especially among women.

## Encouraging facts

Prompted by queries, the villagers reported some encouraging facts, too. Sufficient irrigation is available through canals. Traditional water sources like ponds are protected by the villagers themselves and hence are not polluted much. Deforestation is also not a problem since people desist from felling trees due to traditional cultural attachments. Women were particularly happy that almost all the households have toilets. But there was concern about a lack of public toilets.

## What do the villagers want?

After listening to the experts, villagers spelt out the following requirements in their village:

- All of them were eager to learn more about climate change and related issues and asked for more awareness programmes.
- Farmers asked for advice from agriculture experts on crops, seeds, pesticides, fertilisers etc.
- Women were worried about waste management and requested for training in waste management.
- Some villagers expressed concern about loss of livelihood due to closure of water canals for construction of a power generation company in the vicinity and wanted action on this.

## Seminar on climate change advocacy

The awareness programme was followed by a seminar held on the next day in the Senate Hall of the Jawaharlal Nehru Technical University in Kakinada, the nearest town. Participants were representatives from the village, academics, social workers, youth and AIWC workers. Resource persons included academics, industrialists, social workers, and doctors as well as representatives of local, state and national governments. The main objective of the programme was to bring the voices of the villagers to the notice of the government.

## Salient points from the presentations were:

Resource persons and participants took part in animated discussions and deliberations. All agreed that there is need to create awareness about citizens' role in mitigation and adaptation. Several practical suggestions were made for the ordinary citizens to contribute to mitigation and adaptation, many of them of special importance to

women since they dealt with household practices. It was emphasised that there is need to empower women who can be major players in bringing the desired change. There is also the urgent need to control industries causing pollution leading to climate change, affecting trade and causing misery to consumers. The urgent need for an effective water policy was also brought to notice.

A leading lady doctor practising in the area pointed out that climate change is the biggest health threat in the twenty-first century, disturbing quality of life. Pregnant women, elderly persons and persons suffering from ailments like heart disease, cancer etc. are most affected. She said that there is a rise in cases of asthma, bronchitis, skin ailments etc. caused by the pollutants in the air and water. Crops are affected by the toxins present in the air, water and soil, reducing production and threatening food security. Malnutrition is seen among children. Extreme temperatures affect mental faculties and cause genetic disturbances as well. Quality of life and health will be severely damaged if we do not wake up and act right now.

Government Representatives took the floor to explain government initiatives and to highlight some of the challenges they face. National and State-level Action Plans on Climate Change were explained. The plans take short term climate variability and extreme events as the starting points for long term climate change plans. Both adaptation and mitigation are included in the plans. The head of the district administration, the district collector, who was present, spelt out the district's urgent requirements. The problem of garbage disposal is assuming huge proportions in villages, towns and cities. AIWC's help was sought by the district administration in dealing with the problem by conducting awareness programmes, training in waste management etc. The public need to be educated about the need to effectively manage waste through methods like vermi-composting etc. and reducing dependence on chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

## Follow up

Responding to the demand of the district administration, AIWC undertook training programs in waste management in the village. Farmers were trained to deal with the waste generated in an eco-friendly and sustainable manner. As an immediate outcome five of the farmers were able to follow good practices in waste management on their farmland and were able to successfully claim the subsidy amount offered by the local government. Women were trained in domestic waste management through techniques such as biogas and vermicompost. They were encouraged to implement these in their homes. AIWC branch will render the assistance required.

## Allahabad

The city of Allahabad, selected for the second phase of the pilot project, is among the prominent cities of Uttar Pradesh, the largest state of India. It is situated at the confluence of three rivers – Ganga, Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati. Founded in 1575 AD by Emperor Akbar, the city enjoys the honour of being a religio-cultural center of India. Allahabad today is a centre of administration and education. As in Komaragiri, here also AIWC has been working in partnership with the government in different areas such as literacy, health, energy etc. for more than five decades. Hence we could get active cooperation and help from government.

### Awareness programme: phase I

The first programme was held at the Ruchi Institute, a training institute in skills and literacy for young persons. Target group included a large proportion of women and youth. Resource persons were academicians, doctors, lawyers, social activists and AIWC workers. This programme was organised mainly to create awareness about climate change among women and youth.

### Awareness programme: phase II

The second Awareness Programme was a meeting with women of Dantapur village, 10 km from Allahabad city.

AIWC Allahabad branch runs several projects for women in the village including a literacy centre and a herbal medicines unit. The discussions centered around several topics and the women enthusiastically participated, voicing their opinions. Though not familiar with the terminology of climate change, they shared their concern about changes noticed in the environment in recent times.

The local elected body, *Panchayat*, is headed by one of the women, Manju. She also took part in the discussions, asking questions frequently to better understand the problem of climate change. AIWC workers also explained to her the concept of Climate Change Action Plans at different levels of administration and what the role of the village *Panchayat* is in implementing the plans. She assured the women and members of AIWC of all help in organising programs to combat climate change.

## Villagers' experiences

Though ignorant about the causes and consequences, the women were vocal in explaining the changes they have noticed in the past few years. They face harsher summers and longer winters. In summer they are forced to get up very early to finish working on the farms before the sun gets too hot. Thereafter they have to attend to the home and family. They are unable to work long hours due to intense heat. In winter the ground becomes so hard that they have to toil twice as hard to till and plant seeds. Receding water table calls for more frequent deepening of wells. Several ponds have dried up permanently, causing shortage of drinking water. The women also expressed concern about several health problems like diarrhoea and asthma afflicting the children and elders which adds to their burden since patient care falls in their domain.

