



Living in harmony with nature

Gender and Biodiversity

The importance of biodiversity to individuals varies according to gender. Based upon the social roles between men and women, gender is shaped by culture, social relations and natural environments. For this reason, we need to incorporate gender dimensions into our understanding of biodiversity and its conservation, sustainable use, and sharing of benefits. Gender roles affect economic, political, social and ecological opportunities and constraints faced by both men and women. Recognizing women's roles as primary land and resource managers is central to the success of (any) biodiversity policy. For example, women farmers currently account for 60-80% of all food production in developing countries, yet gender often remains overlooked in decision-making on access to, and the use of, biodiversity resources.

Just as the impact of biodiversity loss is disproportionately felt by poorer communities, there are also disparities along gender lines. Biodiversity loss affects access to education and gender equality by increasing the time spent by women and children in performing certain tasks like collecting valuable resources and services such as fuel, food and water.

To conserve biodiversity, we need to understand and expose gender-differentiated biodiversity practices, gendered knowledge acquisition and usage. Various studies demonstrate that projects integrating gender dimensions generate superior results. Gender considerations are not solely a women's issue; instead, this outlook could yield advantages for whole communities and benefit both genders.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) developed a Gender Plan of Action that defines the Secretariat's role in stimulating and facilitating efforts on national, regional, and global levels to promote gender equality and mainstream a gender perspective. The Millennium Development Goals emphasize clear linkages between gender equality, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Such insights should be included into our outlook and approach for reversing biodiversity loss, reducing poverty and improving human well-being.



At the tenth Conference of the Parties (COP 10), through its decision X/19, the COP emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming in all programmes of work under the Convention in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention and its Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; invited Parties to consider gender as a core cross-cutting issue in the implementation of biodiversity-related activities and urged Parties to promote the mainstreaming of gender considerations in developing, implementing and revising their national and, where appropriate, regional, biodiversity strategies and

strategies and action plans, and equivalent instruments, in implementing the three objectives of the Convention, taking into account the guidance provided in the Technical Series No. 49 (Guidelines for mainstreaming Gender into the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans). In addition, 25 out of 47 decisions from COP 10 call for the mainstreaming of gender and/or the full participation of women.

Through its decision X/2, the COP adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and urged Parties to develop national and regional targets, using the Strategic Plan as a flexible framework, and to review, update and revise, as appropriate, their national biodiversity strategies and action plans in line with the Strategic Plan. In addition, decision X/2 also requests Parties to mainstream a gender perspective into the implementation of the Convention, to promote gender equality and to mainstream gender considerations in the NBSAPs and in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

As part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and that of the Aichi Targets, the Convention has held a series of eight regional and sub-regional workshops thus far on the revision of the NBSAPs. Gender mainstreaming is one of the themes covered at the workshops and has been received positively. Through these workshops a network of expertise is being created on gender and biodiversity for the Convention.



Coordination among the conventions

From 11 to 12 March 2011 in San Jose, Costa Rica, the first workshop on the development of a coordinated framework on gender mainstreaming of the three Rio Conventions (CBD, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF)) was held. Hosted by the Office of the IUCN Global Senior Gender Adviser, financial support for the workshop was provided by the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS – people unlimited), a development organization based in The Hague, Netherlands. The workshop convened representatives from the secretariats of the CBD, the UNCCD, the UNFCCC and the GEF, as well as other representatives from major stakeholder groups. The workshop elaborated a vision for the joint gender efforts amongst the three Rio Conventions and the GEF, a set of principles to guide concrete actions and a roadmap outlining possible joint activities. The Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the conventions, at its eleventh meeting in April 2011, endorsed the Joint Coordination Group on Gender.

In June 2011, Finland renewed its support for the Convention's gender mainstreaming efforts by contributing €250,000 to the Special Voluntary Trust Fund as support to the implementation of the CBD Gender Plan of Action and the related activities with regard to gender mainstreaming in the three Rio Conventions and the GEF.

Financial and technical support to date:

- ▶ Government of Finland: €440,000 for the establishment of a full-time Gender Programme Officer, including support to the other Rio Conventions on gender mainstreaming
- ▶ Government of the United Kingdom: £10,000
- ▶ Government of Norway: \$25,000
- ▶ HIVOS the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation, of the Netherlands: \$300,000
- ▶ Swiss Development Corporation: \$30,000 for women's participation in COP 9
- ▶ The International Union for Conservation of Nature through the Office of the Global Senior Gender Advisor continues to give technical support, advise and resource mobilization to the Rio Convention Secretariats

Fast Facts

- ▶ Exposing and understanding gender-differentiated biodiversity practices and knowledge of women and men enhances biodiversity conservation.
- ▶ If women were given equal access to productive assets, agricultural production would increase by 2.5 to 4 percent in developing countries, which could lift 100 to 150 million people out of hunger.
- ▶ Biodiversity conservation efforts become more effective and efficient when women and vulnerable groups are empowered to participate as equals in: information sharing and generation, education and training, technology transfer, organizational development, financial assistance, policy development.
- ▶ Of the 196 world leaders, only 20 are women.

Learn More

Gender and the Environment ▶ www.unep.org/gender_env

Facts from the UN Millennium Development Goals Report 2008

▶ www.millenniumpromise.org/site/DocServer/MDG_FastFacts.pdf

Gender and Women's empowerment ▶ www.unwomen.org

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature

▶ www.genderandenvironment.org

Women's Environment and Development Organization ▶ www.wedo.org

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

413, Saint Jacques Street, suite 800
Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1N9
Canada

Tel.: +1 514 288 2220
Fax: +1 514 288 6588
UNBiodiversity@cbd.int



Convention on
Biological Diversity