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## REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2015-2020 GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. In decision [14/18](#), the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, subject to availability of resources, to undertake a review of the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action,<sup>1</sup> in parallel to the development of the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and the second edition of the *Local Biodiversity Outlooks*, in order to identify gaps, best practices and lessons learned. The Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to include the lessons learned from the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action within the regional consultations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

2. The present document has been prepared in response to the request for a review of implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action. Section II provides an overview of the methodology for the review and section III provides an analysis of the Gender Plan of Action as a guiding framework, also considering actions by Parties and by the Secretariat. Section IV provides an overview of best practices, lessons learned and gaps, and section V outlines possible considerations and conclusions for the post-2020 period. The Secretariat thanks the Government of Sweden for its generous financial support for this review.

### II. METHODOLOGY

3. This review of implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action addresses the effectiveness of the Plan as a framework for guiding action, and the effectiveness of actions taken by Parties and by the Secretariat. The review is based on assessment of the sixth national reports<sup>2</sup> received by the Secretariat, and results of two global surveys, one for government representatives and one for other relevant organizations.<sup>3</sup> The surveys were open on Survey Monkey from 21 November 2019 to 10 January 2020.<sup>4</sup> A total of 76 responses to the survey for government representatives and 72 responses to the survey for relevant organizations were received.

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\* CBD/SBI/3/1.

<sup>1</sup> Decision [XII/7](#), annex.

<sup>2</sup> Sixth national reports received by the Secretariat up to and including 8 November 2019 were considered in this assessment. A total of 126 reports were reviewed.

<sup>3</sup> “Other relevant organizations” refers to international organizations, civil society organizations and other relevant organizations working to achieve the objectives of the Convention, at international, regional, national and local scales.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2019/ntf-2019-106-gender-review-survey-en.pdf>.

4. In line with the request from the Conference of the Parties, the review of the Gender Plan of Action was undertaken in order to identify gaps, best practices and lessons learned, with a view to identifying next steps for advancing gender-responsive action in the post-2020 period.

5. The review has taken into consideration the four spheres of the Gender Plan of Action: policy, organizational, delivery and constituency. The policy sphere refers to the development of a policy framework to ensure integration of gender considerations in implementation of the Convention. The organizational sphere refers to gender equality in staffing, institutional capacity, staff development, accountability and related equal opportunity policies. The delivery sphere addresses integrating gender in the implementation of the Convention and Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including through underlying theory, methodology and applied research. The constituency sphere focuses on mobilizing partners and building on existing efforts, best practices and lessons learned.

### **III. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 2015-2020 GENDER PLAN OF ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION BY PARTIES AND THE SECRETARIAT**

#### **A. Effectiveness of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action as a guiding framework**

6. The surveys that were made available to Parties and other relevant organizations posed a series of questions addressing familiarity with the Gender Plan of Action, the relevance of its objectives, and its contribution to supporting national-level and global efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the Convention.

7. Many respondents from governments and other relevant organizations were familiar or somewhat familiar with the Gender Plan, agreeing that the objectives of the Plan were useful or very useful. The Plan's objectives were largely seen to address all relevant issues of gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the Convention, although some respondents identified additional aspects of work. These included actions related to mainstreaming gender (capacity-building, gender balance in decision-making processes, the inclusion of gender considerations in national reporting) and specific thematic areas, such as food security, human rights (including women as environmental defenders) and traditional knowledge.

8. Views differed between representatives of organizations and governments on the contribution of the Gender Plan to their work to implement the Convention. A majority of respondents from organizations felt that the Plan contributed to their work, while under half of government respondents felt this was the case. For both organizations and governments, the Plan was seen as valuable in providing a mandate or enhancing political will for mainstreaming gender equality into their work, in providing a guideline to inform gender policies, planning and programming, and, for organizations, for influencing the provision of funding.

