

RESEARCH PAPER

TOWARDS A GENDER-  
RESPONSIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



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# I. INTRODUCTION

This research paper ‘Towards a gender-responsive implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity’ was initially prepared by UN-Women, with inputs from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bioversity International, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for the capacity-building workshop on gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the CBD. The workshop was co-organized by UN-Women and the CBD Secretariat, and was held on 1 July 2018 in Montreal, Canada.

The workshop was organized at a critical juncture, when Parties to the CBD were at the initial stages of discussions on the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The CBD process has consistently integrated gender considerations, as reflected in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020,<sup>1</sup> the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action,<sup>2</sup> and other decisions, guiding documents and instruments. Furthermore, Parties have emphasized the importance of exploring synergies in the implementation of all three Rio Conventions, namely the CBD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The research paper was updated after the workshop. It first sets the context by presenting the gender dimensions of biodiversity conservation and the global norms on gender equality and natural resource management. It then outlines the key mandates for the integration of a gender perspective in biodiversity conservation and identifies the main entry points for strengthening gender considerations in decisions of the Parties to the CBD and in the implementation of the Convention, as well as in the future work of Parties and other stakeholders. Gender-responsive practices contributing to biodiversity conservation at the local and country level are then presented to highlight promising examples and lessons. The paper concludes with recommendations for action directed at specific stakeholders.

1 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2010. *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2. [\[Link\]](#)

2 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2014. *Mainstreaming Gender Considerations*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XII/7. [\[Link\]](#)

## II. GENDER DIMENSIONS OF BIODIVERSITY

Biological diversity, or biodiversity, is the term given to the variety of life on earth and the natural patterns it forms.<sup>3</sup> Biodiversity sustains lives, but it is in danger; 28 per cent of species evaluated by IUCN in 2018 are either critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable.<sup>4</sup> The fragmentation, degradation, and outright loss of forests, wetlands, coral reefs, and other ecosystems pose the gravest threat to biological diversity. Forests are home to much of the known terrestrial biodiversity; however, global forest loss in 2017 alone amounted to 29 million hectares.<sup>5</sup> Biodiversity degradation reduces the productivity of ecosystems, and by extension, the goods and services they can provide. Ecosystems are being fragmented or eliminated, and many species are in decline or already extinct. These trends have serious implications for the well-being of human beings who are dependent on their environment for basic needs, including for food crops, medicines and other biological resources.

In many societies, and in particular in rural areas, women and men interact with their natural environment on a daily basis for their sustenance and livelihoods. Women and men depend on and

contribute to the management and conservation of biological resources. Yet, pervasive gender inequalities limit women's opportunities, rights and benefits linked to biodiversity, which in turn

### BOX 1. THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUALITY

The CBD, in its preamble, recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirms the need for full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation.”<sup>a</sup>

Consideration of the gender dimensions of biodiversity involves understanding women's and men's use of biological resources; identifying the institutions—both formal (e.g., policies, laws etc.) and informal (e.g., customs, values, norms etc.) – that influence women's and men's use, management and conservation of biodiversity; and examining how different biodiversity-related outcomes (e.g., loss, degradation, sustainable management etc.) impact women and men differently.

Gender-responsive sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity therefore requires that laws, policies, programmes and public services take into account existing structures of gender inequality and proactively aim to overcome and remove those inequalities in order to contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of their human rights.

a CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 1992. Text of the Convention. [\[Link\]](#)

3 The first paragraph is adapted from CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2000. “Sustaining life on earth.” Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

4 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). 2018. “Numbers of threatened species by major groups of organisms (1996-2018).” Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

5 Global Forest Watch. 2017. “Dashboard.” Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)



influence their needs, priorities, roles, responsibilities and decision-making power with respect to the use and conservation of biodiversity, and more generally, natural resource management. As a result, women are differentially impacted by biodiversity degradation and loss.

## Gender-based differences in roles, priorities and knowledge relevant to biodiversity

Gender norms shape the expectations of women's and men's behavior, and their roles and responsibilities in a community or society. In many communities, women and men have different roles in agriculture and food production, land use, accessing water and energy, natural resource management and conservation, and household activities, among others.<sup>6</sup> Women are primarily responsible for activities such as managing seed, foraging for food or medicinal plants, and food processing and preparation, while men manage incomes and profits and make decisions on resource allocation.<sup>7</sup> This division of roles based on gender is often a result of gender-based inequalities that limit women's rights to, ownership of and access to land and other productive resources. Additionally, it limits women from acquiring latest information and knowledge on natural resources and participating in decision-making related to their management. At the same time, labour burdens are shifting in regions experiencing high rates of male outmigration, with rural women taking on additional farming, resource management and household responsibilities. Such inequalities are often exacerbated by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women, as experienced by young women and girls, older women, heads of households, indigenous women, women affected by HIV/AIDS, women with disabilities and migrant women.

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- 6 Howard P.L. 2003. *Women and plants: Gender relations in biodiversity management and conservation*. London: Zed Books. pp. 1–47. [\[Link\]](#)
- 7 FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). 2017. *State of food and agriculture: Leveraging food systems for inclusive rural transformation*. Rome: FAO. [\[Link\]](#)

Women and men often have different needs and preferences regarding the type of biological resources and their use. For example, women's criteria for choosing certain food crop seeds may be influenced by cooking time, meal quality, taste, resistance to damage from animals and ease of collection, processing, preservation and storage.<sup>8</sup> In rural communities of Mexico, indigenous women prefer maize varieties that are most resistant to the local weather, most nutritious and that gave the highest tortilla yields; these varieties are different from those grown for commercial purposes.<sup>9</sup> In Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, women tend to value the nutritional, cultural and social aspects of the forests.<sup>10</sup> Men are more likely to consider yield or suitability for a range of soil types and ease of storage, and prioritize timber and high-value non-timber forest products over food crops. Their interests are also associated with greater commercial value, which means that men typically realize greater monetary returns compared to women.

Just as gender norms shape behaviours and preferences related to the natural environment, they also influence how women and men acquire and develop different knowledge about plant and animal species, their uses and their management, resulting in important and sometimes complementary distinctions between women's and men's agroecological knowledge.<sup>11</sup> Knowledge of biodiversity also differs by age, culture and other factors of social differentiation,<sup>12</sup> and is often transmitted inter-generationally by gender.<sup>13</sup> A crucial factor in recognizing, leveraging and preserving ecological knowledge thus lies in capturing

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- 8 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). 2012. "Gender makes the difference." Accessed 7 September 2018.
- 9 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). 2010. "Gender and biodiversity." Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)
- 10 Khadka, M., and Verma, R. 2012. *Gender and biodiversity management in the greater Himalayas: Towards equitable mountain development*. ICIMOD, Kathmandu. [\[Link\]](#)
- 11 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2017. *Guidance for gender mainstreaming in the work of CBD*. [\[Link\]](#)
- 12 Pfeiffer, J. M., and Butz, R.J. 2005. "Assessing cultural and ecological variation in ethnobiological research: the importance of gender." *Journal of Ethnobiology* 25(2), 240–78. [\[Link\]](#)
- 13 Elias, M. 2016. "Distinct, shared and complementary: gendered agroecological knowledge in review." *CAB Reviews* 11(40) p.1-16. [\[Link\]](#)

women's contributions to the collective knowledge of the community.

Consequently, conservation initiatives, if not gender-responsive, can overlook women's specific needs and responsibilities, fail to preserve and leverage their ecological knowledge, and augment their work burden. For example, initiatives to combat deforestation have often tasked women with planting trees without compensation, which adds to their unpaid work responsibilities.<sup>14</sup> Efforts to increase women's participation in support of environmental targets can shift the responsibility for sustainable natural resource management to women without relieving them from other responsibilities.<sup>15</sup> Hence, "while the participation of women is vital, their involvement in policy interventions aimed at sustainability does not automatically mean greater gender equality, particularly when the structural foundations of gender inequality remain unchanged."<sup>16</sup>

## Access, use and control of resources

Legislation, customary norms and practices as well as policies and social behaviour shape women's and men's access to, use of and control over natural resources. Women's rights to productive resources such as land and other forms of property, and access to essential natural resources such as water are still not universally respected, protected or fulfilled.<sup>17</sup> According to the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), as of 2014, laws or customary practices of 102 countries still restrict women's rights to access land.<sup>18</sup> In many contexts, women also have limited access to agricultural services, information,

capital, credit, labour, and markets compared to men. Access to and ownership of these different resources often pave the way to more resources and opportunities, such as access to formal credit, technology, or conservation funds. Women are also often excluded from programmes geared toward 'land owners'. As a result, women often have less control over the types of crops cultivated, method of cultivation, and sharing of benefits.<sup>19</sup>

Limited access to key resources and assets is linked to women's poverty and marginalization and can severely constrain women's productivity and undermine their role in biodiversity conservation. Gender inequalities in access to and control over resources and information also result in inequalities in risk and vulnerability to biodiversity degradation and subsequent disruption of livelihoods. Therefore, rights and access to biological resources and their use should address existing gender inequalities and actively seek to reduce them.

