

# Progress, good practices and lessons learned in prioritizing and incorporating gender-responsive adaptation action



United Nations  
Climate Change



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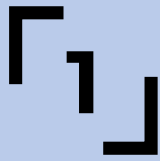
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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AC	Adaptation Committee
COP	Conference of the Parties
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
EnGenDER	Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LDC	least developed country
LEG	Least Developed Countries Expert Group
LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and more
NAP	national adaptation plan
NDC	nationally determined contribution
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WECF	Women Engage for a Common Future
WHO	World Health Organization



# INTRODUCTION

It has been widely recognized that gender has multiple linkages to vulnerability to and agency related to climate change. To address the gender-specific impacts of climate change, and to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment through climate change adaptation plans and policies, countries around the world are increasingly applying gender-responsive approaches. The following assessment of recent trends in adaptation research and action, including the formulation and implementation of NAPs, reveals some gaps and challenges for the application of gender-responsive approaches, but also opportunities and good practices that governments and other stakeholders have identified and are undertaking to enhance resilience and gender equality in a comprehensive and synergistic manner.

In this regard, Parties to the Convention have recognized the importance of engaging women and men equally in the UNFCCC process and in the development and implementation of gender-responsive climate strategies. To support Parties in this endeavour, specifically in the area of adaptation, members of the Adaptation Committee’s NAP task force prepared this policy brief on progress, good practices and lessons learned in prioritizing and incorporating gender-responsive adaptation action under the framework of the flexible workplan for 2022–2024.<sup>1</sup>

This policy brief has the objective of helping governments and other stakeholders to develop and implement gender-responsive adaptation action, taking into consideration the different national circumstances and cultural values.

<sup>1</sup> See document AC21/INFO/7C.



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GENDER AND CLIMATE  
CHANGE IMPACTS,  
VULNERABILITY  
AND RESILIENCE

Research shows that gender can exacerbate vulnerability to climate change since gender-related social norms, structures, processes and relationships of power affect the distribution of the impacts of climate change and adaptation opportunities. Furthermore, these elements intersect with others, creating multidimensional vulnerabilities (Prakash et al., 2022). Parties to the Convention have highlighted place of residence (rural or urban), income, educational background, ethnicity, disabilities, and gender and sexual identity (e.g. belonging to the LGBTQI+ community) as additional social factors that influence individuals' vulnerabilities to and experience of the impacts of climate change.<sup>2</sup>

Referring specifically to gender, examples of relevant inequalities include those related to access to and control over resources, land and financial services; the distribution of the labour force in different sectors; and participation in decision-making spaces. These differences impact how women and men experience climate change (Field et al., 2014; Prakash et al., 2022).

In many contexts, women are disproportionately affected by climate change. Recent data suggest, for example, that 80% of people displaced by climate change are women, which exacerbates their risk of violence, including sexual violence (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2022). In many developing countries, women are responsible for subsistence agriculture and collecting water for the household, and the burden falls disproportionately

on them when the impacts of climate change affect the availability of water and agricultural yields (Bonewit, 2015). Furthermore, women may be more susceptible to malnutrition when there is food scarcity, as cultural norms inside the household can result in women eating smaller portions than men or reducing their intake in order to feed their children or husband during food shortages (German Agency for International Cooperation, 2021).

Globally, more women than men live in poverty (UN Women, 2022a), which means that women find it harder to access the resources they need to build resilience against the impacts of climate change. At the same time, climate change could worsen this situation by pushing an additional 130 million people into poverty in the next decade if not properly addressed (World Bank, 2021).

Gender roles and behaviours also increase the vulnerability of women to natural disasters compared with men, which has resulted in some cases in disproportionately high mortality rates among women. One emblematic example was the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. Studies have found that the role of women as primary caregivers, as well as gender norms that prevented women from learning how to swim, were among the factors that contributed to the higher mortality rates among women (Fatouros and Capetola, 2021). This is particularly significant, considering that global warming will continue to cause unavoidable increases in multiple climate hazards (IPCC, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> See document FCCC/SBI/2022/7.



However, social norms related to the gender division of labour can also result in disproportionate impacts from climate change related hazards on men. For example, during disasters men often exhibit a higher risk-taking behaviour, which can increase their mortality rates. When climate change affects male-dominated agricultural activities, men may be expected to move to urban centres to find an

alternative income. Men may also have limited knowledge or information on the impacts of climate change on domestic issues, such as the availability of drinking water (Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2014). There is evidence from both developed and developing countries that drought can disproportionately increase suicide rates among male farmers (WHO, 2014).

**EXAMPLE: Burkina Faso**

In its adaptation communication, Burkina Faso outlined some of the vulnerabilities that women face as a consequence of climate change in the country. For example, women are generally more dependent than men on resources that are impacted by changing weather patterns and natural hazards, which can affect their income sources and livelihoods. In this regard, women farmers are particularly affected by the degradation of land and water scarcity as they are less able to procure agricultural inputs such as fertilizers or implement adaptation practices, for example precipitation harvesting methods such as planting pits or “half-moon” techniques. This is linked to the fact that women have less access to productive land and are often relegated to small marginal plots. More frequent and longer droughts also result in women having to travel longer distances to find water for use in the home. Women are also more vulnerable to extreme weather events, such as floods. Past experience has shown that women are more prone to losing their home owing to extreme weather events – as their dwellings are more likely to be built with lower-quality materials – and have disproportionately higher mortality rates. During the floods in 2020, for example, the number of female casualties (23,675) was more than twice the number of male casualties (11,747) (Government of Burkina Faso, 2021).