9. Respondents identified five areas in which the Gender Plan could be more useful in supporting national implementation, focusing on funding, capacity development, technical advice, partnerships, and implementation/reporting mechanisms. Proposals included: ensuring adequate financing and technical assistance; providing capacity-building and guidelines to support implementation; enhancing public-private partnerships; obtaining buy-in from relevant sectors to develop and implement the Plan; integrating the Plan in national reporting and national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs); and enhancing the links between the Plan, NBSAPs, and sectoral policies.

10. More respondents found the Gender Plan to have contributed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the global level, as compared to the national level. The Plan was seen to have enhanced awareness of the links between gender and biodiversity conservation, to have served as a blueprint for Parties and organizations to support collaborative efforts, and to have provided a framework with specific actions for Parties to meet gender and biodiversity objectives. Notably, the Gender Plan of

Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity was also seen to have inspired other conventions to develop their own gender action plans.<sup>5</sup>

## **B. Effectiveness of actions by Parties**

11. The 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action outlines nine possible objectives for Parties to address gender considerations. The assessment of effectiveness of actions by Parties focuses largely on information received from the sixth national reports, drawing on some relevant questions from the survey pertaining to progress and challenges in implementation of the Plan.

12. Analysis of the sixth national reports indicates an increased level of reporting on gender considerations. Approximately 75 per cent of the reports reviewed contained one or more references to gender or women's issues, with approximately 20 per cent containing 50 or more references. While this percentage does not reflect national reports received after 8 November 2019, it suggests an increase in reporting on gender and women from the fifth national reports,<sup>6</sup> 67 per cent of which contained references to gender or women. It is relevant to note that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported 64 countries<sup>7</sup> in preparing their sixth national reports,<sup>8</sup> with support provided to ensure that countries addressed gender considerations and included sex-disaggregated data. Of those reports,<sup>9</sup> 94 per cent contained references to gender or women, and approximately 40 per cent included 50 or more references.

13. Approximately 5.5 per cent of Parties specifically referenced the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action in their reports, with findings from the survey indicating that 27 per cent of government respondents thought that national implementation of the Plan had been effective and 40 per cent thought it had been somewhat effective. Respondents from other relevant organizations rated national implementation overall as less effective, as compared to government respondents.

14. Regarding specific actions for Parties outlined in the Gender Plan, the most pertinent of these is to mainstream gender in NBSAPs. Previous reviews of NBSAPs conducted by the Secretariat and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)<sup>10</sup> found that close to half included references to gender or women, and a third of plans identified gender perspectives as part of national targets or actions related to a national target. The reviews also found that information in NBSAPs was limited on strategies and actions to address a gender perspective or engage women's organizations or ministries in the review and implementation process.

15. In the sixth national reports containing references to gender or women, various actions and themes are addressed, corresponding to those in the Gender Plan. These include: participation of women in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use initiatives; the value of women's leadership; the provision of relevant capacity-building and training, particularly for women; the integration of gender considerations in relevant policies; and the reflection of areas of progress, including as demonstrated by sex-disaggregated data.

16. In regard to policy, some countries have noted that gender has been mainstreamed in major national policies and strategies while others referenced specific biodiversity-related plans that have incorporated gender considerations. The updated National Gender Policy of Guinea includes a priority

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<sup>5</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted gender action plans in 2017.

<sup>6</sup> The IUCN Global Gender Office carried out a review of 173 fifth national reports in 2016; see <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/gender-5th-national-report-factsheet.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> A total of 54 of the 64 reports were reviewed by the Secretariat of the Convention; 9 reports were not received by 8 November 2019, and 1 could not be reviewed due to language.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP-GEF Global Project: Technical Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

<sup>9</sup> This refers to reports reviewed by the Secretariat (54 out of 64 reports).

<sup>10</sup> As referenced in [CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3](https://www.cbd.int/doc/2019/02/2019-02-01-add-3.pdf).

measure on reinforcing the participation of women and men in the management and control of natural resources and the environment. Peru has integrated gender considerations in environmental education in its National Environmental Education Plan.

