



ADAPTATION FUND

18 March 2016

Adaptation Fund Board

**ANNEX 4 TO OPG:
GENDER POLICY OF THE ADAPTATION FUND
(APPROVED IN MARCH 2016)**

ANNEX 4 to OPGs: GENDER POLICY

Background

1. Gender equality is increasingly recognized as a crosscutting issue in major multilateral environmental agreements. The 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development acknowledged in Principle 20 women's "vital role in environmental management and development" with Agenda 21 focusing in its Chapter 24 on women's considerable knowledge and experience in managing and conserving natural resources.¹ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in its Article 2 recognizes the "anthropogenic interference" – meaning the interference of both men and women -- within the climate system.² Over the past 15 year, a number of UNFCCC decisions have addressed the gender dimensions of climate change.³ In 2010, the Cancun Agreements in decision 1/CP.16 underscored that gender equality and the effective participation of women are important for long-term cooperative action on all aspects of climate change.⁴ In 2012, Doha decision 23/CP.18 decreed the promotion of 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 the Kyoto Protocol "so that gender-responsive climate policy responds to the differing needs of men and women in national and local contexts."⁵ In 2014, Lima decision 18/CP.20 established a two-year work program on gender in the UNFCCC to "advance gender balance, promote gender sensitivity in developing and implementing climate policy and achieve gender-responsive climate policy in all relevant activities under the Convention".⁶ Most recently, the Paris Agreement, acknowledging that Parties in their climate actions should be guided by respect for human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women in its preamble, in Art.7(5) stressed the importance of following "a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach" for adaptation action.⁷

2. The *Operational Policies and Guidelines for Parties to Access Resources from the Adaptation Fund (OPG)* mandate the Fund to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol "aimed at addressing the adverse impacts of and risks posed by climate change" and "at producing visible and tangible results on the ground by reducing vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of human and natural systems to respond to the impacts of climate change, including

¹ UNGA (1992), Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Annex I: Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I); UNCED (1992), Agenda 21; <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/unced>. In 1992, the Rio+ 20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 confirmed that gender equality and the effective participation of women are important for effective action on all aspects of sustainable development.

² http://unfccc.int/key_documents/the_convention/items/2853.php.

³ WEDO (2014), UNFCCC Decisions and Conclusions: Existing Mandates and Entry Points for Gender Equality; <http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/GE-Publication-ENG-Interactive.pdf>.

⁴ UNFCCC, Decision 1/CP.16; <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

⁵ UNFCCC, Decision 13/CP.18;

https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/election_and_membership/application/pdf/cop18_gender_balance.pdf.

⁶ UNFCCC, Decision 18/CP.20;

https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/lima_dec_2014/decisions/application/pdf/auv_cop20_gender.pdf.

⁷ UNFCCC, Adoption of the Paris Agreement;

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09.pdf>.

climate variability.”⁸ Gender norms and related cultural rules are part of what structures the interactions and reactions to climate threats and opportunities in human systems. 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. It does so by supporting women as positive change agents with deep knowledge of adaptation-relevant food, water or energy systems at the forefront of climate change and by actively addressing the disproportionately higher vulnerability of women to climate change impacts and natural disasters due to persisting gender inequalities. These often restrict women’s access to resources, legal rights or political participation and decision-making, threaten their peace and security, and undermine their adaptive capabilities. It will thus apply the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which in 2007 already determined the role of gender to be an important consideration for the development of interventions to enhance adaptive capacity and to facilitate adaptation.⁹

3. The Fund’s gender policy builds on the existing gender policies and gender action plans of other climate funds.¹⁰ It systematically integrates key principles elaborated in the Fund’s own environmental and social Policy (ESP), especially the principles on **access and equity**, on consideration of **marginalized and vulnerable groups** and of **human rights**. It expands the principle of **gender equity and women’s empowerment**, which is process-oriented and often subjectively contextualized, to the legal mandate of **gender equality** as the goal that the Fund strives to attain through its processes.¹¹

4. The Fund’s gender policy is human rights-based and congruent with international instruments in acknowledging the centrality of women’s rights as universal human rights, in particular with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Labor Organization’s (ILO) core conventions,¹² the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),¹³ follow up Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

⁸ OPG, para. 10; <http://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/OPG%20amended%20in%20October%202014%20final.pdf>.

⁹ 4th IPCC Assessment Report, Working Group 2; https://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg2/en/ch17s17-3-2-3.html.

¹⁰ For the elaboration of this draft policy, the Gender Mainstreaming Policy of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) as well as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan were considered. GEF (2012), Policy on Gender Mainstreaming, Policy SD/PL/02; GEF (2014), Gender Equality Action Plan, GEF/C.47/09; and GCF (2015), Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan, GCF/B.09/23, Annexes XIII and XIV, pp. 84–91.