Image credit: ©Rodrigo Ordonez/GLF



Gender norms also play a factor in adaptation and resilience. For example, women’s social roles are in many cases crucial to ensuring the resilience of the whole community. Women are often well-positioned to understand the community’s needs and address common challenges. In post-disaster contexts or in response to the impacts of climate change, women have established networks among themselves to increase the social capital

needed for an effective response. Women are often educated to think more collectively than men, which can be an asset during times of crisis (Smith, 2022). Additionally, women may hold specific knowledge, for example on edible and medicinal plants, sustainable agricultural techniques or food preparation, which may be key to building resilience to climate change (Rivera Ferre, 2021).

**EXAMPLE: Fiji**

In its NAP, Fiji explicitly recognized that women and girls are impactful agents of change and drivers of climate-resilient development. In this regard, its NAP aims to ensure the full and effective participation of women in decision-making, equal opportunities for leadership, equitable access to economic resources and financial services, and equal rights to opportunities stemming from adaptation action. The NAP identified the specific functions that women have in different sectors, such as selling farm produce in the agriculture sector or fishing for particular species. These roles can become entry points for women to play an active part in the implementation of adaptation activities in these areas (Government of Fiji, 2018).

Furthermore, the NAP recognized the specific contributions that women can make to adaptation based on their social roles. For example, owing to the role of women as the primary caregivers, they play a key part in shaping the values of children on climate change adaptation. Moreover, the knowledge that women acquire on sustainable resource use and management is likely to be passed on to children and thus be applied in the longer term (Government of Fiji, 2018).

While a vast number of countries and organizations have so far focused on the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men based on a binary understanding of sex and gender, research suggests that climate change can also disproportionately affect gender and sexual minorities (e.g. members of the LGBTQI+ community) when they face discrimination.

This can result in social and political exclusion, additional socioeconomic disadvantages, and obstacles to access support and care. At the same time, these minorities can effectively contribute to adaptation and local-level resilience-building efforts, for example through their strong social networks (Stockholm Environment Institute, 2021; International Institute for Environment and Development, 2022).

**EXAMPLE: Canada**

In a recent UNFCCC submission, Canada highlighted the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change related extreme weather events and natural disasters on LGBTQI+ people and other gender and sexual minorities. As a result of these groups being disproportionately more likely to have low incomes and experience homelessness or vulnerable housing, they may be more exposed to the impacts of climate change and have reduced access to emergency services (Government of Canada, 2021a). On the other hand, in its NDC Canada also emphasizes that gender and sexual minorities are an essential part of climate leadership and action, as they can uniquely contribute owing to their diverse experience and knowledge of climate change (Government of Canada, 2021b).



# 3

## GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE ADAPTATION

The exacerbated impacts of climate change on women, and gender and sexual minorities can only be addressed by adaptation plans and policies that specifically take them into account. This means using gender-responsive approaches and including women, and gender and sexual minorities in the full scope of the decision-making process and implementation of all adaptation actions.

Gender-responsive approaches are those that examine and actively address gender norms, roles and inequalities (WHO, 2009). Gender-responsive approaches go beyond sensitivity to gender differences and instead actively seek to promote gender equality (CARE and International Center for Research on Women, 2007; WHO, 2009). This often involves specific actions to empower women in their households and communities, as well as broader policy and planning processes (Burns and Lee, 2015).

Research demonstrates that adaptation policies can reinforce gender inequalities if gender considerations are not explicitly taken into account, which makes gender-responsive approaches even more relevant (Prakash et al., 2022). To be effective, gender responsiveness should be taken into account in all stages of the adaptation cycle: the assessment of impacts, vulnerability and risks; planning; the implementation of adaptation measures; and monitoring and evaluation.

The first step to implement a gender-responsive approach is to identify, through a context-specific assessment, the particular vulnerabilities that women and girls face as a consequence of climate change. Participatory and community-based vulnerability and capacity assessments, using community knowledge and scientific data, allow an understanding of the local vulnerabilities and risks (Climate and Development Knowledge Network Global, 2016).

A gender-differentiated vulnerability assessment and gender analysis of relevant factors provides valuable information to policymakers for designing gender-responsive adaptation plans and actions. For example, applying a context-specific gender analysis during the design phase of an adaptation plan enables an understanding of the specific gender roles and dynamics, access to and control over resources, and gender-differentiated needs and priorities. Failing to undertake this type of analysis before designing adaptation policies can result in unhelpful generalizations of the specific vulnerabilities of women or men, or a failure to take advantage of opportunities to empower women or promote gender equality, and can reinforce gender inequalities. These factors can negatively affect the effectiveness and sustainability of adaptation actions in the long term (Dekens and Dazé, 2019).



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**EXAMPLE: Saint Lucia**

In its updated NDC, Saint Lucia emphasized its commitment to SDG 5, on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and stated that the Government has systematically addressed gender considerations in the design, consultation, implementation and monitoring stages of adaptation actions. However, the lack of data on the different needs of women and men related to adaptation was identified as a challenge. In response, Saint Lucia is working to collect and assess gender-disaggregated information, allowing the consideration of gender-differentiated impacts in decision-making and planning. In particular, the EnGenDER regional project is highlighted, through which Saint Lucia has undertaken gender assessments for selected sectors to develop gender-responsive sectoral adaptation strategies and action plans (Government of Saint Lucia, 2021).

Under the EnGenDER project, the UN Women Multi-Country Office Caribbean completed a review of the gender inequality and differential impact of climate change and disaster risk, and the cost of inaction for Saint Lucia, and also completed a gender-responsive, resilience-building knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours study in collaboration with the International Institute for Sustainable Development. The assessments confirmed that natural hazards and climate change impact men and women differently in Saint Lucia. The review identified the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in the agriculture, water and fisheries sectors, as well as the gender- and age-differentiated climate impacts and risks derived from inland flooding and hurricanes and tropical storms, such as increased water-borne diseases or damage to infrastructure. An assessment through stakeholder consultations was also conducted to identify the gendered use of coping mechanisms by sector, for example insurance schemes, industry diversification, membership of a cooperative or social organization and microfinancing schemes. Gender biases, knowledge gaps and barriers to integrating gender at the institutional level were also identified through the knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours study (UN Women Multi-Country Office Caribbean, 2021).

