



Harmonizing Gender in the Three Rio Conventions and the GEF



IUCN GENDER OFFICE





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Introduction

Why Gender Mainstreaming?

It is today widely recognized that gender is a key component of human rights and social justice. Moreover, gender equality is a real driver of development, significantly enhancing the effectiveness of programmes, projects and initiatives. For more than 40 years, IUCN has recognized the key role played by gender in biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability. Since 1998, the Union has had a formalized gender mandate with a dedicated Gender Office and programme. IUCN's Gender Policy explicitly calls for the inclusion of gender equality in the 'One Programme' and in the annual workplans of all the programmes, projects and initiatives carried out by the organization, along with the participation and inclusion of women in all IUCN events, forums and delegations. Thanks to its expertise, IUCN has now become the Scientific & Technical Centre for Excellence for organizations, conventions, governments and others seeking advice on gender.

Women, especially in rural areas and developing regions, have unique knowledge about natural resources and their sustainable use, and make vital contributions to the livelihoods of their families. Without the participation of women and the realization of their full creative and productive potential, it will not be possible to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially those related to poverty and hunger, environmental protection, child and maternal health, or universal education: in short, all the components of sustainable development.

The importance of gender mainstreaming in environmental protection and poverty eradication policies has also been acknowledged in a wide range of global agreements and forums. It is recognized in the requirements and agreements set out in the 1975 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992); the 2000 Millennium Declaration; and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Within the United Nations system, several internal mandates also call for gender equality, including the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations in 2004 and 2005; the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the 60th session of the General Assembly—the 2005 World Summit (General Assembly resolution 60/1, paragraphs 58, 59 and 116); and Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/31 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system. In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/64/289 to assist the United Nations system to be accountable for its own commitments on gender equality. This resolution includes provisions for regular monitoring of system-wide progress in this area.



The Rio Conventions

The three Rio Conventions – the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – are separate, yet inter-related international treaties, dealing with different aspects of environmental sustainability. All of them include gender provisions in their Preambles that have been subsequently reinforced by meetings of Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the Conventions.



Photo: Eric Hidalgo

Gender and The Rio Conventions

The Convention on Biological Diversity developed a Gender Action Plan in 2008 with assistance from the IUCN Gender Office; it was welcomed by Decision IX/24 of the 9th CBD COP in Bonn in May 2008. In 2010, the CBD stepped-up its gender efforts with the development of guidelines¹ for mainstreaming gender into NBSAPs². Subsequently, at the Nagoya COP 10 in October 2010, States Parties to the Convention adopted Decision X/19 calling for gender mainstreaming in all programmes of work under the Convention and requesting the Executive Secretary to cooperate with other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations in this and to formulate clear indicators to monitor progress. The Parties also adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, whose preamble calls for the participation of women in decision- and policy-making surrounding access and benefit-sharing. The text also contains several explicit references to the role of indigenous women and local communities. Finally, Article 26³ of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety allows parties to take socio-economic considerations, including gender issues, into account in decision-making on living modified organisms and their impacts.

The United Nations Framework Convention to Combat Desertification is the only one of the Rio Conventions that makes references to gender in its preamble, and also contains gender provisions in the body of the text laying out the obligations of States Parties to the Convention. Article 10 paragraph 2f calls for the effective participation at the local national and regional levels of local populations, both women and men, particularly resource users, in policy planning, decision-making and implementation of national action programmes.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change includes several references to gender. NAPA guidelines contain 'gender equality' as one of the guiding elements in their preparation, UNFCCC Parties have highlighted gender-specific vulnerability assessments as important elements in determining adaptation options, and various submissions from Parties and organizations have highlighted gender-specific vulnerability to climate change and the need for gender mainstreaming in climate change policy and programmes. Decision 36/CP.7 adopted at COP 7 calls for improving the participation of women in UNFCCC bodies. While decision 1/CP.16 of the recently adopted Cancún Agreement, explicitly mentions gender considerations in adaptation, mitigation and capacity building.

¹ Part of the Technical Series (TS.49), the guidelines are available in English, French, and Spanish at <http://www.cbd.int/gender/documents>.

² National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

³ <http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/text/article.shtml?a=cpb-26>

Harmonizing the Rio Conventions

Parties to the Conventions have recognized that enhanced cooperation and collaboration are needed across the three instruments to give full expression to their provisions. Efforts to achieve this within the United Nations system for better environmental governance at the global level have received strong political support including from the 64th and 65th meetings of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as from various meetings of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council, the Environmental Management Group (EMG), and from the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Moreover, Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of a number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) have requested enhanced cooperation and coordination among the Rio Conventions to support governments in their efforts to implement, comply with and enforce them. Harmonization among the Conventions for improved global environmental governance has been placed on the agenda for Rio+20 in 2012.



