



### RIO CONVENTIONS PAVILION HIGHLIGHTS: 9 DECEMBER 2015

The penultimate day of the RCP at UNFCCC COP21, Gender Day, convened on 9 December 2015, in Paris, France. In the morning, participants took part in a session titled ‘Filling in the Blanks.’ In the afternoon, three sessions took place on: gender, land rights, and the surrounding policy frameworks; climate change and DRR using a gender-focused lens; and synergies among the Rio Conventions to support achieving the SDGs, with a focus on gender.

#### **FILLING IN THE BLANKS: BUILDING THE EVIDENCE-BASE ON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary, CBD Secretariat, chaired the session, welcoming participants and noting that 18 partners were involved in Gender Day. He referred to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, stating that it is “about transforming our world” and said that efforts to insure gender equity are “an essential part of this transformation process.” Regarding the Rio Conventions, he said that efforts to reduce land degradation, address climate change, and reduce biodiversity loss, are only possible when taking a broader approach to sustainable development, including a focus on equity, education and gender equality, and identified the importance of gender-aggregated indicators.

Calling the approval of the SDGs and their 169 targets an “ambitious and universal agenda,” Yannick Glemarec, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women, acknowledged that there are not enough resources to achieve the SDGs in isolation, and underscored the need to address them synergistically. He noted that there is strong consensus that women are particularly vulnerable, stating that roughly half of the targets could be



Gender Day participants at the Rio Conventions Pavilion

achieved by taking a gender-focused approach. Pointing to the gender gap in the agricultural sector, including regarding land tenure and access to credit and equipment, Glemarec identified that approximately 70% of farmers are women, but only 5% benefit from agricultural extension services.

Jacqueline McGlade, Chief Scientist, UNEP, discussed the first UNEP Global Gender and Environment Outlook (GGE0) report, acknowledging a learning point, in that some UN tools and guidelines may not be gender-sensitive, especially at the community level, and called for gender-disaggregated data. She said the GGE0 included combining micro- and macro-level data, incorporated traditional and indigenous knowledge, and noted that “western science” has to be scaled-down to the community level to understand what it means to local populations.



L-R: Amy Duchelle, CIFOR; Margaux Granat, IUCN; Jacqueline McGlade, Chief Scientist, UNEP; and Yanick Glemarec, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women

The *Rio Conventions Pavilion Bulletin* is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was written and edited by Olivia Freeman, Jennifer Lenhart, Ph.D., and Kate Louw. The Digital Editor is Francis Dejon. The Editor is Melanie Ashton <melanie@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. Funding for coverage of RCP has been provided by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). IISD can be contacted at 111 Lombard Avenue, Suite 325, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0T4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate academic citation. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists (in HTML and PDF format) and can be found on the Linkages WWW-server at <http://www.iisd.ca/>. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, New York 10022, USA. The IISD Team at RCP can be contacted by e-mail at <Kate@iisd.org>.



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Margaux Granat, IUCN, on behalf of Lorena Aguilar, IUCN, presented on IUCN's Environment and Gender Index (EGI), which, she said, assesses women's participation across six categories, in 72 countries. She provided results from the pilot phase, saying that, generally, there is a paucity of gender-focused data. For the next phase, she said, IUCN will expand the number of countries assessed so that the EGI is universal.

Amy Duchelle, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), on findings from a global comparative study on REDD+, highlighted that in early REDD+ implementation, a mix of interventions were used, encompassing enabling environments, incentives and disincentives. She said that in general, women were less aware of REDD+ projects compared to men, but this "levelled out" over time.

Responding to questions from the audience, panelists discussed: the need and opportunity for collaboration in data collection and generating knowledge; donor demand for mainstreaming gender; and, gender's role at the level of implementation, and feeding this into higher-level processes. On the need for improved data, one panelist stated, "we cannot improve situations if we don't have data on them." Responding to a question about REDD+, Duchelle stated, "the biggest hope for gender and REDD+ are the Cancún safeguards," referencing the REDD+ social and environment standard initiatives.

***FOCUSING ON RESULTS: BRINGING FORWARD POLICY ACTIONS AND SHARING EXPERIENCES FROM THE FIELD ON GENDER AND LAND RIGHTS***

Dessima Williams, former Ambassador of Grenada to the UN, moderated this session.

Wagaki Wischnewski, UNCCD, stated that in 2010, UNCCD adopted an 'Advocacy Policy Framework on Gender' to have a systematic approach to address gender issues and women's rights in dryland communities. She presented a study that examined women's land rights, underscoring that in dryland communities, women face unique challenges, and that they are more vulnerable to climate change. She addressed several findings, including: that social and cultural factors are



Dessima Williams, former Ambassador of Grenada to the UN

powerful, including women's relative confidence to assert their land rights; the need to tackle both institutional and practical barriers; and, governance conditions in pastoral communities.

