

Analysis of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (2017-2019)

Background and contents

A Gender Action Plan (GAP) was adopted by the COP23 in Bonn in November 2017, based on a COP decision taken a year before. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) developed the plan in close cooperation with interested Parties and the UNFCCC Secretariat (the Secretariat) in order to support the implementation of gender-related decisions and mandates resulting from the UNFCCC process since its inception.

The purpose of the GAP is three-fold. It seeks to (1) advance women's full, equal and meaningful participation, (2) promote gender-responsive climate policy and (3) to mainstream a gender perspective in the work of the Convention and under the Paris Agreement, by all stakeholders.

Various stakeholders, including the UNFCCC Secretariat, Parties, bodies under the Convention and other UN entities are responsible for and/or involved in the implementation of activities under the GAP. A synthesis report on the implementation of the plan is to be presented by the Secretariat at the COP 25 in November 2019. The GAP thus has a two-year implementation span. The implementation will be reviewed at the COP25 in 2019.

Activities under the GAP are organised under five priority areas: Capacity-building, knowledge sharing and communication; Gender balance, participation and women's leadership; Coherence; Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation; and Monitoring and reporting.

Strengths

The adoption of the GAP gives concrete form to the work on gender under the UNFCCC and sets out a framework for follow up. In the Paris Agreement, gender issues are recognised as an overarching principle (in the pre-amble) and in relation to efforts on adaptation and capacity building. The GAP relates to activities concerning adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building, which thus expands the scope of integration. Although targets have been set for increasing women's participation in delegations to the UNFCCC, little progress has been made to date.

The GAP has been developed through a series of workshops during 2017. It has given interested Parties the opportunity to discuss the contents in-depth, and all Parties to take part in the formulation of the plan during the in-session workshop in May 2017 and the SBI negotiations at November 2017.

The five priority areas of the plan cover the most important aspects of promoting gender equality under the Convention and the Paris Agreement.

Weaknesses

Implementation of the activities in the GAP is not compulsory. Parties and other concerned stakeholders are "invited" to engage in implementing the plan and to engage in gender-related activities under the plan "as appropriate". The GAP also recognizes that climate action under the Convention is Party driven, thus leaving it up to Parties to prioritise the activities. In recognizing that Parties are at various stages in terms of progress on the agenda of gender and climate change, the

COP is respecting countries' respective capabilities, but also leaving the door open to do nothing, based on lack of capacity – which is what the activities themselves aim to build.

The actions to be taken by the Secretariat under the GAP are subject to the availability of funds. The Secretariat has a key role to play both in the implementation of the plan and monitoring and follow up of the same. Should funding not materialize, efforts to ensure policy coherence, mainstreaming and capacity building of UNFCCC constituted bodies and chairs will be weakened and the compilation of synthesis reports of submissions and the implementation of the GAP will be in jeopardy. Without this coordinating function of the Secretariat, sharing and learning between countries will be difficult and there will be less coordinated results to build future plans on.

Qualification of the plan

The GAP states that gender-responsive climate policy requires further strengthening in all activities concerning adaptation, mitigation and related means of implementation, including finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building, as well as decision-making on the implementation of climate policies. It recognizes participation of women as a means of increasing effectiveness of climate action. These statements are in line with the findings of contemporary research on the gender aspects of climate policy and action.

Research has shown that women's and men's vulnerabilities, strategies, knowledge, contribution and attitudes differ when it relates to climate change and its causes and effects. There is also a marked difference in men's and women's access to information and decision making on climate change policy and action.¹

The above-mentioned differences between women and men in relation to climate change are linked to traditional gender roles, which *inter alia* determine women's and men's roles in the economy, the household and in society at large. Women generally have the main responsibility for care work within the household. On average, women earn less and own less than men. Individuals as well as groups that have fewer resources, less access to information and smaller networks are generally more vulnerable to change, including the effects of climate change.