## Seminar on climate change advocacy

The next day a seminar was organised in the Conference Hall of the Allahabad Museum in Allahabad, again the nearest town. Target audience included members of the public with major participation from women and youth. Resource persons were academics, social activists, and government officials. Students took active part and presented a skit and several songs on the theme.



## Salient points from the presentations

Tampering with the environment has disturbed the balance of nature. The only alternate before us is to respect nature. We must learn to follow traditional practices and maintain cultural legacies. This awareness has been lost and there is urgent need to inculcate it in today's youth. Tradition and human efforts/techniques are the two legs of progress. The first leg, i.e. tradition, has to be firmly placed on the ground to enable humanity to make progress through the second leg, human effort and technology. In a well-researched and informative talk, appreciated by all, developments around the world in terms





of international agreements and charters were outlined; starting from the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the progress of talks and negotiations which culminated in the COP17 Summit in Durban were traced. Environment is not something to be feared, but is to be enjoyed. The need is to understand the basic principles and learn to manage the resources well.

### Suggestions and opinions

All participants, especially women, were eager to take part in the discussions. Several women made suggestions about how to deal with issues that affected them directly: Respect for nature needs to be inculcated in children right from an early age. Mothers must teach them to understand the basic principles of nature and learn to manage the resources well. They must be vigilant to any loss caused to nature and national wealth. Everyone must desist from wastage and overuse. Women can effectively promote traditional practices that enhance the quality of environment and also serve as depositories of herbal remedies. Efforts must be made to counterbalance the effects of deforestation for development purposes, like building canals for irrigation, and by increasing reforestation efforts. Many practical tips in daily lives to reduce pollution and to increase the quality of environment were forthcoming. Youth whose enthusiastic participation throughout was one of the encouraging aspects of the programme offered to actively take part in the efforts for climate change awareness, mitigation and advocacy.

### Follow up

The AIWC branch has trained women in herbal gardening and they have set up a traditional medicine manufacturing unit in the village. Training in solar energy has also been given.

## Lessons in advocacy: looking ahead with hope

**What we learnt from the experience with regard to the grassroots level:** The acute lack of awareness among the common people about climate change causes and mitigation is a matter of great concern. Sense of individual responsibility of citizens needs to be stressed and enhanced. Civic engagement in policy making must be encouraged and promoted. AIWC will now focus on these significant aspects while designing future programs. Youth are sensitive to the issue and are enthusiastic about supplementing advocacy efforts. AIWC is making concerted efforts to attract more and more young persons to the activities related to mitigation, adaptation and dealing with loss and damage. They could be good ambassadors and carriers of messages to the community regarding climate change, causes and effects as well as redeeming practices.

It is important to engage with the local government in implementing any programme, especially advocacy since the exercise is aimed at sensitising officials regarding problems faced by ordinary citizens. AIWC's long legacy of welfare programmes in different places across India has won for us the trust and confidence of the government and people. This is the only path to follow for successful advocacy.

**What we learnt from the experience with regard to national advocacy:** Over the past more than eight decades AIWC initiatives in the field of environment have empowered women economically and socially. The success stories and the wide network give confidence to venture into advocacy and lobbying for Climate Change policy at local, sub-national and national levels. In the area of climate change, AIWC has been actively involved internationally in promoting the understanding and implementation of the Gender Decision of UNFCCC, assisting nearby countries to make submissions. AIWC has made submissions to the Indian Government to incorporate gender-sensitive policies and budgets for dealing with climate change. Efforts are also in progress to involve like-minded women's organisations in the country to get involved in this field. On this account, we hope to show good results through our work with women and for women.

**Action on the gender decision:** AIWC has been active in tracking the implementation of the Gender Decision at national and international levels. Members were actively involved with the Collective Working Group formed at Doha. A submission was made to the national government with certain recommendations for implementation, and after consistent interaction and persuasion India made a submission to UNFCCC reflecting some of the points in AIWC submission. This gives hope for the future.



*Dorah Marema*

# Integrating Gender into Climate Change Agenda and Programmes in South Africa



*Dorah Marema*

In South Africa, the interaction between socio-political circumstances and environmental conditions and change determines the vulnerability of people to environmental disasters including those caused by climate change. Major causes of this situation include the deepening poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS, poor levels of disaster readiness, susceptibility to climate and variability, and the people's inability to cope with extreme weather events including droughts and floods.<sup>1</sup> Household food security is a major concern in the face of climate change. In addition, a deteriorating state of the environment, poor past land-use planning, patchy success in the delivery of services such as sanitation and clean water, are increasing the exposure of people to environmental and climate disasters.