A gender-responsive approach to adaptation planning involves ensuring that there is a balanced gender representation in all decision-making spaces and explicitly including objectives and activities related to enhancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in adaptation plans at all levels.

Participatory decision-making is key to capturing the experiences and needs of all genders, which translates into more effective climate action. Inclusive decision-making processes and opportunities facilitate change towards more gender-equal societies (Prakash et al., 2022). In particular, women’s leadership has been associated with better resource governance at the local level (UN Women, 2022b). Furthermore, some research suggests that a higher

representation of women in politics correlates with socioeconomic progress in areas such as health and education expenditure, as well as stronger climate action (Andrijevic et al., 2020).

Adaptation plans have the highest potential to contribute to gender equality when they address the root causes of differentiated vulnerability and exclusion. Having specific gender-related objectives and seeking synergies with other SDGs when designing adaptation policies increases the potential of transformative action (Prakash et al., 2022). Under the UNFCCC framework, gender responsiveness in adaptation is being advanced by Parties by mainstreaming gender-responsiveness in all relevant vehicles (NAPs, NDCs, adaptation communications, etc.) and by preparing specific climate change gender action plans.

**EXAMPLE: Pakistan**

Gender is one of the additional sectors that Pakistan covers in its updated NDC. Gender-sensitive programming is one of the guiding principles of the updated NDC, which includes a specific section on gender equality. As part of its strategy, Pakistan is undertaking consultations with different social groups to ensure that women and girls have a voice in climate policies and strategies as a part of the ‘whole-of-government’ approach. Pakistan’s National Commission on the Status of Women and the provincial commissions lead the work on gender mainstreaming in all policy areas. Incorporating climate impacts and the role of women in climate adaptation in both urban and rural contexts is a work in progress by these commissions (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

The updated NDC contains gender mainstreaming actions and potential targets in different sectors, including agriculture, forestry, water, energy, disaster management, waste, health, and research and knowledge management. One of its objectives is ensuring that plans, strategies, programmes and the budgets of government bodies, funding agencies and NGOs promote gender equality and a balanced access to resources. Furthermore, some proposed actions related to planning include assigning a gender focal point for the national interministerial committee, revisiting national policies and legislation to ensure that gender and climate change are taken into consideration and developing different funding scenarios for the integration of gender issues in various sectoral programmes (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

Pakistan has also recently developed its Climate Change Gender Action Plan, which includes a gender-responsive approach to climate action, including for adaptation. The plan focuses on six priority sectors that are particularly important for building resilience and where women are likely to be most severely affected: disaster risk reduction; agriculture and food security; forests and biodiversity; integrated coastal management; water and sanitation; and energy and transport. The plan includes objectives, activities and indicators of success for each policy area. Moreover, it includes some specific actions related to planning, such as developing gender-specific local adaptation plans for the impacts of climate change on agriculture, incorporating a role for women in the decision-making process on climate change adaptation initiatives and developing climate change adaptation measures based on local and Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, particularly knowledge held by women (Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Climate Change, 2022).

Finally, Pakistan is planning to convene and facilitate stakeholder dialogues and consultations to ensure that gender dimensions are included in its NAP formulation process, which is ongoing (Green Climate Fund, 2022).

A gender-responsive approach to the implementation of adaptation action recognizes that women are central actors in the response to climate change, and in many cases are leading the way. Other helpful principles for implementation include involving different stakeholders through coordinated action,

building the technical capacity of government agencies, organizations and local communities to address the gender dimension in their adaptation programmes, promoting local ownership of projects and providing adequate resources (IUCN Global Gender Office, 2012; UNFCCC secretariat, 2013).



Depending on the context, leveraging the practical experience and knowledge of women can be an important asset, for example in protecting and restoring ecosystems and managing natural resources, and in areas such as farming, forestry and fisheries (LEG, 2015; Miranda et al., 2022), but also in the areas of science, innovation and entrepreneurship, among others.

Locally and community-based adaptation action carried out by women's groups is an example of how implementation can increase the participation of women. Moreover, the most recent assessment by the IPCC shows that ecosystem-based adaptation strategies have the strongest positive links with the targets of SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment (Prakash et al., 2022).

#### **EXAMPLE: Guatemala**

Guatemala incorporated gender considerations in its NDC as a cross-cutting issue. The Government developed and implemented a specific gender strategy while formulating its NDC, and enacted a participatory review process by representatives of the gender offices in relevant agencies to ensure that the proposed actions contribute to reducing women-specific vulnerabilities to climate change, and that women benefit from the measures included in the NDC (Government of Guatemala, 2021).

The NDC lists concrete ecosystem- and community-based gender-responsive adaptation actions that aim to increase resilience and adaptive capacity, while empowering women and ensuring they adequately participate in the programmes. These actions include, among others, restoring and reforesting mangrove ecosystems with the full participation of women's groups; managing fisheries with an ecosystem approach with the participation of women; approving new marine and coastal natural protected areas that sought input from women and their participation during the technical assessment stage; and ensuring that at least 30% of forest areas is under the management of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women (Government of Guatemala, 2021).

#### **EXAMPLE: Bhungroo, a gender-just climate solutions award-winning project**

Bhungroo is a rainwater harvesting technology developed locally in response to recurring droughts and floods that affected agricultural land. The system filters, injects and stores excess rainwater underground, which is then used for irrigation in agriculture during dry periods. Each unit can store 1–4 million l floodwater and irrigate more than 9 ha during the dry season. The technology contributes to climate change adaptation by enhancing food security and mitigating floods and droughts in the context of changing weather patterns. The project was developed in Gujarat, India, and has now expanded to other parts of the country, as well as to Bangladesh, Ghana, Madagascar and Togo (CTCN, 2021; WECF International and women and gender constituency, 2022; Naireeta Services, 2023).

