



---

12 August 2024

## **GENDER POLICY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN** **of the Science-Policy Interface**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND MANDATE**

Gender<sup>1</sup> equality is recognized as a cross-cutting priority across all aspects of the work of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP). In 2017, by decision 30/COP.13, the COP adopted the Gender Action Plan (GAP)<sup>2</sup>, recognizing that all aspects of the Convention have gender dimensions and calling for further mainstreaming of gender equality into policies and activities addressing desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD), recognizing the differentiated impacts of DLDD on women and men.<sup>3</sup>

The Convention secretariat and the Global Mechanism promote men and women's equal and balanced participation in all aspects of the UNCCD process and implementation. The UNCCD, in decision 24/COP.15 paras 5 and 6, *strongly encourages* Parties to increase the representation of women in their delegations attending the Conference of Parties and invites Parties to facilitate the meaningful participation of women, women's organizations and people in vulnerable situations in United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification processes at all levels of decision-making, and *requests* the secretariat, in collaboration with constituted bodies under the Convention, to monitor the level of gender parity across the Convention and report its findings to sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation (CRIC) of the Convention and the COP. This is in line with United Nations system-wide commonly agreed standards and coordinated approaches for attaining gender mainstreaming goals of equal representation of women in all bodies.<sup>4</sup> This includes science bodies as the General Assembly has recognized that full and equal access to and participation in science, technology and innovation for women of all ages is imperative to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.<sup>5</sup>

In decision 19/COP.15 paras 1 and 2, the COP *requests* the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the secretariat, after consulting with those intergovernmental scientific bodies and panels cooperating with the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), to develop a gender policy and implementation plan for the SPI whereby gender is mainstreamed and gender parity is progressively achieved within the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework<sup>6</sup>, and to revise the SPI terms of reference (TORs) and selection criteria to be consistent

---

<sup>1</sup> The United Nations definition of gender: "Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as 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 and age." Source: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

<sup>2</sup> UNCCD Gender Action Plan (2018): <https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/gender-action-plan>

<sup>3</sup> Study on differentiated impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought on women and men (2022):

<https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/study-differentiated-impacts-desertification-land-degradation-and-drought>

<sup>4</sup> In 2018, the UNCCD secretariat joined the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which defines commonly agreed standards and coordinated approaches for the UN system to reach its gender mainstreaming goals. In particular, UN-SWAP performance indicator 12 requests for the "equal representation of women in all bodies (...) Committees, Advisory Bodies and Funds linked to the entity irrespective of budgetary source." See UN-Women UN-SWAP 2.0 Framework & Technical Guidance (2023):

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/How%20We%20Work/UNSystemCoordination/UN-SWAP/UN-SWAP-2-TN-en.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> See A/RES/70/213, paragraph 6: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/213>

<sup>6</sup> UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategy Framework (2018): <https://www.unccd.int/resources/other/unccd-2018-2030-strategic-framework>



with the gender policy and implementation plan. This document represents the outcome of the work of the Bureau of the CST and the secretariat as mandated by the COP.

### 1.1 Relevant UNCCD documents

The SPI Gender Policy & Implementation Plan were informed by:

- References to gender in the Convention text,<sup>7</sup>
- The UNCCD Policy Advocacy Framework on Gender developed in response to decision 8/COP.9;<sup>8</sup>
- The UNCCD Gender Action Plan developed in response to decision 30/COP.13 to support the gender-responsive implementation of the UNCCD;<sup>2</sup>
- The UNCCD Gender Action Plan Road Map developed in response to decision 12/COP.14 and approved under decision 14/COP.15 para 1;<sup>9</sup> and
- Concurrent work of the secretariat to develop an internal UNCCD Gender Policy.

### 1.2 Mapping the landscape

Gender policies and plans are context specific, and the UNCCD SPI Gender Policy is tailored to the unique mandate, modes of work, and governance structure of the UNCCD, the CST and its SPI. However, the development of the SPI Policy and Implementation Plan was informed by other relevant gender policies and guidance documents, as well as other resources within the UN system, as well as national policies and initiatives, research studies, and more, provide relevant knowledge. Some of the relevant examples considered from other intergovernmental bodies including those cooperating with the SPI are provided below. This list is not exhaustive and is presented solely for the information of UNCCD delegations and SPI members.

