



*IUCN Background Document on “Gender inequality - A constraint to economic growth, biodiversity protection, poverty reduction and sustainable development: Linkages between MDG 1, 3, and 7.”*

The importance of women’s role in poverty reduction, sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, management and distribution of benefits derived from the use of natural resources cannot be underestimated. Women play a key role in managing local biodiversity to meet food and health needs. In many countries, they also play a crucial role in managing agriculture and are the primary savers and managers of seeds.

Women make up the majority 70% of the world’s poor and are most vulnerable to biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. Women farmers currently account for 60-80% of all food production in developing countries. Loss or reduction of domestic species of plants and animals used by women to ensure food security of their families has devastating consequences. When environmental challenges arise, existing inequalities are magnified and traditional gender roles are reinforced. Historic disadvantages, including restricted access to land, water, resources, information, and decision making result in heavier burdens for women and increased gender inequality.

Women have vast knowledge of the environmental issues and can be powerful agents for change. Furthermore women are responsible for the control, development and transmission of significant traditional knowledge. As men are increasingly drawn to seek remunerated work away from their lands and resources, women’s role in farming and in the management of family and community biological resources, as well as the protection of traditional knowledge is increasing. Yet women enjoy limited access to political influence and decision making spheres on all levels from local to international, which results in the absence of gender-responsive policies.

In this context, there is no topic more relevant – or more timely – than looking at the intersection of MDG 3 gender equality, MDG 1 poverty reduction and MDG 7 environmental sustainability. Gender equality and equity are matters of fundamental human rights and social justice, as well as a pre-condition for sustainable development and the achievement of MDGs. Gender roles affect economic, political, social and ecological opportunities and constraints faced by both men and women. Policies, programmes and projects in any sector and at all levels which disregard existing gender inequalities risk making those inequalities worse. Environmental policies that do take gender into account have only been partially implemented. Women’s empowerment improves their access to resources, enhances decision-making, and leads to cumulative benefits of improved environmental management and poverty reduction for communities. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has identified gender equality as a priority because environmental and development problems cannot be solved by only half of the world’s population.

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IUCN is the international environmental institution with the longest history in promoting gender equality. Since 1984 throughout various decision-making bodies (Members Assemblies and World Conservation Congresses) the incorporation of women and gender considerations have been given high priority. IUCN is uniquely positioned as the world's largest global environmental network - a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries. IUCN is devoted to its commitment of promoting gender equality while addressing most pressing environment and development challenges, supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world and bringing governments, non-government organizations, United Nations agencies, companies and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws and best practices.

In 1998 IUCN approved a Gender Policy in which one of the elements was the creation of a Global Senior Gender Adviser Office. IUCN also defined that gender considerations should be an integral part of IUCN programme of work. A network of regional Gender Focal Points are intensively ensuring that IUCN Gender Equality and Equity Policy is taken into account in the initiatives at the regional and national work.

The Office of the Global Senior Gender Adviser IUCN enjoys worldwide recognition for the extensive work it has carried out over the past twelve years addressing gender equality issues within the environmental sector. This includes the development of sector-specific gender tools, gender-mainstreaming efforts with a variety of global forums including the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity), UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), CSD (United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development), CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) and World Water Forum, along with the establishment of gender entities in environmental ministries throughout Central America. IUCN Global Senior Gender Adviser has been providing guidance to international climate change funds on inclusion of gender criteria. IUCN has provided support to UNEP and the CBD to develop gender action plans.

In the past five years, the IUCN Global Senior Gender Adviser has been conducting a series of efforts to ensure that gender considerations are fully integrated in climate change and biodiversity policies. Part of her work has been the creation and consolidation of the GGCA (Global Gender and Climate Alliance), training to delegates from all around the world to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), building capacity at the governmental and nongovernmental institutions together with the development of groundbreaking materials as well as articles dealing with the topic. The GGCA has grown to include 25 institutions among United Nations and civil society organizations and has been recognized as a unique and effective partnership that is bringing a human face to climate change decision-making and initiatives. The goal of the Alliance is to ensure that climate change policies, decision-making, and initiatives at the global, regional, and national levels are gender responsive. When the GGCA was established there were no references to gender in the UNFCCC processes. Today with the work of the GGCA in partnership with the IUCN Global Gender Adviser, capacity was developed within governments and civil society. To date, more than 300 parties' delegates have been updated and 1000 NGOs, international organizations, partners and donors have been trained on the topic of gender and climate change. The GGCA network of trainers was established and is available in Latin America, Caribbean, Small Islands, Africa, Asia and Arab States. The work of GGCA catalyzed groundbreaking government interventions on gender in UNFCCC process and in other climate-related events (36 references were presented by Parties prior to COP15).