Furthermore, the project aims to advance the empowerment of women through a co-ownership model based on women's self-help groups. Each system is installed with a standard protocol under which it is jointly owned by five low-income women. The women co-owners undergo training on building and maintaining the system, enabling them to become women climate leaders. Their role in providing water for the community, as well as their increased income, helps them to become financially independent, obtain formal land ownership and take part in community governance (CTCN, 2021; WECF International and women and gender constituency, 2022; Naireeta Services, 2023).



Gender-responsive monitoring, evaluation and learning is crucial to assessing whether adaptation policies have met their gender equality and women's empowerment objectives, and whether they have had unintended consequences related to gender, as well as to make the necessary adjustments for the future. Gender-

differentiated data on the outcomes, as well as gender-specific indicators, are needed to make a proper assessment. Furthermore, gender-responsive monitoring, evaluation and learning uses an inclusive and participatory process that incorporates the voices of all stakeholders, including women (UN Women, 2015; UNDP, 2018).

### EXAMPLE: Spain

In its adaptation communication, Spain presented its monitoring, reporting and evaluation methodology for reducing the impacts and risks of, and vulnerabilities to, climate change and enhancing adaptive capacity. Monitoring and evaluation processes are recognized as having a strategic value in guiding adaptation action, and as essential for recognizing relevant trends of the impacts of climate change, measuring implementation progress, and systematizing and applying acquired knowledge (Government of Spain, 2021).

Spain's monitoring, reporting and evaluation system includes national climate risks and adaptation reports – to be prepared every five years –, climate change and adaptation indicators, and a digital platform that gathers relevant information on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation (Government of Spain, 2021).

The adaptation indicators are contained in Spain's NAP, which includes gender as one of its cross-cutting principles. In this regard, the NAP includes specific qualitative compliance indicators for integrating a gender perspective in adaptation programmes:

- a. Having sex-disaggregated data on exposure, vulnerability and climate change impacts for different areas;
- b. Including specific indicators to understand gender inequalities and their evolution for adaptation initiatives;
- c. Integrating gender differences in adaptation responses, including those related to technology, education, information, and sustainable lifestyles; and
- d. Developing concrete actions to eliminate obstacles to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in adaptation (Government of Spain, 2020).

Ensuring adequate means of implementation and support is crucial to advancing gender-responsive adaptation planning and implementation. In this regard, capacity-building, for example through targeted training, and climate finance, including through gender-responsive budgeting, are essential for governments and other

implementing organizations to meet their gender-related objectives on adaptation.<sup>3</sup> Prioritizing the allocation of funds to projects that enhance gender equality and women's empowerment, investing in women's skills and directly providing funding to women-led adaptation projects are some of the ways in which this can be achieved.

<sup>3</sup> See document FCCC/TP/2013/11.

**EXAMPLE: Guinea-Bissau**

In its updated NDC, Guinea-Bissau identified adaptation projects that have developed gender action plans and gender-sensitive budget activities, such as initiatives on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable coastal areas and enhancing climate information and early warning systems. The projects use the UNDP gender marker system for gender budgeting to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the projects' objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment, and to ensure that this budget allocation is tracked (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2019; Government of Guinea-Bissau, 2021).

Guinea-Bissau's NDC also highlighted a project of the Association of Women with Economic Activities in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for training women on food safety, fruit and vegetable processing and conservation, entrepreneurship, and business opportunities in the field of food safety, as part of ongoing activities to enhance resilience through capacity-building (Government of Guinea-Bissau, 2021).



Image credit: ©unsplash/anniespratt

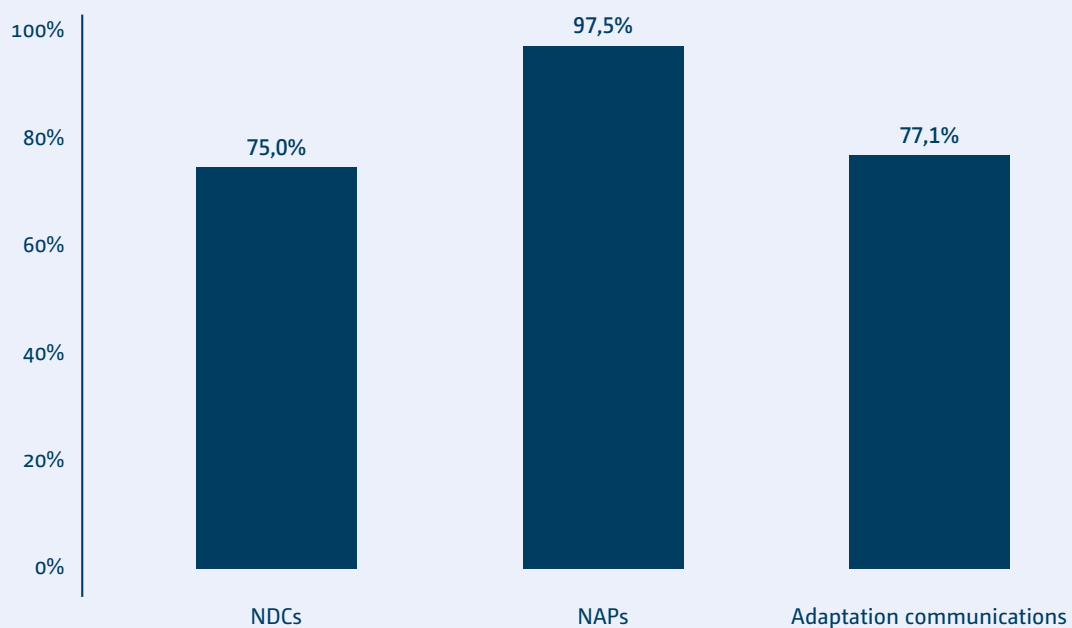
## 4

# PROGRESS MADE IN ADVANCING GENDER-RESPONSIVE ADAPTATION ACTION UNDER THE CONVENTION AND THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Parties to the Convention and the Paris Agreement have increasingly applied a gender-responsive approach to adaptation planning and implementation, as reflected by their NAPs, NDCs

and adaptation communications. According to the latest assessments for 2022, 75% of all NDCs,<sup>4</sup> 97.5% of NAPs<sup>5</sup> and 77.1% of adaptation communications<sup>6</sup> include gender considerations.