17. Pilot and donor-funded projects providing economic opportunities for women based on sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources were highlighted as a means of achieving the twin objectives of conservation and sustainable livelihoods. A number of reports note positive results from measures to strengthen women's economic empowerment, including for enhancing effectiveness of wildlife protection, controlling invasive species and propagating rare crop varieties, among others. Some reports also note the impact of women's leadership in conservation and natural resource management, including for the establishment of a protected area in Belize, and the first female-run conservation area in Vanuatu. Women's leadership was also highlighted as contributing to advancing sustainable livelihoods and fostering biodiversity-related entrepreneurial opportunities in other countries.

18. Capacity-building efforts have also strengthened women's roles in decision-making in some places. In Myanmar, women's participation in community forest management committees has increased as a result of taking part in capacity development activities. This engagement has led women to become more involved in advisory roles in local community forestry management committees.

19. Reports also indicate that countries are collecting different types of sex-disaggregated data, including on women's representation in management and research roles, level of knowledge of biodiversity concepts, participation in biodiversity-related trainings, projects and workshops, including for the development of the sixth national reports. Some countries are also using indicators to measure such things as women's access to biodiversity-related economic opportunities, women's participation and leadership in biodiversity management, women's ownership of relevant resources, and the number of training and awareness-raising programmes that include a gender perspective.

20. Information from the sixth national reports also reflects persistent challenges for effective gender-responsive implementation, such as the lack of data on the differentiated needs of women and men, which has limited the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Target 14.<sup>11</sup> A variety of related needs were identified by Parties: (a) sex-disaggregated data, such as on attitudes and decision-making; (b) better coordination with women's organizations and ministries and local partners; (c) awareness-raising and capacity-building for policymakers and practitioners as well as women's groups to support conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and (d) national legislation on women and men's rights to resources and ecosystem services, access to decision-making processes, and access to benefits.

21. Reports also noted the continued need for women's inclusion in implementation, and for adequate mainstreaming of gender issues in biodiversity-related actions. Survey findings highlighted dedicated financing and capacity development as two critical needs to ensure effective gender-responsive implementation at the national level.

22. The analysis of sixth national reports and the survey data suggests that there is increasing awareness and understanding among Parties of gender and biodiversity linkages and the relevant steps that need to be taken to enable more gender-responsive implementation of actions to halt biodiversity loss. However, Parties' efforts need to be maintained and strengthened, including through developing the capacity of policymakers and practitioners, engaging partners, collecting and applying relevant data and allocating adequate financing, to ensure stronger and sustained outcomes for gender and biodiversity going forward.

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<sup>11</sup> Aichi Biodiversity Target 14 is the only one to explicitly mention women or gender issues; it states: "By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable."

### C. Effectiveness of actions by the Secretariat

23. The Gender Plan of Action contains 16 objectives for the Secretariat, each with a set of corresponding actions, putting a comparatively higher focus on the work of the Secretariat than that of Parties. The 16 objectives cover a wide range of action at different levels of focus, from internal functioning of the Secretariat (funding a full-time gender programme officer position, establishing a body/internal task force to support gender integration) to external actions, such as supporting Parties in integrating gender into national biodiversity planning processes, and building awareness of biodiversity issues among women's organizations. The review considers the work undertaken by the Secretariat related to each of the four spheres of the Plan<sup>12</sup> and notes areas to be further addressed.

24. With respect to policy objectives, the Secretariat has worked to build and communicate a clear rationale for the value and need for a gender-responsive approach to biodiversity, including in relation to the themes of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,<sup>13</sup> as a means of strengthening the mandate, political support and resources for gender mainstreaming. This work has included the provision of regular updates on the progress in implementation of the Gender Plan to meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.<sup>14</sup> The Secretariat has been successful in obtaining support from several donors for gender mainstreaming and targeted initiatives.<sup>15</sup>

25. At the organizational level, the Secretariat secured core funding for a full-time programme officer position,<sup>16</sup> which has enabled the development and implementation of a broad range of initiatives to support integration of gender under the Convention. Efforts to support staff capacity on gender include mandatory online gender training<sup>17</sup> and in-person training addressing gender mainstreaming in relation to staff roles and responsibilities. Guidance has been provided for staff and supervisors on incorporating gender objectives in annual workplans and in programmes of work.

