

## **Submission by ACT Alliance to the UNFCCC Secretariat, on matters to be addressed at the in-session workshop on gender at SB46**

ACT Alliance makes this submission in response to the invitation to Parties and Observers, in Decision - /CP.22 para 30, to submit their view on the matters to be addressed at the in-session workshop on gender to be held in Bonn in May 2017.

### **Introduction**

Climate change poses an imminent and significant threat to all of creation. The survival of people, communities, flora and fauna as well as fundamental human rights, are at risk.

Addressing these risks must be deliberate and holistic. Any strategy or plan devised to address climate change must be gender-responsive and include the guiding principles of justice, equality, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability, with the active participation of all people at all stages of development and implementation. It must have the rights, needs and interest of people - particularly those that live under the most vulnerable conditions - as a point of departure. The elaboration and implementation of the Paris Agreement, including the anticipated energy transition and required adaptation, should enhance human rights and the principles of justice, equality and sustainability.

BOX: ACT Alliance is a faith-based global network of churches and church-related development organisations fighting poverty, providing humanitarian support and promoting a fair and sustainable model of development. The Paris Agreement provides an opportunity for humanity to lift people out of poverty and preserve our environment for future generations through rapid transition to low carbon and sustainable lifestyle that is consistent with the stewardship.

Under the Paris Agreement, gender equality and empowerment of women was acknowledged so that gender differences and inequalities are not only recognised, but identified and addressed in a manner that provides for accountability (articles 7.5 and 11.2). Equal opportunity to participate must be ensured in all climate change policy and project development and streamlined in actual policy and project implementation. ACT Alliance recognises that women, due to gender inequalities, are disproportionately affected by long-term climate change, particularly in developing countries, where they are often more reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods. Because of gender roles, women often have specific competences regarding resource management, such as water and energy management, which are often overlooked because these survival responsibilities typically fall outside the formal economy. To avoid being overlooked and marginalized, women, therefore, must be at the heart of the climate discussion, at all levels of decision making, from local level to UNFCCC negotiations, as the global transition to renewable energy is progressed.

The principle of equity, as embedded in the convention, must prevail as most populations impacted by climate change have contributed least to changing the climate and have less capacity and fewer resources to manage climate change impacts. The principle of climate justice should be applied at all levels (local, national, regional and global), as climate injustice exists between socio-economic and ethnic groups and genders within countries, as well as between countries.

ACT Alliance welcomes and endorses the formulation in the Decision -/CP.22, “*Underscoring the importance of coherence between gender-responsive climate policies and the balanced participation of women and men in the Convention process and the provisions of international instruments and outcomes such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*”

The structure and content of this submission is as follows:

- Suggestions on thematic elements to be addressed during the workshop
- Suggestions on format and procedures of the workshop
- Suggested components of the Gender Action Plan
- Key priorities of the ACT Alliance on gender integration under the Paris Agreement

ACT Alliance takes the opportunity to provide inputs to the GAP at this stage, understanding that the immediate focus needs to be on methodology and process that includes strict measures for monitoring to assure compliance. It is expected that a proposed outline of the GAP can also serve to guide the development of the program of the workshop.

Key priorities/recommendations are included as a means of highlighting ACT Alliance’s expectations on the outcomes of the workshop as well as the implementation of the GAP.

### **Thematic elements of workshop**

The workshop should ideally cover both procedural/administrative issues and content related matters as highlighted below.

- Revisit the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development → discussion on how to implement existing policy commitments for gender equality in climate change
- Inventory of capacity development needs among different actors, and discussion on the capacity and mandate of the UNFCCC to support the identified needs
  - UNFCCC secretariat
  - National delegations to the UNFCCC
  - National focal points for gender in climate negotiations
  - National authorities and policy makers
  - Donor agencies & Climate Funds
  - Implementing agencies (mitigation and adaptation) at national level
  - Local authorities
  - Women’s rights groups
  - Female leaders at local and national level
- Contents of capacity building trainings and programs

- How to set up an implementing body for the Gender Action Plan: revisiting experiences from other UN bodies
- Targeted efforts to strengthen women's participation in UNFCCC negotiations
- Inputs to the preparation of a technical paper, by the Secretariat, identifying entry points for integrating gender considerations in work streams under the UNFCCC process (Decision -/CP.22 para 13)
- How to liaise and coordinate with other work streams before 2019/until the GAP is finalised, in order to ensure gender mainstreaming in the Paris Rulebook
  - Ensure participation (including financial support) of gender expert(s) in upcoming Technical Expert Meetings (decision -/CP.22 para 16 )
  - Ensure gender mainstreaming in climate technology development and transfer (para 17)
  - Financial Mechanism (para 21)
  - Ensure gender mainstreaming in reporting on climate policies (para 23 )