## Participation, decision-making and benefit-sharing

Women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership in decision-making processes related to biodiversity is essential in enhancing the implementation and sustainability of conservation interventions.<sup>20</sup> Research suggests that women's active participation in the management and conservation of biodiversity improves local resource management and conservation outcomes<sup>21</sup> by harnessing critical ecological knowledge across genders, increasing stakeholder compliance with rules and reducing conflicts.<sup>22</sup>

14 Arora-Jonsson S. 2011. "Virtue and vulnerability: Discourses on women, gender and climate change." *Global Environmental Change* 21(2), 744–51. [\[Link\]](#)

15 Ibid.

16 UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 2014. *World survey on the role of women in development: Report of the Secretary-General*. A/69/156. [\[Link\]](#)

17 UN-Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2013. *Realizing women's rights to land and other productive resources*. New York: UN Women. [\[Link\]](#)

18 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2014. *Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) - 2014 synthesis report*. [\[Link\]](#)

19 UN-Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2017. *Towards a gender-responsive implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification*. New York: UN Women. [\[Link\]](#)

20 Climate and Development Knowledge Networks. 2016. *Ten things to know: Gender equality and achieving climate goals*. [\[Link\]](#)

21 Leisher, C., Temsah, G., Booker, F., Day, M., Samberg, L., Prosnitz, D., ... and Sunderland, T. 2016. "Does the gender composition of forest and fishery management groups affect resource governance and conservation outcomes? A systematic map." *Environmental Evidence* 5(6). [\[Link\]](#)

22 Agarwal, B. 2009. "Rule-making in community forestry institutions: The difference women make." *Ecological Economics* 68, 2296–2308. [\[Link\]](#)

However, women's participation in conservation and natural resource management programmes remains low. For instance, data collected from over 8000 households across Africa, Asia and Latin America indicates that women's participation in forest user groups was far less than men's, and below their proportionate use of forests.<sup>23</sup> Women's lack of decision-making power at household and community levels is also reflected in their minimal participation and leadership in national and international environmental platforms.<sup>24</sup> Factors impacting women's participation include gender norms and stereotypes that limit their roles in the public sphere; limited property ownership; limited access to education; and women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, women's knowledge, values and experiences related to biodiversity, as well as their needs and priorities, may not be reflected in policies and programmes on biodiversity and natural resource management. Reviews of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) carried out by the CBD Secretariat<sup>26</sup> and IUCN<sup>27</sup> reveal that such plans predominantly characterize women as a vulnerable group. At the same time, some countries identify women's lack of participation as stakeholders as a challenge for biodiversity conservation. This suggests that women's lack of voice and agency is likely to impact their access to, decision-making about, and the benefits from conservation programmes and initiatives.

Women's equal and meaningful participation, agency and voice also play an important role in equally sharing

the benefits from biodiversity and natural resources. A gender-responsive approach to benefit-sharing requires establishment of meaningful opportunities for women to participate in the design, negotiation, receipt, distribution and application of benefits.<sup>28</sup> As discussed above, women often focus more on the interests of the family and on benefits that will secure family welfare, while men may focus more on furthering individual interests and monetary gains. In Rwanda, members of female-headed households consumed 377 more calories per adult equivalent per day than male-headed households. In the Gambia, the control of cereal production by women brought about 322 additional calories per adult per day. In Kenya and Malawi, levels of malnutrition were much lower among children in female-headed households.<sup>29</sup> As a result, the manner in which benefits are defined, transferred and consumed will be of direct relevance to the equity and fairness of distribution. Where benefits are distributed in a manner that precludes their effective use for overall family welfare, women may in essence be deprived of their right to a fair share of such benefits. Where women are responsible for collecting biological resources such as fodder and fruits, while men manage the sale of these resources as well as the income generated and make decisions regarding how to use this income,<sup>30</sup> interventions need to contribute to enhancing women's decision-making capacities.

## Evidence and data gaps<sup>31</sup>

Gender statistics and biodiversity data disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location and other relevant demographic variables play instrumental roles in outlining the critical interlinkages between biodiversity,

23 Sunderland, T., Achdiawan, R., Angelsen, A., Babigumira, R., Ickowitz, A., Paumgarten, F., ... and Shively, G. 2014. "Challenging perceptions about men, women, and forest product use: A global comparative study." *World Development* 64(1), 56-66. [\[Link\]](#)

24 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). 2015. "EG1: Women's participation in global environmental decision-making factsheet." Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

25 Coleman, E. A., and Mwangi, E. 2015. "Gender and local environmental governance." *Presented at the XIV World Forestry Congress, Durban, South Africa*, 7-11 September 2015. [\[Link\]](#)

26 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2018. *Progress in the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action-Note by the Executive Secretary*. UNEP/CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3. [\[Link\]](#)

27 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). 2017. *Gender and biodiversity: Analysis of women and gender equality considerations in NBSAPs*. [\[Link\]](#)

28 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). 2007. *Mainstreaming gender equality and equity in ABS governance*. [\[Link\]](#)

29 Kabeer, N. 2003. *Gender mainstreaming in poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: A handbook for policymakers and other stakeholders*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat. pp. 162- 163. [\[Link\]](#)

30 Rodriguez, G., Blanco, M., and Azofeifa, F. 2004. *Diversity makes the difference*. Costa Rica: IUCN

31 UN-Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2017. *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: UN Women. [\[Link\]](#)

gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights.

However, data is lacking on many aspects of women's and men's roles in relation to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Reliable evidence on the needs, priorities, knowledge, roles and responsibilities of indigenous women is especially inadequate. At present, evidence predominantly captures the experiences of individual communities or groups at a given point in time, which results in fragmented datasets and lack of comparability of indicators for gender dimensions of biodiversity. Systematic gathering of information on gender-specific impacts of biodiversity degradation and loss on communities is even more difficult, especially given that biodiversity degradation often occurs over a longer period of time and needs to be captured through longitudinal data collection methods.<sup>32</sup> As a result, conservation policies commonly fail to outline targeted measures and allocate resources to address the issues of these communities.

Data disaggregated by sex, age, geographical location and other relevant demographic indicators on the gender dimensions of biodiversity discussed above can inform biodiversity policy planning and programming and facilitate targeted action to address specific issues, groups and ecosystems. Qualitative research and gender analysis can further reveal the underlying gender differences, including in attitudes and behaviours, and highlight inequalities that impact effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Therefore, strengthening the evidence-base on the specific roles and responsibilities of men and women in biodiversity conservation as well as the differentiated impacts of biodiversity degradation and loss on women and men should be an important element in ongoing and future conservation efforts. Existing data systems which exclusively monitor biological indicators such as forest cover and biomass stock need to be complemented with social indicators (e.g., governance, educational attainment, child mortality etc.)<sup>33</sup> to improve the understanding of women's roles, needs and priorities in the context of biodiversity conservation. Therefore, biodiversity policies should not only reiterate the importance of gender-sensitive data collection, but also identify institutional responsibilities and capabilities at national and local levels to enable the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender-sensitive data in biodiversity conservation.

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32 Longitudinal data collection methods involve repeated observations of the same variables (e.g., people) over short or long periods of time.

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33 Leisher, C., Samberg, L. H., Van Buekering, P., and Sanjayan, M. 2013. Focal areas for measuring the human well-being impacts of a conservation initiative. *Sustainability* 5(3), 997-1010. [\[Link\]](#)

## BOX 2. KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

**Gender:**<sup>34</sup> refers to the attributes, roles, rights, obligations and opportunities associated with being male or female. Gender is not something inherent or innate but is socially constructed and learned. It is not fixed and unchangeable but is time and context specific - determining what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given time and context. There can be significant gender differences and inequalities in rights, roles and contributions, as well as in access to and control over resources and decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, disability and age. The term 'gender' is often used in the following contexts:

- a) 'Gender equality'- the goal
- b) 'Gender mainstreaming' - the strategy
- c) 'Gender analysis' - the methodology to identify gender equality issues
- d) 'Gender perspectives'; 'Gender issues' - factors to be taken into account
- e) 'Gender-responsive'; 'Gender blind'- outcomes in terms of consideration of gender issues
- f) 'Gender-neutral'- the assumption that gender issues are not relevant, which needs to be challenged.<sup>35</sup>

Gender can have significant implications for access to and control over resources and is highly relevant in the context of natural resource management and biodiversity.