South Africa has developed a national climate change response policy with the objective of supporting the policies and principles laid out in the Government's White Paper on Integrated Pollution and Waste Management, as well as other national policies including those relating to energy, agriculture and water. The point of departure reflected in this policy is the achievement of national sustainable development objectives, whilst simultaneously responding to climate change. South Africa has also published its second national communication as part of its obligation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

## Strategies used by GenderCC South Africa (GenderCCSA) to integrate gender in climate change Policies and programmes in South Africa

Since its inception in 2009, GenderCC Southern Africa embarked on a number of projects and initiatives in order to integrate gender into climate change agenda and programmes in South Africa. There have been a few strategies that GenderCCSA used in order to ensure that gender is integrated into climate change policies and programmes and they include the following:

### Building a gender and climate change grassroots movement in South Africa

From its inception, GenderCCSA realised that it is important to have a formal and well recognised institution or organisations which can empower women on issues of climate change and coordinate activities to influence the climate change policies and programmes. This has been because for a very long time in South Africa, climate change remained an issue of few environmental organisations who did not see any link between gender and climate change. Also, gender remained an issue of gender organisations who often focused on issues of violence against women, women abuse, women rights and saw no link with environmental issues let alone the recent issue of climate change. As a result, GenderCCSA saw an opportunity to provide a bridge that will cross over these two and create a movement which will ensure that there is gender equity in climate change policies, programmes and projects.

### Building cross-sector partnerships

All the projects of GenderCCSA are planned and designed to be implemented in partnership with various partners including Non Governmental organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and grass-roots organisations many of whom are not focusing on climate change issues but find that it is critical to their work. As a result of



this approach, GenderCCSA made huge contributions since its inception in raising awareness of issues of gender and climate change in South Africa especially during a critical time where the country was developing its National Climate Change Response Policy and also hosting the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) 17 in Durban at the end of 2011. As a result, GenderCCSA was provided an unusual opportunity to be part of many initiatives that were important in developing a national policy and also to ensure that all South Africans, particularly those mostly affected by climate change are aware of climate change and how it will impact them.

### Creating multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms

GenderCCSA hosted dialogue platforms between government, business, academia and grass-roots organisations – particularly by rural women and small-scale farmers – where they can engage on issues that are affecting women's livelihoods. The Dialogues were targeting decision makers in government, business, labour, and academia as well as grass-roots civil society, particularly women and small scale farmers. They focused on the role of grass-roots women within the following topics: both climate change adaptation and mitigation; the roll out of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives; how climate change will affect small-scale farmers and sustainable agriculture as a way of adapting to agriculture; climate finance and how it can benefit grass-roots women to mitigate and adapt to impacts of climate change.

The multi-stakeholder dialogues that have been held by GenderCCSA have been very successful and various stakeholders who participated in these dialogues ranged from donors, NGOs, parastatals, women's groups, government departments (national and provincial), government watch bodies, local municipalities, etc. The common factor in all the dialogues in the provinces were various grass-roots communities, including women's organisations as well as CBOs and cooperatives who came to share their challenges and get more information and answers to their questions on climate change.

The dialogues were often focused and highly effective because they are designed to provide the participants with an opportunity to share their experiences and challenges on climate change and also be able to make suggestions on how these could be overcome and dealt with. During these dialogue sessions, it became evident that many government institutions have public participation policies that require consultation with 'necessary stakeholders including grass-roots women'. However, these consultations are often neither equitable nor meaningful to grass-roots communities and women. They do not ensure adequate input from women about their unique needs and priorities. As a result, grass-roots communities, especially women, are not benefiting from these funds at all.

GenderCCSA and its partners have a very strong partnership with local communities and groups and they can facilitate a process for various agencies including government institutions, to access these marginalised groups of society that are affected by climate change the most.

## Ongoing capacity building for grassroots women

GenderCCSA has been running a continuous capacity building process that focuses on building capacity of grass-roots women, small-scale farmers and civil society community leaders on various climate change technical issues, for example, climate change adaptation and finance, renewable energy & energy efficiency and sustainable agriculture in order that they can engage more effectively in the debates that are currently taking place. This process of capacity building would ensure that grassroots women would be able to engage decision makers and policy makers on any of these issues. In order to enable genuine involvement of women in climate change policies and programmes at all levels, it is imperative to invest more systematically in women's capacity to participate meaningfully in policy-making processes through supporting advocacy and leadership training to build skills and confidence. Broader participation by women would enable a wider cross-section of stakeholders to be involved, and would, at the same time, ensure continuity of the process, and, ultimately, improved efficiency in the implementation of climate-change adaptation and mitigation strategies and projects. Also, community-based engagement lends itself well to the inclusion of women's voices, who, if given the opportunity to articulate their needs, will often be the ones to suggest the workable solutions to address issues of climate change.

There is a need to bring partners who could focus on providing resources and practical solutions to enhance women's adaptive capacity and livelihoods including alternative agricultural practices, equitable employment opportunities, energy-saving technologies and equipment. Gender and climate activists should focus on investing more time and resources into strengthening the capacity of grass-roots women and gender activists on climate change issues and apply affirmative action principles to draw women into climate change institutional structures and policy-making arenas at national, provincial and local levels.

## Accessible and appropriate gender and climate change information

During implementation of its projects, GenderCCSA learned that to sustain the process of capacity building of grass-roots communities and women, accessible climate change information (in terms of language and form of material) had to be made available to those that need it the most, especially in rural communities. Many of the grass-roots women were struggling to grasp the issues and still

did not fully understand what climate change means even though there were facilitators who were speaking native local languages and also used a lot of visual media like DVDs. This is because climate change is a very technical and scientific concept. To overcome this challenge, GenderCCSA developed information on gender and climate change in the form of brochures which have been translated into Zulu, SeSotho and Afrikaans, and these are distributed accordingly including during capacity building workshops with the communities.