- *UN System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity*<sup>10</sup>
- *UN Women Accelerate, Activate, Advance: Advancing Gender Parity across the UN System*<sup>11</sup>
- *UN-Women UN-SWAP 2.0 Framework & Technical Guidance*<sup>4</sup>
- *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Gender Policy and Implementation Plan*<sup>12</sup>
- *UN Environment Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment*<sup>13</sup> (which guides gender policy and implementation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service (IPBES) and the UNEP International Resources Panel (IRP))
- *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Gender Equality Policy*<sup>14</sup> (which guides gender equality policy of the FAO, including the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS))

---

<sup>7</sup> The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): obliges parties to promote awareness and participation of local populations, particularly women and youth, in efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought (Art. 5); calls for the effective participation at local, national and regional levels, of both women and men, in policy planning, decision-making and implementation and review of national action programmes (Art. 10); and calls for capacity-building for women and girls to meet their needs (Art. 19). <https://www.unccd.int/resource/convention-text>

<sup>8</sup> UNCCD Policy Advocacy Framework (2013): [https://catalogue.unccd.int/27\\_loose\\_leaf\\_gender\\_flyer\\_web.pdf](https://catalogue.unccd.int/27_loose_leaf_gender_flyer_web.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> UNCCD Gender Action Plan Road Map (2022) in Official Document ICCD/COP(15)/17 section V, para 49 and its table: <https://www.unccd.int/official-documentscop-15-abidjan-cote-divoire-2022/iccdcop1517>

<sup>10</sup> UN System-wide (2017): <https://www.un.org/gender/content/strategy>

<sup>11</sup> UN Women (2023): <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/12/accelerate-activate-advance-advancing-gender-parity-across-the-un-system>

<sup>12</sup> IPCC (2020): [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2020/05/IPCC\\_Gender\\_Policy\\_and\\_Implementation\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2020/05/IPCC_Gender_Policy_and_Implementation_Plan.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> UNEP 2015 (including IPBES and IRP): <https://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/un-environment-policy-and-strategy-gender-equality-and-environment>

<sup>14</sup> FAO 2020 (including ITPS): <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1583en/cb1583en.pdf>



- *WMO Gender Policy and WMO Gender Implementation Plan*<sup>15</sup> (which guides gender policy and implementation of the Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP))
- UN-Habitat's *Global Land Tool Network Gender Strategy (GLTN)*<sup>16</sup> (which guides gender policy and implementation for the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII))
- *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Parity Strategy*<sup>17</sup>

### 1.3 Vision and purpose

The value of SPI scientific assessment, synthesis and translation for policy making and practice comes from the voluntary participation of the experts who serve on the SPI. To continue to bridge the science-policy gap and address the bottlenecks encountered in addressing DLDD, the CST endeavours to engage the best minds, but also utilize the problem-solving power of diverse perspectives. The UNCCD is dedicated to pursuing a future state where gender is mainstreamed into its all its processes, including the SPI, in an inclusive and respectful manner, where there is gender balance in participation and where all have equal opportunity irrespective of gender. In working to mainstream gender into scientific assessments and scientific processes, the SPI supports the work of the United Nations system in promoting and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in all aspects of life, including with respect to the linkages between gender quality and the empowerment of women and the promotion of sustainable development, addressing land degradation and building the resilience of communities and ecosystems to drought.

In so doing, the SPI will raise awareness of the benefits of gender equality. While the focus of this policy is on gender, it is important to recognise that gender often intersects with other demographic factors that influence participation and access to resources, including race, ethnicity, language, disability, age, diversity of expertise, or nationality. This is established in decision 24/COP.15 clause 2, which *encourages* Parties, in the implementation of the GAP, to pay special attention to intersectionality (including but not limited to age, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality) when planning, designing and implementing policy and programming related to DLDD). Achieving this purpose would be impactful for the SPI as this would address the critical gap of science capacity and leadership among under-represented scientists not only in terms of gender and demographics, but also considering country development because lower- and middle-income regions are, more often than not, greatly affected by DLDD. Accordingly, this Policy and Implementation Plan establishes goals and implementation actions intended to lead the SPI towards achieving this vision.