**Gender equality:**<sup>36</sup> focuses on the goal of achieving equality in rights, responsibilities, opportunities and benefits/outcomes for all women and men and providing potential for both women and men to shape their own lives and contribute to the society in all areas. It implies that the knowledge, experience, contributions, priorities and constraints of women and men should be taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity between different groups of women and men. Gender equality is both a human rights issue and a driver for sustainable development. Gender equality is recognized as critical for the achievement of goals relating to sustainable development and natural resource management, including biodiversity.

**Gender-responsive:**<sup>37</sup> a term used to describe laws, policies, programmes and public services that are formulated and/or delivered to: i) take into account existing structures and relations of gender inequality and seek proactively to overcome and remove them; ii) identify and bring attention to women's contributions and critical roles as agents and leaders, in order to facilitate gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights.

**Empowerment of women and girls:**<sup>38</sup> refers to women and girls gaining power, agency, voice and control over their lives. This implies equal enjoyment of human rights, capabilities and access to resources and

34 Definition partly based on United Nations, OSAGI (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues), 2001, Gender mainstreaming concepts and definitions.

35 Carolyn, H. 2018 forthcoming. The gender mainstreaming strategy: Twenty years of experience. Sweden: University of Lund.

36 Definition partly based on United Nations, OSAGI (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues), 2001, Gender mainstreaming concepts and definitions.

37 UN-Women working definition; with contribution from Carolyn Hannan.

38 Definition partly based on United Nations, OSAGI (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues). 2001. Gender mainstreaming concepts and definitions; and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2005. Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women. London: Earthscan. [\[Link\]](#)

opportunities, as well as the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities strategically to transform societal structures and processes which perpetuate gender inequalities. Integral to women's and girls' empowerment are processes of awareness-raising, building of self-confidence, expansion of choices and increased decision-making and leadership roles. An approach based on empowerment of women and girls ensures that they are not seen as vulnerable only, but rather recognized as managers, leaders and agents of change. In the context of biodiversity, women should in particular be empowered to increase their control over critical natural and productive resources and to access leadership and decision-making opportunities, in order to build on and expand their existing roles and contributions to natural resource management and conservation of biodiversity.

**Human rights-based approach:**<sup>39</sup> refers to the fulfillment of human rights through laws, policies and programmes. Legislation, policies and programmes should address practices and traditions that discriminate against individuals, in particular, women and girls. Principles and obligations derived from international human rights instruments should guide the legislation and policy processes as well as the programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process. Consequently, rightsholders are empowered to claim their entitlements, and duty-bearers are held accountable for meeting their obligations.

**Women's human rights:**<sup>40</sup> refers to the need to ensure full enjoyment by women of all human rights. United Nations human rights instruments and mechanisms, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), provide a framework for, and critical support to, efforts to achieve such enjoyment in all policy areas. Gender-responsive approaches identify and lead to action to address gaps and constraints in women's enjoyment of human rights, including in relation to natural resource management and biodiversity.

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39 UNDG (United Nations Development Group). 2018. "UN practitioner's portal on human rights-based approaches to programming." Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

40 Definition partly based on United Nations Agencies Statement of Common Understanding on the Rights-based Approach to Development Cooperation and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). 2011. Protection and promotion of human rights. Guidance Note for staff.

# III. GLOBAL NORMS AND STANDARDS ON GENDER EQUALITY, BIODIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Biodiversity is necessary for the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights. Conversely, biodiversity degradation threatens the enjoyment of those rights.<sup>41</sup> Biodiversity contributes to the productivity and stability of ecosystem processes.<sup>42</sup> More specifically, it contributes to ecosystem services that directly support the full enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life and health, the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to non-discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights.<sup>43</sup>

Member States of the United Nations recognize this critical link between biodiversity and human rights and acknowledge that degradation of biodiversity often result from and reinforce existing forms of discrimination that need to be addressed.<sup>44</sup> In this regard, particular emphasis is placed on gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights, and the role women play as managers of natural resources and agents of change in the safeguarding of the environment. Similarly, consequences of degradation and loss of biodiversity on the quality

of life of indigenous peoples, local communities, and others who rely directly on the products of forests, rivers, lakes, wetlands and oceans for their food, fuel and medicine can result in further inequality and marginalization. Therefore, strengthened action is needed to protect biodiversity, including by meeting national targets, and achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the CBD.

Global conferences, summits and similar events on environmental issues convened by the United Nations have also made the link between gender equality and the environment with implications for biodiversity conservation. This was the case at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) which gave rise to the three Rio Conventions - on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification,<sup>45</sup> the Rio Declaration on Environment

41 UN Human Rights Council (United Nations Human Rights Council). 2017. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment*. A/HRC/34/49. para. 3. [\[Link\]](#)

42 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2015. *Connecting global priorities: Biodiversity and human health- A state of knowledge review*. p. 34. [\[Link\]](#); Cardinale, B. J., Duffy, J. E., Gonzalez, A., Hooper, D. U., Perrings, C., Venail, P., ... and Kinzig, A. P. 2012. Biodiversity loss and its impact on humanity. *Nature* 486(7401), 59. [\[Link\]](#)

43 UN Human Rights Council (United Nations Human Rights Council). 2017. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment*. A/HRC/34/49. para. 5.

44 UN Human Rights Council (United Nations Human Rights Council). 2017. *Human rights and the environment*. A/HRC/RES/34/20. [\[Link\]](#)

45 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2018. "The Rio Conventions." Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)



### BOX 3. GENDER PERSPECTIVES AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SDGS - SPECIFIC TARGETS

**Target 1.4:** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

**Target 2.3:** By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

**Target 5.a:** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

and Development,<sup>46</sup> and Agenda 21.<sup>47</sup> The Rio Declaration affirmed women's vital role in environmental management and development, and Agenda 21 dedicated Chapter 24 to 'Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development'. Agenda 21 also aimed to increase the proportion of women decision-makers and managers in the environment and development field, and eliminate constitutional, legal, cultural, behavioural, social and economic obstacles to women's full participation in sustainable development and public life. It urged governments to take action to "respect, record, protect and promote the wider application of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities . . . with a view to the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising, and promote mechanisms to involve those communities, including women, in the conservation and management of ecosystems."<sup>48</sup>

'Women and the environment' is one of the 12 'critical areas of concern' of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a blueprint for advancing

women's rights.<sup>49</sup> By reinforcing and further elaborating on the linkages between realizing gender equality and sustainable development, including natural resource management and biodiversity conservation, the Platform for Action galvanizes action by governments and other stakeholders in areas such as women's environmental decision-making at all levels; the integration of gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development; and strengthening of mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has 189 States Parties, can effectively contribute to gender-responsive efforts towards biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Article 14 of the Convention on rural women is of particular importance in upholding the rights of rural women in their access to, use of and control over natural resources. Articles dealing with education and training (article 10), employment (article 12), social and economic development (article 13), and participation in public life (article 7), also have linkages to biodiversity. The Convention's emphasis on the modification

46 UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 1992. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I). [\[Link\]](#)

47 UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 1992. *Agenda 21: UN Conference on Environment and Development*. A/RES/47/190. [\[Link\]](#)

48 Ibid, para. 15.5 (e)

49 United Nations. 1995. "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action." Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)



of socio-cultural patterns of conduct and the elimination of stereotypes (article 5) applies also to women's access to, roles and responsibilities with respect to, as well as benefits from natural resources.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has issued several general recommendations that are particularly relevant to biodiversity. General Recommendation 34 on the rights of rural women gives guidance on the steps to be taken by Parties to uphold rural women's rights to land and natural resources. General Recommendation 37 on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change also provides important opportunities for enhanced Convention implementation in the context of biodiversity.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by Heads of States at the United Nations in 2015, confirms the centrality of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (SDG 5) to sustainable development, poverty eradication, and progress across all goals and targets. This includes Goal 15 on the preservation of diverse forms of life on land. The 2030 Agenda confirms that the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its implementation is crucial (on synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the CBD, see Section VII.B of this paper).

# IV. GENDER MAINSTREAMING: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy aimed at increasing attention to the priorities, needs, contributions and constraints of both women and men in the policy and programmatic work of any sector, with the explicit objective to increase gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights. Mainstreaming aims to ensure that both women and men participate in decision-making and that their knowledge and contributions are recognized and fully utilized in policy-making and planning processes. By identifying and building on the positive management and leadership roles of women and men and addressing the inequalities and constraints which impede women's full involvement and contributions, gender mainstreaming can also have a significant impact on the achievement of the overall goals and targets in the sector in which it is being implemented.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines gender mainstreaming as: "...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes 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."<sup>50</sup>

The full potential of gender mainstreaming has not been achieved in any area and implementation of the strategy remains a major challenge. Effective implementation requires a sound understanding of underlying concepts as well as awareness of, and capacity to utilize, the approaches and methodologies

required for achieving gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights.