GenderCCSA also realised that a lot has to be done to educate women, particularly rural women about the issue of climate change and also to document their experiences that can help authorities to design adaptation interventions. Also, once women are educated about the issues of climate change and how they can participate in policy making processes, it will become easier for them to demand from the government to include them in the public participation processes; also, to make meaningful contributions to the policy process and to ensure that their voices are heard. This has been evident in the preparation of UNFCCC COP17 and during the climate change policy making process where GenderCCSA and its partners conducted capacity building workshops with women who are part of grass-roots movements and community based organisations. These women started from not knowing anything about climate change to being able to participate in the Parliamentary Public Hearings on climate change and the public provincial workshops organised by the Department of Environmental Affairs to gather inputs into the National Climate Change Response White paper.

They also took part in the Rural Women's Assembly during the UNFCCC COP17 where they marched to demand for gender justice and a legally binding agreement to deal with climate change.

However, capacity building and education around issues of gender and climate change alone is not enough, grass-roots women need tools and resources that will enable them to adapt to the impacts of climate change while lifting them out of the dire poverty situations that many of them find themselves in. In this instance, we believe that any form of support to be provided to these women should be aiming at creating opportunities that will see women being able to create sustainable livelihoods while addressing the impacts of climate change.



### Influencing climate change policies and strategies is a long and tedious process

One of the key lessons GenderCCSA has learned in its work is that the policy environment in South Africa has yet to fully recognise the gender-specific characteristics of vulnerability and adaptive capacity, even though this is shifting gradually as a result of the work that has been done since 2010. There is often a challenge that environmental issues, including policies, laws and programmes, are treated as being gender neutral. GenderCCSA had to build alliances and partnerships with key organisations and institutions, as well as grass-roots social movements across various sectors to be able to influence climate change policy and ensure that gender is taken into considerations. Many civil society organisations working on climate change issues were also not fully aware of gender and climate change issues and hence gender issues were often not addressed in their interventions and programmes. As a result, they too needed to be lobbied to consider the gender dimensions in their programmes and policy interventions.

It is important for GenderCCSA and its partners to lobby for various entry points that will ensure that the various national and international climate change policies and programmes are more gender-equitable. It is also very important that the national gender machinery and institutions responsible for women's issues are made aware of the challenges that grass-roots women are facing as a result of climate change and the potential for engaging more closely with various government institutions to ensure that the issues and interests of grass-roots women are addressed. These institutions should be encouraged to go around the country to make presentations on the various programmes on climate change and how women and vulnerable communities can access them.

### Climate change is often considered a technical problem

GenderCCSA also learned that climate change is often been considered as a technical problem requiring a technical solution and the debates on climate change in South Africa by and large neglect the dimension of gender, and up until the establishment of GenderCCSA not much had been done to include a gender sensitive perspective. As a result, GenderCCSA and its partners had to work hard to defend

and sustain the interventions and inputs made during the national climate change preliminary response green paper to ensure that they remain in the final white paper, and become integrated throughout in climate change programmes and projects.

### Policy makers often to listen to representatives of constituencies

Another key finding is that politicians and policy makers are interested in listening to voices of the people, often grass-roots, who are affected and impacted directly rather than representatives of big organisations with offices and no 'followers'. As a result, organisations working to influence policies would be taken seriously if they had a constituency they represent. GenderCCSA worked with grass-roots social movements and community based organisations who were capacitated to participate in the policy making process, making submissions and inputs to the politicians and policy makers. This also ensured that the programmes and projects are rooted within the communities and continue to address the needs of grass-roots communities, particularly women.

### Climate change negotiations should be lobbied in their home countries and not at UNFCCC COPs

GenderCCSA also learned that it is important to lobby the national climate change negotiators at home to ensure that they integrate gender in their positions before they reach the UNFCCC COP. Over the years, it has been difficult to lobby the South African delegation to consider gender in their positions during the COPs; they were somewhat not open to that. However, we have since realised that when lobbied at home using national platforms, they are responsive to our inputs around gender considerations and cooperative to work with us to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the policy and part of the South African position to the UNFCCC COP. As a result, GenderCCSA and its partners have been participating in the National Climate Change Committee what meets every quarter to discuss important national climate change priorities and make input into all the policies and programmes of the national government. The organisation is now recognised as one of the key stakeholders in this process and this afford us an opportunity to raise the issues of gender and climate justice to the climate change negotiators before and after the UNFCCC COP conference.



## Issues of climate change, poverty, environment and gender are integrated

The issues of climate change, poverty, environment and gender are tightly interwoven and cannot be separated. For example, women farmers are particularly affected by climate change, food insecurity and disasters, so we have to drive gender equality and decrease women's vulnerability in the agricultural sector. However, government and policy makers often don't recognise this interconnectedness and often don't come up with holistic policies and programmes. For example, throughout the process to develop the National Climate Change Response Policy, policy-makers worked on the assumption that people can read and write and thus excluded 24 percent of South African adults who are profoundly affected by climate change, especially women. This also meant that grassroots communities, most of whom are women, who don't have access to a computer and the internet, were largely excluded from the process.