On the national and regional level, IUCN has supported the development of gender and climate change strategies that incorporate gender mainstreaming in all areas of climate change activity undertaken by the national government, including bringing women's voices and concerns into an arena of high national priority, and

incorporating considerations of gender-differentiated impacts and needs in vulnerabilities-reduction efforts especially disaster planning. Additionally, the national strategies establish the expectation that all climate change-related projects and activities conducted in the country by donors, NGOs and external partners will incorporate gender considerations. This year, Mozambique was the first country worldwide to develop a gender and climate change strategy. Responding to the demand of many countries who requested support from GGCA, currently, Central America has started the process of developing a gender-sensitive climate change strategy on a regional level and Ghana started the process on a national level.

IUCN Publications and Resources:

### **CBD Technical Series No. 49 Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans**

Recognizing that successful conservation policies cannot neglect the wider socio-economic setting of societies, the Guidelines aim to assist the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to meet the objectives of the Convention while simultaneously promoting gender equality. As countries will be reviewing their NBSAPs in line with the new revised Strategic Plan, these Guidelines provide an opportunity and general guidance to Parties on the inclusion of gender considerations into their existing and forthcoming NBSAPs. The Guidelines were requested by the CBD Secretariat and developed by the IUCN Senior Gender Advisor in close collaboration with the Secretariat staff.

English: <http://generoyambiente.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/CBD-TS-49-Gender-Guidelines.pdf>

Spanish: <http://generoyambiente.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/CBD-TS-49-Guías-de-Género.pdf>

### **Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change**

The goal of the Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change is answering the urgent demand expressed by the Parties to UNFCCC and other stakeholders for a deeper understanding about the linkages between gender and climate change. The Manual has a double scope; first, including the latest data and information on the gender dimensions of climate change; second, offering participatory training methodologies for trainers to foster successful trainings in the topic at a national and/or regional levels.

English: [http://generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/651\\_english.pdf](http://generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/651_english.pdf)

Spanish: [http://generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/651\\_espanol.pdf](http://generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/651_espanol.pdf)

French: [http://generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/651\\_frances.pdf](http://generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/651_frances.pdf)

### **CBD Gender Plan of Action**

The CBD Gender Plan of Action was requested by the CBD Secretariat and developed by the IUCN Senior Gender Advisor in close collaboration with the Secretariat staff. The plan defines the role that the Convention Secretariat will play in stimulating and facilitating efforts, both in house and with partners at the national, regional and global levels, to overcome constraints and take advantage of opportunities to promote gender equality. It is also a reflection of the increasing awareness that gender equality and women's empowerment are important prerequisites for environmental conservation and sustainable development

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-09/information/cop-09-inf-12-rev1-en.doc>

### **UNEP Gender Plan of Action**

The Plan of Action is a set of gender-equality criteria, gender sensitive strategies and guidelines for implementation of programmes. The UNEP Gender Plan of Action was requested by UNEP and developed by the IUCN Senior Gender Advisor in close collaboration with the UNEP management and partners.

<http://www.unep.ch/roe/gender/refdocs/Final%20POA%20for%20UNEP.pdf>

### **Gender equality within the REDD and REDD-plus framework**

What is REDD and REDD-plus? The framing of coordinated international approach for REDD and REDD-plus are part of the current UN climate negotiations in addition to reforestation and a forestation which have both have been integrated as forestry based mitigation schemes into the Kyoto Protocol. The Framework provides specific recommendations and strategies for making REDD gender responsive. The incorporation of gender considerations into the REDD and REDD-plus frameworks brings about increased efficiency and sustainability as it contributes to women's involvement and commitment who are crucial players of local forest management.

<http://www.generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/500.pdf>

### **Engendering REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation)**

Engendering REDD was produced by a group of experts from IUCN, GGCA, and Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and NRM (WOCAN). Engendering REDD reveals criteria and standards for international and national/subnational processes related to REDD, and to define GGCA activities in this area.

<http://www.generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/499.pdf>

### **IUCN Factsheet Linking Gender and Biodiversity**

<http://www.generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/494.pdf>

### **IUCN Factsheet Gender and Agricultural Biodiversity**

<http://www.generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/492.pdf>

### **IUCN Factsheet Gender and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)**

<http://www.generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/490.pdf>

### **IUCN Factsheet "Gender and Bioenergy"**

<http://www.generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/497.pdf>

**Putting Words into Action...** Analysis of the Status of Gender Mainstreaming in the Main Multilateral Environmental Agreements <http://www.generoyambiente.org/arcangel2/documentos/488.pdf>

For more resources, please see:

**IUCN Gender and Environment** (English and Spanish): <http://www.generoyambiente.org/>

**IUCN** (English, Spanish, and French): <http://www.iucn.org/>