Gender mainstreaming in the area of biodiversity has thus the potential to both accelerate the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights and to contribute positively to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the achievement of the established global biodiversity goals and targets.

## Approaches and methodologies

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy - a means to an end, and not an end in itself. The strategy can be effectively utilized in all areas of biodiversity work - in both policy-making processes and outcomes in the global intergovernmental context, as well as in activities focused on national level implementation of the

<sup>50</sup> ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council). 1997. Agreed Conclusions. 1997/2. [\[Link\]](#)

Convention.<sup>51</sup> Mainstreaming aims to make all existing and planned policies, programmes, activities and outcomes gender-responsive - i.e. to ensure that they address existing gender inequalities within a sector/thematic area and seek proactively to overcome and remove them.

An important principle underlying gender mainstreaming is its focus on incorporating attention to gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights as an explicit and integral part of planned and existing policies, procedures, programmes, activities and outcomes. Mainstreaming is not always about developing separate 'components' on gender equality (although targeted activities may sometimes be necessary). The end result of gender mainstreaming should be that existing approaches, methodologies and tools utilized in the work of the Parties in the intergovernmental processes and national contexts, as well as in the work of the Secretariat and other institutional mechanisms, are gender-responsive.

Gender considerations therefore need to be taken adequately into account in analyses routinely carried out – such as stakeholder analyses, poverty analyses, institutional analyses and environmental impact analyses. Indeed, gender mainstreaming implies that ways and means are developed to ensure that all research carried out systematically takes gender equality issues into account; that data collection consistently gives attention to the need for sex-disaggregated data and the collection of gender statistics; and that all work on the development of indicators results in gender-sensitive indicators. Where gender-specific methods and tools are deemed necessary – such as capacity-building, guidelines/handbooks, development of pilot projects/case studies, and compilations of sex-disaggregated data, gender indicators and promising practices – these should be directly linked to existing planning and implementation processes.

A second important underlying principle is that gender mainstreaming should lead to change or

transformation in policies, procedures, programmes, activities and outcomes – with positive outcomes for gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights, as well as for the implementation of the CBD. Monitoring and evaluation processes should explicitly focus on identifying and highlighting outcomes.

There are five critical elements for effective implementation of gender mainstreaming:<sup>52</sup>

### **1. Understanding the linkages between gender equality and biodiversity**

Analysis is required to identify the roles, responsibilities, rights, resources and access to decision-making of women and men, respectively, which need to be taken into account, as well as constraints to women's or men's full involvement in, contribution to, and benefits from biodiversity activities which must be specifically addressed. It should never be presumed that issues are neutral from a gender perspective; analysis must always be carried out to ascertain the relevance of gender equality.<sup>53</sup> For more details on the various gender dimensions of biodiversity, refer to section II.

### **2. Investigating gender equality - biodiversity linkages in specific socio-cultural contexts**

The relevance and importance of the established linkages between gender equality and biodiversity need to be investigated in the specific socio-cultural context in which the work will be carried out. There can be considerable variation in gender roles, responsibilities and rights in relation to biodiversity in different contexts and these must be understood before work is planned. Effective gender mainstreaming must be context-specific; there is no single 'blueprint' that fits all contexts. Cooperation with local women's organizations can provide access to critical information. If partnerships are planned with local community institutions, an 'institutional analysis' may be needed

<sup>51</sup> This section focuses on the programmatic activities of implementation rather than intergovernmental policy-making processes.

<sup>52</sup> Carolyn, H. 2018 forthcoming. *The gender mainstreaming strategy: Twenty years of experience*. University of Lund, Sweden.

<sup>53</sup> This is made clear in the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2. [\[Link\]](#)

to understand the prevailing attitudes, knowledge and capacity on gender equality issues among local partners.

### **3. Assessing the potential implications of planned interventions on gender equality**

Based on the analysis of the linkages between gender equality and biodiversity in the specific context, the potential implications of any planned activities/interventions need to be assessed in order to avoid maintaining or exacerbating existing inequalities and to ensure positive impacts for both women and men. This requires understanding of women's contributions and change-agency roles and ways these could be positively built upon, as well as awareness of the vulnerabilities women may face which need to be addressed, or areas in which women's rights would need to be specifically promoted and protected, through the planned actions.

### **4. Identifying entry points in processes and procedures for promoting gender equality**

Relevant entry-points for promoting gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights in the processes and procedures for planning and implementing the interventions need to be identified. They could be, for example, research, analyses, data collection, consultation processes, establishment of benchmarks, and capacity-building, as well as planning, implementation and monitoring processes. These entry points should ensure that the

concerns and experiences of both women and men influence relevant processes. They should provide opportunities for building on the potentials of both women and men and addressing any constraints/challenges identified.

### **5. Identifying ways and means to ensure that the entry-points are gender-responsive**

Ways and means need to be sought for effectively influencing processes and procedures to ensure they are planned and implemented in a gender-responsive manner and lead to positive outcomes for gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights, as well as for the sectoral/thematic area. This could include, for example, ensuring that all research and data collection give explicit attention to gender equality issues; that consultation processes and participatory approaches target women as well as men; or that women as well as men access any training, employment opportunities and technologies made available. Gender-specific methodologies and tools could be utilized to support efforts to make processes and procedures gender-responsive, such as capacity building, dissemination of sex-disaggregated data, documented successful case studies or promising practices.

# V. GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN THE CBD PROCESS

The Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for signature at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It is a legally-binding international agreement with three objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. The CBD seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, civil society and business, in its implementation.<sup>54</sup>

The CBD has a long history of attention to gender perspectives, starting with the recognition, in its preamble, of the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirmation of the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biodiversity conservation.<sup>55</sup>

Notably, the CBD was the first multilateral environmental agreement to have a gender plan of action associated with its implementation. This plan was welcomed by the Parties to CBD in 2008, and updated in 2014 to align with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action includes possible actions for Parties, as well as a framework of actions for the Secretariat to integrate gender considerations in its works to implement the Convention. One of the possible actions identified for Parties, which is reflected in a number of other decisions under the Convention, is to mainstream gender considerations into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). This emphasizes the importance of NBSAPs as an avenue for Parties to

mainstream gender at the national, subnational and local levels.<sup>56</sup>

The Conference of the Parties to the CBD (CBD COP) has adopted meaningful decisions to integrate gender perspectives in the implementation of the Convention. The following sub-sections present in more detail some significant gender-specific mandates.

54 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2018. "Background." Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

55 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 1992. *Text of the Convention*. [\[Link\]](#)

56 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2008. *Review of implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/8. [\[Link\]](#); CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2010. *Gender mainstreaming*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/19. [\[Link\]](#); CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2012. *Review of progress in implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and related capacity-building support to Parties*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XI/2. [\[Link\]](#); CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2014. *Mainstreaming gender considerations*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XII/7. [\[Link\]](#); CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2016. *Progress in the implementation of the Convention and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets*. CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/1. [\[Link\]](#)

## Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, adopted at COP 10 (2010) in decision X/2,<sup>57</sup> promotes the coherent and effective implementation of the three objectives of the Convention.<sup>58</sup> It is comprised of five strategic goals as well as 20 time-bound, measurable targets to be met by the year 2020, which are collectively known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In the decision, Parties and other Governments are urged to “enable participation at all levels to foster the full and effective contributions of women, indigenous and local communities . . .”<sup>59</sup> Parties are requested to mainstream gender considerations, where appropriate, in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its associated goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and indicators.<sup>60</sup>

The Strategic Plan has several key entry points for gender mainstreaming. In particular, Strategic Goal D: ‘Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services’, includes Target 14: “By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.”

Another key entry point for gender mainstreaming is under Strategic Goal E: ‘Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building’ and its Target 18: “By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention

with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.” This is tied closely to the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions under the Convention, and the programme of work which emphasizes the full and effective participation of women, and the importance of women’s knowledge of biological diversity.

Finally, the Strategic Plan’s section VI: ‘Support Mechanisms’, mandates that “Capacity-building on gender mainstreaming in accordance with the Convention’s gender plan of action, and for indigenous and local communities concerning the implementation of the Strategic Plan at national and subnational levels should be supported.”<sup>61</sup>

### Article 8(j) on traditional knowledge<sup>62</sup>

To support the implementation of Article 8(j) of the Convention and to enhance the role and involvement of indigenous and local communities in the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, Parties adopted a decision at the fifth Conference of Parties in 2000 (COP 5) which contains a programme of work on the implementation of the CBD and its related provisions.<sup>63</sup> One of the general principles of the programme of work is the “... full and effective participation of women in indigenous and local communities in all activities of the programme of work.” This emphasis on the participation of women is further promoted under Task four of the first phase of the programme of work, which calls on Parties to “develop, as appropriate, mechanisms for promoting the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities with specific provisions for the full, active and effective participation of women in all elements of the programme of work taking into account the need to: a) Build on the basis of their knowledge; (b) Strengthen their access to biological diversity; (c)

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Section VI para. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Article 8(j) recommends that the States, “subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.” [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>63</sup> CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2000. *Article 8(j) and related provisions*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/V/16. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>57</sup> CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2010. *The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., para. 3(a).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., para. 8.