¹¹ The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) cautions against a reliance on the term “gender equity,” which can be used in a way that perpetuates stereotypes about women’s roles in society, and advises instead the use of gender equality as the legal term under existing human rights instruments with corresponding obligations for signatory states. OHCHR (2014), Women’s Rights are Human Rights, HR/Pub/14/2, pp. 33–34; <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR-PUB-14-2.pdf>.

¹² Conventions relevant for gender equality among the eight ILO Core Conventions include: (i) Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (1951); (ii) Convention concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour (1957); (iii) Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (1958); <http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm>.

¹³ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

Development.¹⁴ It supports the equal right of men and women to access and benefit from the Fund's resources in order to increase their adaptive capacity and reduce their vulnerability to climate change impacts.

5. The Fund's gender policy makes reference to the following key gender concepts¹⁵:

- (a) **Gender:** refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context and intersects with other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.¹⁶
- (b) **Gender Balance:** refers to the goal of having the same number of women and men in decision-making bodies and among staff in the different levels of organizational structures.
- (c) **Gender Equality:** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities and access of women and men and boys and girls and the equal consideration of their respective interests, needs and priorities. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue as well as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable, people-centered development.¹⁷
- (d) **Gender Equity:** refers to the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls. It recognizes the need for potential differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or historical or social disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms. The process of gender equity leads to gender equality as a legal right and obligation.
- (e) **Gender Mainstreaming:** refers to a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming involves the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the experiences and concerns of women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated, if necessary through targeted actions to ensure that women's voices as important actors are heard.
- (f) **Gender responsive:** refers to the consideration of gender norms, roles and relations and to addressing inequality generated by unequal norms, roles and relations through changes within a given social setting through remedial action.
- (g) **Gender sensitive:** refers to the consideration of gender norms, roles and relations but does not necessarily address inequality generated by unequal

¹⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

¹⁵ If not otherwise indicated, relevant definitions are drawn and adapted from the GCF gender policy or the Annex to the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

¹⁶ See a related definition from the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (UN OSAGI).

¹⁷ UN OSAGI.

norms, roles or relations through remedial action beyond creating gender awareness.

- (h) **Women's empowerment:** can be best understood as an expansion of agency throughout women's lives, especially via participation and decision-making. It generally refers to differential or pro-active support to increase:
- i. women's sense of self-worth;
 - ii. women's right to have and determine choices;
 - iii. women's right to have access to opportunities and resources;
 - iv. women's right to have power to control own lives both within and outside the home; and
 - v. women's ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.¹⁸

Objectives

6. The Fund and its implementing partners shall strive to uphold women's rights as universal human rights and to attain the goal of gender equality and the equal treatment of women and men, including the equal opportunities for access to Fund resources and services, in all Fund operations through a gender mainstreaming approach.

7. The Fund's gender policy has the following objectives:

- (a) To ensure that the Fund will achieve more effective, sustainable and equitable adaptation outcomes and impacts in a comprehensive manner in both its internal and external procedures;
- (b) To provide women and men with an equal opportunity to build resilience, address their differentiated vulnerability, and increase their capability to adapt to climate change impacts; recognizing the need for targeted efforts in order to ensure women's participation.
- (c) To address and mitigate against assessed potential project/programme risks for women and men in relation to concrete adaptation actions financed by the Fund; and
- (d) To contribute to addressing the knowledge and data gaps on gender-related vulnerabilities and to accelerate learning about effective gender-equal adaptation measures and strategies.
- (e) To consult with affected women and men actively, taking into account their experiences capabilities and knowledge throughout Fund processes.

Main Principles

8. The Fund's gender policy is based on a set of key principles as elaborated below:

¹⁸ UNFPA

Commitment

9. The Fund commits to upholding women's human rights and to contributing to gender equality in line with international human rights instruments, ensuing applicable international and domestic law. The Fund further commits to:

- (a) Adopt methods and tools to promote gender equality and reduce gender discriminations and disparities in its funding operations; and
- (b) Measure the outcomes and impacts of its activities on women and men's resilience to climate change impacts and their ability and agency to address gender differentiated vulnerability to climate change.

Comprehensiveness in scope and coverage

10. The Fund applies its gender policy to all its adaptation activities irrespective of project/programme size, whether implemented by international, regional or national entities accredited to the Fund.

11. The policy will be implemented throughout the Fund's operational processes with guidelines to be issued by the Secretariat for the benefit of the Fund's external partners, Designated Authorities (DAs) and Implementing Entities (IEs).

12. Fund IEs will be required to undertake an initial gender assessment as per the ESP process, to select gender-responsive indicators and to design gender-responsive implementation and monitoring arrangements.