26. With respect to delivery actions, notable initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat include support to developing country Parties to integrate gender considerations in their NBSAPs through a pilot initiative implemented by the IUCN Global Gender Office with financial support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund. Women's group representatives and national government officials from Mexico, Uganda and Brazil were supported to develop gender-responsive NBSAPs.<sup>18</sup> At the regional level, the Secretariat has supported training and institutional strengthening with financial assistance from the Government of Sweden, engaging partners in the South-East Asian region to develop training materials with a regional focus, and validating these materials through a training workshop co-organized with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.<sup>19</sup> To reach a global audience, the Secretariat has developed a variety of materials to promote,

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<sup>12</sup> Policy, organizational, delivery and constituency.

<sup>13</sup> Outputs include *Addressing Gender Issues and Actions in Biodiversity Objectives* (<https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-towards2020-gender-integration-en.pdf>).

<sup>14</sup> [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/14](https://www.cbd.int/inf/14); [CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3](https://www.cbd.int/inf/14); [CBD/SBI/2/INF/11](https://www.cbd.int/inf/11).

<sup>15</sup> The Governments of Canada, Japan and Sweden have provided donor support to the Secretariat's gender work during the period that the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action has been in effect.

<sup>16</sup> Core funding for a Gender Programme Officer position in the Secretariat at the P-2 level was approved by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting.

<sup>17</sup> As of January 2020, 86 per cent of Secretariat staff had completed the UN-Women online course "I Know Gender" (<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/portal/product/i-know-gender-1-2-3-gender-concepts-to-get-started-international-frameworks-for-gender-equality-and-promoting-gender-equality-throughout-the-un-system/>).

<sup>18</sup> Information on this project is available in the document *Integrating Gender Considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans* (<https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/pilot-project-integ-gender-nbsaps.pdf>).

<sup>19</sup> Regional Training Workshop to Build Understanding and Capacity on Gender and Biodiversity Issues in South-East Asia, Manila, 9 to 13 December 2019 (<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/GB-WS-2019-01>). This was a follow-up to a workshop held in Bangkok from 28 to 30 November 2017 (Regional Expert Workshop to Develop Training Materials on Gender Equality and Biodiversity for South-East Asia and the Pacific).

clarify and share information on gender and biodiversity, including factsheets,<sup>20</sup> a pocket guide to the Gender Plan of Action,<sup>21</sup> and guides and lessons learned publications.<sup>22</sup>

27. In terms of constituency actions, related to building partnerships and networks to promote gender integration, the Secretariat has established strong partnerships with key United Nations system and international partners, including UN-Women, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNFCCC, UNCCD, IUCN and others. With UN-Women, the Secretariat has delivered a capacity-building workshop on gender mainstreaming for Convention delegates<sup>23</sup> and an expert workshop to develop recommendations for a gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework,<sup>24</sup> and has prepared associated materials and events. The active engagement of UN-Women has assisted in aligning the Secretariat's work with that of the broader UN system on gender equality and women's empowerment. Through the GEF Gender Partnership (established mid-2015), the Secretariat has contributed to the development of the renewed GEF Gender Policy<sup>25</sup> and associated project guidelines. In partnership with the GEF Small Grants Programme, the Secretariat developed an online course module on gender and biodiversity as part of a free massive open online course on gender and environment.<sup>26</sup> To date the biodiversity module has had the highest number of certificates issued of the five thematic modules.<sup>27</sup>

28. The Secretariat has also worked to strengthen engagement by Parties and civil society in processes under the Convention. These efforts include promoting engagement in the CBD Women's Caucus and helping to initiate and support the Convention's Friends of Gender Equality Group to contribute to processes under the Convention.<sup>28</sup> The Secretariat has also held a range of side events and convened discussions at major meetings under the Convention in order to engage delegates on the value of and opportunity to take a gender-responsive approach to work on biodiversity.