**FIGURE 1.** Percentage of Parties' reports that refer to gender (as of 2022)



4 See document FCCC/PA/CMA/2022/4.

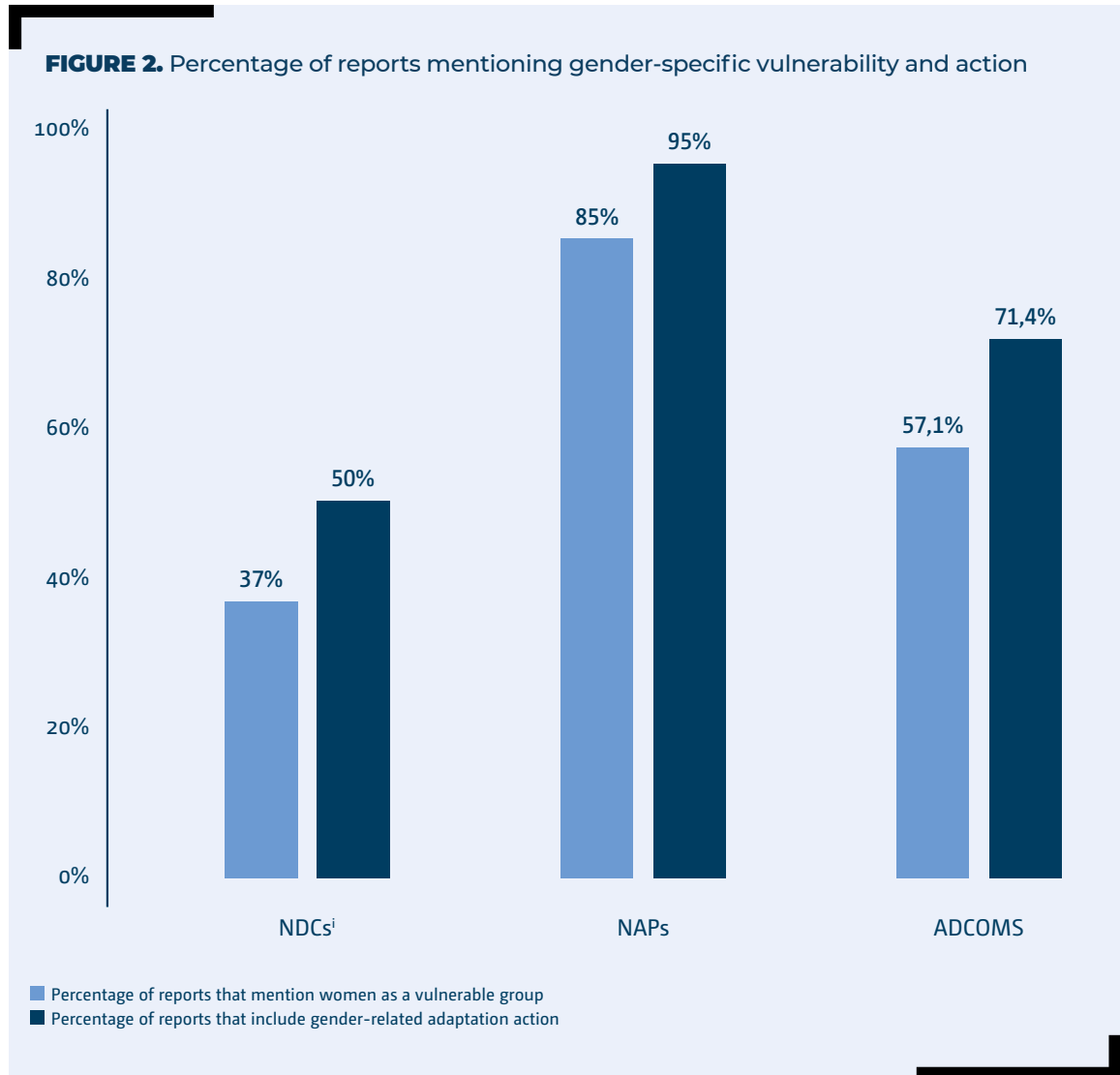
5 Considering NAPs submitted up to December 2022.

6 Considering adaptation communications submitted as separate documents or as part of national communications up to December 2022.

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Reports integrate gender mainly into two categories: recognizing the specific vulnerabilities that women and gender and sexual minorities face as a consequence of climate change;

and including adaptation goals and actions that advance gender equality and women’s empowerment, or at least ensure these are not negatively affected by adaptation policies.



<sup>i</sup>For this analysis, only the NDCs submitted until December 2022 that include information on adaptation were considered.

There is a clear upward trend in the percentage of NDCs that mention gender, from 35% for NDCs submitted in 2020 to 90% for those submitted in 2021 or 2022. Of these submissions, 50% considered that gender is a cross-cutting issue or considered gender with a particular or exclusive focus on adaptation.<sup>7</sup>

The regions that most frequently included gender and/or considerations on women in their NDCs were Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia and the Pacific (IUCN, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> See document FCCC/CP/2022/6.

