

Adaptation Fund Launches Call for Comments on New Gender Policy Proposal

Adaptation Fund Board Looks to Strengthen Gender Considerations in Projects; Board to Consider Final Policy and Gender ‘Action Plan’ in March

(Washington, DC, October 20, 2015) -- Among the key decisions taken by the Adaptation Fund Board at its 26th Meeting October 8-9 in Bonn, Germany was to recognize the importance of streamlining and strengthening the integration of gender considerations in policies and procedures of the Adaptation Fund's work.

The Board welcomed an Adaptation Fund gender policy proposal that builds on the human rights-based approach of the Fund's Environmental and Social Policy, which calls for projects to be designed and implemented in a way that both women and men are able to participate fully and equitably in them and receive comparable social and economic benefits.

“Gender issues are a common theme we see in many vulnerable communities affected disproportionately by climate change and we want to ensure that we are providing the most equitable and optimal use of resources to equally assist some groups that may be marginalized but offer a wealth of knowledge in managing and conserving natural resources and adapting to climate change, so that equal project benefits are received among women and men,” said Adaptation Fund Board Chairman Hans Olav Ibrekk.

“This policy proposal really focuses on gender roles and cultural rules that make up some of the local structures in certain vulnerable areas and form sometimes challenging interactions and reactions to very real climate change threats that need to be addressed by building the capacity for resilience in an equitable way,” added Marcia Levaggi, Manager of the Adaptation Fund.

The policy proposal considers gender an important factor in developing interventions to enhance the climate adaptive capacity of women as well as men, and contains the following objectives and principles:

- Ensure more effective, sustainable and equitable adaptation outcomes and impacts
- Provide women and men with equal opportunity to build resilience, address their varying vulnerabilities, and increase their capability to adapt to climate change impacts
- Address and mitigate against potential project risks for women and men
- Contribute to knowledge and data gaps on gender-related vulnerability and accelerate learning about effective gender-equal adaptation measures and strategies
- Adopt methods and tools to promote gender equality and reduce gender discriminations and disparities in funding operations
- Measure outcomes and impacts of activities on women and men's resilience to climate change impacts and their ability to address underlying sociocultural factors of gender-related vulnerability to climate change

The importance of gender equality and the vital role of women in environmental management, knowledge, resource conservation and climate change has increasingly been recognized in international agreements. “By striving for gender equality and supporting gender equitable processes, such as

empowering women in its activities, the Fund increases the adaptive capacity of human systems as it actively addresses the disproportionately higher vulnerability of women to climate change impacts due to persisting gender inequalities,” the policy proposal states. “These often restrict women’s access to resources, legal rights or political participation and decision-making and undermine their adaptive capabilities.”

Adaptation Fund projects, which are having tangible effects in helping vulnerable communities in developing countries adapt to climate change, often have gender components in them. For example, a project in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality of South Africa is helping small scale farmers – most of who are women - improve their resilience to climate vulnerability and change through gender-sensitive ecological and engineering infrastructure solutions, climate-smart farming, use of climate-resilient crops, early warning disaster response systems and linking farming cooperatives to existing and new markets. In addition, a recently completed Adaptation Fund project in Senegal established anti-salt dikes to protect against seawater intrusions and help primarily women reclaim their livelihoods on abandoned rice-growing lands. Another 100 female fish sellers were aided by rehabilitating a fish drying infrastructure, while the use of firewood in fish processing was reduced.

The Adaptation Fund has launched a public call for comments on the gender policy proposal, which can be submitted to afbsec@adaptation-fund.org thru Dec. 31, 2015. A final policy will be developed with input gathered from comments and Board members, and will be considered along with an action plan at the next meeting in March.

ABOUT THE FUND

The Adaptation Fund was established under the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and since 2010 has committed US\$331 million to support 54 countries. To date, 51 concrete climate adaptation and resilience projects have been approved, with the majority in the implementation stage. Please visit www.adaptation-fund.org for more information.

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