### 1.4 Conformity with national gender policies

The SPI Gender Policy and Implementation Plan is applicable for all SPI participants, and it sets gender-related objectives for the SPI's overall governance and execution. The SPI recognizes the sovereignty of individual Parties. Therefore, this Policy and Implementation Plan does not intend to supersede national legislation, policies, or structures. It sets standards and expectations for the work of the SPI.

<sup>15</sup> WMO 2015 (including IDMP): <https://wmo.int/files/wmo-gender-equality-policy> and [https://meetings.wmo.int/Cg-19/\\_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BF3DE3C27-50B4-46B5-9EB6-E56BD703C5D9%7D&file=Cg-19-d04-5\(1\)-GENDER-ACTION-PLAN-UPDATE-approved\\_en.docx&action=default](https://meetings.wmo.int/Cg-19/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BF3DE3C27-50B4-46B5-9EB6-E56BD703C5D9%7D&file=Cg-19-d04-5(1)-GENDER-ACTION-PLAN-UPDATE-approved_en.docx&action=default)

<sup>16</sup> UN-Habitat GLTN 2019 (including GLII): <https://unhabitat.org/gltm-gender-strategy-2019-2030-towards-securing-womens-and-girls-land-and-property-rights>

<sup>17</sup> UNDP (2023): <https://genderequalitystrategy.undp.org/#:~:text=In%20the%20next%20four%20years,productive%20uses%20of%20clean%20energy.>



## **2. SPI GENDER POLICY**

### **2.1. Goal 1: Achieving and maintaining gender parity in SPI membership**

- 2.1.1. Maintain gender parity gains already achieved while progressively closing the remaining gaps.
- 2.1.2. Increase targeted outreach efforts to attract qualified women candidates in all categories of SPI membership.
- 2.1.3. Continuously analyse results from exit interviews, with a special focus on women, to inform and tailor future action plans to advance gender parity.

### **2.2. Goal 2: Enabling a gender-sensitive and inclusive environment**

- 2.2.1. Provide a gender-sensitive and inclusive organizational environment that promotes gender equality, facilitates active and equal engagement of all individuals with diverse identities, and supports the success of SPI participants and products.
- 2.2.2. Increase targeted outreach efforts to attract qualified women candidates in all categories of SPI membership.
- 2.2.3. Strive to facilitate participation of people with child or elderly care responsibilities.

### **2.3. Goal 3: Enhancing gender equality in SPI governance and organizational processes**

- 2.3.1. Promote equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, within the governance and execution of the SPI's activities.
- 2.3.2. Pursue gender equality among leadership positions in the SPI, including chairpersons, working groups, author teams, and other SPI organizational groups.
- 2.3.3. Pursue gender equality and inclusion during SPI meetings, including, inter alia, during full SPI meetings, working group, expert meetings, and official meetings of the UNCCD Conference of Parties and its subsidiary bodies which involve SPI participation.
- 2.3.4. Ensure gender equality is one of the priorities when establishing workplans and programmes.
- 2.3.5. Pursue gender equality in the scientific review processes of SPI products.
- 2.3.6. Track financial and human resources specifically allotted towards advancing gender equality and gender mainstreaming and ensure these are reported to the UNCCD secretariat gender marker system.
- 2.3.7. Update the SPI terms of reference (TORs) and selection criteria to be consistent with the SPI gender policy and implementation plan.

### **2.4. Goal 4: Mainstreaming gender dimensions into SPI scientific processes and products**

- 2.4.1. Ensure each SPI product addresses the role of women, with the aims to, inter alia:
  - helping unlock the potential of women as drivers of sustainable development, enhanced resilience and improved land stewardship;
  - considering the differentiated implications for men and women of the SPI's scientific findings on social dimensions such as, inter alia, health, agriculture, food systems, water management, unpaid care work, key industries, and migration patterns;
  - promoting equal rights and opportunities for women in political, economic and environmental decision-making and resource allocation; and



- removing any barriers that prevent women from being full participants in the economy, particularly as these pertain to land and the multiple benefits derived from sustainably managed land.
- 2.4.2. Actively promote the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive indicators in SPI scientific assessments.
- 2.4.3. Consider gender-related issues in all SPI outreach activities.