Another challenge was that as a result of this exclusion, the climate change policies and programmes then promoted large-scale, market-based climate change adaptation solutions, such as nuclear power or genetic modification, and not ones that can be accessed by women. Priorities seem to be placed on technologies, not on lifestyle changes that ordinary people can implement in their daily lives. This remains a huge challenge that has to be watched by GenderCCSA as we continue to lobby and advocate for people-centred solutions that are context-specific, participatory and use local knowledge. Ultimately, we want to create environmental circumstances where women are in control and don't depend on others.

## Ongoing financial support is critical to sustain the work

It is important for GenderCCSA to have ongoing financial support to ensure continuous engagement on issues of gender and climate change in various foras while providing support to its partners by coordinating activities that provide up to date information on the key issues of climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well platforms where members can openly discuss issues and decide on positions or actions that may assist in the achievement of the GenderCCSA goals. Also, this requires GenderCCSA to be strengthened as an organisation for it to be able to follow up on the work that has been done.

## Conclusion

Integrating gender into the climate change agenda is a very complex, long and winding process which is heavily influenced by the context, politics and various stakeholders in each country. Even within each country, the context of each region is different and as a result, it is often hard to come up with one size fits all approach that can be adopted universally. It is important to work closely with grassroots women and their communities to ensure that this work is done effectively and efficiently. Also, it is important to work at all levels, i.e. at the grassroots and at a national level, if resources permits, to ensure that the experiences of grassroots women are taken up into national processes and addressed.

## Notes

1 Cf. Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism (2007): South Africa Environmental Outlook: A Report on the State of the Environment.

Yvette Abrahams

# Knowledge for Power: Rethinking Climate Change, Energy and Gender in South Africa

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Yvette Abrahams

## Introduction

South Africa is the 11<sup>th</sup> highest carbon emitter in the world, emitting over a quarter of Africa's emissions on its own. Extraction and combustion of coal were around two-thirds of the national emissions inventory in 2000.<sup>1</sup> We are the home of coal to liquids giant SASOL, the single biggest carbon emitter per square metre in the world.<sup>2</sup> Because our economy has historically been dependent on mining, we are not only currently an energy-intensive economy, but find ourselves locked into that position for many decades. Mining investments are typically made with a time horizon of forty to fifty years, so rapid change is possible but not easy.<sup>3</sup> For this reason we might as well take our time and go to the root of the matter.

Concretely, this paper analyses from a feminist perspective the knowledge system which led to climate change. My key point is that the way our understanding of what constitutes knowledge has to shift towards a feminist perspective; else once we have sorted climate change, capitalism will create some new calamity.

But in order not to be mistaken: the term feminist is not simply meant as gender equality, but as an intersectional theory as defined by bell hooks, which looks at class, race

and gender as mutually constitutive elements of systems which are both material substructures and ideological superstructures, while located in specific historical contexts and interpreted from a standpoint approach.<sup>4</sup> Only in this way is it revealed, how (gendered) relations of power are upheld and reinforced.

Energy and agriculture are used as reference points in this discussion, as areas where eco-feminism is positing alternative systems of knowledge which, it is argued, are better suited to the challenges of accomplishing climate justice.

## Renewable energy, gender inequality and feminist knowledge

Almost all the literature on renewable energy and jobs available on South Africa does not speak of power at all. It represents itself as neutral and value free, while it represents renewable energy as purely a technological challenge which can be solved by technological solutions. It uncouples energy production from its social and historical context and pretends the problem is purely a matter of numbers. In doing so it hands over the power of distribution to a market which should not be entrusted with such power.

The market, in the sense of neo-classical economics, where information is perfect and all actors have equal power to affect decision-making, does not exist. Feminist analyses of the market instead foreground the question of power. The existence of unpaid labour (the reproductive economy) (though it is central to sustaining the capitalist labour market) does not form part of neo-classical analyses and does not get counted in official statistics. Yet the labour market could not exist without the reproduction of the labour force. In this sense the capitalist labour market can be viewed as a parasite existing on the back of the 'free' unpaid labour economy. Even paid labour is structured by relations of power in the home – supposedly a 'market-free' space.

Many people have remarked on the racism of *apartheid* but few outside the women's movement have emphasised the extreme sexism of the system. Yet this factor shaped women's resistance to the National Party and led to intense pressure to ensure that a clause guaranteeing



gender equality was included in our new Constitution. Still, the stubborn legacy of gender inequality in the economy and civil society will take a lot longer than two decades to change. If women are not equal in the home, the site of the reproductive economy, then they are disadvantaged even before they go out to work. This weakens their bargaining power in the labour market and is a major cause of the persistence of a gendered wage differential. This material reality is obfuscated through the production of a hegemonic ideology, namely the notion of equal exchange.<sup>5</sup>

The task of feminist economics, then, is to uncover the true relations of power, and represent the market as contested terrain on which these redistributions of goods and services from the poor to the rich are played out. But to achieve gender equality without simultaneously restructuring gendered relations of power can have catastrophic results. As Sharon Astyk points out, the post-war demand of equal access to the labour market, made without simultaneously seeking to incorporate the cost of reproductive and environmental externalities into the labour market, is a strategy which worked for some women, but which succeeded only by mortgaging the planet at the expense of the welfare of future generations:

“... when we took one additional person in each family out of the home and sent them to work we doubled the size of our economy and thus our resource usage. In 1950 slightly over 30 percent of all women worked outside the home. In 2000 that number had doubled. Tellingly, per capita household energy use also doubled in the same period. Not all can be attributed to both adults in a household working outside the home, but a great deal of it can. Two incomes created a need for new services, all very energy intensive, and a new level of affluence that fueled our consumption.”<sup>6</sup>

While often the shift from the male breadwinner to the adult worker was accompanied by a decline in wages, the family ending up with not double but hardly any more than before, in South Africa and other developing countries, this shift was also achieved by the outsourcing of domestic work to poor women. Domestic work remains the single biggest employer of Black women in the work-

force. In other words, the entry of women into the workforce necessitated two women travelling to work, the one to her office and the other to the first one's home and children. Thus while the electrification of housework increased energy usage in the global North, energy usage in the global South would have also increased in the transport sector.<sup>7</sup>

It is unlikely that a society fueled entirely by renewable energy could afford this kind of resource use, certainly not equitably across the globe. Even renewable energy uses a certain amount of non-recyclable resources in its production, so energy savings have to be part of our programme to create a balanced society.

Feminists should certainly not be mobilising to increase energy usage. But this must not mean we accept the patriarchal norms of gender, discriminatory legal frameworks, as well as gender-based violence which form interlocking systems of control and domination and distort the participation of women in the labour market.<sup>8</sup> At heart the problem is one of knowledge, of who controls the production of knowledge and how that knowledge is used. If the capitalist market requires perfect knowledge to function, it stands to reason it will never function well. Wes Jackson's argument goes to the core of the problem:

“...we inherited and developed a knowledge-based worldview founded on the assumption that we can accumulate enough knowledge to bend nature pliantly and to run the world. Greenhouse gases are the result of that knowledge-based worldview ... What makes us think that we can adequately assess these proposed projects? Only our Cartesian assumptions that we *know enough to run the world*, despite the reality that we are billions of times more ignorant than knowledgeable.”<sup>9</sup>

Our strategy cannot counter this world-view with the assertion that we know even better than the emitters of greenhouse gases. This would be to concede the assumptions of discourse within which the capitalist markets operate. Instead, we should be saying that it is precisely because we know so little that we seek to exercise

precautions. We should be learning our lessons from the poor and the powerless, those whose experience of the world is precisely to know that we know little. Masanobu Fukuoka has expressed this sense of the dominant episteme as one of an overweening sense of power leading to the inevitable fall:

*“If we strip away the layers of human knowledge and action from nature one by one, true nature will emerge of itself. A good look at the natural order thus revealed will show us just how great are the errors committed by science. A science that rejects the science of today will surely ensue.”<sup>10</sup>*

The issue of knowledge, what kind of knowledge we choose to perpetuate, and what philosophy of knowledge we choose to base this on, means when we talk about renewable energy we need to do this with some consciousness of what renewable energy really is. It is a return to nature and a rejection of industrial notions that we can control all of nature through knowledge. The first step to doing that is to admit that we cannot be in charge. We have never been in charge. We are part of a planetary ecosystem which mankind has succeeded in disturbing but which will right itself with or without our help.<sup>11</sup> A theory of knowledge which seeks to serve the development of renewable energy needs to have as its starting point a philosophy of knowledge which can best be described as Zen: we know little and that little only at the mercy of nature. We should not place our faith in the knowledge production of the powerful, but to seek truth amongst those who know what it is to know little. The experience of powerlessness and how to turn that experience into collective action for positive change is surely the knowledge we need now. Surely women who have had both philosophical and bodily experiences of utter powerlessness, must be the experts on the workings of power:

*“...the dominant group (both the conservative and liberal wing) is deeply invested in seeing themselves, falsely, as neutrally objective and value free. If, in fact, other world views were treated as equally legitimate, their sense of themselves as naturally superior would be dismantled. They don’t want this. So, they maintain the exclusion and the silence around that exclusion as a way to falsely construct themselves as deserving of the power to shun. And that impulse is instinctive, not conscious. I believe that if there were an open, complex discussion of this exclusion, this answer would come to the forefront and that is why there is no such discussion.”<sup>12</sup>*

It follows, therefore, that to engage the literature on renewable energy and gender in the South African context without pointing out the implications for eco-feminist

action would render us complicit in the perpetuation of hegemonic silences and exclusions. It needs to be stated that this literature is disempowering in the extreme. First, because it is untrue. Its silences conceal almost everything that is important. Second, because it is unimplementable. The little bit of renewable energy we do have has come about because of the exercise of political power on the part of society’s underdogs. For instance, the amount of renewable energy in our 20 year plan, the Integrated Resource Plan II of 2010, tripled after the substantial civil society mobilisation during the public consultation process.<sup>13</sup> The implementation has proceeded at a speed far outpacing new fossil fuel power, and this is to some extent due to continued civil society monitoring of the rollout.<sup>14</sup> How come this does not form part of public discourse on the subject? This indicates a degree of wilful blindness on the part of energy planners and scientists who see only the outcome but not the process it took to get there. Ideally, on the basis of these experiences, we should be able to calculate a budget for the amount of civil society mobilisation needed for the required degree of renewable energy implementation, but that would require breaking the silences and focusing sustained attention on the politics of voice surrounding energy planning.

