

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

BRIEFING PAPER

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1. Introduction

The climate is changing and more frequent and severe extreme events are increasing. This will lead to adverse impacts on economy and human health. The international negotiations on climate change have realized that though the richer, highly industrialized countries are to blame for the rising temperature, it is the poor and the vulnerable countries that will have to face the brunt of the changing climate. Climate change has proved to be one of the most difficult challenges that developing countries and their communities face today. Developing countries have almost negligible share in emitting green house gases (GHG), the precursor to global climate change but have to adapt to the impacts of Climate Change.

Climate change adaptation is a process; it requires shifting people's lifestyle to the changing climate, which is determined by factors as such as knowledge, technology and resources. Adapting to climate change can therefore, pose different set of challenges to different countries, communities, sectors, groups and individuals; men and women. The basic understanding needed here is that since our society has been hoarding gender inequalities, the hardships brought about by this new challenge called "climate change" will hit women of the developing world disproportionately hard and exacerbate the already existing inequalities between men and women. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report (IPCC, 2007) discusses the differential impact of climate change on men and women. The physical, psychological, social and economic impacts they experience together with the emergency responses, recovery and ultimately reconstruction are different. Majority of women are from the poorer sections of society and they are the most vulnerable as they have the least capacity or opportunity to prepare themselves for the impacts of climate change.

2. Gender & Climate Change

In Nepal and in other developing countries, women are directly involved in agricultural production activities without being recognized as important actors for agriculture. According to a report by United Nations Environmental Program, 64% of the population of women in South Asia are "non-active or non-reported",



Source: ccafs.cgiar.org

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reflecting that much of women's work in rural areas is informal, non-formal, unpaid and not counted, and thus is not recorded. Women also struggle to gain equal access to resources and extension services. Therefore there is a need to bring their needs and inputs forward to policy makers. (CCAFS, 2012)

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the different implications for women and men of any planned activity which could be legislation or programs in all sectors and at all levels. It is the strategy to make men's and women's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of policy and program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in all political, economic and social spheres so that both genders will benefit equally. The ultimate aim is to achieve gender equity. Gender mainstreaming is important to make the social problem of gender inequality visible. Gender mainstreaming, however, does not prevent the need to develop separate women's projects within work programs, or women's components within existing activities. The main reasons why gender needs to be mainstreamed in climate change are:

- To increase the efficiency of responses to climate change
- To make continuous progress towards gender equity.

Gender mainstreaming is thoroughly different from women empowerment; however, Women Empowerment can complement Gender Mainstreaming.

3. Gender Debate in UNFCCC

The United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during its inception did not include gender. The first significant achievement was realized at the seventh Conference of the Parties (COP7) during which parties took two important decisions related to gender. A first one, adopting the guidelines for the preparation of national adaptation program of actions (NAPAs) (Decisions28/CP.7), outlining gender equality as one of the guiding principles to drive the identification and the implementation of urgent and short-term adaptation needs. The second targeted at improving the participation of women in the UNFCCC process (decision 36/CP.7).

In terms of the UNFCCC, the Women's Caucuses that have been held since the 11th meeting of the Conference to the Parties (COP11) have vigorously negotiated for the inclusion of a gender approach in all areas of the Convention. These caucuses have been facilitated by the Gender and Climate Change (GenderCC) – Women for Climate Justice Network. 2 Members of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), which was launched in 2007 at COP 13 in Bali, have also been active in promoting gender equality concerns in global efforts to address climate change.

During COP 18 there was landmark achievement by the gender decision23/CP.18 which aimed at "Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or its Kyoto Protocol. Gender and climate change was made an item on the agenda. These decision have been followed in this COP 19 with the gender workshop that made presentations on-

- Gender balance in the UNFCCC process. (A report of the secretariat was issued on gender composition in the UNFCCC bodies)
- Capacity building on gender-sensitive policies and implementation
- Gender-sensitive climate policies developed.

COP 19 presents several such actions in an annex, including the establishment of a two-year work program on gender balance under the Convention, capacity building for female delegates organized by the UNFCCC secretariat, and the monitoring of



Source: unfccc.int

gender balance, gender budgeting and gender sensitive climate policies and actions by Parties. However the Ad Hoc Working Group on Durban Platform working to develop a global climate change agreement from 2020 and on ways to increase pre-2020 mitigation ambitions, has yet to integrate gender equality in its discussions.