Parties included in their NDCs gender-responsive actions on different aspects of climate planning and implementation, such as gender-differentiated vulnerability assessment and gender analysis, including through gender-disaggregated data; consultations with relevant stakeholders; the inclusion of gender-specific objectives and activities; gender-specific funding, budgeting, capacity-building and technology; and gender-specific and/or gender-disaggregated indicators to monitor and track progress. Parties included different levels of detail regarding these actions and goals in their NDCs, including examples of specific activities that are planned or being implemented. Moreover, some Parties included in their NDCs elements of multidimensionality to the gender considerations (e.g. the vulnerabilities of Indigenous or low-income women), non-binary understandings of gender or specific sectors, including energy, agriculture, health, water, land use and forestry.

Furthermore, there is a qualitative shift in the integration of gender considerations in their NDCs, including in the adaptation sections. An increasing number of Parties characterized women as agents of change in their updated NDCs, instead of portraying them only as a vulnerable group, and recognized gender-responsiveness as an element contributing to the overall ambition and effectiveness of climate action.<sup>8</sup>

A similar trend can be identified regarding gender considerations in NAPs. A growing number of NAPs incorporate gender responsiveness and identify women as agents of change, as opposed to only as a vulnerable group or stakeholders in the adaptation planning process (Dazé and Hunter, 2022).

The majority of NAPs emphasized the inclusion of women, Indigenous Peoples groups and/or youth as a goal or guiding principle. Furthermore, different countries reported that

they have specifically considered women in key activities, such as consultations, training, information management and decision-making on climate change adaptation at all levels.<sup>9</sup> However, the focus of gender integration in NAPs tends to be exclusively on women.<sup>10</sup>

Most NAPs included gender considerations regarding capacity-building, knowledge management and gender mainstreaming in adaptation planning and action (82%), while the majority of NAPs (61%) mentions women's participation and leadership in decision-making spaces and planning. Parties included participatory implementation of adaptation policies and gender-responsive means of implementation (funding and budgeting, capacity-building and training, and technology) in 32% of the NAPs. Gender was also considered in NAPs in the context of monitoring and evaluation through gender-disaggregated data and indicators.<sup>11</sup>

Progress has been made with regard to gender analysis and consideration of gender in institutional arrangements for adaptation, with a growing number of NAPs showing evidence of having conducted gender analysis as part of the planning process and an increase in the inclusion of the government agencies responsible for gender issues in institutional arrangements for adaptation planning and implementation (Dazé and Hunter, 2022). Intersectionality and a sectoral approach were also incorporated in some NAPs, with Parties showcasing examples of gender-responsive projects and policies planned to take place or already implemented.

Furthermore, most NAPs provide entry points for a deeper and more consistent integration of gender considerations in future iterations of NAPs, as well as for developing stronger gender-responsive implementation, communication strategies, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.<sup>12</sup>

8 See document FCCC/CP/2022/6.

9 See document FCCC/SBI/2022/19. (The analysis refers to NAPs submitted between November 2021 and October 2022.)

10 See document FCCC/SBI/2018/INF.1.

11 See document FCCC/CP/2022/6.

12 See document FCCC/SBI/2018/INF.1.



Gender responsiveness also features prominently in adaptation communications. The assessment of gender-specific vulnerabilities, including at the sectoral level, is integrated in many cases. Parties have reported mainstreaming gender in their climate change adaptation strategies and institutionalizing gender-responsiveness through laws and regulations, as well as by involving and/or creating gender agencies and focal points. In the adaptation communications submitted so

far, Parties have reported undertaking initiatives pertaining to gender-related capacity-building, knowledge and communication (37%), women's participation and leadership (51%) and gender-responsive implementation, resource allocation and support (51%). Some Parties have also reported working on the monitoring and evaluation of gender-related outcomes. Lastly, the adaptation communications identify many examples of relevant gender-responsive policies and programmes that are being undertaken.



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## GAPS AND NEEDS

In their NAPs, NDCs and adaptation communications, Parties identify several gaps and needs related to effectively integrating gender responsiveness in adaptation planning and implementation. A widely mentioned challenge is the lack of sufficient gender-disaggregated data related to the impacts of climate change and vulnerabilities, as well other information and knowledge needed to develop gender-responsive adaptation policies.

Parties have signalled that there is not an equitable representation of women in decision-making spaces relevant to climate change adaptation in all cases or at all levels, which hinders gender-responsive action by failing to integrate women's perspectives on their own needs and assets.

The lack of an enabling legal and institutional environment to advance gender-responsiveness in adaptation policies, including incentive mechanisms, is also highlighted. This includes the need to further mainstream gender considerations in relevant plans and strategies, including at the sectoral level.

Another obstacle mentioned by Parties is the need for further funding and financial resources allocated to gender-responsive and participatory adaptation planning processes,

and to implementing projects. In particular, Parties signal that women are less able to access financial resources for adaptation than men. Equally, more efforts need to be made for capacity-building, training and awareness-raising for government officials, implementing agencies, communities and women's groups to advocate for, develop and implement gender-responsive adaptation actions. In this regard, the lack of gender specialists and/or focal points in relevant ministries or agencies is stressed by Parties.

Parties emphasize the absence of common metrics, indicators, and monitoring and evaluation systems that can help Parties and organizations to track and assess progress made on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through adaptation policies and programmes.

Further efforts in strengthening vertical integration between subnational and national adaptation processes are needed (Dazé and Hunter, 2022).

On the positive side, Parties have identified solutions and options to overcome these challenges, including through specific projects, policies, and cooperation and funding mechanisms to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in adaptation action.