Third, renewable energy literature is disempowering because it reduces ordinary people to the status of passive recipients of services delivered through the capitalist market with a little bit of help from the state. This sets us up for inaction since if an expert says we are passive enough times we may even come to believe it. What we need instead is a positive response to trauma:

*“Transformation does not happen unless we explore what threatens us as teachers and students; what we sweep under our desks; what we silence; what we’re angry about; what causes us anxiety, what brings us into open conflict and disagreement; and what cultural prescriptions and cultural teachings we are rebelling against...When we experience boundary shifts, border violations, bodily penetrations, identity confusions, a flash of *conocimiento* (understanding) may sear us, shocking us into a new way of reading the world.”<sup>15</sup>*

Comparing different types of energy allows us to make the same comparison as that between industrialised agriculture and organic. Mining fossil fuels has allowed a degree of mechanisation and standardisation of the economy which will not be possible with renewable energy. Renewable energy brings us back in touch with the seasons and cycles of nature. Suddenly it becomes important if the sun shines or not, where the wind blows and whether it is hot or cold. The idea that energy can come whenever we require it, at the flick of a switch, is shown to be a male, middle-class notion that was never actually true except for a



small part of the world population at a particular point in historical time, and at the expense of future generations. Men have dominated the source sciences of capitalism such as engineering and accounting. That these sciences have therefore been complicit in the Cartesian patriarchal worldview which lies at the heart of our energy planning up to now should not surprise us.

## Agriculture, and the knowledge of interdependent change

The right to work for women of the global north also entailed massive land dispossession and poverty for women of the global south newly incorporated into a globalised economy.<sup>16</sup> As women began to work outside the home in increasing numbers, the demand for processed and ready-made foods increased exponentially. The increased demand laid the foundation for a massive industrialisation of the food economy, which led to the shedding of workers from the farm sector. Thus we saw after the Second World War a massive transition as millions of farmers were divorced from the land to become a cheap industrial labour force in the cities. It was recognised at the time that this would help drive down urban wages.<sup>17</sup> Rural communities were deprived not only of farmers with local knowledge, but of the expertise (mostly unpaid) of their wives.<sup>18</sup> At the very moment when women going to work began creating an enormous consumer market for mass-produced food, this played right onto the hands of agri-business:

*“Even the shift in cooking from the home to the factory, though it has left us free to engage in other pursuits, has also left us with far less knowledge of, and control over, what we eat.”<sup>19</sup>*

The postwar massive increase in energy usage in industrialised countries has been partly due to the industrialisation of agriculture. Yet at heart the production of food cannot be industrialised beyond a certain level because the land itself, the soil and the climate will never be fully predictable or standardisable. There will never be a substitute for the farmer's local context specific knowledge of the soil, the climate, the plants, and the human ecology of the farm because at the heart of the interface between human beings and food production we call agriculture is change.<sup>20</sup> The only thing constant is change, and what agricultural mechanisation does is to slow down the rate of change – i.e. our ability to adapt to the environment – to the pace a farmer can afford to pay off new machinery.

Even our current level of agricultural mechanisation is achieved at the cost of such massive negative externalities that the survival of the human species itself has become severely disrupted. Since 2002, the rising temperatures

and increases in extreme weather have led to massive secular rises in food prices.<sup>21</sup> Price is an indicator of scarcity, meaning we need to read this as a sign of increasing instability in our food production system. Thus industrial agriculture is itself a major emitter of greenhouse gases which worsens our problem instead of solving it.

A sustainable system of food production cannot function like a factory because all environments are not the same and are difficult to standardise. Each soil, climate and human ecology is unique. However, the dominance of a few high-yielding but very sensitive seed strains in our food production means conventional farmers waste a lot of energy trying to create the perfect microclimate for genetically modified organisms. We have forgotten that food production that lasts needs to be tailored to the local environment. It requires an expert and context-specific knowledge of the land on which you grow, the soil, the weather, the sun, the wind; as well as the relationship of plants to each other, to animals and to your household economy, which can only be gained through years of experience.

Therefore the agribusiness approach to food production is inherently wasteful.<sup>22</sup> Instead we need to practice ecosystem thinking. The necessity for local context specific knowledge serves as a useful model for how radical theorising needs to take place. Every action has consequences, and every part of the whole will affect and be affected by other parts. This also includes an understanding of the individuals who can uphold or change systems, will have massive unintended consequences. We cannot seek to change merely one part of the system (such as gender inequality) without looking at its relationship to other parts of the system.<sup>23</sup>

## Towards peaceful knowledge systems

The capitalist market is neither free nor value-less, but a battleground structured by gendered norms and relations of power which become fundamental determinants of women's wages. The problem is not just that this oppresses women, but also that it represents a wasteful use of resources and is not the optimal outcome for society as a whole. An economy which refuses to empower half its brains, for instance, is less likely to be adaptive to change through innovation. A capitalist market may quite deliberately tolerate this inefficient use of resources because it enables some to enrich themselves at the expense of others.

At such times, the task of feminist intellectuals is first and foremost to dismantle the hegemony of market ideology. The problem is not the market as such but the relations of power which structure it. If feminists unite we can have power over the market. It only has power over us insofar

as we are disorganised and divided. If the goal of renewable energy is to optimise the survival and welfare of human society it can be done through the market – provided that the relations of power which structure this market are equal.<sup>24</sup> If this is the case then dealing with questions of power would allow us to use context specific dynamic analyses which would cause individuals, society, and the planet to be better off.<sup>25</sup> One could define these processes of cumulative causation as qualitative changes in the relations of power which structure production and reproduction. In a word: revolution.