### **Format of workshop**

ACT Alliance would like to encourage the active participation, e.g. by means of presentations, panel discussion participation, or chairing of group discussions, of civil society representatives, in particular to include the voice of women from developing countries. The active participation by established women's rights organisations is essential. Additionally, the sessions should include the following criteria:

- Based on previous experiences from in-session workshops, the ACT Alliance would like to recommend that the time allotted to one-way communication/presentations is limited to a minimum.
- External resource persons, such as researchers and facilitators, may provide useful inspiration and input to the discussions on procedural as well as content matters.
- The workshop should provide ample scope for discussion and interaction, for example through themed group discussions. ACT Alliance encourages the use of participative methods to stimulate exchange of ideas and to collect suggestions and flesh out priorities.
- In order to make one-way communication more interactive and allow more people to voice their concerns, we suggest using Twitter or similar tool to collect questions and comments during presentations, and to allow ample time for presenters to address them.
- All sessions should be outcome focused, with a purpose to collect ideas/input to the Gender Action Plan and/or to be forwarded to other work streams or bodies under the Paris Agreement.

### **Components of a gender action plan**

ACT Alliance expects the Gender Action Plan (GAP) to ensure that gender inequality is consistently and comprehensively addressed in all policy development, implementation, monitoring and reporting under the Paris Agreement. Principles that should be incorporated include:

- Setting up of a responsible body/mechanism for implementation and monitoring of the GAP

- Establishing clear coordination mechanisms among the mentioned responsible body/mechanism and other UN agencies and bodies tackling gender and climate issues allocating responsibilities clearly.
- Development of guidelines for gender integration in NDCs, NAPs and National Communications, ensuring policy coherence with existing international obligations on women's human rights, ensuring that they address key challenges to reduce gender inequality in climate change policy development and implementation:
  - Reducing the gender gap in decision-making on climate change
  - Gender-responsive policies and interventions on adaptation
  - Gender-responsive policies and interventions on mitigation
  - Gender-responsive mechanisms for climate finance
  - Underlying causes behind women's marginalization and vulnerable conditions, e.g.
    - Land ownership
    - Inheritance laws
    - Access to labour market; unequal pay and other discriminatory conditions and practices.
    - Exclusion from decision making processes.
- Building capacity for relevant actors
  - Negotiators
  - National policy makers
  - Donor agencies/Climate funds
  - Implementing agencies (mitigation and adaptation) at national level
  - Local authorities
  - Women's rights groups
  - Female leaders at local and national level
- Building capacity on relevant topics/themes
  - Gender sensitive NDC, NAP, National communications, climate legislative frameworks, etc
  - Gender sensitive mitigation, adaptation
  - Financing for increased gender equality through climate interventions
- Establishing clear mechanisms to enhance participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations (both in terms of quality and quantity)

- Supporting revision of NDCs and NAPs to ensure integration of gender considerations
- Developing the framework for monitoring of impact on gender equality in climate change interventions funded by climate finance (by climate funds, multilateral banks, bilateral and multilateral agencies, private investors, etc.)
- Incorporating instruments to ensure channelling of climate funds to women and gender rights groups
- Devising monitoring guidelines for NDCs, NAPs, National Communications, and Climate Finance
- Incorporating indicators on gender equality in reporting requirements for NDCs, NAPs, National Communications, and Climate Finance

ACT Alliance appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments and suggestions. Some of ACT Alliance's key priorities on gender integration under the Paris Agreement are included in the appendix to this submission. We look forward to working with the Gender Team and the UNFCCC bodies in addressing climate change from a human rights and gender-responsive perspective, especially in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

2017-02-01

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## Appendix

### Key priorities of the ACT Alliance on gender integration under the Paris Agreement

Transforming gender relations is an essential part of adapting to climate change and building resilience – for example, to diversify livelihoods, women require increased access and security of tenure of farmland and more participation in decisions on how that land is used. These changes require a focus on wider systems of structural discrimination, access and rights, often considering other intersectional factors of discrimination, *inter alia*, age, class or race. If women are to take an equal role in responding to climate change, consideration must be made of how to redistribute the burden of unpaid care which prevents their full participation, for example by increasing the provision of public services.