Strengthen their capacity on matters pertaining to the conservation, maintenance and protection of biological diversity; (d) Promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge; (e) Promote culturally appropriate and gender specific ways in which to document and preserve women's knowledge of biological diversity.”<sup>64</sup>

Subsequent decisions on Article 8(j) have continued to recognize the important role that indigenous women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, the need to include women and women's organizations in activities, the unique value of biodiversity-related traditional knowledge, especially those of women, and the disproportionately large share of negative development impacts that they bear.<sup>65</sup> At COP 13 (2016), a note by the Executive Secretary of the CBD suggested that in formulating future work, the Working Group on Article 8(j) should take into account gender and the Gender Plan of Action for the Convention.<sup>66</sup>

## 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action

Parties to CBD welcomed the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action at COP 12 (2014), in decision XII/7 on 'Mainstreaming gender considerations'.<sup>67</sup> The Gender Plan of Action updates and builds upon the 2008 Gender Plan of Action,<sup>68</sup> to align with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Plan identifies a number of possible actions for Parties, which include integrating gender considerations in NBSAPs, as well as ensuring consistency with related conventions, among others.<sup>69</sup> It also includes a framework of actions for the Secretariat of the CBD to integrate gender perspectives into its work. Parties are requested to report on actions undertaken to implement the Gender Plan of Action.<sup>70</sup>

### BOX 4. PRIORITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION<sup>a</sup>

Parties and stakeholders, in their submissions to the CBD, have identified a number of actions to better implement the Gender Plan of Action and gender mainstreaming efforts:

- Documenting traditional knowledge related to gender issues and developing and disseminating case studies articulating gender and biodiversity linkages;
- Undertaking an independent evaluation of the Gender Plan of Action;
- Ensuring that gender issues are explicitly incorporated in the process of developing the post-2020 biodiversity framework;
- Making more explicit links between actions under the Gender Plan of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>a</sup> CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2018. Progress in the implementation of the 2015-2020 gender plan of action: Note by the Executive Secretary. CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3.

64 Ibid.

65 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2000. *Article 8(j) and related provisions*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/VI/16. [\[Link\]](#); CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2002. *Article 8(j) and related provisions*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/VI/10. [\[Link\]](#); CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2006. *Article 8(j) and related provisions*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/VIII/5. [\[Link\]](#); and CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2008. *Article 8(j) and related provisions*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/13. [\[Link\]](#)

66 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2017. *Integration of article 8(j) and provisions related to indigenous peoples and local communities in the work of the Convention and its protocols: Note by the Executive Secretary*. CBD/WG8J/10/8. [\[Link\]](#)

67 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2014. *Mainstreaming gender considerations*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XII/7. [\[Link\]](#)

68 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2008. *Gender Plan of Action*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/24. [\[Link\]](#)

69 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2018. *Progress in the implementation of the 2015-2020 gender plan of action: Note by the Executive Secretary*. CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3. [\[Link\]](#)

70 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2008. *Gender Plan of Action*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/24. [\[Link\]](#)



The Gender Plan of Action has four strategic objectives:

- (a) Mainstream a gender perspective into the implementation of the Convention and the associated work of Parties and the Secretariat;
- (b) Promote gender equality in achieving the objectives of the Convention, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- (c) Demonstrate the benefits of gender mainstreaming in measures towards the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources; and
- (d) Increase the effectiveness of the work under the CBD.

## National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and National Reports

The NBSAPs, called for in Article 6 of the CBD,<sup>71</sup> are the principal instruments for implementing the Convention at the national level. The Convention requires countries to prepare a national biodiversity strategy, plan or programme and to ensure that this is mainstreamed into the planning and activities of all those sectors whose activities can have an impact (positive or negative) on biodiversity.

National reporting is intended to provide information on measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and the effectiveness of these measures. In accordance with Article 6, measures to be addressed, in light of specific national circumstances, are reflected in the national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

<sup>71</sup> CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2018. "What is an NBSAP?" Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

Analyses of the incorporation of gender equality and women's empowerment in NBSAPs<sup>72,73</sup> and Fifth National Reports<sup>74</sup> reveal that approximately half of NBSAPs and around 67 per cent of Fifth National Reports contain at least one reference to 'gender' and/or 'women', signaling some acknowledgement of the relevance of women's participation and gender issues in biodiversity action planning. Women are most often characterized and recognized as stakeholders<sup>75</sup> and beneficiaries,<sup>76</sup> although few countries identify specific measures to support women's increased involvement in biodiversity conservation.<sup>77</sup> In the most recent set of NBSAPs, the lack of involvement of women as stakeholders was identified as a challenge for biodiversity conservation, or as an indirect driver of biodiversity degradation. Women were often characterized as vulnerable, with rural women identified in some of the more recent NBSAPs as a 'particularly vulnerable' or a 'target' group. Yet, reference to women's vulnerability does not always lead a country to plan actions to reduce that vulnerability.<sup>78</sup>

NBSAPs were more likely to have gender perspectives integrated within an objective than to have a specific gender equality objective. Specifically, roughly a quarter of countries have at least one activity that explicitly addresses gender equality or women's empowerment in their latest NBSAP. Few countries' NBSAPs include both sex-disaggregated data and

<sup>72</sup> The Global Gender Office of the IUCN reviewed all NBSAPs submitted by Parties to the Secretariat of the Convention between 1993 and May 2016. The Secretariat reviewed revised NBSAPs received in the period following the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (November 2010) through mid-February 2018. See UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/46 [\[Link\]](#) and UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.3. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>73</sup> CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2016. *Progress in implementing the Gender Plan of Action: Update on mainstreaming gender considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans: Note by the Executive Secretary*. UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.3. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>74</sup> The Global Gender Office of the IUCN reviewed 173 Fifth National Reports received between March 2014 and October 2016. See UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/46 for more details. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>75</sup> NBSAPs (37 per cent)

<sup>76</sup> Fifth National Reports (30 per cent)

<sup>77</sup> CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2016. *Progress in implementing the Gender Plan of Action: Update on mainstreaming gender considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans: Note by the Executive Secretary*. UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.3. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>78</sup> IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). 2016. *Gender & the Convention on Biological Diversity: From policy to practice*. [\[Link\]](#)



### BOX 5. SETTING A GENDER AND BIODIVERSITY TARGET IN AN NBSAP – THE EXAMPLE OF BOTSWANA<sup>a</sup>

Parties wanting to mainstream gender perspectives into their revised NBSAP may want to set a national target that contributes toward Goal D and/or Target 14.

For example, Botswana's gender mainstreaming target as reflected in its 2010 NBSAPs reads as follows:

**Target:** Gender issues mainstreamed into the biodiversity planning framework to enhance participation

**Justification:** The future of biodiversity conservation depends on the active involvement of all groups of the society, including women and youth. There is an increase in the number of female-headed households for whom biological resources provide livelihoods opportunities

**Actions to achieve target:** Evaluate gender access and ownership of natural resources with regards to the current institutional and policy environment, with the aim of addressing gaps or inequalities in national policy; Improve women's access to credit facilities in order to utilize natural resources such as veld products and medicinal plants

**Outputs/products:** Gender related statistics on resource utilization; Gender sensitive credit schemes

<sup>a</sup> CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2012. Mainstreaming Gender Considerations in the Development and Implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Module 9 (B Series). [\[Link\]](#)

gender-sensitive indicators. Most of the sex-disaggregated data is related to background information and demographics for the country.

It is worth highlighting that the revised NBSAPs<sup>79</sup> did not demonstrate a marked increase in the reflection of a gender perspective even after the adoption of the 2008 Gender Plan of Action.<sup>80</sup> This suggests that more efforts need to be made to raise awareness and build capacity for the integration of gender issues in developing and implementing NBSAPs.

NBSAPs could be strengthened by including activities which explicitly address gender perspectives. Such activities could include: gender analysis; educational, communications and outreach efforts to inform women about biodiversity issues; steps to increase women's effective participation, decision-making and management roles; and capacity-building targeted at women. In addition, and in order to strengthen accountability, sex-disaggregated data and

gender-sensitive indicators should be consistently included. Monitoring and evaluation plans could also call for reflection of gender perspectives to ensure the monitoring of efforts to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights in the context of biodiversity. There are capacity gaps in the collection of sex-disaggregated data as well as in developing gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Hence, these should be addressed in any intervention for NBSAPs to reflect greater attention to gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights.