If it were not climate change, there would be something else. From chloro fluorocarbons to DDT, from Recombinant

Bovine Somatotropin to organophosphates, our post-Enlightenment scientific history is replete with examples of scientists thinking that it was possible to fully foresee the consequences of their actions. Climate change should be a big warning signal that what is required is a change in our epistemology.

The violations of silence are not just the violation of our minds, but the violation of the ecosystem. It would not be feminist to not speak out against it. Our best hope is to revert to struggle tactics which in South Africa have served us well in the past. These begin by speaking truth to power.

## Notes

- 1 Leaton, J. (2012): Unburnable Carbon. Budgeting Carbon In South Africa, Carbon Tracker, London, pp. 16.
- 2 INCITE (2013): Climate Disclosure Project South Africa 100 Climate Change Report 2013, National Business Initiative, Johannesburg, pp. 8.
- 3 Cf. Martin, Brenda (ed.) (2013): Smart Electricity Planning: Fast-Tracking Our Transition to A Healthy, Modern Affordable Electricity Supply For All, Electricity Governance Initiative South Africa, Cape Town; Alternative Information And Development Centre (2012): One Million Climate Jobs. A Just Transition To A Low Carbon Economy To Combat Unemployment and Climate Change, Cape Town (hereinafter OMCJB); for more detailed studies see Burton, Jesse (2011): One Million Climate Jobs: Renewable Energy Jobs, AIDC, Cape Town. Available at <http://www.climatejobs.org.za/index.php/downloads/category/27-r-e?start=20>.
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- 5 Vaughan, Genevieve (2002): For-Giving: A Feminist Critique of Exchange, Plain View Press, Austin, Texas, pp. 137.
- 6 Astyk, Sharon (2008): Depletion and Abundance. Life On The New Home Front, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, Canada, pp. 29. The statistics refer to Canada.
- 7 I am indebted to Conny van Heemstra for pointing this out.
- 8 It goes without saying that race and sexual orientation are further systems of domination which complicate and complement the oppression of women.
- 9 Wes Jackson (2011): Nature As Measure. The Selected Essays of Wes Jackson, Counterpoint Press, Berkeley, California, pp. 54-55.
- 10 Fukuoka, Masanobu (1985): The Natural Way of Farming: The Theory and Practice of Green Philosophy Bookventure, Madras 1993, pp. 82.
- 11 This reasoning is not meant to refute those who hold a religious conviction that we may be here for a purpose. It is merely trying to abolish the notion that we are in control.
- 12 Schulman, Sarah (2009): Ties That Bind. Familial Homophobia and Its Consequences, The New Press, New York, pp. 123.
- 13 Cf. Department of Energy (2011): Integrated Resource Plan For Electricity 2010-2030. Final Report, Pretoria.
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- 16 The globalisation experience resembles the South African liberation struggle in one respect; "While they offered opportunities for women, these did not translate into changed gender identities for them, which continued to be governed by social norms." Awumbila, Mariama and Dzodzi Tsikata (2010): "Economic Liberalization and Gendered Livelihoods", in: Tsikata, Dzodzi and Pamela Golah, Land Tenure, Gender and Globalization. Research and Analysis from Africa, Asia and Latin America, Zubaan, New Delhi and International Research Centre, Ottawa, pp. 141.
- 17 Jackson, Wes (2011): Nature As Measure. The Selected Essays of Wes Jackson, Counterpoint Press, Berkeley, California, pp. 160.
- 18 Sachs, Carolyn (1983): The Invisible Farmers. Women In Agricultural Production, Rowman and Allanheld, Totowa New Jersey, pp.75-108.
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- 21 For a fuller discussion cf. Abrahams, Yvette (2011): "'Stop Complaining About The Price Of Bread! Start A Bakery!'. Colonial Patriarchy As The Cause Of Current High Food Prices", in: Koen, Karen (ed.), Proceedings of the Feminist Consultative Conference On Women and Socially Excluded Groups Bearing The Social Costs of The Economic And Social Crisis, GETNET, Athlone.
- 22 Shiva, Vandana (2013): Making Peace With The Earth. Beyond Resource, Land and Food Wars, Women Unlimited (Jacana Media), Johannesburg, pp. 17.
- 23 Cf. e.g. Israel, Andrei and Carolyn Sachs (2013): "A Climate for Feminist Intervention: Feminist Science Studies and Climate Change" in: Alston, Margaret and Kerri Whittenbury (eds.), Research, Action and Policy. Addressing the Gendered Impacts Of Climate Change, Springer Dordrecht, New York.
- 24 It should be noted that this argument should by no means be read as support for carbon credits. It is ridiculous to pay capitalists not to emit, and makes much more sense to charge them for emitting. Still, this example bears out my general point that it is not the market mechanism as such which is the problem, but the way we use it.
- 25 Elson, Diane (1999): "Labor Markets as Gendered Institutions: Equality, Efficiency and Empowerment Issues", in: World Development Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 611-627. In this essay Elson takes issue with neoclassical economics. For her response to Marxists, mainly Ernest Mandel, see Diane Elson (1988): "Market Socialism or Socialization of the Market?", in: New Left Review 1/172.

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