



## Rio Pavilion Session Summaries

*The Pavilion is a collaborative effort between the Secretariats of the three Rio Conventions and the Global Environment Facility, in addition to a growing list of other global and local partners*

### Day 2 Wednesday 30 November, Durban Theme: Gender

#### SESSION 1. CONVERSATIONS ON GENDER AND THE RIO CONVENTIONS

**Chair:** Jasmin Metzler (UNCCD)

**Speakers:** Sergio Zelaya (UNCCD), Tiffany Hodgson (UNFCCC) and Lorena Aguilar (IUCN)

**Summary.** This session discussed gender issues in the context of the three Rio Conventions: the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). An overview of the achievements and ongoing activities was given by the speakers.

#### Gender Mainstreaming in the Three Rio Conventions

The UNCCD is unique among the Rio Conventions in that it makes reference to gender in its preamble, and also contains gender provisions in the body of the text outlining the obligations of Parties to the Convention. It established an Advocacy Policy Framework (APF) demonstrating the benefits of mainstreaming gender into sustainable land management actions to combat desertification at national and local levels. The UNCCD COP 10, which took place in October this year in South Korea, approved the decision to implement the APF on gender and hence to mainstream gender issues in the convention.

Parties to the CBD, at COP 10 in Nagoya in 2010, adopted a decision on gender mainstreaming in biodiversity. The CBD stepped-up its gender efforts with the development of guidelines for mainstreaming gender into the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) taking into account national circumstances. Moreover, parties to the Convention should monitor the development and implementation of gender issues in climate change.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change also mainstreams gender issues and these are to be integrated into the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), mitigation, adaptation, fellowships, and other climate change related issues and activities.

#### Harmonizing Gender in the Three Rio Conventions



**Summary.** After the short presentation of the ongoing activities under the three conventions, Lorena Aguilar from the IUCN lead a discussion on the added value of harmonizing gender in the three Rio Conventions. Harmonization is meant to strengthen the Multilateral Environment Agreements and is built on an ongoing programme of work that IUCN has been implementing with the Secretariats.

**Why harmonization?** Because enhanced cooperation and collaboration are needed across the three agreements in order to more effectively implement their provisions. Also, harmonization enables efficiency and effectiveness, an increase in responsiveness of gender efforts and greater linkages between climate change and other issues. It increases information sharing and capacity building at the national level.

**What do we win?** A more strategic, focused and powerful approach and the ability to respond to mandates on gender equality and harmonization.

The Harmonization Road Map identifies areas of collaboration and associated objectives. This provides a strategic vision, peer group support and a unified system to align communications and messaging. The Road Map also includes stronger and more targeted events and activities, research in innovative areas, and the development of common methodologies, in particular for national reporting. The objectives deal with building capacity and creating tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the Conventions. They focus on training for gender mainstreaming, including capacity-building workshops, and call for the enhanced participation of women and gender experts in the delivery of these workshops.

There is a need for gender to be an important focus at the Rio+20 summit and to increase the visibility of gender in future meetings. Strategies towards implementation that are firmly science-based are needed. Challenges and gaps in the implementation of gender issues in climate change must also be identified. The **Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA)** was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007. GGCA membership includes over 50 UN agencies and civil society organizations. Working together, the GGCA continues to be recognized as a unique and effective partnership that brings a human face to climate change decision-making and initiatives. The primary mandate of the GGCA is to create a link between the gender and climate change agendas. The main challenge is to influence Parties through knowledge creation and capacity building.

Gender and the Rio Conventions in science, policy and action – Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Why is the gender lens important across the conventions?
- What are the goals for collaboration on gender among the conventions?
- How can we achieve a healthy planet and healthy people?
- How the three issues are connected through UNCCD, UNFCCC & CBD?
- Which sectors are relevant to include in collaboration?
- What actions are underway to integrate a gender lens in the implementation of the conventions?



## SESSION 2. GENDER HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT

**Chair:** Dr. Tanya Abrahamse (SANBI)

**Speakers:** Sakhile Koketso (CBD), Kulthoum Omari, Her Excellency, Minister Ms. Lulama Xingwana (Ministry of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, South Africa), and Deputy Minister, Her Excellency, Ms. Rejoice Mabudafhasi (Ministry of Environmental Affairs, South Africa)

### **Address by the Honourable Minister of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, Her Excellency Lulama Xingwana**

**Summary.** The Hon. Minister paid tribute to the late Dr. Wangari Maatha who took a leading role in the environmental issues. A moment of silence was observed, acknowledging the role Dr. Maatha played during her life. The main focus of the Hon. Minister Xingwana's talk was the devastating impacts of climate change and global warming.

It's important for the elderly and leaders to engage youth in policy development in response to climate change and other issues. Women are severely affected by climate change and other drivers of poverty. Women appear to be bearing the most burdens resulting from climate variability. It is in this context that women should be considered when addressing climate change. A case study in Kwazulu-Natal reports that women are involved in fishing through fencing which allows small fish to escape, grow and produce. Rural women will experience harsh conditions and therefore they should be given consideration during policy development. Over the years, women have made sure that they are empowered and that everyone in their families is also empowered.