29. Survey results indicate that a majority of respondents from organizations were aware of the activities undertaken by the Secretariat, as compared to just under half of government respondents. Responses from organizations and governments indicated that the most useful activities carried out by the Secretariat related to capacity-building and awareness-raising, as well as building partnerships and support for gender mainstreaming. Governments also found guidance for Parties to integrate a gender perspective in NBSAPs to be a useful activity by the Secretariat.

30. As indicated in the paragraphs above, the Secretariat has undertaken activities to meet objectives identified under the four spheres of the Gender Plan of Action. The main focus of the work undertaken has been to enhance the profile and action on gender in efforts by Parties and stakeholders to implement the Convention. While the overall impact of this work may be difficult to gauge, indications such as the agreement on a gender-responsive process to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the increased references on gender in the sixth national reporting cycle, and the interest of Parties and organization representatives in participating in the Friends of Gender Equality Group suggest that there is a

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<sup>20</sup> *Gender Perspectives on Biodiversity* (<https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/fs-gender-perspectives-en.pdf>); *Sustainable Wildlife Management and Gender* (<https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/swm-fs5-gender.pdf>).

<sup>21</sup> 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action Pocket Guide: Summary and Examples (<https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/CBD-GenderPlanofAction-EN-WEB.pdf>).

<sup>22</sup> *Addressing Gender Issues and Actions in Biodiversity Objectives* (<https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-towards2020-gender-integration-en.pdf>); *Integrating Gender Considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans* (<https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/pilot-project-integ-gender-nbsaps.pdf>).

<sup>23</sup> The capacity-building workshop was held in Montreal, Canada, on 1 July 2018.

<sup>24</sup> The expert workshop was held in New York City, United States of America, on 11-12 April 2019 (<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/GB-OM-2019-01>).

<sup>25</sup> The GEF *Policy on Gender Equality* (<https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/policy-gender-equality>) was approved by the GEF Council on 28 November 2017.

<sup>26</sup> <https://sgp.undp.org/our-approach-153/course-on-gender-and-environment.html>.

<sup>27</sup> As of 31 December 2019, 2,306 certificates have been issued for the gender and biodiversity course module.

<sup>28</sup> The CBD Friends of Gender Equality Group was initiated in July 2018 and is co-Chaired by the Governments of Canada and Malawi. The Group meets on the margins of major meetings held under the Convention.

growing interest in strengthening attention on gender in work to implement the Convention. Further support to Parties is needed to advance gender integration, including in areas identified in the Plan, such as the development of gender and biodiversity indicators. The Secretariat has engaged with partners on this work, including to identify appropriate indicators for inclusion in the post-2020 framework; however, more effort and capacity is needed in this area.

31. Further work is also needed to integrate gender more fully into the Secretariat's thematic programmes, as well as to strengthen the capacity of staff to ensure a stronger and more comprehensive approach to addressing gender. Efforts are under way to develop a more systematic approach to addressing gender throughout the thematic areas of work.

#### IV. BEST PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED AND GAPS

##### A. Best practice examples

32. Best practices with relevance to the Gender Plan of Action are drawn from the information provided in sixth national reports received from Parties. These examples demonstrate a stepwise approach wherein actions to assess or address gender considerations have led to gender-responsive biodiversity policy and practice. A series of best practice case studies are elaborated in an associated information document (CBD/SBI/3/INF/4).

