

# Gender in Mitigation Actions

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## GENDER IN MITIGATION INITIATIVES

To effectively, efficiently, and equitably respond to climate change, countries must develop gender-responsive mitigation and adaptation strategies—not least because women are among those disproportionately and adversely affected by climate change and are seldom included in relevant decision-making processes to identify and implement solutions. Mitigation actions are measures undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and harnessing the experiences, expertise, and ideas of women and men alike is essential for full mitigation power. Governments, institutions and agencies have been slow to consider ways in which women and gender considerations can be well integrated in mitigation planning—but the trend may be improving, as this Brief discusses.

Progress towards recognizing the need to address gender equality in climate change initiatives has been gradual, but over the last eight years, more than 50 decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) now support the recognition and integration of gender considerations.<sup>1</sup> Built into these decisions are programme and reporting mechanisms designed to support and promote countries' mitigation efforts. The most well known of these mechanisms is the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which offers developed countries an opportunity to earn credit by implementing emissions reduction projects in developing nations. A 2012 assessment of CDM projects concluded that only five of the 3,864 projects (0.13%) assessed at the time included gender considerations within project documentation.<sup>1,2</sup> By 2015, however, additional mechanisms have been established to support countries through processes to plan their mitigation activities—and some of these processes reveal greater attention toward women's and gender concerns.

To understand the manner in which gender-responsive decisions are being translated into mitigation instruments agreed under the UNFCCC, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Global Gender Office (GGO), through its Gender Equality for Climate Change Opportunities (GECCO) Initiative,<sup>ii</sup> examined three other mitigation programme and reporting mechanisms: the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), which often contain mention of a country's CDM strategy; Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs); and Low-Emission Development Strategies (LEDS). These mechanisms are expected to play a large role in international mitigation efforts in the post-2015 framework and are, in many cases, revising and reorienting sustainable development more broadly.

## THE ROLE OF ENERGY IN MITIGATION INITIATIVES

Energy is at the core of climate change mitigation discussions, as its production and consumption account for two-thirds of GHG emissions.<sup>3</sup> Given that energy access is a strong determining factor for development, there is a need to both guide and ensure large scale emission reductions while sustaining a growing global economy, improving energy security and bringing access to modern energy services to the billions of people who lack it today.

Renewable energy options have tremendous potential to support the dual goal of achieving energy access and security while reducing GHG emissions. Additionally, renewable energy options can expand women's energy access and combat energy poverty, given their capacity to address women's economic, health and immediate survival needs. Women are important positive change agents through their role as key energy managers and their participation in the renewable energy sector and value chain, including the design, production, servicing and marketing of these technologies.

<sup>i</sup> Gender considerations are included via the CDM indicator for "empowerment of women, care of children and the frail", which is noted as women's access to education and training, and enhancement of their societal position.

<sup>ii</sup> GECCO is a five-year program launched by USAID and IUCN in 2014. GECCO's overall goal is to leverage advancements in women's empowerment and gender equality through, and for, the benefit of climate change and development outcomes

## A GENDER ASSESSMENT OF THE INTENDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (INDCs)

In Decisions 1./CP19 and 1./CP20, the UNFCCC invites all Parties to the Convention to submit INDCs in advance of the December 2015 negotiations in Paris. INDCs are countries' transparent commitments that outline their national ambitions to reduce GHG emissions.

INDCs can include targeted emissions reductions via mitigation and/or adaptation actions. Countries are encouraged to ensure that INDCs are ambitious in addressing both mitigation and adaptation. However, depending on the development status of the country, the scope and priority focus areas differ. INDCs should go beyond determined emission reductions to include climate equity factors, such as human development, resilience to climate change impacts, economic capacity and gender equality, in their national ambitions.

References to gender and women in these national policies reinforce the link between gender and climate change as a relevant issue in the negotiations for a global framework for climate change action

and implementation programming. It is essential to consider the various ways Parties view women within the descriptions of their national commitments, which may include women as vulnerable victims to the impacts of climate change, women as stakeholders for a climate-resilient future, women as the beneficiaries of projects and/or women as agents of change in mitigation and adaptation measures.

