

NOVEMBER 2015

GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Strengthening climate action by promoting gender equality

- Women and men are experiencing climate change differently, as **gender inequalities persist** around the world, **affecting the ability of individuals and communities to adapt**.
- **Recognising the important contributions of women as decision makers, stakeholders, educators, carers and experts** across sectors and at all levels can lead to **successful, long-term solutions to climate change**.
- **Women have proven to be leading the way towards more equitable and sustainable solutions to climate change**. Across sectors, women's innovations and expertise have transformed lives and livelihoods, and increased climate resilience and overall well-being.
- Global negotiations have increasingly reflected the growing understanding of gender considerations in climate decision making over the last eight years. **Continued progress towards gender equality at COP21 can help achieve successful climate action**.

What is the issue?

Across societies the impacts of climate change affect women and men differently. Women are often responsible for gathering and producing food, collecting water and sourcing fuel for heating and cooking. With climate change, these tasks are becoming more difficult. Extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have a greater impact on the poor and most vulnerable – 70% of the world's poor are women.

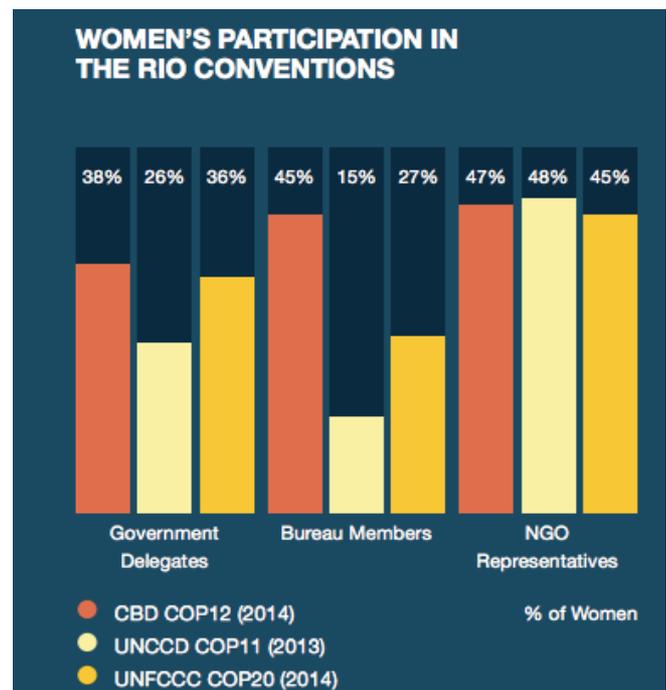
Despite women being disproportionately affected by climate change, they play a crucial role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Women have the knowledge and understanding of what is needed to adapt to changing environmental conditions and to come up with practical solutions. But they are still a largely untapped resource. Restricted land rights, lack of access to financial resources, training and technology, and limited access to political decision-making spheres often prevent them from playing a full role in tackling climate change and other environmental challenges.

Unleashing the knowledge and capability of women represents an important opportunity to craft effective climate change solutions for the benefit of all.

Why is this important?

Climate change represents the most complex challenge of our time – it requires a concerted, proactive and holistic response. Gender inequality may dramatically limit the resilience and adaptive

capacity of women, families and communities. It may also restrict options for climate change mitigation.



Evidence shows that women's empowerment and advancing gender equality can deliver results across a variety of sectors, including food and economic security and health. It can also lead to more environmentally friendly decision making at household and national levels.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30% which could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4%.

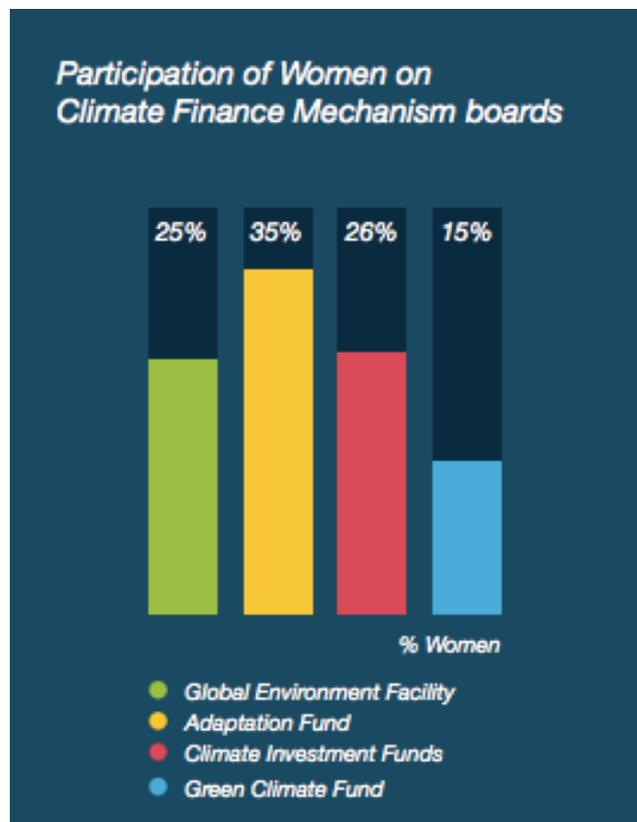
Raising women's labour force participation to country-specific male levels would raise GDP in the United States by 5%, in Japan by 9%, in the United Arab Emirates by 12% and in Egypt by 34% according to a report by the International Monetary Fund.

What can be done?

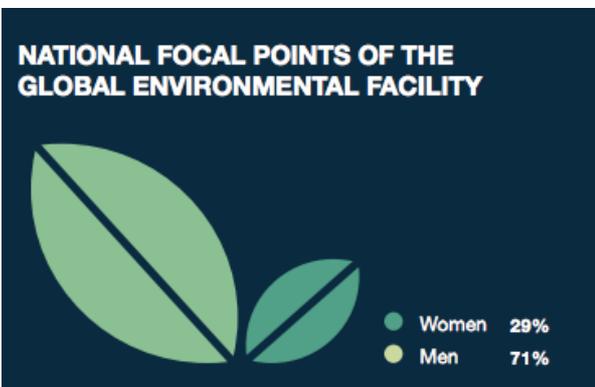
United Nations climate change negotiations, void of gender-related texts and discussions until 2008, have more recently reflected an increased understanding of the links between gender equality and responding to climate change. The Lima Work Programme on Gender adopted at COP20 in 2014, for example, promotes gender balance and achieving gender-responsive climate policy. A gender-responsive outcome at COP21 in Paris would set the standard for implementation.

It is important to ensure equal space and resources for women and men to participate in climate change decision making and action at all levels.

Climate finance should be accessible to both men and women and designed to generate mutual benefits, not exacerbate patterns of inequity.



*The graphics and data above are from IUCN's Environment and Gender Index: <http://genderandenvironment.org/egi/>



At national and subnational levels, important steps forward include the design and planning of policies, programmes and projects, as well as financing, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

In particular, investing in participatory, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral Climate Change Gender Action Plans can help countries to develop comprehensive action that integrates gender concerns and builds on women's unique knowledge and perspectives.

Where can I get more information?

- <http://genderandenvironment.org/>
- IUCN's new publication *Roots for the Future: the Landscape and Way Forward on Gender and Climate Change* is being launched at COP21 on Tuesday, 8 December
- Contact: globalgenderoffice@iucn.org
Twitter: IUCN_Gender



More on IUCN at COP21