African women have proven over the decades that they can overcome these challenges. The South African government supports women's involvement in climate change issues, thereby encouraging the mainstreaming of gender issues in the Rio Conventions: UNFCCC, UNCCD and the CBD. A gender perspective is critical in all development processes. Our collective capacity to reach the Millennium Development Goals is in danger due to the challenges posed by climate change. The goal of beating hunger will be undermined by the disappearance of plants and animal species. In Kwazulu-Natal, communities have adopted "One home, one garden", an approach which improves food security. In African countries, women depend on fishing for protein diets and food supply. Women are also responsible for fetching water and collecting wood for fire. Unfortunately, women and children are also most likely going to die during disaster. There is also a need to adopt new strategies for crop production and for provision of food to households. Despite all the challenges, there is hope. Women are not only victims of climate change, but they can act as agents of change. Women are implementers of the working programmes: working for water, working for waste, working on fire, etc. The Green Climate Change Fund should prioritise developing countries, small islands states, and vulnerable groups. We urge them to consider the needs of women, children and people with disabilities.

### **Address by the Hon. Deputy Minister, Her Excellency Rejoice Mabudafhasi**

How can we help one another with the information that we need to produce policy? We can learn from different case studies and provide sufficient planning. Floods damage infrastructure and cause water-borne diseases. Pollution affects river health; some villages have embraced the *Adopt a River Programme* to rehabilitate and maintain healthy ecosystems. In terms of the Convention to Combat Desertification, people are experiencing poor harvests due to unpredictable rainfall which resulting in less available food. How do we reverse these situations? How do we address them and change policy implementation?

### **Presentation of Case studies (available at [www.boell.org.za](http://www.boell.org.za))**

**Case study from Botswana: Sironga village from the Okavango Delta and Chobokwane village from the Kalahari**– These communities depend on government programmes but also on biodiversity for food, water and shelter. There are distinct economic activities, strongly segregated by gender. For example, men fish and the fishing community was male dominated; this is principally because women didn't participate in fishing as they lacked fishing skills. Women only fish to provide for their family whereas men fish in order to generate income. Women make baskets, crafts and use ostrich eggs for decoration and harvest poisonous trees for fuel wood.



We cannot address adaptation without addressing the underlying issues within our societies. We need to think about how to empower policies on human rights. We also need to encourage the active participation of women in economic activities. Women must participate and help to implement biodiversity and climate change programmes. It is also critical to determine the impacts and vulnerability of women to climate change, particularly in transport as well as other sectors.

**Case study from Mozambique: Gaza Province– Site 1:** a dry area prone to drought and **Site 2:** a wet area prone to flooding. Local communities are mostly traditional and homogeneous. These communities are characterized by significant migration of men to large urban areas like Johannesburg for employment. Women are disadvantaged because of their educational training and the fact that many economic areas are male dominated. Women and men also experience different challenges resulting from climate change. In these communities, women do not have access to, or control of land. Women are responsible for agricultural resources, reproductive tasks, for adaptation and for many economic activities: they make charcoal from wood, increase their fishing stocks and brew beverages from bread. In other areas, women also take leading roles in the absence of men, but final decision-making typically rests with the Chief or Headman. There should be awareness and a critical review of policy, planning, and implementation and it should be ensured that women are given priority in resources.



### SESSION 3. GENDER AND THE ART OF IMPLEMENTATION

**Chair:** Lorena Aguilar (IUCN)

**Speakers:** Francois Rogers, Lucy Wanjiro (UNDP), Andrea Quesada

**Summary.** The lack of implementation of gender issues is the largest threat to sustainable development. National level work, knowledge development, capacity building, advocacy, national policies and implementation are all essential. Practical approaches to mainstreaming gender were presented: mapping the players, identifying stakeholders and addressing shortcomings where appropriate. Gender mainstreaming is a multi-stakeholder process with government and non-government institutions and is anchored to the national climate change process. There are additional benefits of mainstreaming gender in mitigation activities. Indeed, gender is the glue that brings all actions and efforts together. There should be increased efficiency, effectiveness and implementation.

**Poverty and focus projects; accounting for green growth through the lens of gender equality: why it matters.** The world is shifting away from models of economic growth based on fossil fuels and towards a green economy based on low carbon development. The gender lens presented implies that there should be balanced responsibility between men and women in green growth. The green economy is a pathway that can help to achieve sustainable development by alleviating environmental threats while also contributing to the creation of dynamic new industries, income growth and high quality jobs. Do policies hindering women from engaging in business and development exist? What capacities do women need in order to address capacity development in women? However, without access to finances and resources, it is not possible to move forward. How do we ensure that women have the information and access to financing mechanisms from climate change funds? How do we work together to achieve greater success?

Case studies from Cameroon, Ghana and Uganda on gender and REDD+ issues were presented. These case studies demonstrate how gender roles determine forest resource use, control patterns, decision making power and livelihood strategies. The Cancun Agreements require Parties to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, gender considerations, land tenure and other environmental issues. Through multi-stakeholder consultation and national policy maker workshops, a road map was developed to provide guidance on the implementation of gender issues in REDD+.

These workshops on gender mainstreaming and climate change were conducted with several objectives:

- to enhance knowledge of women and women organizations, acknowledge women's role in forest resources and to share knowledge between communities and policy makers;
- to support the establishment of a gender and forest task force;
- to build and strengthen women's and gender focused organizations' capacity on REDD+ issues.

REDD+ has potential to become a force for conservation, poverty reduction and climate change mitigation. Mainstreaming gender sensitivity into these processes has the potential to lead to an improvement of human rights.

During the event participants asked questions related to gender issues in mitigation and adaptation as well as REDD+, the development of gender indicators, and the need for engaging with men and women at every level of implementation. The event was closed by remarks from each of the invited speakers.

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