In a pilot project<sup>81</sup> to build the capacity of developing country Parties to integrate gender perspectives into their revised NBSAPs, carried out by IUCN's Global Gender Office in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, and with generous financial support from the Government of Japan, women's groups and other stakeholders in three countries were engaged in a collaborative exercise to review and provide inputs on the draft revised NBSAPs of Mexico, Uganda and Brazil. This process helped to build awareness and learning

79 Revised NBSAPs are NBSAPs that were revised to align with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

80 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2018. *Progress in the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action: Note by the Executive Secretary*. CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3. [\[Link\]](#)

81 Ibid.

#### **BOX 6. TOWARDS GENDER-RESPONSIVE NBSAPS: PROPOSED ACTIONS<sup>a</sup>**

There are many ways to approach gender issues in NBSAP development and implementation. Each Party will need to identify the most suitable method given the country's circumstances. However, regardless of the specific steps taken, and the areas where each country may focus, a number of actions could contribute to more gender-responsive NBSAPs:

- Ensure that women and women's interests are represented in stakeholder consultations. Ministries responsible for gender equality or women's issues, as well as international, national and local women's groups are important actors in these processes;
- Collect and utilize sex-disaggregated data, to identify and address existing differences and inequalities between women and men;
- Undertake a gender analysis of NBSAP issues and objectives, such as natural resource management sectors and issues;
- Support the full and effective engagement of women and men in decision-making and all action related to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NBSAPs;
- Provide adequate resources (expertise and financial) to support the development and implementation of related actions to achieve gender equality;
- Promote equal rights to use, access and derive benefits from, biodiversity.

<sup>a</sup> CBD Secretariat

among representatives of women's groups as stakeholders who have not typically been actively engaged in Convention processes. Revised NBSAPs from these pilot countries have incorporated gender-specific recommendations and demonstrate a considered reflection of gender issues, pointing to the value of engaging relevant stakeholders in this process.

#### BOX 7. SUMMARY: ENTRY POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN CBD PROCESSES<sup>a</sup>

- **Representation:** Ensure that women and women's organizations are represented in any stakeholder consultations (e.g., gender equality ministries, international, national and local women's groups etc.) to implement the Convention and related decisions;
- **Equal rights:** Promote equal rights to use, access and derive benefits from, biodiversity by undertaking consultations, in-depth studies and analysis involving women, including indigenous women in communities and other experts;
- **Decision-making and implementation:** Support the full, equal and effective engagement of women and men in decision-making and all action related to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NBSAPs and National Reports;
- **Resources:** Provide adequate resources - expertise and financial - to support the development and implementation of gender-responsive interventions, policies and programmes;
- **Data:** Systematically collect data disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location and other relevant demographic variables to identify existing differences and inequalities between women and men and utilize those to inform policy reforms and related actions to address such inequalities;
- **Analysis:** Undertake a gender analysis of priority biodiversity/NBSAP issues and objectives, such as natural resource management sectors;
- **Monitor and evaluate:** Strengthen accountability mechanisms to monitor and evaluate measures to support gender equality and women's empowerment, such as sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive indicators and gender analysis;
- **Share experience:** Share examples of sector-specific initiatives to build the knowledge base and support learning by other countries;
- **Maximize synergies:** Reinforce efforts to implement the SDGs and Rio Conventions by highlighting linkages with efforts to achieve the SDGs, including SDG 5 and gender-related targets.

<sup>a</sup> CBD Secretariat

# VI. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PRACTICE: IMPLEMENTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BIODIVERSITY POLICIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

The importance of gender-responsive biodiversity measures becomes most visible at the implementation level, often while investigating the reasons why policies and programmes are not working the way they should or are not achieving the expected impact. For the same reason, to understand how gender dimensions affect the implementation of biodiversity policies, it is crucial to examine scenarios at the grassroot level. This section outlines promising practices in integrating gender equality considerations into policies, programmes, interventions and initiatives aimed at biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management.

## Leveraging ecological knowledge of women and men: A case study from Malaysia<sup>82</sup>

Men and women have specific local ecological knowledge of native species, and as such, should both be important contributors to the knowledge gathering and documentation of these species. Excluding women from knowledge gathering and management initiatives will not only exclude their knowledge, but also limit women's access to the benefits from improved management of biological resources resulting from enhanced knowledge. Consequently,

biodiversity interventions should seek to clarify *a priori* the differential knowledge of women and men and to gain related insights into relevant activities.

This is emphasized by a study conducted in the state of Sarawak, Malaysia, to understand the ecological, organizational and marketing aspects of native fruit trees and explore the knowledge of both women and men on forest resources and their benefits. The study showed the benefits of using participatory approaches to reveal the different sets of knowledge held by women and men of different age groups about the status of and markets for mango and rambutan species. Four participatory research tools were used to collect and organize the ecological knowledge of women and men who owned native fruit tree orchards in Malaysia. These were: Four Cell Analysis to identify

<sup>82</sup> Muhammad, F. A., Elias, M., Lamers, H., Omard, S., Brooke, P., and Hussin, M. H. 2017. "Participatory research to elicit gender differentiated knowledge of native fruit trees." Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

the key biological assets playing important roles in the livelihood of local communities; Venn Diagrams to group local organizations according to their status as internal or external to the community and assess their relative importance; Participatory Value Chain Mapping and Participatory Rapid Market Appraisal to assess community members' level of understanding about marketing processes.

The data collected through the study revealed that knowledge of native fruit trees varies among genders as well as generations. Knowledge is related to the different roles played by women and men (e.g., cultivation, collection, preparation etc.). In addition, men and women have different assessments of the type of fruits that were abundant and those which were not, based on the fruits they predominantly used, and hence have different conservation priorities. The study underlines the importance of a gender-responsive approach to gathering, preserving and promoting ecological knowledge for biodiversity conservation.

## **Strengthening decision-making: Empowering Kenyan women to engage in natural resource management and forest conservation<sup>83</sup>**

Women's voice and opinions should form an integral part of natural resource management, to ensure that their needs, priorities and concerns regarding natural resources are adequately addressed in the decision-making process and women and men equally benefit from conservation programmes and policies. Active involvement of all members of the community, both women and men, can also increase the likelihood that conservation practices are adhered to in the long-run, after interventions have concluded.

Kenya has embraced participatory forest management that allows communities to manage their local resources. However, women are rarely adequately

involved, even on issues that have direct impacts on their lives. Kijabe Environment Volunteers - a local organization working in the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest - is collaborating with local groups to support women's involvement in local management committees and address their specific priorities, such as the need for healthy and efficient fuel alternatives. Through research, capacity building, partnership development and advocacy, the project contributes to the long-term conservation of the forest while empowering women to take an active role in decision-making in natural resource management and environmental protection. The project advocates for the inclusion of more women in governance structures of community institutions and provides a platform for women to be heard, to collaborate, and to exchange experiences in natural resource management and decision-making. In addition, there are specific components of the project, such as alternative livelihood development, sustainable energy solutions and education, targeted at women to address some of the challenges women face in the community that impede their effective participation in conservation activities.

## **Addressing the needs and priorities of women: Environmental preservation through economic empowerment<sup>84</sup>**

Women and men have different needs and priorities regarding the type and quantity of natural resources they use, and how the resources are being used. Biodiversity conservation interventions that are not gender-responsive can overlook these differences, and further aggravate existing gender inequalities. A conservation programme implemented in the Western Himalayan region mitigates this outcome by paying special attention to the challenges faced by women in the community.

83 Conservation International. 2017. "Understanding gender and empowering women in East Africa." Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

84 NBSAP Forum. 2017. "Women's empowerment, biodiversity conservation & securing rural livelihood options in the Himalayas." Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

The main sources of income in the Gadsa Valley in the Western Himalayan Mountains are harvesting natural resources, selling fuelwood, fodder and medicinal plants, and sheep and goat rearing. Poor households are heavily dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods, which is contributing to the rapid depletion of available resources such as fuelwood. Since women are predominantly engaged in these activities, the increased time needed to obtain resources due to resource depletion has further added to their work burden. To address these challenges, Jagriti, a local organization, with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), SN POWER (Norway) and the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP), disseminated a package of energy-efficient devices (including liquefied petroleum gas stoves, pressure cookers and traditional water heaters) in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu District. This energy programme is implemented

through more than 100 women's savings and credit groups at the village and hamlet level. The project focuses on: expanding the usage of energy-efficient and drudgery-reducing devices to reduce the dependence on fuelwood (with related environmental and health benefits); and using women's 'freed' time to improve their livelihoods through activities that increase income, in addition to encouraging female participation in public forums and devoting time for leisure.