IUCN: Facilitating The Gender Mainstreaming Process

Gender is an important recurring theme across the three Rio Conventions. As such, it has been acknowledged as an appropriate entry point for efforts to achieve harmonization across the Conventions. The heads of the Rio Conventions and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) have therefore decided to collaborate on efforts to harmonize gender mainstreaming across the three Conventions and the GEF.

As the foremost Scientific and Technical Centre of Excellence on Gender and Environment, IUCN has been identified by the Secretariats of the three Conventions and the GEF as their preferred partner in efforts to harmonize gender mainstreaming across the Conventions during implementation.

IUCN is working closely with the three Secretariats and the GEF to facilitate the process to develop a common vision and a shared roadmap to promote the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment within and across their respective areas of work. This builds on an on-going programme of work that IUCN is already implementing with the three Secretariats – its experience and expertise, and its unique convening power enabling it to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to share knowledge and information.

The partners have defined a vision for the roadmap: "To lift, by 2020, gender as a cross cutting priority and to ensure that it is integrated into thematic issues across the Rio Conventions and the GEF, to achieve the long-term objectives of these Conventions".

They have identified five principles which will guide action towards achieving this:

- ▶ Capitalizing on the on-going paradigm-shift on gender;
- ▶ Using harmonized gender approaches to create new opportunities for synergies among the Rio Conventions;
- ▶ Leveraging further benefits for gender issues from existing coordination efforts;
- ▶ Enhancing the responsiveness of gender efforts to the needs and particularities of stakeholder groups; and
- ▶ Underlining the importance of strengthening cooperation with a view to ensuring consistency and complementarities and optimal use of resources.

Led by IUCN, early efforts have resulted in a proposed Framework to harmonize gender mainstreaming efforts across the three Conventions. The Framework has identified 6 areas for collaboration and 16 related objectives with suggestions for actions needed to achieve them and responsibility for implementation. The pages which follow offer an overview of the main features of the proposed Framework.

Objectives

Objective 1

Political commitment towards a common platform for gender across the three Rio Conventions and the GEF.

Objective 2

National focal points of the three Rio Conventions and other relevant stakeholders have the capacity to mainstream gender in their action plans and programmes under the three Rio Conventions.

Objective 3

Gender aspects are integrated into new and/or revised national plans and programmes to implement the three Rio Conventions.

Objective 4

Templates to access GEF funding for the harmonization of national plans and programmes under the three Rio Conventions integrate gender aspects.

Objective 5

Reporting obligations include gender considerations within national reporting processes.

The Gender Mainstreaming Framework

Political Aspects

This objective speaks to the heads of the three Conventions and the GEF. It calls for high-level political commitment and efforts to raise awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming across the Conventions for the long-term achievement of their objectives. It also encourages the Conventions to establish a Joint Coordination Group on Gender.

Capacity Building & Reporting

The four objectives defined under this area deal primarily with building capacity and creating tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the Conventions. They focus, in particular, on training for gender mainstreaming, including through jointly organized (multi-Convention) capacity-building workshops, and call for the enhanced participation of women and gender experts in the delivery of these workshops. They address both the Convention Secretariats and the national Parties to the Conventions.

These objectives also call for the development of tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the 'documents' used by the different Conventions to define plans for the implementation of the provisions of the Conventions and to report back to the Parties. These include National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) for the Convention on Biological Diversity; National Action Programmes (NAPs) for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification; and National Action Programmes for Adaptation (NAPAs), Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) by developing countries and National Action Programmes (NAPs) under the UNFCCC. Particular attention should be given to assisting developing countries to achieve this, perhaps through the development of common templates for each 'document'. Training sessions should be organized to facilitate this with participation by focal points drawn from each of the Conventions.

An external provider such as IUCN could offer 'gender screening' and technical assistance to national parties in the preparation and/or validation phase of their plans and programmes.

Similarly, templates should be developed to include gender considerations in funding requests submitted by the Conventions to the GEF and other donors.

Finally, all three Conventions should include an obligation for States parties to report back on gender considerations in their national reporting processes. Again, as part of efforts to achieve this, the Framework recommends the development of a template to facilitate such reporting.



Objectives

Objective 6

Staff in the three Rio Convention Secretariats and the GEF benefit from shared experiences in mainstreaming gender in the context of the work programmes.

Objective 7

Role of gender in REDD-plus in the context of dry forests is acknowledged .

Objective 8

Gender considerations are mainstreamed into ongoing work on integrated ecosystem management for adaptation and mitigation to climate change.