The GGO examined the INDCs of the 187 Parties that submitted their documents as of January 18, 2016, for and as part of the UNFCCC COP 21 meeting in Paris. Of the 160<sup>iii</sup> submitted INDCs, 61 (37.5%) explicitly mention "gender" or "women" in the context of their national priorities and ambitions for reducing emissions. Three Parties—Liberia, Peru and Jordan—reference their Climate Change Gender Action Plans (ccGAPs)<sup>iv</sup> in their INDC communications. Three-fourths of sub-Saharan African Parties reference "gender" or "women" in their INDCs, making the region a global leader in integrating gender equality into sustainable development priorities.



**37.5%**

*Of the INDCs submitted as of 1/18/16, 37.5% explicitly mention "gender" and / or "women" in the context of their national priorities and ambitions for reducing emissions.*

Mitigation and adaptation are two fundamental facets of the UNFCCC. Within the context of the INDCs, most Parties approach mitigation by committing to GHG reduction targets. When included in a Party's INDC, the adaptation component includes country-specific vulnerabilities to climate change and identifies activities to adapt to its adverse impacts. In designing and developing mitigation and adaptation actions, Parties must recognize both women's vulnerability to climate change and their potential to participate in and contribute to these actions. Examining the references of women and gender within the INDCs reveals that 31 of the 61 INDCs that mention "gender" and/or "women" identify gender as a cross-cutting policy priority or commit to integrating or mainstreaming gender into all climate change actions, strategies and policies.

iii The 160 INDCs represent 187 Parties, as the European Union's INDC includes 28 country commitments.

iv Climate Change Gender Action Plans (ccGAPs) are national strategies to ensure that climate change actions and programmes are gender-responsive. Working with governments and local women, the IUCN GGO has developed ccGAPs—and related Gender and REDD+ Roadmaps—in 19 countries and regions as of 2015.

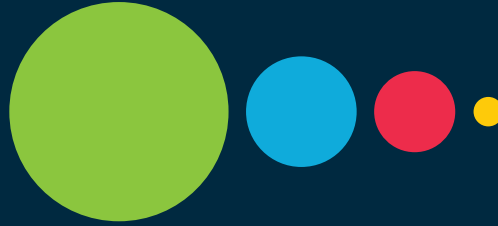
## Context of mentions of “women” and / or “gender” within INDCs

**15**

reference “women” or “gender” exclusively in their adaptation plans.

**31**

mention “women” and / or “gender” in both their adaptation and mitigation components, identify gender as a cross-cutting policy priority, or commit to either integrate or mainstream gender in all climate change actions and strategies.



**11**

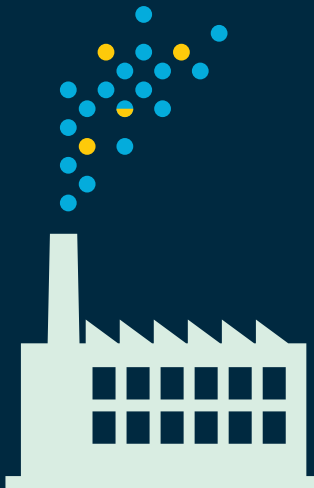
mention “women” or “gender” exclusively in their introduction or national context sections.

**4**

mention “women” or “gender” exclusively in their mitigation actions.\*

\* These countries are Gambia, Indonesia, Senegal and Zambia.

The total emissions of the 61 Parties that mention gender or women in their 2015 INDC divided by the global statistic reveals that these Parties account for only 18% of greenhouse gas emissions as per the 2012 baseline.<sup>v, 4</sup>



**18%**

of GHG emissions from 2012 were emitted by the 55 Parties that mention gender in their 2015 INDC;

**82%**

of emissions were from all other Parties.

Thus, an upward trend is clear, in that 37.5% of INDCs make mention of women and/or gender considerations, reflecting an increase in national recognition and understanding of gender and climate (and development) interlinkages. And yet, in order to achieve an equitable response to climate change, the world’s largest emitters must undertake gender-responsive climate actions.

<sup>v</sup> The World Resources Institute CAIT Climate Data Explorer Tool provides country and global data of GHG emissions, as recently as 2012.

# GENDER TRENDS IN NATIONALLY APPROPRIATE MITIGATION ACTIONS (NAMAs) AND LOW-EMISSION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (LEDS)

## NATIONALLY APPROPRIATE MITIGATION ACTIONS (NAMAs)

NAMAs are a voluntary set of mitigation contributions that developing country Parties to the UNFCCC propose to reduce GHG emissions. NAMAs were established in 2007 at UNFCCC COP13<sup>5</sup> as an element of the Bali Action Plan (Decision 1/CP.13), and the concept has been retained throughout subsequent COPs. As there is no international mandate establishing guidelines for NAMA development and implementation, NAMAs can take the form of national programmes, policies or regulations. NAMAs combine a set of mitigation efforts directed at promoting low-carbon growth within sectors of the national economy. Parties can design multiple NAMAs that target specific sectors, such as the energy, transportation, agriculture, waste, housing or forestry sectors.

