Interactive dialogue

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the context of climate change and environmental degradation: leaving no one behind

Wednesday, 18 March 2019, 3.00 – 6.00 pm, United Nations Headquarters

Concept note

Background

Since 1995, and particularly in the last five years, land degradation, biodiversity loss, global warming, and pollution have rapidly accelerated and intensified into widespread and interlinked environmental and climate crises. Environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately affect the most marginalized women and girls by exacerbating underlying inequalities, including women’s unequal access to land and natural resources, sustainable infrastructure and public services, jeopardizing their income and food security, health, and livelihoods while increasing their unpaid care and domestic work. Women’s capacities to withstand and recover from natural disasters are also strongly affected by gender inequalities (E/CN.6/2020/3).

At the same time, women and girls are demonstrating that they are agents of change. Women and girls are leading climate and environmental actions and coming up with solutions and initiatives to address the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. They often take on these roles while facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Risks for indigenous women and girls, women and girls living in rural or remote areas or urban slums, women and girls who are pastoralists or living in informal settlements, migrant or displaced women and girls, among others, are intensified when confronting climate and environmental challenges. The Platform for Action provides important policy guidance for implementing the SDGs with gender equality at the centre of environmental and climate solutions and actions.

The objective of this interactive dialogue is to present the experiences of women and girls who are taking action in the face of climate change and environmental degradation.
**Format and participation**

The interactive dialogue will be chaired by Ms. Ahlem Sara Charikhi, Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women. A moderator will support the Chair.

The event will consist of presentations by women leaders and representatives of government agencies, women’s groups and international organizations that are implementing promising measures and approaches to address climate change and environmental degradation. They will present their experiences and concrete actions in response to the consequences of the climate and environmental crises through policy measures and gender-responsive budgeting, including for social protection; exercising rights to land and resources and securing livelihoods and well-being; and for women’s productive and care work.

Following the presentations by a set of speakers, the floor will be open for comments and questions from Member States and other stakeholders. Panelists will respond to questions. This will be followed by a second set of speakers, followed by comments and questions from Member States and other stakeholders. Panelists will have an opportunity to respond to questions posed and make short concluding comments, time permitting. The moderator will wrap up and the Chair will close the meeting.

**Leading questions**

Participating stakeholders in the interactive dialogue are invited to address the following questions:

1. What measures have governments taken to enhance the capacity of women and girls to respond to climate change and environmental degradation? What policy frameworks and measures, and what financing approaches have achieved results?

2. What are examples of gender-responsive social protection measures that have supported women and girls in the context of climate and environmental crises and natural disasters? How can these strategies be replicated more broadly?

3. How can the rights to land, resources and livelihoods of women and girls affected or displaced by climate change and environmental degradation be protected and promoted?

4. How can partnerships among different stakeholders, for example, government, civil society, and the private sector, strengthen the environmental and climate resilience of women and their communities?

**Outcome**

The outcome of the interactive dialogue will be in the form of a Chair’s summary, prepared in consultation with the regional groups, through the members of the Bureau.