33. At the policy level, a number of countries have taken specific action towards enhancing biodiversity policy frameworks to make them gender-responsive. In Malawi, policy reviews were undertaken to assess the level of gender mainstreaming in policies in the environment and natural resource management sector. Based on the findings of these reviews, policy and implementation guidelines were enhanced to integrate gender considerations more effectively. In Malawi, the National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy was developed on the basis of spatial mapping of sex-disaggregated data to determine priority restoration areas to benefit both women and men.<sup>29</sup>

34. Countries have also been identifying links between different processes (e.g., REDD+, UNFCCC, Sustainable Development Goals), and have been making use of data and statistics available from these different processes, to overcome gender gaps in biodiversity-related sectors. For instance, Costa Rica has combined sex-disaggregated data on forests, biodiversity and gender collected as part of the REDD+ programme<sup>30</sup> with census data on land ownership, to map the different uses and activities carried out by women and men in forests and determine land ownership gaps. Assessing how women may benefit equally from forest use also led Costa Rica to recognize that women were not involved in decision-making and implementation at the institutional level.<sup>31</sup> The Ministry of Environment and Energy has now enacted a Directive<sup>32</sup> that requires key biodiversity-related institutions to report on actions towards reducing gender gaps in their work. These institutions are also required to develop five-year plans to generate funds to implement the Directive.

35. Further efforts on gender budgeting, or accounting for the specific needs and interests of women and men in developing and implementing budgets, include those of the Government of India, which incorporates gender budgeting as part of the annual central government budget. One of the focus areas of the Ministry of Women and Child Development is to strengthen capacity and expertise on gender

<sup>29</sup> Ms. Mphatso Kalemba (CBD Secondary National Focal Point, SBSTTA National Focal Point for Malawi), interviewed by Ms. Katherine Despot-Belmonte (Programme Officer, United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)) on 3 February 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (<https://redd.unfccc.int/>).

<sup>31</sup> Ms. Pamela Castillo Barahona (Vice-Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica), interviewed by Ms. Katherine Despot-Belmonte (Programme Officer, UNEP-WCMC) on 4 February 2020.

<sup>32</sup> The Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica enacted, on 12 August 2019, Directive No 005-2019 on the reduction of gender gaps in the biodiversity-water sector, protected areas and forests to ensure equality and the contribution of women to that sector

([http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm\\_texto\\_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&nValor1=1&nValor2=89370&nValor3=117296&strTipM=TC](http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&nValor1=1&nValor2=89370&nValor3=117296&strTipM=TC)).

budgeting. They have conducted a number of workshops and trainings and have developed a manual and handbook on gender budgeting, which is to be used by all ministries and departments.

36. Countries have undertaken a variety of approaches to raise awareness, build capacity and share learning to support equitable engagement of women in biodiversity-related sectors. In Belize, an annual Women in Fisheries Forum has been held for the past three years, to highlight the importance of women's roles in the fishing industry. The Forum brings women together to learn from each other and develop strategies to mitigate challenges, including for access to resources and capacity development opportunities. These forums have also been held in Barbados and Fiji. In Costa Rica, a high-level national meeting on women and biodiversity<sup>33</sup> declared closing gender gaps in the biodiversity sector to be a national priority.

## B. Lessons learned

37. Lessons learned are drawn from the results of the two surveys and the review of the sixth national reports and pertain to the value of the Gender Plan of Action, areas of progress in implementation and monitoring, and ongoing needs. Considerations for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework emerging from these lessons are also identified.

38. *A Gender Plan of Action is an important tool for promoting gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Convention.* As indicated in survey results, the Gender Plan of Action was seen as a valuable policy or advocacy tool for Parties and other actors in providing a mandate or guideline for integrating gender in biodiversity activities. The Plan was found to be more useful in supporting global efforts to implement the Convention than national ones, which suggests that more effort may be needed to translate the Plan into action at the national level. For the post-2020 period, this could be addressed through further emphasis on national capacity development, technical assistance, and development/strengthening of coordination mechanisms, such as among gender focal points in relevant ministries, among other actions.