Mariela Puga, Executive Director, Fund for Women from the South, shared an example of her Fund's financial and political support for women's engagement in the Chaco Americano Ecoregion, an area that includes a large forested region across Paraguay, Argentina, and Bolivia. She called grassroots and indigenous women "natural leaders," as they are most affected and have most to fight for, in part because of their low land ownership, despite being central figures in their families. She urged for "a politics of care, versus a politics of power" and underscored that indigenous women can act as an "early warning system" to foresee upcoming environmental impacts.

Tatiana Cordero, Director, Urgent Action Fund Latin America and the Caribbean, spoke about the work of "women human rights defenders" in Latin America. She described her organization, which started as a collaborative initiative on women, land and territory, defending the rights of women and indigenous peoples who provide resistance to environmental and human right threats. She underscored the challenges "women human right defenders" face, including prosecution, stigmatization and harassment, lauding their continued efforts despite these obstacles to protect land rights and ensure environmental justice. Cordero closed, stressing the power of women to confront power structures to ensure the future of generations to come.

Discussion touched on the role of men in addressing problems facing women, with Cordero highlighting, "the struggle at home is not the struggle of women alone, and is often related to the community." She also underscored the role of youth. Wischnewski outlined the importance of networking with people and aligning work with like-minded groups and organizations to facilitate meaningful change. Panelists closed the discussion, emphasizing the power of collective action and having women working together behind collective visions.



Yanick Glemarec, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women



L-R: Tatiana Cordero, Director, Urgent Action Fund Latin America and the Caribbean; Mariela Puga, Executive Director, Fund for Women from the South; and, Wagaki Wischnewski, UNCCD

### **ADDRESSING CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND DRR THROUGH A GENDER LENS, PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD**

Priscilla Achakpa, Women Environmental Programme, Nigeria, moderated this session. Sakhile Koketso, CBD Secretariat, presented on EbA and ecosystem-based DRR (eco-DRR) and experiences with gender mainstreaming, based on a recent CBD Synthesis Report. She highlighted key messages, saying that, to strengthen application of EbA and eco-DRR, gender should be mainstreamed. She underscored the need to consider tradeoffs in the two approaches, and that the potential limitations of the two approaches also need to be acknowledged.

Houria Djoudi, CIFOR, presented case studies from pastoral communities in Mali and Burkina Faso. She said that the Mali study examined how men and women reacted, *vis-à-vis*, short and long-term coping strategies to climate change. She said the Burkina Faso study examined the use of ecosystem services. Urging for adopting a “gender index” when examining how communities are impacted by climate change, she recommended including a focus on “intersectionality,” as women are not a homogenous group, and suggested combatting this “over simplification” of gender considerations, noting that this approach includes an examination of related factors such as age, ethnicity, and social class.

The ensuing discussion focused on the CBD Synthesis Report. Audience members asked questions pertaining to the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ perspectives, EbA in cities, the use of mangroves as a climate change adaptation measure, and the linkages between adaptation, DRR and biodiversity. Koketso clarified that the Synthesis Report is quite broad, but she focused on its gender considerations in line with the session’s objectives. Djoudi noted that in many African cities citizens plant trees, which have multiple benefits, supporting urban cooling, and providing fodder for urban and suburban livestock. Civil society representatives then described experiences from their project experiences, including on DRR initiatives in different parts of the world, noting linkages with climate adaptation, the relevant conventions, and the SDGs.

Farah Kabir, ActionAid Bangladesh, spoke about putting women at the center of DRR and response in Bangladesh, framing their work around SDG5 (Gender Equality). Kabir drew on examples of women-led, community-based adaption

as part of disaster preparedness. Recommendations from the project, she said, included among others, having women design and prepare disaster response approaches, and scaling-up micro programs. She closed saying, “women are not just recipients of disasters, but also leaders in disaster response.”

Kalyani Raj, All India Women’s Conference, presented on implementation of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services during post-disaster periods. The work of her NGO, she described, is increasing access to SRH services within populations displaced by disasters. Raj gave examples of training that provided women with knowledge to respond more effectively to SRH needs, such as how to deliver a baby in an emergency situation.

Jacqui Patterson, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), described work in Mississippi promoting DRR resilience. Outlining how extreme flooding events are becoming the norm, she noted areas of vulnerability faced by women, colored people and low-income communities. She highlighted initiatives to empower women and girls, including developing a post-disaster equity framework.

