

Opening Speech

Virtual EGM on: Gender Equality in Climate Change: Analysis report on Gender in Climate Change Policies, Programs and NDC Processes.

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Distinguished participants, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, I am pleased to be here to open this very important Expert Group Meeting for the validation of the study entitled “Gender Equality in Climate Change: Analysis report on Gender in Climate Change Policies, Programs and NDC Processes.”

The current global climate crisis and the COVID19 crisis has further underlined the world’s vulnerability- and the inability of our current development approaches to resolve these most urgent problems.

The crisis of inclusion is not new. But the impacts are more pronounced as inequities are further laid bare by our inability to respond effectively.

Thus our shared goal for a green recovery, must be an inclusive recovery. We need inclusion in terms of gender- and also in terms of African youth, and all those who are currently marginalized. Unfortunately, the majority of Africa’s economic activity remains informal- and this further marginalises vulnerable groups.

As you already know, Climate change impacts are not gender-neutral; women are disproportionately and, often, more severely affected by its impacts around the world. This distortion is even more severely felt here in Africa.

Gender-based inequities lead women to face more adverse climate change impacts than men. The same holds true with disasters: women are particularly exposed to disaster risks and are likely to suffer more.

Several underlying factors exacerbate women’s vulnerability to the impacts of disasters, including limited livelihood options, restricted access to education and basic services, lack of income, discriminatory social, cultural and legal norms and practices. Women are under-represented in decision-making processes at local, national and international levels. Their needs and concerns are not often adequately integrated into development programming and policy. Progressive policy intervention is needed to lessen the impact of climate change and address vulnerability of women and girls.

Gender inequalities exacerbate vulnerabilities to climate shocks and affect ways in which men and women experience, cope and get affected by climate change. In many African communities, the gender roles of women place them as primary food producers and providers of water and fuel for their families. These roles, therefore, are often heavy as they place greater responsibility for family and community welfare disproportionately on women and girls.

Development policies in Africa, especially those in climate sensitive related sectors like environment, agriculture, climate, energy and water sectors across most African countries have not sufficiently integrated gender and the differential impact of climate change on men and women and on boys and girls.

While Africa is responsible for approximately only 4% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, it still bears the brunt of climate change and its related costs.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation in most of the continent's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) focuses respectively on managing energy consumption through a transition to clean renewable energy and building a resilient agriculture focused on Climate Smart Agriculture.

Since women form more than 60% of the total population of agriculture in Africa, it is expected that improving that sector and making it gender sensitive and climate resilient will benefit women.

Making the transition from fossil fuels to renewable, low-carbon energy sources will be costly without assistance on the means of implementation as provided for in the Paris Agreement. We must emphasise that by addressing Africa's energy gap, we would be making significant progress towards creating new opportunities for women led SMEs to better position themselves in numerous sectors, and leverage the promise of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Addressing the 'last mile' connections in electricity access through sustainable and renewable sources will be a significant step towards

And as far as adaptation is concerned, the costs represent a huge burden on African countries in particular. The recently released WMO report on the State of the climate in Africa to which ACPC was a key contributor, showed that African countries are having to spend between 2 and 9% of GDP on actions to address environmental disasters or environmental degradation. These impacts disproportionately affect women as already illustrated.

Climate change represents one of the most challenging threats to inclusive and sustainable development in Africa. It is a stress multiplier and its detrimental effects can be felt in the short-term through frequent recurring weather shocks, such as intermittent rainfall, floods and cyclones; and in the long-term, through more gradual degradation of the environment. Climate change affects mostly those dependent on natural resources and whose livelihood are climate sensitive.

Conversely- a focus on clean low carbon energy investment, sustainable climate smart food production systems, and investment in nature based solutions can be an opportunity multiplier, which in particular can enhance women's participation in wealth creation and economic benefits.

This report focuses on two commitments with an aim to highlight gender perspectives in climate change policies. A particular focus on i) African countries' NDC formulation processes highlighting the factors contributing to gender related climate change vulnerability and ii) the gender responsiveness of adaptation and mitigation mechanisms that will mitigate the vulnerabilities of disproportionately affected

groups, particularly women and youth. But as this report will also show, many African governments across their relevant departments require support in the formulation and implementation of their NDCs.

The key findings and recommendations of the report for your consideration and validation are:

- a) To promote the participation of women in leadership, government departments and climate change institutions with an ultimate aim of shifting the view of women as victims
- b) To ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies are in line with other development priorities supported by gender disaggregated data
- c) To develop capacity of policy makers at the national and sub- national levels and awareness-raising as integral to climate change and integration climate change policy and planning in all sectors.
- d) To include gender in financing mechanisms so that they are designed to generate mutual benefits, not exacerbate patterns of inequity when implementing adaptation and mitigation options.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear participants

I have no doubt the study will benefit from your invaluable experience in the subject matter coupled with positive criticism will improve the report and help us have a solid final document which can serve member states to mainstream gender in climate change and remain cognizant of gender details when redesigning their NDCs.

I wish you fruitful deliberations

I Thank you