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Gender Equality & Climate Change

UN system-wide response to climate change

Under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) brings together 29 UN system organizations to jointly support Member States in meeting global challenges.

In 2007, the CEB adopted the Climate Change Actions Framework, a joint action-oriented approach in line with the decisions of the UNFCCC Parties. The UN system supports Member States in implementing their commitments and in responding to the emerging challenges.

At COP 17 / CMP 7, the UN system is presenting its ongoing work and practical solutions and tools at side events, exhibits and by sharing a joint package with thematic information.

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The Cancun Agreements, adopted at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), entrenched gender equality principles into the UNFCCC outcome documents for the first time. These references spanned multiple and critical areas of the negotiations. Their common fundamental message is illustrated by the shared vision for long-term cooperative action, which recognizes “that gender equality and the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change”.

This paradigm shift is a result of collaborative efforts by UN agencies and other multilateral organizations, Governments, civil society and the private sector. New knowledge and awareness has been brought to the fore within the UNFCCC dialogue to ensure that climate change decision-making and initiatives at all levels are gender-responsive.

Moving forward, it is imperative to ensure that gender equality principles are integrated into the implementation of the Cancun Agreements, including in the areas of adaptation, finance and technology transfer.

United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Climate Change Action Framework

Focus (left) and Cross-Cutting Areas (right) have been identified in pursuance of the broader mandates and capacities in the UN system (with corresponding convening agencies) to ensure better coordination and cooperation for concrete deliverables:

- Adaptation
- Technology transfer
- Forestry and Agriculture
- Financing mitigation and adaptation action
- Capacity-building

- Climate knowledge; science, assessment, monitoring and early warning
- Supporting global, regional and national action
- Public awareness-raising
- Social Dimensions of Climate Change

Gender Equality & Climate Change

Objectives

UN agencies support Governments and partners to:

- Enhance realization of women's equal rights and empowerment, including in decision-making processes.
- Increase effectiveness of interventions related to climate change through use of gender analysis, enhanced capacity, and holistic strategies.

Adaptation

Adaptation is a critical priority for the poorest nations. The Cancun Agreements, "Affirm that enhanced action on adaptation should [...] follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach..." It is thus essential to prioritize the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment considerations into the planning and implementation of adaptation initiatives at all levels. This requires continued advocacy and capacity building on the gender dimensions of climate change; developing new and building upon existing guidelines and tools on 'how' to mainstream gender in adaptation; and creating adaptation learning networks to facilitate sharing of knowledge within and across regions.

Finance

In order to achieve climate objectives, countries and communities require access to finance for climate change responses. Administered wisely, this funding can also promote development, help transform traditional gender roles and reduce inequalities. In order to promote equitable climate finance, it is critical for Fund objectives, operational guidelines, funding criteria and monitoring and evaluation frameworks to incorporate gender equality principles; for boards and secretariats to include gender expertise; and for projects and programmes to be developed in collaboration with all stakeholders. Gender responsive budgeting, which seeks to ensure the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are accountable to *all* members of society, is an essential tool in this regard.

Technology

The development and diffusion of technology is critical for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. Yet in many countries women face substantial barriers to technology adoption, including gaps in knowledge, credit, finance and investment. In order to contribute to gender equality outcomes, it is vital that the networks and centers charged with researching, developing and transferring appropriate adaptation and mitigation technologies apply social safeguards; consult women end-users of technology; target energy and adaptation needs that close gender equality gaps; and ensure equal opportunity for women scientists, innovators and decision-makers in their operations. Collaborative efforts such as the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves are important steps in this direction.

Selected Resources

- FAO: Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development, 2011
- UNDP: Gender, Climate Change and Community-based Adaptation, 2010
- UNDP: Ensuring Gender Equity in Climate Change Financing, 2011
- WHO: Gender, Climate Change and Health, 2011