39. *Clear, actionable and measurable gender-biodiversity objectives are needed to support implementation and measure progress.* In their sixth national reports, a number of Parties<sup>34</sup> noted a lack of understanding or data on how the needs of women may be taken into account in ecosystem management, which presented difficulties in taking specific action to implement Aichi Biodiversity Target 14.<sup>35</sup> While the collection of sex-disaggregated data relevant for biodiversity is generally limited, lack of clarity of gender-related objectives, including how or what to measure, poses an additional obstacle for effective action. Assessing the value of the Gender Plan and associated efforts to mainstream gender is also difficult without established baselines, appropriate indicators, or measurable outputs. This suggests that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework as well as a future gender plan of action should include clear and measurable gender-related objectives and actions.

40. *Gender mainstreaming requires concerted action and investment over the long-term to be successful.* Some countries noted that, despite encouragement for women's participation in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management, or the absence of explicit gender barriers in policy or decision-making, women are still less involved than men in meetings, committees and decision-making processes related to biodiversity.<sup>36</sup> These observations illustrate the importance of ongoing, targeted action to ensure biodiversity-related processes are equitable and contribute to achieving gender equality alongside outcomes for conservation and sustainable use. Going forward, this gives further emphasis to the need for NBSAPs to include specific activities to address gender inequalities and to allocate adequate funding for

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<sup>33</sup> Ms. Pamela Castillo Barahona (Vice-Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica), interviewed by Ms. Katherine Despot-Belmonte (Programme Officer, UNEP-WCMC) on 4 February 2020.

<sup>34</sup> For instance, Dominican Republic, Iraq, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Samoa.

<sup>35</sup> As noted above (in note 11), Aichi Biodiversity Target 14 is the only one to explicitly mention women or gender issues; it states: "By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable."

<sup>36</sup> For instance, Haiti, Malawi, Uzbekistan.

these and related efforts to mainstream gender. Consideration might also be given to the development of national gender-biodiversity plans of action, to prioritize and track gender-related actions.

41. *Measures need to be taken to build on project results to strengthen action at larger scales.* Many countries noted the value of specific short-term pilot or donor-funded projects in achieving biodiversity and gender-related objectives. These initiatives have typically provided the most quantifiable gender-biodiversity data, due to established results frameworks and reporting requirements. Examples from such countries as Costa Rica demonstrate that data from different initiatives and processes can be applied to address gender gaps, and can help define new courses of action to mainstream gender in policy and practice. Sharing learning from these initiatives can help to spur related action in other areas and countries facing similar challenges, and individual projects can serve as a basis for further action. For the post-2020 period, further consideration may be given to building on collaborative and information-sharing mechanisms already in place, such as the Friends of Gender Equality Group and national networks of gender focal points in different ministries.

### C. Gaps

42. The analysis of sixth national reports and survey data was largely consistent with previous analyses<sup>37</sup> in the identification of persistent gaps. These relate largely to the process of gender mainstreaming rather than to specific thematic issues. Gaps, or areas requiring further attention, include types of support needed to advance national implementation, such as capacity development, collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, adequate financing, and reporting.

43. Survey results also emphasized funding and capacity-building as areas necessary to achieve progress. The lack of financial resources was highlighted as a challenge for implementation of the Gender Plan, along with a lack of staff skills and knowledge, indicating a need for capacity development and technical assistance. Countries also noted the absence of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system or reporting framework to enable more detailed reporting on gender considerations.

44. The review of the Gender Plan of Action also brings to light the limited focus on the role of other organizations or stakeholders in leading activities. The Plan includes possible actions for Parties but is weighted towards actions by the Secretariat and does not include actions for other relevant organizations or stakeholder groups. International organizations and civil society contribute in many ways to the initiation and implementation of gender-responsive approaches, and it is relevant to consider how they may play a more direct role in assisting Parties in implementing gender commitments.