The gender gap in climate decision-making exists at every level. Although the UNFCCC agreed in 2001 to improve women’s participation in decision-making processes, by 2010 women constituted less than 30% of all delegation parties to UNFCCC talks. Steps have already been taken to address this gap. In 2012, at the UN Climate Change Conference in Doha, Qatar, states committed to promoting gender balance and working towards equal participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and the representation in bodies established under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol, with progress to be reported annually. However, there are still improvements to be made, as women’s rights organisations and experts have had low levels of participation throughout the UNFCCC process. For the gap to be addressed there is a need to listen to the experiences of the most affected and draw on their expertise so that approaches to climate change are suitably informed.

ACT Alliance recommends that the following concepts be utilized as guiding principles:

- Implementing the Paris Agreement, every decision, policy and plan must pay attention not only to the different impact on women and men; beyond that, they must be transformative, gender-responsive and contribute to women’s empowerment and to the gender equity. Women must be seen as key decision makers and drivers of change.
- Gender is rarely perceived as a relevant consideration in the context of mitigation strategies and the majority of the plans and policies developed by northern countries to be implemented in their territory do not include any reference to gender and human rights. Gender-responsive policy and mechanisms to achieve gender equality must be developed by all parties.
- To make equal representation possible, financial support to participate in global and regional decision-making should be equally divided between male and female delegates
- Women’s rights organisations must have access to decision making fora on climate change policy

To be effective, mitigation policies will need to be based on a sound understanding of gender-differentiated relationships with the environment that are the result of social norms. Women’s energy needs, for example, can be different from that of men, requiring energy for clean cooking, water pumping for agriculture and drinking water, and access to public services such as health clinics and education. The gender differentiation of roles of men and women in transitions to clean energy is therefore considerable. Mitigation policies and initiatives, including the SDG on sustainable energy, must strive to be gender aware to be effective. Similarly, different roles in forest conservation must be understood with regards to carbon capture policies, and gender awareness in sustainable consumption policies must be explicitly gender-

sensitive because of the strong role of women in household consumption decisions. However, policies around mitigation and low carbon development remain largely blind to gendered engagement with climate change and to their impact on gender equality. For example, approaches to ‘offsetting’ carbon emissions through economic incentives in programmes such as the UN’s Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) have been criticised for commercialising natural resources – this excludes landless women who depend on forests for their livelihoods benefit from these economic incentives. Moreover, there is a concern that such market-based approaches can serve to worsen gender inequality. Consideration of gendered roles in mitigation and the gendered impact of mitigation policies being implemented will be vital to ensuring that these responses to climate change are successful. Women have a vital role to play in adaptation because of their knowledge, for instance in managing water resources. Moreover, gender justice should be at the heart of decisions regarding the allocation of resources for adaptation both through gender mainstreaming and the allocation of resources to respond to the specific needs of women.

ACT Alliance recommends parties to:

- Ensure equal participation of women and men in identifying adaptation and mitigation challenges and solutions
- Address the underlying causes of women’s and men’s specific vulnerabilities to the identified impacts of climate change , e.g. land ownership, inheritance laws, access to information and skills development, etc.
- Apply a holistic approach to addressing the respective practical needs and strategic, interests of women and men in a given location, integrating adaptation, mitigation and gender equality aspects
- Consider how available local resources and traditional and innovative knowledge of different user groups can be applied to address needs and vulnerable conditions in a given location
- Put resilience (to shocks and slow onset changes) as the overarching objective for climate change adaptation and mitigation policies

On Climate Finance, ACT Alliance recommends as follows:

- A share of climate funds should be earmarked to target women’s needs/programmes designed by and involving women
- All climate finance mechanisms should be guided by clear transparency principles.
- Climate finance institutions (inter alia Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, World Bank and bilateral donors) should incorporate a measureable Gender Policy
- Climate funds’ boards and governing bodies should have equal gender representation
- Climate funds should allow gender civil society groups observer space at their decision-making bodies
- Climate finance flows from both public and private sources must be subject to strict social and environmental safeguards, to ensure that they contribute to gender justice as part of sustainable development and poverty reduction, as set out in the purpose (Article 2) of the Paris Agreement.

- Climate funds should consider gender aspects in all phases of funding: design, implementation, assessment of proposals and reporting and evaluation; and
- Initiatives funded by Climate funds should apply gender budgeting and gender audits to ensure that mitigation, adaptation, capacity building, technology transfer etc. contribute to gender justice