### EXAMPLE: Albania

In its revised NDC, Albania highlighted some of the specific gaps and needs that the country has faced in incorporating gender responsiveness in climate action, including on adaptation. One of the gaps is the limited availability of data on gender and climate change. For example, there are no studies on the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in sectors such as energy, and only a few ministries collect gender-disaggregated data on issues related to climate change. Furthermore, the limited presence of women in key decision-making spheres is also identified as a barrier to progress on gender-responsive climate action. Additionally, many climate-related policies and laws do not address gender issues systematically (Government of Albania, 2022).

To address these gaps and needs, Albania's NDC identified policies and measures to bring about change, including a government mandate to update the majority of the strategies related to gender equality, changes to the education system and the participation of Albania in relevant multilateral agreements on gender equality and climate change (Government of Albania, 2022).



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## 「6」

UNFCCC'S WORK ON  
GENDER-RESPONSIVE  
ADAPTATION,  
PARTICULARLY  
ACTIVITIES OF  
THE ADAPTATION  
COMMITTEE AND NAP  
TASK FORCE

Parties to the Convention and the Paris Agreement have recognized the importance of considering and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment when acting on climate change. Parties discuss gender and climate change at each COP session through a dedicated agenda item and have established specific mechanisms to advance gender balance and achieve gender-responsive climate policies and actions, such as the Lima work programme on gender.<sup>13</sup> At the twenty-fifth session of the COP, Parties agreed on an enhanced five-year Lima work programme on gender and gender action plan, which

sets out objectives and activities under five priority areas.<sup>14</sup> The intermediate review of the implementation of the gender action plan took place at the twenty-seventh session of the COP, which included amendments to existing deliverables and the establishment of new activities.<sup>15</sup>

Parties to the Paris Agreement acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a gender-responsive approach.<sup>16</sup> In this regard, gender-responsiveness is considered and promoted in adaptation action, including through the relevant activities of constituted bodies.<sup>17</sup>

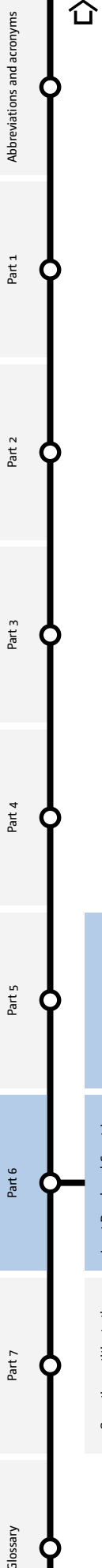
13 Decision 18/CP.20.

14 Decision 3/CP.25.

15 Decision 24/CP.27.

16 Paris Agreement, Article 7, para. 5.

17 The COP requested all constituted bodies to continue to include in their regular reports information on progress towards integrating a gender perspective into their processes (decision 3/CP.25, para. 12) and invited them to enhance implementation of the gender action plan (decision 24/CP.27, para. 17).



## 6.1 Adaptation Committee

In line with its mandates, the AC has over the past years incorporated gender into its work as a cross-cutting consideration and looks to enhance the consideration of gender in adaptation planning and action through various activities and products, including the joint AC, LEG and NAP Global Network toolkit on a gender-responsive process to formulate and implement NAPs (NAP Global Network and UNFCCC, 2019).

An assessment of recent efforts by the AC to incorporate gender considerations into adaptation action and the AC workplan activities showed good progress in the different indicators and activities, including on the number of women in the composition of the AC;<sup>18</sup> attendance of AC members in gender-relevant events; numbers of female speakers in AC events; collaboration and partnership with other constituted bodies and relevant organizations to enhance gender consideration in adaptation action; the inclusion of gender considerations in technical papers and reports prepared by the AC; and the provision of guidance on how best to incorporate gender considerations into adaptation action.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, in its 2022–2024 flexible workplan, the AC decided to “advance provision of technical support through the work of the NAP task force, including by [...] mainstreaming gender considerations in adaptation planning and implementation”,<sup>20</sup> and will continue to incorporate gender-responsiveness in all its workstreams.

## 6.2 Least Developed Countries Expert Group

The LEG is mandated through decision 10/CP.27, paragraph 13, to support the LDCs in integrating gender considerations into the formulation and implementation of NAPs. The promotion of gender considerations is therefore an integral part of the LEG work programme, including the work programme for 2023–2024.

The LEG will continue to apply a gender-responsive lens when developing technical guidelines, toolkits and publications, engaging appropriate experts, drawing upon the experience of the LDCs, mobilizing support for the LDCs, catalysing implementation, and promoting best practices and lessons learned.

The NAP Expos organized by the LEG remain key to facilitating the integration of gender considerations into the formulation and implementation of NAPs. Sessions on gender considerations in both adaptation planning and implementation remains a key feature of the programme. The LEG plans to hold technical sessions on this matter at NAP Expos in 2023 and 2024.

The LEG has also established a multi-stakeholder forums subgroup under the NAP Technical Working Group to engage multiple stakeholders, including local communities, Indigenous Peoples, smallholder farmers, the private sector, women and youth, in the process to formulate and implement NAPs and advise on integrating gender considerations into the products and activities of the LEG in 2023.

In addition, the LEG continues to report the progress of developing countries in strengthening gender considerations in adaptation actions through the annual progress report on NAPs. The LEG is making use of the UNFCCC gender action plan and ensuring that the gaps identified in implementing the action plan are considered when developing activities to support the LDCs.

<sup>18</sup> Members of the AC are nominated by Parties in their respective groups or constituencies and elected by the COP, in accordance with its rules of procedure as endorsed by decision 11/CP.18.

<sup>19</sup> Document AC19/INFO/5C.

<sup>20</sup> Annex to document FCCC/SB/2021/6.