45. These gaps provide a basis to guide thinking and planning for the post-2020 period. It is clear that financing, capacity development, a strengthened reporting framework/mechanism, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and engagement of relevant organizations will continue to be important for effective implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

## V. CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS FOR THE POST-2020 PERIOD

46. The surveys for government and organizations included questions on how gender issues should be addressed in the post-2020 period, including in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and actions for its implementation.

47. Of the numerous actions that were proposed to address a gender perspective in future efforts to conserve, sustainably use and equitably share benefits from biodiversity, most touched on upon similar subjects, including the following: mainstreaming gender in national policies, NBSAPs and national reports; developing a monitoring/reporting framework to measure progress; securing funding; providing technical advice to support national/local-level implementation; providing training/capacity development on gender mainstreaming; carrying out national/local-level gender-biodiversity assessments; enhancing women's

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<sup>37</sup> CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3; *Addressing Gender Issues and Actions in Biodiversity Objectives* ([https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-towards2020-gender\\_integration-en.pdf](https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-towards2020-gender_integration-en.pdf)).

access to decision-making processes; and enhancing partnerships (between governments, civil society organizations, local and women's organizations).

48. A majority of survey respondents from governments and organizations thought that a new gender plan of action or strategy should serve as the implementation mechanism for the gender-responsive elements of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Respondents proposed that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework could follow an approach similar to that of the Sustainable Development Goals, in which gender is integrated across the framework.

49. Respondents shared views on developing a post-2020 gender plan of action or strategy, indicating that it should follow a consultative and participatory process engaging Parties and relevant stakeholders. Regarding structure, respondents felt that a new plan or strategy should provide clear actions, activities, SMART<sup>38</sup> targets, and gender-responsive indicators. They also proposed that it be framed around key priority areas: equal access to decision-making processes, equal access to biological resources, and equal access to benefits from conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

50. With respect to implementation, most respondents felt that (a) gender should be mainstreamed in NBSAPs; (b) gender should be integrated in the post-2020 review process; and (c) national reports should include information on gender actions undertaken. Responses further indicated that new work on gender in the post-2020 period should be supported through long-term capacity development and reliable funding.

### Conclusions

51. The review of implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action reveals that the Plan has had a valuable impact in bringing attention to and advancing action on gender equality and women's empowerment in global efforts to implement the Convention, and to a lesser extent at the national level. Overall progress in implementation is somewhat difficult to measure, as the limited availability of sex-disaggregated data, relevant gender analysis and appropriate indicators poses a challenge for assessment. Additionally, reporting on gender considerations by Parties is frequently focused on individual initiatives, from which it can be difficult to draw broader conclusions. However, the review of sixth national reports indicates an increased focus on gender and women's issues as compared to the fifth national reports, and offers some rich information on novel initiatives, areas of progress, as well as ongoing challenges for gender mainstreaming. It is clear that there is an enhanced awareness and understanding among Parties of gender and biodiversity linkages and the steps that need to be taken for more gender-responsive action. Persistent challenges include lack of sex-disaggregated data; availability of financing; and insufficient capacity to address, monitor and report on gender-responsive measures to halt biodiversity loss.

52. The survey findings indicate that a new gender plan of action or strategy including measurable targets and indicators will be needed to support the implementation of a gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Based on the assessment of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action, it appears that particular attention may be needed to translate a global gender plan into action at the national level, and to strengthen capacity development, reporting and coordination with Parties and partners to increase gender-responsive implementation and impact of activities. Opportunities to enhance engagement and implementation at the national level include appointing and providing support for dedicated national focal points for gender and biodiversity in order to strengthen institutional capacity and coordination. These focal points could support the gender-responsive implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, NBSAPs, and national reporting.

53. Findings also indicated that the process for developing a post-2020 gender plan of action or strategy should follow a consultative and participatory process engaging Parties and relevant organizations and stakeholders. In terms of supporting implementation, it was emphasized that gender should be mainstreamed in NBSAPs, integrated in the post-2020 review process, and addressed in national reporting.

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<sup>38</sup> Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.