The programme addressed specific needs of women, while linking energy interventions with larger empowerment programmes that have environmental and economic co-benefits. A gender-responsive approach allowed women to actively participate in the livelihood development activities and public decision-making platforms, hence empowering them to contribute to policies.

# VII. SYNERGISTIC APPROACH TO GENDER-RESPONSIVE IMPLEMENTATION

A synergistic approach to gender-responsive implementation across related commitments – i.e., identifying and building on important linkages between biodiversity and other issues, processes and mechanisms – has the potential to contribute to positive outcomes for gender equality, the empowerment of women and women’s enjoyment of human rights, as well as to significantly enhance the implementation of the Convention and the achievement of global goals and targets on biodiversity.

Towards this end, positive synergies which arise from enhanced attention to gender equality, the empowerment of women and women’s enjoyment of human rights in Convention implementation should be identified, recognized and built on. Ensuring that all stakeholders, resource managers and agents of change – women as well as men – have the potential to participate and contribute effectively is critical for reaching the biodiversity goals and targets. Failure to recognize women’s roles and contributions, and to address any constraints they may face, can seriously jeopardize the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

Effective gender mainstreaming in relation to biodiversity can be facilitated by close links with the work on gender equality, the empowerment of women and women’s enjoyment of human rights, undertaken in the context of the two other Rio Conventions – the UNFCCC and the UNCCD. Considerable opportunities for positive synergies in the area of sustainable development are also available with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, many of which include targets relevant for gender equality and biodiversity concerns. In addition, there are increasing opportunities

to make critical links to human rights – particularly rights to, access to and control over natural and productive resources – through relevant human rights instruments and mechanisms (refer to Section III for an overview of human rights instruments relevant to women and biodiversity).

## Rio Conventions

While each of the three Rio Conventions is unique, the three Conventions are also integrally inter-related. Climate change, biodiversity, desertification and drought are all interconnected. There are mutual dependencies and inherent relationships among the three Conventions and the issues they address. The Conventions share a common concern for many of the same environmental and sustainable development issues and operate within the same ecosystems. There is potential for positive synergies on many issues. One significant inter-linkage is the context of climate change which has implications for, and is impacted by, the management of biodiversity and actions on desertification and drought. Land use, land rights, sustainable land management, forest resources and land degradation are critical issues with implications for all three Conventions.

Synergies can also be identified in relation to the obligations of Parties to the Rio Conventions for implementation at national level. Parties to all three Conventions have committed to national level research, capacity-building and awareness raising. Coordination and collaboration at national level is particularly critical when responsibility for implementation of the Conventions does not lie with the same institutions.

There are also significant synergies in relation to processes and procedures across the three Conventions. Many of the processes for implementation and follow-up at national level are similar. For example, each of the Conventions has developed planning and reporting tools and mechanisms to support national level implementation which provide opportunities for coordination and collaboration – NBSAPs, National Action Programmes (NAPs),<sup>85</sup> and National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).<sup>86</sup> Each Convention works with national Convention focal points to support implementation processes.

A Joint Liaison Group, composed of the Executive Secretaries of the three Conventions, was established in 2001 to enhance coordination, collaboration, knowledge-sharing and outreach across the Conventions. Priority areas for coordination and collaboration through the Joint Liaison Group include information sharing and awareness-raising, development of technical papers, contributions to workshops and promoting coordination between national focal points and stakeholder groups. The Rio Convention Pavilion<sup>87</sup> is a coordinated platform exhibiting joint work across the Conventions which raises awareness and shares information on the latest scientific findings, policy developments and practices linking biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management, including issues of land degradation and drought

85 UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification). "National Action Programmes." Accessed 7 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

86 UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). 2018. "National Adaptation Programmes of Action." Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

87 RCP (Rio Conventions Pavilion). 2018. "About the RCP." Accessed 10 September 2018. [\[Link\]](#)

reduction.<sup>88</sup> Identification of synergies and coordination/collaboration is becoming increasingly important among the Rio Conventions, which provides an opportunity to strengthen collaborative work on gender mainstreaming.

Implementation at national level is recognized as providing critical openings for synergistic, coherent and cost-effective actions.<sup>89</sup> The Joint Liaison Group supports Parties to achieve national level coordination and synergies in implementation processes, including collaboration among national focal points for the three Conventions.

Joint Liaison Group publications highlight a number of areas where coordination and cooperation should be fostered – adaptation, forests and gender equality.<sup>90</sup> The Joint Liaison Group continues to explore areas with potential for further collaboration, including the land-use sector, national reporting processes, project preparedness and indicators.<sup>91</sup> All of these areas are critical from a gender equality perspective and efforts need to be made to ensure that gender mainstreaming is included in the coordination and collaboration promoted in all the thematic areas identified.

The Joint Liaison Group publication 'The Rio Conventions Action on Gender' (2012) provides an overview of gender mainstreaming across the Conventions, highlighting opportunities and challenges. The Convention secretariats were encouraged to harmonize gender mainstreaming efforts.<sup>92</sup> The potential for increased coordination and collaboration on implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy, with positive outcomes for all Conventions, is significant. Building on

88 UN-Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2018. *Towards a gender-responsive implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification*. New York: UN-Women. [\[Link\]](#)

89 Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. 2011. *Terms of reference and Modus Operandi for the Joint Liaison Group between the three Rio Conventions*. [\[Link\]](#)

90 Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. 2012. *The Rio Conventions action on adaptation* [\[Link\]](#); Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. 2012. *The Rio Conventions action on gender*. ; and Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions 2012. *The Rio Conventions action on forests*. [\[Link\]](#)

91 Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. 2016. Report of the fourteenth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Convention. [\[Link\]](#)

92 Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. 2012. *The Rio Conventions Action on gender*. [\[Link\]](#)



synergies with other Conventions and their secretariats is an important means to strengthen the support and resources available for effective work on gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights.

Explicit mandates have been established for gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights in all Rio Conventions, including through a focus on gender mainstreaming. Efforts have been made in all three Conventions to mainstream gender considerations in key processes and mechanisms. There has been significant advocacy and efforts to increase attention to gender equality in new policy development and implementation activities. As of 2017, all three Rio Conventions have gender action plans, and they each also support capacity-building efforts on gender mainstreaming. The approaches, methodologies and tools used in gender mainstreaming are very similar and there is significant potential for increased collaboration and cooperation and sharing of experiences, expertise and promising practices.

Capacity-building is one area where there is considerable scope for positive sharing of resources and expertise, and for joint initiatives. To this end the CBD Secretariat, in partnership with the UNFCCC and UNCCD secretariats, prepared a survey on joint capacity-building needs for gender mainstreaming for Parties and stakeholders, which was open for responses from October to December 2017. Opportunities flagged for joint capacity-building among the Rio Conventions included: improving 'gender literacy' or increased understanding of gender and biodiversity/environment linkages; women's empowerment and participation in the Convention; considering the regional/national/local context for implementation; and establishing/emphasizing synergies between the conventions. Training needs included the integration of gender issues in the design and management of projects and in the development and evaluation of policies. Developing a database or platform on linkages between gender, biodiversity and climate change was also proposed among practical actions for capacity-building.

In addition to these suggestions, there is potential for joint efforts to focus on shared needs for advocacy, gender analyses, sex-disaggregated data, gender statistics and gender indicators. Other potential areas for joint initiatives include development of pilot projects and case studies on common issues and the documentation and dissemination of promising practices in areas of mutual interest.

Collaborative efforts to streamline mandates, develop common tools in some areas, and identify points of leverage for effective implementation across the Conventions would also be useful,<sup>93</sup> while periodic joint thematic reports on different aspects of the work on gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights could also be a possibility.<sup>94</sup> Constituencies for gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's enjoyment of human rights are often connected if not identical in the three Rio Conventions and joint advocacy work might be possible in some areas.

Increased coordination and collaboration would have significant benefits in terms of less duplication of efforts and more cost-effective use of scarce resources and greater impact through common approaches and voice – outcomes which Member States and Parties to the Rio Conventions have consistently underscored and would particularly welcome. Joint activities at national level would be viewed positively by Parties as a means to facilitate national level implementation and reduce overload on institutions.