### 6.3 Operating entities of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism

The operating entities of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism have all undertaken actions to mainstream gender in their operations and actively implement gender-responsive directives. This is captured, for example, in the Global Environment Facility's Policy on Gender Equality,<sup>21</sup> the Green

Climate Fund's Gender Policy,<sup>22</sup> and the latest Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan of the Adaptation Fund<sup>23</sup> and Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Parties to the Convention have encouraged the operating entities to consider enhancing support for implementing gender-related activities and to strengthen their gender policies.<sup>25</sup>



Image credit: ©WMO

- 21 See annex I to document GEF/C.53/04 at [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF.C.53.04\\_Gender\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.53.04_Gender_Policy.pdf).
- 22 See document GCF/B.24/12 at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-gender-policy.pdf>.
- 23 See document at [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/OPG-Annex-4\\_GP-and-GAP\\_approved-March2021pdf-1.pdf](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/OPG-Annex-4_GP-and-GAP_approved-March2021pdf-1.pdf).
- 24 See document at [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/AF\\_GenderGuidanceDocument\\_Final\\_15Aug-2022\\_clean\\_16Aug-clean-3.pdf](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/AF_GenderGuidanceDocument_Final_15Aug-2022_clean_16Aug-clean-3.pdf).
- 25 Most recently through decisions 16/CP.27 and 17/CP.27.





# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Climate change has context-specific differentiated impacts on women, men, and gender and sexual minorities because of gender-related social norms and relationships of power, distribution in the labour market by sector, access to property and resources, and other intersectional factors. In many cases, this means that women, and gender and sexual minorities are disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

On the other hand, women, and gender and sexual minorities may hold social roles and/or have specific assets, knowledge, experience, or networks that are crucial to ensuring the resilience of the whole community. Therefore, empowering women, and gender and sexual minorities to act on adaptation is key for the overall effectiveness of adaptation efforts.

In this regard, applying a gender-responsive approach to adaptation planning and implementation is crucial to actively advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through adaptation policies, and to ensuring that actions taken to increase resilience do not inadvertently reinforce inequalities.

Through gender-responsive approaches, women, and gender and sexual minorities are part of all decision-making spaces, and gender objectives and activities are incorporated in all phases of the adaptation cycle: assessment of impacts, vulnerability and risks; planning;

implementation of adaptation measures; and monitoring and evaluation. Equally, ensuring adequate means of implementation and support, including finance, technology and capacity building, is crucial to advancing gender-responsiveness in adaptation plans and actions.

Parties to the Convention and the Paris Agreement have increasingly applied a gender-responsive approach to adaptation planning and implementation, as reflected by their NAPs, NDCs and adaptation communications. At the same time, the different workstreams under the Convention have advanced efforts towards enhancing gender-responsiveness in climate action, including on adaptation. The work of constituted bodies is an important part of this endeavour.

However, Parties have signalled several gaps and challenges to implementing gender-responsive adaptation, including a lack of gender-disaggregated data and relevant information, inequitable representation of women, and gender and sexual minorities in decision-making spaces, a lack of an enabling legal and institutional environment, the need for further means of implementation and support, and an absence of common gender-specific metrics, indicators, and monitoring and evaluation systems. These barriers need to be addressed in order to effectively advance gender equality and women's empowerment through adaptation action.



In this regard, Parties have highlighted examples of good practices and lessons learned that can be applied to strengthen gender responsiveness and counter some of the identified gaps and needs. These include:

- a. Strengthening the capacity of national and local government offices to collect gender-disaggregated data related to the impacts of climate change and relevant socioeconomic variables;
- b. Conducting gender analysis and gender-specific vulnerability assessments in the planning stage of adaptation plans and policies to critically assess context specificities for women, gender-diverse people and men in all their diversity, avoid exacerbating existing inequalities and inform actions oriented towards promoting gender equality;
- c. Ensuring that women, men, and sexual and gender minorities have equitable representation in adaptation-related decision-making spaces, and implementing participatory approaches and consultations with relevant groups and stakeholders;
- d. Involving gender ministries in adaptation planning and having gender focal points in relevant ministries and government agencies that are tasked with ensuring that adaptation strategies take into account gender considerations;
- e. Having specific gender-related objectives and activities, and seeking synergies with other SDGs, when designing adaptation policies;
- f. Empowering women's groups and relevant stakeholders to implement adaptation actions, including by supporting women-led initiatives;
- g. Implementing locally and community-based projects, as well as ecosystem-based adaptation programmes, that have synergies with and present opportunities for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment;
- h. Including gender-specific indicators and measuring gender-differentiated impacts in the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation actions;
- i. Providing adequate funding for gender-responsive goals and activities, including through gender budgeting;
- j. Providing training to relevant planning and implementing agencies and organizations on gender responsiveness, and providing capacity-building to women working on adaptation.

Finally, and in order to support Parties in addressing the technical needs to implement gender-responsive adaptation planning and action, constituted bodies under the Convention and the Paris Agreement are collaborating and will continue to work together to provide Parties with relevant tools, knowledge and guidelines.



# GLOSSARY

**Gender:** “Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to 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 determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, as are other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sexual orientation, age, etc.” (UN Women Training Centre).

**Gender analysis:** “Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/ entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between females and males and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions, and that, where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted.” (UN Women Training Centre).

**Gender equality** (equality between women and men): “This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or

female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. 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 seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.” (UN Women Training Centre).

**Gender mainstreaming:** “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” (UN Women Training Centre).

**Gender-responsive approaches** are those that examine and actively address gender norms, roles and inequalities (WHO, 2009). Gender-responsive approaches go beyond sensitivity to gender differences in that they actively seek to promote gender equality (CARE and International Center for Research on Women, 2007; WHO, 2009). This often involves specific actions to empower women in their households and communities as well as broader policy and planning processes (Burns and Lee, 2015).

**Women’s empowerment:** “The empowerment of women concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.” (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, 2001).

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