Josefina Mialax, Huairou Commission, and Maite Rodríguez, Huairou Commission, presented on the experiences of Guatemalan communities benefiting from the Community



Wagaki Wischnewski, UNCCD



Resilience Fund. They noted that the aim is to empower grassroots women's organizations to "emerge as leaders, change agents, and champions of resilience who help their communities to face the adverse impacts of natural disasters and climate change." They said that the communities they work in have taken steps to increase food production, create disaster funds, and renew disaster affected areas. In the ensuing discussion, participants highlighted that while climate change is often a negative concept, many of the local communities are using the opportunity of climate change adaptation to challenge "the gender and power dynamics that persist in society."

### **EXPLORING SYNERGIES IN THE RIO CONVENTIONS TO SUPPORT ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SDGS**

Elwyn Edward Grainger-Jones, GEF, moderated the session, acknowledging the broad collection of views represented, with panelists from the Rio Conventions, the main financial instruments and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). He invited audience members to share what they would like the panel to address. Responses included: what role women's organizations can play to support the Rio Conventions; and how the Rio Conventions can help implement the SDGs "on the ground."

Tanya McGregor noted that gender considerations are incorporated within the CBD's preamble paragraphs, and highlighted that since 1996, the CBD has included text on gender. She called for integrating gender considerations within National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), while underscoring that this can be challenging, as they cover "very technical species conservation issues" often dominated by men. She urged for inclusion of both women and men within decision making on conservation measures.

Ousseynou Nakoulima, GCF, highlighted that the GCF aims to incorporate gender equality, while noting that applicants' projects are very diverse, and that not all projects address gender responsiveness. He stated that applicants must automatically fill out a gender assessment, even if their particular project does not have a specific gender focus, and in this way the GCF can understand the overall importance of this issue, from the perspective of their applicants.

Wagaki Wischnewski described how inclusion of women on the "process side of things" has "fizzled out" in implementation, noting a decline in the inclusion of women in reporting since 2010. She said in the next two years she wants to incorporate a systematic way for the UNCCD to address gender, alongside a framework for parties to address gender. The big challenge, she stated, is demonstrating change on the ground.



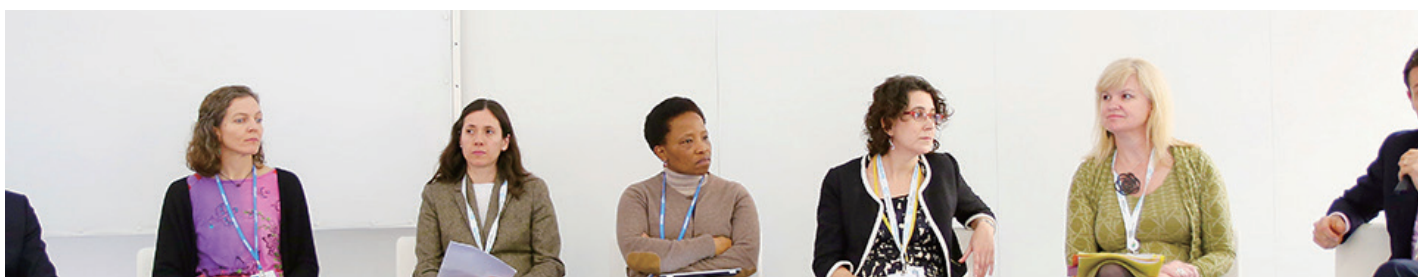
Sakhile Koketso, CBD Secretariat

Eleanor Blomstrom, WEDO, described that despite gender no longer being included in the text of the draft agreement, gender remains critical in understanding how to achieve the UNFCCC's objective. Given the large challenges facing the Paris agreement, she stated, "some issues can be traded," with gender being an issue currently "traded out," stressing the need for it to be brought back in.

Fleur Newman, UNFCCC, reflecting on progress made on the reporting of women's participation since COP18 in Doha, Qatar in 2012, said, participation is critical but not the entire "gender story." She further outlined opportunities to move the gender agenda forward through existing decisions and highlighted gender responsiveness as a remaining gap that can be drawn upon to create solutions.

Verania Chao, UNDP, on gender, stressed the need to respond to national priorities, and said there are very good experiences on the ground, but most of these are small-scale and need to be scaled-up. She highlighted the need to improve gender-sensitive approaches, and better include gender considerations in projects and proposals with partners integrating gender in a more systematic way.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed developing sustainable development strategies that link NBSAPs, SDGs, and other development plans. Others suggested providing guidance on best practices on mainstreaming and implementing gender considerations, the newly-formed GEF partnership on gender, and an increased understanding of women's contribution in the food and agriculture supply chain.



L-R: Ousseynou Nakoulima, GCF; Eleanor Blomstrom, WEDO; Verania Chao, UNDP; Wagaki Wischnewski, UNCCD; Tanya McGregor, CBD Secretariat; Fleur Newman, UNFCCC; and Elwyn Edward Grainger-Jones, GEF