As of November 2015, the UNFCCC's NAMA Registry<sup>vi</sup> reports 112 NAMAs actively seeking support for recognition, preparation or implementation, and the Ecofys NAMA Database<sup>vii</sup> houses information on 162 NAMAs from 41 different Parties, with 72 NAMA projects specific to the energy sector.<sup>6</sup> Releasing information on NAMAs, however is voluntary and at the discretion of governments and project sponsors, thus these databases rarely include comprehensive NAMA design documents. Without access to this key information for the purpose of a gender assessment, it is difficult to render a statistical analysis as to how gender is being integrated into NAMAs to date.

However, GGO was granted access to 8 energy-sector NAMA documents and found that 7 include mentions of “women” or “gender” in the proposed objectives or outcomes of the NAMA project. Of these energy-sector NAMAs reviewed, the gender component includes specific gender-responsive activities such as increasing electrification in rural households and improving the efficiency of biomass fuels for household energy uses. Additionally, the examination of these 8 energy-sector NAMAs also allowed for best practices in NAMA development to be identified, with several displayed on the map below on pages 6 and 7.

## LOW-EMISSION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (LEDS)

LEDS are national efforts that promote low-carbon growth within economies to achieve climate-resilient development.<sup>7</sup> The LEDS concept was first introduced at UNFCCC COP15 in 2008; the following year's Copenhagen Accord (2009) refers to LEDS as “indispensable to sustainable development.” Parties were first invited to develop LEDS at COP16 in 2010, through the resulting Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16).

Unlike the specific and targeted actions under a NAMA plan, LEDS are intended to be longer-term policy frameworks, such as national climate change policies or action plans. National energy, poverty alleviation, green growth and sustainable development strategies can be streamlined within the comprehensive LEDS. Unlike NAMAs, LEDS are instruments that can be implemented by both developing and developed Parties.

The International Partnership on Mitigation and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) houses a database on global LEDS to aid in information exchange, with the aim of supporting partnerships between developed and developing countries. As of November 2015, this database includes 86 LEDS. Like the NAMA databases, releasing LEDS information is at the discretion of governments and donor agencies; therefore, conducting a comprehensive gender assessment is not feasible. However, of the 27 LEDS acquired, 12 either identify women's vulnerability to climate change or commit to integrate gender into national policies.

Recognizing this relatively small sample size, these LEDS do suggest a positive trend in terms of increasing recognition and integration of gender concerns, given that—as indicated earlier in the Brief—the first mitigation mechanism (the CDM) saw a woefully inadequate integration of gender. The LEDS database reveals best practices of gender-inclusive mitigation activities, with three examples presented in the map below on pages 6 and 7.

vi The UNFCCC NAMA Registry is an online platform for Parties to facilitate information sharing and seek support in NAMA development

vii The NAMA Database, supported by the environmental consultancy Ecofys, is another online platform for NAMA knowledge exchange.

*Progressive trend of mentions of “women” and “gender” in mitigation activities.*

*CDM est. in 1997*

*NAMA est. in 2007*

*LEDS est. in 2010*

*INDCs est. in 2013*



*In a sample of 3,864 CDM projects, only 5 reference gender or women (2012)*

*Of 162 NAMAs registered to the Ecofys Database, at least 7 [out of 8 analyzed by GGO] address gender or women (2015)*

*Of the 86 LEDS registered in the MRV database, at least 12 [out of 27 analyzed by GGO] reference gender or women (2015)*

*Of the 160 INDCs submitted to the UNFCCC, 61 include references to women or gender (January 2016)*

## Powering Forward

Although efforts to integrate a gender component in energy activities at the household level improve the livelihoods of women around the world, the explicit inclusion of gender considerations into national-level mitigation activities such as NAMAs, LEDS and INDCs is fundamental for equitable and sustainable development outcomes. The meaningful participation of women as stakeholders and agents of change in mitigation efforts, specifically those relating to energy, can enhance the success of such projects while promoting equality at local and national level.