4. Inclusion of Gender in Climate Change Policies and Programs in Nepal

In 2010, the Government of Nepal approved National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). Nepal's NAPA report includes gender as a cross cutting theme as recommended in the UNFCCC guidelines. It contains a gender impact analysis of differentiated climate change effects which were said to be collected through consultation processes, including transect appraisals. In addition, the NAPA undertook a study on the implications of observed climate change effects on men and women (Ministry of Environment, Government of Nepal, 2010). This analysis concluded that men and women are impacted differently by climate change due to their societal roles and existing socio-political norms. The development of the NAPA comprised a Thematic Working Group (TWG) process to address the different sectoral aspects of climate change. Each group assessed the gender implications and found that women will be impacted more due to climate change than their male counterparts.

Though gender has been set as a cross cutting issue in the NAPA, low priority has been given to gender in the formulation of the NAPA, which is reflected in the fact that there are no gender specific projects included in any of the NAPA's nine prioritized projects' profiles.

Further to facilitate NAPA in Nepal, Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs) were developed. LAPA was designed through a bottom up approach and was developed in line with the Local Self Governance Act (LSGA). The LSGA has strong provisions for gender mainstreaming from both the point of view of women's participation in decision making and in ensuring that projects are developed that address their interests.(IIED, 2012)

5. Conclusion

Climate change responses need to take into account women's and men's relative and different capacities, power, social resilience, vulnerabilities and resources, because gender norms, roles and relations can either facilitate or constrain capacities. IPCC acknowledges that disasters affect men and women differently on a number of levels, including economically, socially, psychologically, and in terms of exposure to risk and risk perception. Further, in context of Nepal, the existing patriarchy, has limited the woman's access to knowledge, capacity inhibiting their participation in decision making.

Women's daily activities, particularly in rural areas, largely relate to natural resources and have adequate knowledge and contribution to conservation which is seldom acknowledged. Women, in Nepal, typically have disproportionate access to resources and opportunities – less pay for the same work as men, less access to schools, less access to health services, inferior social and political status than men. Women also face larger barriers to travel compared to men, which inhibits them from learning and building their capacity and also because of their involvement in household chores their learning opportunities are highly limited. Further, with men increasingly forced to migrate, leaving women in villages to never return, it becomes even more

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Source : N. Palmer CIAT

important to recognize women's needs and rights to secure access and control over natural resources, in order to fulfill their role as household heads.

Further, if we look at the history of community forestry, the emergence of women as leaders of Mother Groups and User Group's has been widely appreciated.

But again when we look at the NAPA formulation process, the Government of Nepal has faced many criticisms that women were excluded from the process. Also, there are no gender specific projects in the NAPA, which somehow indicates that Government of Nepal has not considered women to be more vulnerable to Climate Change. However, if gender is sufficiently mainstreamed it will contribute a lot in building capacities of women and reducing the gap. Climate Change Policy, 2011 has recognized the role of women and mentioned in its policy for capacity building, as "Ensuring the participation of poor people, Dalits, marginalized indigenous communities, women, children and youth in the implementation of climate adaptation and climate change-related programs;" (Climate Change Policy, 2011). LAPA on the other hand with affiliation to Local Self Governance Act can be a powerful legal tool for promoting gender

Equity and social justice cannot be achieved unless gender mainstreaming is done. Proper analysis of gender along with effective gender mainstreaming and formulation and implementation of gender sensitive policy and programs is a must for effectiveness and sustainability of any program, more so in climate change. More research needs to be done to understand the impacts of gender factors in various climate responses. Moreover, the fact that women are not only the victims of climate change but can also be active agents of change and possess unique knowledge and skills should be acknowledged. There is a surmounting need of including women in decision making at all levels.

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For further information:

Clean Energy Nepal

140 Bulbulemarg, Thapagaun, Baneshwore

POB: 24581, Kathmandu Nepal

Tel: +977 01 4464981/016915649

Email: info@cen.org.np

Web: www.cen.org.np



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