

Gender and Climate Change

PARIS CLIMATE JUSTICE BRIEFS

DEC 2015 #5

The international climate change negotiation process and climate change policies at the national level must adopt the principles of gender equality at all stages, including research, analysis and design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies.

- Expert Group, Commission on the Status of Women, 2008

KEY MESSAGES

- Adapting to and mitigating climate change are critical to women's and men's enjoyment of economic and social rights
- Climate change policy and financing must seek to promote sustainable development as the grounding for gender equality, women's empowerment and poverty eradication
- Global, regional, and national climate financing policies and projects must ensure positive synergies between adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer, and gender and social equity
- Gender analysis, gender perspective and women's effective participation must be assured at all levels of the climate policy and climate change financing architecture

WHY FOCUS ON GENDER IN CLIMATE CHANGE?

In most economies, women's care-taking role, their access to resources and information, and their level of participation in society leaves many women at a disadvantage when climate change related weather events such as storms, floods, and droughts occur. In almost all developing countries women are more dependent than men on the agricultural and informal sectors, which are more vulnerable to extreme weather than traditional male dominated sectors.

DIFFERENTIATED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change and extreme weather events impact both men and women, but its adverse effects are likely to be more acute for women, especially poor, rural women and indigenous women. A London School of Economics study on the aftermath of extreme weather events shows that "natural disasters (and their subsequent impact) on average kill more women than men or kill women at an earlier age than men."

ASIAN PEOPLES' MOVEMENT ON
DEBT AND DEVELOPMENT
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH - ENGLAND
WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND

THIRD WORLD NETWORK
PHILIPPINES MOVEMENT FOR
CLIMATE JUSTICE

LDC WATCH
TIPPING POINT COLLECTIVE
EARTH IN BRACKETS

The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report notes that "climate change is likely to directly impact children and pregnant women because they are particularly susceptible to vector and waterborne diseases, e.g. malaria is currently responsible for a quarter of maternal mortality." And climate related conflicts over resources predispose women more so than men to both domestic and community violence.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Current approaches to climate change may intensify the effects of pre-existing gender gaps such as gender segmentation in credit and finance and information asymmetry (in terms of credit, technical assistance and transfer of technology) between men and women.

While the old forms of asymmetries led to long-term chronic problems such as endemic poverty, the new forms, such as asymmetrical information sharing regarding early warning and disaster preparedness, are a matter of life and death.

ADAPTATION

Women are dynamic actors in projects and programmes related to adaptation, such as crop and livestock selection, crop shifting and soil preservation, the use of traditional water harvesting techniques and the efficient use of water. Women, as the managers of household energy and water supplies, are adapting to the changing climate conditions. As farmers and major producers of food, women are also adopting production and growing practices that ensure food security, in spite of climate change.

Adaptation strategies and policies must be supportive of women's practical and strategic interests by enhancing the role of local innovation and context specific knowledge as captured by participatory research. They would also need to address the obstacles to women's participation, (such as poor infrastructure and limited time). Hence, adaptation must focus on:

- The different needs of men and women in prescribing funding goals, criteria and delivery mechanisms
- Funding mechanisms should hold to a less than 'burdensome criteria' for women's projects

- Ensure that there are appropriate easily accessible mechanisms for compensating men, poor women and other vulnerable groups impacted by climate change

The importance of addressing gender inequalities in socio-economic, political and cultural norms of adaptation programmes are increasingly being recognized in UNFCCC COP decisions from the Cancun 2010 and to the Lima 2014 meetings as well as in funding priorities of funding instruments such as the Green Climate Fund. But much more needs to be done.

MITIGATION

Gender-friendly mitigation should stress the provision of decentralized renewable energy in rural areas and promote the conservation, sustainable livelihoods and natural resources management practices of women and indigenous peoples. Adequate financing, technology and capacity must be provided to enable mitigation actions in developing countries that enhance gender equality and empower women.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology funding and projects must seek to facilitate the elimination of the substantial barriers to entry (i.e. credit, information gaps) and the adoption of technology faced by women. Women's – more so than men's – acquisition of technology is blocked by upfront purchase prices or administrative costs.

CLIMATE FINANCING

It is important that gender equality and women's empowerment and social equity priorities are included as key drivers of climate change financing. Ultimately, poverty reduction, sustainable development, the financing of gender equality and women's empowerment outcome sensitive adaptation, mitigation and technology development and transfers necessitate:

Inflows of new, additional, non-debt creating, and predictable funds. Developing countries cannot meet critical poverty reduction and gender equality targets if they are burdened with financing climate related adaptation and mitigation.

No diversion of current ODA flows from social and development imperatives towards climate change financing.

Adequate scale of financing to meet the agreed full incremental costs of the adaptation and mitigation measures required for protecting and maintaining the lives of women and men in developing countries and in women's empowerment.

New Fund under the Convention and the control of the COP. This new fund must integrate gender analysis and priorities into all of its aspects.

A gender and social impact analysis of carbon markets and emission reductions projects currently implemented in developing countries.

- Ensure that climate protection policy have gender-based analytical components.
- Embedding climate focused gender analytical tools (that are climate policy relevant) into global, regional and national climate protection policies,
- Ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, programmes and strategies aim to support the elimination of gender and other social gaps and promote women's and men's well-being.
- Ensure adequate and predictable, new and additional climate finance, including for technology transfer and development that is gender responsive.

GENDER AT THE UNFCCC

Since Cancun 2010 until Lima 2014, governments at the UNFCCC are increasingly recognizing the importance of a gender-based perspective to reach a fair climate action agreement.

COP20 delivered the Lima Work Programme on Gender attempting to have a more comprehensively focused attention on specific issues around gender dimensions of adaptation and mitigation. However, in spite of these decisions, the situation of women's representation has not significantly improved and gender inequality and women's rights are not foundational to policy formulation in the UNFCCC and its member states' climate policy apparatus.

It is fundamental that gender equality issues are further embedded within the substantive provisions of the Paris Agreement as well in the final outcomes relating to pre 2020 period. This can be achieved by setting in place policies, processes and mechanisms to:

- Improve the understanding of the primary, secondary, direct and indirect roles and contributions of women and men in adaptation and mitigation.
- Show how adaptation and mitigation policies impact women's and men's multiple roles: as workers, producers, mothers, care-givers, consumers, (highlighting the differential constraints, challenges, and opportunities of each gender in these areas).