Through examination of available documents, it is clear that a progressive trend is emerging in the integration of gender in mitigation mechanisms. This progression reflects the increase in gender mandates provided via UNFCCC decisions and the relative upsurge in understanding of gender and climate change interlinkages in recent years. Parties are generally including more references to women and gender in their mitigation planning and national priority setting, and more diversity in specific activities (as the map reveals) that involve or target women and/or gender equality considerations is noteworthy.

But to be able to conduct a full gender assessment of current mitigation mechanisms, as well as to offer targeted recommendations for plans still in development—both for

governments and the international institutions that support them in these processes—much more information would be necessary. Moving forward, IUCN GGO encourages information sharing among energy-sector actors and practitioners, including increased transparency and accountability for reporting NAMAs and LEDS. Continued capacity building for national stakeholders may also be necessary, as the full spectrum of women’s expertise and experiences may not be adequately reflected in the limited number of cases analyzed.

The mechanism that merges mitigation and adaptation priorities is the one that appears to demonstrate the greatest number of references to women and gender: the INDCs predominantly favor inclusion of these references in their adaptation sections, introductory sections, or in sections that merge adaptation and mitigation issues. While these references are indeed important, they also suggest persisting gaps: first, that the heaviest-emitting countries are not integrating gender concerns (as Figure 2 revealed), and secondly, that gender equality and women themselves are still not fully embraced as vital drivers toward effective and efficient mitigation—which, in fact, is key to a more equitable and sustainable future.

The GECCO initiative supports NAMAs and LEDS—with an interest in INDCs—to be gender-responsive by strengthening national efforts to mainstream gender into energy and mitigation policies and by working with governments and civil society organizations to address knowledge gaps on the linkages between gender and climate change mitigation in the energy sector. INDCs, NAMAs and LEDS have the potential to be gender-responsive by addressing gender considerations in their design and implementation. GECCO aims to build on the progress and examples offered by several NAMAs, LEDS and INDCs to date that have included strong gender-responsive elements.

- **Liberia's INDC** includes components on both mitigation and adaptation, and proposes to reduce global GHG emissions by 15% from its business-as-usual trajectory. In its INDC, Liberia supports a gender-responsive approach for adaptation and mitigation actions, especially through the implementation of its ccGAP.

- The **Dominican Republic** is committed to reducing its GHG emissions by 25% by 2030 (using 2010 data as its baseline). In its INDC, the Dominican Republic recognizes the role of women as agents of change towards a resilient and low-carbon future.

- **Jordan** plans to reduce GHG emissions by 14% by 2030. In addition to mentioning its ccGAP in its INDC, Jordan proposes a comprehensive approach to gender equality across all development sectors, including calling for gender-equitable benefits from climate finance mechanisms.