## 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The three Rio Conventions share a common commitment to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The issues covered by the Rio Conventions are intricately linked to the interrelated elements of sustainable development, i.e., social, economic and environmental development. Thus, implementation of each of the Rio Conventions is critical for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the same time, implementation of

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

**BOX 8. KEY SDG TARGETS RELEVANT TO GENDER EQUALITY, THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONTRIBUTING TO A GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH TOWARDS BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**

**1.4:** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

**1.b:** Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.

**2.3:** By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

**4.7:** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

**5.5:** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

**5.a:** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

**5.b:** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

**5.c:** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

**10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

**13.b:** Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

**14.b:** Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

**15.6:** Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed

**16.7:** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

the Rio Conventions is only possible if there is a strong and balanced focus on sustainable development in the implementation processes. The Joint Liaison Group has discussed the possibility of a publication highlighting the synergies between the Rio Conventions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>95</sup> It will be critical that gender equality issues are mainstreamed into development of synergies related to sustainable development.

The importance of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls for sustainable development – as well as the critical role of gender mainstreaming – is explicitly recognized in the 2030 Agenda: “Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets . . . The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.”<sup>96</sup> UN-Women’s recent SDG monitoring report ‘Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ provides a comprehensive picture of progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the SDGs from a gender perspective and highlights key areas for action.<sup>97</sup>

Implementation of the Rio Conventions should draw on the integrated, people-centred and gender-responsive

approach to sustainable development outlined in the 2030 Agenda. All of the SDGs have relevance for the work of the CBD and the Rio Conventions generally.<sup>98</sup> Apart from the goals directly linked to the three Conventions, such as SDG 13 on climate change, SDG 15 on terrestrial ecosystems, and SDGs 6, 7, 12, and 14 on water, energy, sustainable consumption/production, and oceans, there are other SDGs of importance for people-centred, gender-responsive implementation, including those focused on the critical issues of poverty eradication (SDG 1), food security/nutrition (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education/life-long learning (SDG 4) and employment (SDG 8). The strong focus in the 2030 Agenda on inclusion/participation (SDGs 5, 10 and 16) and governance issues (SDG 16) has potential to impact positively on implementation of the three Rio Conventions.

With its focus on ending discrimination, ensuring equal access to resources, as well as the emphasis on women’s leadership roles and empowerment, SDG 5 highlights critical issues for gender-responsive implementation of the CBD and the Rio Conventions. Equally important, however, is focusing on some of the targets under other SDGs contributing to gender equality, the empowerment of women and women’s enjoyment of human rights, which can act as entry points for strengthening a gender-responsive approach to biodiversity conservation (see box 8 for list of key targets).

<sup>95</sup> Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. 2016. *Report of the fourteenth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Convention*. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>96</sup> UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 2015. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. A/RES/70/1, para. 20. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>97</sup> UN-Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2018. *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: UN-Women. [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

# VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

This section outlines key recommendations to guide Parties, the CBD Secretariat, and other stakeholders, including inter-governmental organizations, regional organizations, financial mechanisms, United Nations entities and civil society actors in systematically integrating a gender perspective into efforts to implement the Convention and biodiversity conservation.

## A. Integrate a gender perspective into the implementation of the CBD

Parties, CBD Secretariat, implementing entities and stakeholders:

- Adopt a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach to CBD implementation, including strategies, workplans, frameworks and financing mechanisms;
- Raise awareness on the added value of gender mainstreaming in biodiversity conservation, at the community and national level, through communication campaigns and capacity-building efforts; and
- Raise awareness of all CBD delegates on the interlinkages between gender and biodiversity to enhance their capacity to contribute to a gender-responsive CBD process.

### Parties:

- Work for the inclusion of a standing agenda item on gender equality in the CBD process to enable in-depth discussion on the gender perspectives of biodiversity and commit to the consideration of existing gender-responsive mandates across the various thematic areas and work programmes of the CBD process; and
- Develop inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to ensure that gender perspectives are

mainstreamed into the operations of all biodiversity-related institutions.

## B. Ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in biodiversity-related actions and in the CBD process

Parties, CBD Secretariat, implementing entities and stakeholders:

- Ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in biodiversity policy-making and financial mechanisms including as delegates, representatives of women's organizations, and indigenous peoples;
- Institutionalize capacity-building and technical support, and provide financial support for women, especially indigenous women, to participate meaningfully in biodiversity decision-making processes at the community, local and national levels and in global processes; and
- Raise awareness on the added value of gender mainstreaming in biodiversity conservation, at community and national levels, through communication campaigns, and capacity-building efforts.

### Parties:

- Build capacity of national CBD focal points and institutions to raise awareness on gender issues in the implementation of the CBD and in the

development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, ensuring greater emphasis on working with women's organizations; and

- Establish a 'Friends of Gender Equality' group under the Convention to strengthen Parties' efforts in ensuring the integration of gender considerations in the implementation of the Convention and its related processes.

## C. Strengthen the evidence: gender-responsive research, data collection and reporting

### Parties, CBD Secretariat, implementing entities and stakeholders:

- Include more social indicators (e.g., governance, educational attainment, child mortality etc.) in national biodiversity statistics, which capture the impact of human activity on biodiversity, the impact of biodiversity degradation and loss on women and men, and changes in perceptions over time regarding biodiversity conservation.

#### Parties:

- Facilitate women's equal and meaningful participation and leadership in natural resource governance and decision-making;
- Build capacity at the national and local levels to collect, analyze and use data disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location and other relevant demographic variables, as well as qualitative data, in a consistent and timely manner to ensure that issues of individual communities and populations, including rural and indigenous women, are reflected above and beyond aggregate statistics at the national level; and
- Undertake periodic mapping exercises to identify the data gaps in biodiversity and natural resource management, with a specific focus on the social impacts of biodiversity degradation, that would hinder gender-responsive policy making.

### CBD Secretariat, implementing entities and stakeholders:

- Develop guidelines for Parties on the data requirements for developing and implementing gender-responsive biodiversity policies and related decisions including the NBSAPs and National Reports;
- Support Parties in mapping their data needs and developing the necessary approaches and tools for the collection and management of gender-sensitive data on biodiversity;
- Develop guidance which will assist Parties in identifying, prioritizing and reporting on gender-indicators in their National Reports and other reporting processes;
- In coordination with the three Rio Convention Secretariats, prepare joint periodic thematic reports on the implementation of the gender equality mandates of the Conventions highlighting good practices by Parties and other stakeholders, and identify research gaps to inform future work as well as policies and programmes;
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and the dissemination of information on the gender dimensions of biodiversity; and
- Consider holding an expert group meeting on the nexus between gender equality and the environment to support the development of a gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

## D. Ensure equal access, use and control of natural resources

Parties, CBD Secretariat, implementing entities and stakeholders:

- Equip women, including indigenous women, with skills and knowledge, including on new technologies and other related tools to conserve and manage their land and related resources;
- Address local norms, cultural frameworks and other informal structures that restrict women's access, use and control of natural resources, including land, while implementing conservation projects and programmes; and
- Undertake research on equitable benefit-sharing in relation to biodiversity, drawing on existing literature, consultations and interviews with stakeholders, including women's organizations and indigenous women.

### Parties:

- Develop biodiversity policies and practices which recognize, and strengthen women's access to, control over and ownership of land; and
- Strengthen legal and policy frameworks to ensure women's land rights and equal access to natural resources.

## E. Pursue synergies in the gender-responsive implementation of the Rio Conventions

Parties, Secretariats of the Rio Conventions, implementing entities and stakeholders:

- Strengthen cooperation and knowledge sharing among the three Rio Convention secretariats in an effort to ensure that gender equality issues are systematically considered in the implementation of the Conventions;
- Mobilize resources to organize joint training programmes for Rio Convention focal points and other relevant decision-makers and implementers and develop joint tools to support implementation of gender-responsive decisions of the Conventions;
- Support and develop strategic partnerships with women's organizations that advocate and work for gender-responsive implementation of the three Rio Conventions;
- Map gender mainstreaming opportunities in key planning and policy instruments, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Programmes and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and develop related guidance notes and other tools; and
- Consider holding an expert group meeting, bringing together gender equality and technical experts on the Rio Conventions and related SDGs, to develop recommendations for their synergistic implementation.

### Parties:

- Establish, at national level, a joint working group of focal points of the three Rio Conventions on gender equality, as a means to strengthen coordination and collaboration in the gender-responsive implementation of the three Rio Conventions.

# APPENDIX 1: ACRONYMS

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<b>CBD</b>	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CIFOR</b>	Center for International Forestry Research
<b>COP</b>	Conference of Parties
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>GEF SGP</b>	Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
<b>JLG</b>	Joint Liaison Group
<b>LDN</b>	Land Degradation Neutrality
<b>NAPAs</b>	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
<b>NAPs</b>	National Action Programmes
<b>NBSAPs</b>	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
<b>NDCs</b>	Nationally Determined Contributions
<b>NORAD</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SIGI</b>	Social Institutions and Gender Index
<b>UNCCD</b>	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>UNFCCC</b>	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

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