## **2.5. Goal 5: Training and guidance**

- 2.5.1. Raise awareness about gender-related issues, intersectionality and gender equality within the SPI.
- 2.5.2. Enhance skills to respond to gender-related issues within the SPI.
- 2.5.3. Strengthen knowledge and capacities among SPI members for mainstreaming gender and human rights considerations into SPI scientific processes and products.
- 2.5.4. Consider gender-related issues in all training activities and guidance materials.



### **3. SPI GENDER IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The activities and actions in this implementation shall be pursued by the SPI with support from the UNCCD secretariat.

#### **3.1. Establish an SPI Gender Action Team (GAT)**

- 3.1.1. The GAT serves as the point of contact for gender-related issues and will develop and implement a protocol and process for addressing informal and formal complaints made in the context of the SPI Gender Policy and Implementation Plan, and when deemed necessary by the SPI co-Chairs, in the context of the SPI TORs.
- 3.1.2. The GAT will be gender-balanced and is comprised of two or three SPI members, the SPI co-Chairs and a representative from the UNCCD Secretariat.
- 3.1.3. The GAT will identify two co-Leads at its first meeting.
- 3.1.4. The GAT can call upon external experts, as needed.
- 3.1.5. The members of the GAT act as designated contact points for the SPI Gender Policy and Implementation Plan.
- 3.1.6. The GAT operates by consensus. In those cases where no consensus is reached, the SPI co-Chairs are empowered to make the decision.
- 3.1.7. The GAT operates as a practical working arrangement and is responsible for the Gender Implementation Plan. It will oversee and monitor the implementation of the actions outlined in the Gender Implementation Plan and will propose potential future refinements of the Gender Policy and the Implementation Plan to the CST Bureau through the SPI co-Chairs as needed and at least at the beginning of each biennium.
- 3.1.8. GAT meetings will be held primarily through teleconferencing and/or in combination with existing SPI meetings. Teleconferencing arrangements will be provided by the UNCCD Secretariat.
- 3.1.9. The GAT is accountable to the SPI co-Chairs, and through them, to the CST Bureau. It will provide reports to the SPI co-Chairs when and as needed, including a summary report at least six months before the end of the biennium.
- 3.1.10. The GAT will be supported by the UNCCD secretariat.

#### **3.2. Enable a gender-responsive and inclusive environment**

- 3.2.1. Provide a gender-responsive and inclusive organizational environment that promotes gender equality, facilitates active and equal engagement of all individuals with diverse identities, and supports the success of SPI participants and products. The specific efforts to be implemented promoting an inclusive environment for the SPI members would be developed in discussion with the GAT, as one of their prime activities.
- 3.2.2. Increase targeted outreach efforts and activities to attract qualified women candidates in all categories of SPI membership. These activities could be done in collaboration with other units in the secretariat, as appropriate.

#### **3.3. Enhance gender equality in SPI processes**

- 3.3.1. Support the CST Bureau in revising the SPI TORs and selection criteria to be consistent with the SPI gender policy and implementation plan.
- 3.3.2. Take into account a gender perspective in SPI governance decisions, when and as appropriate.



3.3.3. Consider the ability to provide a gender-friendly and inclusive environment when planning SPI meetings, which aligns with the UN staff Rules and Regulations on matters relating to travel and provisions for nursing mothers as per “Policy on breastfeeding [ST/SGB/2019/1](#)”.

3.3.4. Provide timely information to SPI meeting participants who are unable to attend meetings due to family considerations and facilitate their remote participation as appropriate.

#### **3.4. Mainstream gender dimensions into SPI scientific processes and products**

3.4.1. Collaborate with the secretariat’s gender policy officer, and as needed, external experts, to help ensure gender dimensions are mainstreamed into SPI scientific assessments and the resulting technical reports.

3.4.2. Ensure the appropriate inclusion of gender equality indicators and sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive indicators.

#### **3.5. Training and guidance**

3.5.1. Organise training, guidance, or internal workshops for SPI members, leadership, and to wider groups, as appropriate, on gender balance and gender-related issues, addressing implicit biases, and implementing inclusive practices.

3.5.2. Set up an informal process to share best practices on gender issues and gender mainstreaming between the GAT and the wider SPI.

3.5.3. Organise opportunities for gender and diversity training as needed, based on the guidance of the GAT.

3.5.4. Cooperate with other organizations as relevant to enhance gender equality within the SPI.