13. Fund projects and programmes will be screened for gender responsiveness at various stages of the project preparation, appraisal, approval and monitoring process by the relevant Fund bodies and external partners (the Secretariat, the Project and Programme Review Committee, the Ethic and Finance Committee, DAs and IE). Throughout, stakeholders should be meaningfully consulted in a gender equal way.

Accountability

14. The Fund accounts to the Board for its gender mainstreaming efforts and its gender-responsive adaptation results and outcomes, including through regular annual reports to the Board, as appropriate, in a transparent and comprehensive manner. Gender monitoring for project/programme impacts is to be integrated into the Fund's Results-based Management (RMB) framework. Portfolio-wide the Fund accounts for the number of men and women beneficiaries through efforts to improve gender-disaggregated data collection of Fund activities.

15. The Board, as operating entity of the Fund, is accountable for gender results.

16. Applicant IEs are required to document an institutional capacity and commitment to apply the Fund's gender policy and to demonstrate their ability to implement it. An applicant IE may demonstrate its ability and commitment to implement the gender policy through:

- (a) An institutional framework for gender mainstreaming, such as designated expert staff and/or a commitment at highest management level to gender equality;

- (b) Own policies, strategies or action plans that address gender equality and gender-responsive activities, or demonstration through related implementation track-records;
- (c) An ability to undertake socioeconomic and gender assessments, or similar methods to assess the potential roles, benefits, impacts and risk for women and men;
- (d) An ability to identify measures to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate adverse gender impacts; and/or
- (e) A monitoring and evaluation process that accounts for gender mainstreaming efforts, including the use of gender-disaggregated indicators, and can provide social and gender expert support during project implementation.

17. A tiered approach will be applied to rolling out the gender policy to already accredited implementing entities.¹⁹ The ability of existing IEs to comply with the Fund's gender policy may be enhanced through the readiness programme and other means in order to meet the requirements of this policy. Already accredited implementing entities will apply the gender policy requirements to the project/programme submitted for funding. Moreover, reporting requirements in an amended project performance report (PPR) will apply to projects/programmes currently under implementation.

18. New entities that apply for accreditation as an IE with the Fund shall be assessed by the Accreditation Panel for their capacity and commitment to implement the Fund gender policy. They may demonstrate its capacity through the requirements elaborated above.

19. All Fund IEs shall identify a grievance mechanism, which can be pre-existing, national, local, or institution- or project-specific, able and competent to provide men and women affected by Fund supported projects and programmes with an accessible, transparent, fair and effective process for reviewing and addressing gender-related complaints and grievances.

Competencies

20. The Board is encouraged to consider relevant gender expertise and gender balance in the appointments of its Board members and their designation to serve on the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) and the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC).

21. The Fund will work with Designated Authorities and Implementing Entities, including through the accreditation process, to enhance their capacity to understand and implement the Fund's gender policy. Project preparation grant support for IEs and readiness support through the Fund readiness programme for applicant entities may be requested for that purpose. They may also obtain gender training and capacity building through their partnerships with other organizations (such as domestic, bilateral, multilateral and international organizations, including NGOs).

¹⁹ The Fund's ESP was phased in following a tiered approach for different categories of entities, depending on accreditation status such as whether they are already accredited and implementing approved projects/programmes; are accredited without approved projects/programmes; applicant entities under review by the Accreditation Panel; new accreditation applicants; or accredited IEs applying for reaccreditation after five years. Decision AFB/B.22/23 and document AFB/B.22/5/Add.1.

Resource allocation

22. The Fund's resource allocation for concrete adaptation projects and programmes contributes to gender equality and supports the empowerment of women. Fund projects and programmes without articulated gender considerations shall not receive Fund resources.

Knowledge generation and communication

23. To accelerate learning on the implementation of gender-responsive adaptation actions and to contribute to addressing existing knowledge and data gaps, the Fund will document the experiences and knowledge gained from the implementation of its gender policy. In particular, it will focus on identifying good practices from recipient countries and implementing entities. The Fund will actively engage in knowledge exchange on gender and adaptation finance with partner and peer organizations, in particular with other existing climate funds, especially the GCF and the GEF.

24. The Fund will communicate its commitment to gender equality, its gender policy and related implementation guidance to its partners and the wider public and seek periodic feedback from stakeholders and partners on the implementation of the Fund's gender policy, including possible future improvements.

Review and Revisions

25. The gender mainstreaming approach of the Fund's gender policy is a long-term undertaking demanding a sustained commitment and a regular tracking of its progress. As experience is gained and lessons are learned in the implementation of the gender policy throughout the Fund's operations, the Fund as a learning institution might adjust its approach. In light of this, the Fund will review its gender policy three years after it becomes operational.