Beyond vulnerability, earning and owning less as well as being confined to the private (rather than the public) sphere to a larger degree than men has an effect on women's influence on decision-making. Excluding women from planning and policy making has the effect that their perspectives, experiences and knowledge are not taken advantage of when designing responses to climate challenges – with regard to mitigation as well as adaptation. Domains that are considered "female" therefore risk getting less attention and solutions to climate challenges will consequently be incomplete and ineffective. In order to address everyone's basic needs and strategic interests in climate action, policy making and planning must be inclusive and participatory.

Implications for Sweden

As a Party to the Convention and the Paris Agreement, Sweden is invited to implement and engage in all the activities of the GAP. As a country with a feminist government and a feminist foreign policy, it is a matter both of credibility and of political priority to undertake the tasks assigned to Parties under

¹ Pearse, R. Gender and climate change. WIREs Clim Change 2017, 8:e451. Doi 10.1002/wcc.451
http://www.academia.edu/30671931/Gender_and_climate_change

the plan. As a country with relatively high gender equality, Sweden should use the opportunity to lead by example, by showcasing successful policy initiatives and climate action with a gender perspective.

Implementing the activities in the plan should put up a mirror that will let stakeholders in climate policy and implementation in Sweden reflect on what has been done and what can still be improved in terms of climate action, by integrating a gender perspective in policy development, planning and implementation. This could provide input not least to the Swedish Climate Policy Council on how to further develop Swedish climate policy.

In addition to contributing to purposes of the GAP by implementing activities, Sweden should take responsibility for supporting other countries as well as the Secretariat to undertake activities under the GAP.

Below is a commentary on the five priority areas of the GAP, suggesting relevant action in the national context and engagement in the UNFCCC and other UN processes. Key activities have been selected based on relevance and applicability for Sweden.

Priority area	Key activities	Implications/Required action for Sweden
A. Capacity-building, knowledge sharing and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance capacity for gender-responsive policies, plans and programmes (A.1) Submission on integration of gender-sensitive training and awareness raising in mitigation and adaptation activities (A.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an investigation to establish a baseline of gender integration in climate policies, plans and programs, and existing capacity Develop a plan for addressing capacity building needs to increase gender integration The most effective way to increase the capacity of all relevant stakeholders to integrate gender in climate policy and planning should be to assign specific responsibility or recruit the necessary expertise. Regional and local stakeholders should be given a clear mandate and responsibility and the necessary funds to do this. Conduct a mapping of information/education/training activities linked to climate change policy and planning initiatives and compile as submission to Secretariat
B. Gender balance, participation and women's leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote travel funds (B.1) Training on leadership, negotiation, facilitation and chairing (B.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute travel funds on request Promote leadership training e.g. through financing or including in mandate for Sida's International Training Programmes (ITP)
C. Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogue on entry points for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in activity C.1, to promote/request further work on the

	<p>integration with chairs (C.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building on integration for chairs et al (C.2) • Sharing of information on supporting activities (C.3) 	<p>entry points for gender integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on implementation of activities C.2 and C.3, asking for reporting on the issues from concerned UN entities and organisations
D. Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation	Activities mainly accrue to developing country Parties and UNFCCC constituted bodies and entities	n/a
E. Monitoring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission to the Secretariat on climate change impacts on women and men and integration of gender in climate policy, planning and action and policies and plans for gender balance in national climate delegations(E.1) 	<p>Conduct a mapping, based on sex-disaggregated data when available, of a) gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in Sweden, b) how gender considerations have been integrated in climate policy, planning and implementation for mitigation and adaptation, and c) key success factors behind progress made in achieving a gender balance in the national climate delegation. This should require cooperation between a number of Ministries and involvement of regional and local administration (länsstyrelser och kommuner). Compile the findings as a Submission to the Secretariat, but also as lessons and recommendations for relevant stakeholders in the national context.</p>

Recommended action

The top three activities in the GAP for Sweden to follow up on should be A.1, E.1 and B.3. A.1 and E.1 have the potential to significantly increase the integration of a gender perspective in climate policy and planning in Sweden, by identifying gaps and required action. This would contribute to more effective climate action and would more likely lead to transformative change. Activity B.3 is key to increasing the quality and influence of women's participation in the UNFCCC process. Since Sweden already has an established program for capacity building for developing country individuals, it should be fairly easy to use as a platform for the required training.