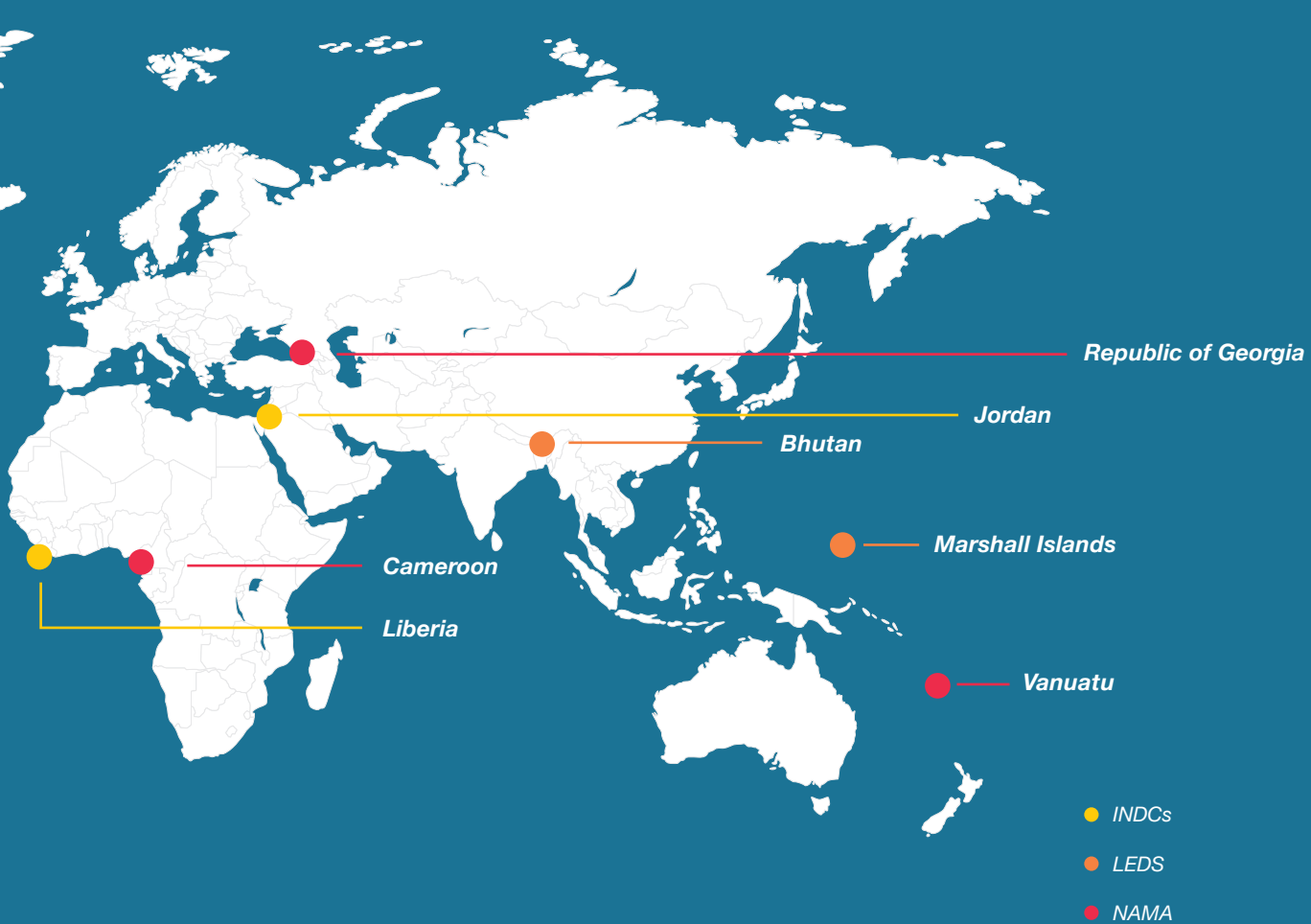
- **Peru's INDC** commits to reduce GHG emissions by 30% of its projected business-as-usual scenario by 2030. Under its Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change, Peru encourages the full and equal participation of women—including indigenous women—in adaptation actions.

- In **Cameroon**, nearly 80% of the population relies on biomass energy for household cooking, which contributes to both deforestation and an increased exposure to indoor air pollution—with women among the most affected. A NAMA focused on promoting access to improved cookstoves aims to improve women's health outcomes while simultaneously reducing pressure on forests.<sup>8</sup>

- In **Vanuatu**, only one-third of households have access to electricity. A NAMA focused on rural electrification in Vanuatu also includes interventions to foster income-generating activities that create opportunities for rural households and other vulnerable populations. Specifically, this NAMA works towards increasing private sector involvement in rural electrification and encourages fostering women-run enterprises.

- For rural households in the **Republic of Georgia**, water heating is the second largest energy expense. Often, with only access to traditional wooden stoves, households' warm water needs—most often for women's duties of cooking and cleaning—are not met. A NAMA has been designed to improve access to solar water heaters and improved stoves for 100,000 women and men in rural Georgia, while reducing 48,000 tons of carbon dioxide.<sup>9</sup>





- Small island nations in the Pacific Ocean, such as the **Marshall Islands**, are extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including sea-level rise and an increase in extreme weather events. The Marshall Islands' National Climate Change Policy Framework, developed as a LEDES initiative, promotes the inclusion of gender-specific knowledge in the development of mitigation and adaptation responses and practices.
- In 2013, in order to ensure gender integration into its LEDES, **Bhutan** developed a Rapid Gender Capacity Needs Assessment to identify gendered needs in climate policy development and to provide gender-disaggregated data to inform decision making. Activities of the gender strategy include a stakeholder engagement and capacity training activities to increase women's participation in the transport, waste and housing sector economies.
- In **Costa Rica**, 80% of public transport users are women. As a result of the ccGAP development process, Costa Rica's National Strategy Action Plan on Climate Change, a LEDES, addresses the gendered patterns of transport by planning to redesign routes, based on women's habits of traveling shorter distances and requiring more transfers than their male counterparts.



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