Objective 9

The shared vision of gender in the context of the three Rio conventions is effectively communicated.

Objective 10

Communication & outreach strategy for dissemination of gender work in place.

Objective 11

Virtual communication platform in place for the gender framework.

Objective 12

Gender-related inputs are fed into the knowledge-management systems of the Conventions and the GEF.

Objective 13

Joint side-events to raise-awareness of gender efforts conducted.

Workplan/Thematic Areas

These three objectives talk to the individual workplans and thematic areas of the Convention Secretariats and call for standardization of the integration of gender considerations in the workplans and methods of each Convention.

They call upon GEF and gender focal points from each Convention to exchange experiences and lessons learned from staff training in gender mainstreaming, along with details of the different tools developed and paths defined to ensure that gender is mainstreamed within their workplans, including tools and indicators developed to monitor progress.

Although the three Conventions focus on different issues with environmental impacts – biodiversity, desertification, climate change – these are all cross-cutting. The Joint Coordination Group (Objective 1) should prepare a joint publication of the three Conventions that highlights points of cross-fertilization among them on gender issues. Its emphasis should be on gender aspects of REDD-plus, biodiversity, and dry forest landscapes. Gender issues should also be included in support provided to Parties for the design and implementation of options for integrated ecosystem management for adaptation and mitigation. New case studies should be developed on ecosystems and mitigation and, along with case studies on gender, added to existing databases on ecosystems and adaptation.

Communications and Knowledge Management

This section of the Framework offers guidance on communicating gender mainstreaming efforts among the three Conventions to effect their harmonization. It speaks to the Convention Secretariats.

Heads of the Convention Secretariats need to agree on a vision for gender in the context of the three Rio Conventions. A list of relevant issues should be developed by focal points, stakeholders and others for the Convention Heads to discuss and agree upon.

The three Convention Secretariats should agree a joint communication and outreach strategy. This should be in addition to their own individual strategies in which gender concerns should occupy a prominent place. This could include the development of a joint web portal with links to each of the Convention websites; and a joint newsletter for distribution online and in hard copy.

Efforts should be implemented to ensure the inter-operability of the gender-related databases managed by the three Conventions and the GEF, to enable accessibility and sharing of information. All these media must be regularly updated. Funding should be sought for this from the GEF and other donors.

Finally, the three Conventions should explore options for organizing joint side events on gender during various international forums (e.g. UN General Assembly) and meetings of their respective Conferences of Parties (COPs).



Objectives

Objective 14

Women effectively influence deliberations and decision-making under the three Rio Conventions.

Objective 15

Expertise on gender issues is effectively channelled to the Rio Convention processes.

Objective 16

Create incentives in the framework of funding under the Conventions to encourage integration of the gender agenda into implementation of the Conventions.



Stakeholders/Gender Experts

These two objectives are intended to ensure greater participation by women delegates and experts in official sessions of the three Rio Conventions as well as other key meetings such as Rio+20 PrepComms. They address the Convention Secretariats and the Parties to the Conventions.

In particular, they are intended to provide women with an official meeting space and to enable them to intervene on agenda items and participate in interactive sessions, both physically and virtually.

Among the actions required to give effect to these objectives include fundraising to facilitate participation by women, especially from poorer countries. Similarly, actions could be implemented to enhance the on-going engagement of the women and gender constituency in the UNFCCC, recognize women as a major group under the UNCCD, and enhance the on-going engagement of women as a major group under the CBD.

Joint networking among women participating in the Rio Conventions should be encouraged. A cross-Convention directory of expertise in gender issues should be compiled to have available a resource that can be drawn upon as needed to contribute to the gender mainstreaming work of the three Conventions. Expertise should also be sought from among other organizations participating in the various Convention forums, e.g. NGOs, donors, indigenous persons organizations, youth groups, etc.

Financing

This objective is intended to ensure that priority is given to the integration of gender into national policies and strategies under the three Conventions through the provision of adequate financing. It speaks to the Convention Secretariats and Parties to the Conventions.

Under this objective, options should be explored to incentivize gender activities under the three Rio Conventions.

Research should be undertaken, in collaboration with the GEF, to identify possible and innovative sources of funds to finance gender mainstreaming activities through networks and partnerships. Possible sources of funds might include the Global Fund for Women, the UNDP Japan Fund for Women in Development, OSI, the Clinton Foundation, the Gates Foundation, AGRA, Regional Development Banks, the World Bank and, of course, the GEF.

Parties to the Conventions should be informed of possible sources and availability of funds.



Global Gender Policy Series



Photo: Andrea Quesada-Aguilar

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For more information, please contact iucngenderoffice@iucn.org or visit
our website on www.genderandenvironment.org