

**Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**

**in a Changing Climate**

**UN Women Key Messages for the Climate Conference -- COP 21**

* **The climate agreement must reflect that gender equality, women’s empowerment and the full and equal participation of women are crucial and indispensable to transformational climate response and action**

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have adopted a growing number of gender-related mandates including Decision 1/CP.16 (Shared Vision, COP 16) which affirmed that “***gender equality*** *and the* ***effective participation of women*** *are important for effective action on all aspects of climate**change.*” Gender equality and climate change is now a standing agenda item in the annual COPs as mandated by the decision on *‘Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiation’*. In 2014, Parties adopted the [Lima Work Programme on Gender](https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/lima_dec_2014/decisions/application/pdf/auv_cop20_gender.pdf), which contains a set of mandates for Parties to “promote gender sensitivity in developing and implementing climate policy and achieve gender-responsive climate policy in all relevant activities under the Convention.”

The above mandates provide a strong and solid basis for seizing the opportunity at COP 21 for decisive action that promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of climate change. Applying a gender lens to climate change reveals solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Notably, systematically addressing the persistent gender gaps in the response to climate change is one of the most effective mechanisms to build climate resilience.

* **Existing gender inequalities constrain women and girls’ potential to be leaders in climate responses.** As gender inequalities limits women and girls’ **ability to adapt and respond to climate change impacts**, they often bear the brunt of the impacts.The disproportionate effects of energy poverty on women and girls limits their access to education and employment due to the time spent on biomass collection. They also face significant health and safety risks from household air pollution, carrying heavy fuel loads and the lack of exterior lighting. Women are more at risk of death in disasters. For example, more than 70% of the fatalities from the 2004 Asian tsunami were women. Gender inequalities, in turn, are further exacerbated by climate-related hazards, resulting in what the IPCC found to be “higher workloads, occupational hazards indoors and outdoors, psychological and emotional stress, and mortality” for women as compared to men.
* Yet, **women are agents of change and leaders,** and play a critical and often unrecognized role in climate action and the management of natural resources. Women’s agency is reflected in their knowledge of and leadership in sustainable natural resources management and in spearheading sustainable practices at the household, community, national and global levels to respond to and find common solutions to climate-related crises. In most developing countries, women are the primary household energy managers and can also be powerful agents of change in the transition to sustainable energy. Women entrepreneurs have enormous potential to create distribution and service networks in rural areas, helping to lower the cost of customer acquisition and increasing access to sustainable energy. However, this potential to accelerate the energy transition is vastly under-utilized.
* The **climate agreement** to be adopted in Paris in December 2015 **must be coherent with and reflect the outcomes of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** – outcomes which strongly committed to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including through increased investments to close the gender gap. Goal 13 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’s on *climate change* includes target 13.b which provides for the promotion of mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management …, “including focusing on **women**, youth and local and marginalized communities.”
* The **climate agreement must acknowledge women and girls as critical actors in addressing climate impacts and in devising climate responses that are comprehensive and contribute to sustainable development.** The draft agreement and the decision to give effect to the agreement (which Parties will further negotiate in Paris) incorporate gender-specific references in the Preamble, Purpose, Adaptation, Finance and Capacity-building. There is **complete absence of key gender equality linkages in the draft decision on workstream 2 which will guide Parties’ climate actions in the period 2015-2020**, before the new climate agreement takes effect in 2020.
* As Parties to the UNFCCC finalize the universal **climate agreement** in Paris, it is imperative to:
* Ensure that the gender-specific references in the Preamble, Purpose, Adaptation, Finance and Capacity-building are retained and that a reference to the gender dimensions of technology development and transfer be considered.
* Include gender-specific references (currently non-existent) in the draft decision on workstream 2. Specific textual proposal are annexed.

**Annex:**

***Draft decision on workstream 2 of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action Work of the ADP contact group Version of 23 October 2015@15:30hrs***

**NOTE:** Proposals for addition are in ***bold, italicized and underlined***

5. Resolves to strengthen, in the period 2016–2020, the existing technical examination process on mitigation, as defined in decision 1/CP.19, paragraph 5(a), taking into account the latest scientific knowledge, including by:

1. Requesting the Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre and Network to:
2. Include information ***reflecting a gender perspective*** on their activities under this paragraph 5(d) in their joint annual report to the Conference of the Parties;
3. Encouraging Parties to make effective use of the Climate Technology Centre and Network to obtain support in the development of economically, environmentally and socially viable**, *as well as gender-responsive*** project proposals in the high potential areas identified in this process;
4. Requests the secretariat, in consultation with the co-facilitators referred to in paragraph 5(a) above, to organize the process referred to in paragraph 5 above and disseminate its results, including by:
5. [Ensuring, in the preparation of the technical paper referred to in paragraph 6(b) above and summary for policymakers referred to in paragraph 6(c) above, the inclusion of information ***reflecting a gender perspective*** related to the means of implementation, in particular finance, technology and capacity-building support required by developing country Parties;]

***[III. Support]***

1. [Recognizes the need and urgency to enhance the provision of ***gender responsive*** finance, technology and capacity-building by developed countries, in a predictable manner, to support [the highest possible mitigation] of developing country Parties [and other Parties in need of support, including countries with economies in transition] related to pre-2020 action…

***[IV. Accelerated implementation]***

Option 2 (paragraphs 18-20):

1. Decides to [launch][conduct] a facilitative and exploratory [process][dialogue] in conjunction with the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties (2017) with a view to identifying ways to accelerate the implementation of commitments under the Convention in the pre-2020 period, including:
2. Opportunities to enhance the provision and mobilization of finance, technology and capacity-building support to developing country Parties [and other Parties in need of support, including countries with economies in transition,] in a holistic ***and gender-responsive*** manner;

***[VI. High-level dialogue/events]***

29. Agrees to convene, in conjunction with each session of the Conference of the Parties from 2016 to 2020, a high-level event that:

1. Exchanges experiences and best practices on climate action by non-Party stakeholders[, including indigenous peoples’ ***and women’s*** knowledge and technologies on mitigation and adaptation];

***[VII. Adaptation]***

Option 1 (paragraphs 34-40):

1. Also decides that the process referred to in paragraph 34 above will aim to identify opportunities for decreasing vulnerabilities, enhance adaptation action and support, share best practices and attend to gaps in implementation, knowledge, technology, capacity and finance, by addressing ***including from a gender perspective***, inter alia:
2. Requests the secretariat to facilitate the process referred to in paragraph 34 above and disseminate its results, taking into account the work of, inter alia, the Adaptation Committee, the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, and activities under the Nairobi work programme ***and the mandates outlined in the Lima Work Programme on Gender****,* including by:

Option 1 Alt (paragraphs 41-44):

1. Decides to launch a technical examination process on adaptation in the period 2016-2020, building on existing processes and institutions, including the Adaptation Committee ***and the relevant mandates outlined in the Lima Work Programme on Gender***, to enhance adaptation action and support, share best practices and address gaps in implementation, knowledge, finance, technology, planning and institutional capacity;