



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

GENDER@UNCCD

The first UNCCD Gender Caucus concept
and summary report

Lets
Move
towards
a greener
future



**COP 14 UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**





Photo: Arne Hoel / World Bank

The UNCCD Gender Caucus -Concept

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) adopted at COP 13 was a landmark decision for the UNCCD. With its adoption UNCCD parties show commitment to improve the quality of life for women worldwide. It bears the potential to move us closer to achieving women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the UNCCD process as well as on national and sub-national levels.

Yet policies alone can’t do it. To move the GAP from a bold commitment by COP to real impact and action a multi-layered approach from numerous actors is necessary. This is the idea behind the Gender Caucus.

Gandhi said, “Be the change you want in the world” being the change is becoming part and parcel of what happens at national and international level. It is about engaging in forming opinions and taking actions to bring positive change in society and to pave the way for an successful implementation of the GAP.

The active participation of women and men alike is essential. Active participation of people is about the people being engaged and contributing to the well being of themselves. People not being on the sidelines or spectators in matters concerning them but actively being part of the process. This emphasizes the vital role that Parties to

the UNCCD must play in bringing about the change. Definitely, it takes time, energy, resources and dedication. All relevant stakeholders, especially female and male national focal points and negotiators are invited to work together to guarantee that a gender perspective is applied throughout the process and implementation of the Convention.

In line with this the objectives of the Gender Caucus are as follows:

- Promote and boost the implementation the UNCCD Gender Action Plan by gathering strong gender advocates during UNCCD COP meetings and beyond;
- Sensitize negotiators and other stakeholder on gender implications of issues discussed during COP and develop the ability to look at UNCCD related themes with a gender perspective thereby detecting “gender blind-spots” ;
- Empower female and male delegates to negotiate with a gender lens/ perspective during negotiations and beyond;
- Provide a platform to exchange information between UNCCD stakeholders interested in gender issues and the UNCCD Secretariat.

Themes for group discussions at the Gender Caucus

- Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Sand and Dust Storms. (Document ICCD/COP (14)/17)
- Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Drought (Document ICCD/COP (14)/16)
- Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Gender. (Document ICCD/COP (14)/18)
- LDN Transformative project and programme.

Summary of the UNCCD Gender Caucus

“How can a country and its economy progress when close to half of its work-force is constantly pulled down? This is the fundamental issue of development”, said Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD, Executive Secretary, at the opening of the Gender Caucus, which took place on the sidelines of the 14th session of the Conference of Parties (COP14) to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Greater Noida Area of New Delhi, India.

The UNCCD secretariat inaugurated its first Gender Caucus, by stressing the urgency of mainstreaming gender in addressing desertification. The Gender Caucus provided space to discuss key

“In most parts of the world, women do not have land rights. Without owning land, they have no access to finance and are thus left behind”
Ibrahim Thiaw

gender related issues to be discussed at COP 14 such as Sand and Dust Storms and Drought, Land tenure; the Gender Action plan as well as the further development of gender responsive LDN transformative projects and programmes.

Round about 30 participants women and men from UNCCD Country parties and CSOs attended the Caucus and participated actively in the group discussions emphasizing the need that all relevant stakeholders, should to work together in a continuous fashion to guarantee that a gender perspective is applied throughout the implementation of the Convention.



Following discussion groups were established:

- Discussion Group on Sand and Dust Storms (SDS) and Drought (Facilitator: Eli Kodzi UNDP)
- Discussion Group on gender and land tenure (Facilitator: Nathalie van Haaren Both Ends; Shipra Deo Landessa)
- Discussion Group on the UNCCD Gender Action Plan (Facilitator: Jackie Siles IUCN; Corinna Voigt UNCCD)
- Discussion Group on gender -responsive LDN transformative programmes and projects (Facilitator: Aurélie Lhumeau GM)

Discussion Group on Sand and Dust Storms (SDS) and Drought. Facilitator: Eli Kodzi UNDP

Participants reaffirmed that women and girls in particular in rural areas are disproportionately affected by drought and other natural disasters. Women are a significant labour force and are guardians of valuable traditional and indigenous knowledge on land, but they generally have less access than men to productive resources, services, information and employment opportunities. Participants also noted that the work burden for women and girls increases during and after disasters, as they are typically responsible for securing fuelwood, water and fodder, and caring for the sick and injured. These gender inequalities contribute to the fact that rural women and girls are often the most affected by hazards and disasters.

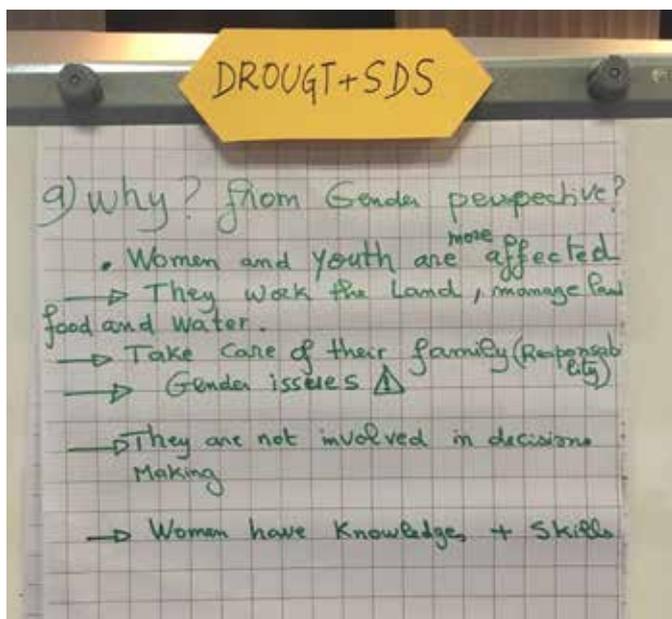
Despite women dispose over profound knowledge on land, women's contribution to building drought resilience has often been overlooked, and they have been largely marginalized in the development of drought preparedness policies and decision-making processes. Against this backdrop participants stressed the importance of developing gender-smart responses to drought and SDS.

Drought

Reviewing the recommendation on the proposed a plan of action for the next steps in addressing drought under the UNCCD (Document ICCD/COP (14)/16) applying a gender lens, the participants highlighted many entry points for improving the recommendations from a gender perspective.

They found that the finalization and validation of the national drought plans should follow a gender responsive approach. It was further recommended that the integration of additional tools to expand the drought toolbox should be gender friendly, taking into account gender-responsive tools and approaches.

In terms of enhancing the capacity of participating countries to assess drought impacts and their vulnerability it was stressed that a gender-responsive drought impact and vulnerability assessment



management the group underlined that such a mechanism should be guided by gender equality and should consider the need for gender-responsive policies and measures. Web-based decision-making support tools (SDS toolbox) should be complemented by traditional media outlets to ensure inclusive, fully accessible information/knowledge sharing and capacity-building.

Discussion Group on Land tenure. Facilitator: Nathalie van Haaren BothEnds/Shipra Deo Landesa

With the aim of encouraging UNCCD parties to create an enabling environment for responsible land governance, the second intersessional meeting of the Bureau of the thirteenth session of the COP (COP 13) endorsed the inclusion of a new agenda item on land tenure. During the group's review of the related recommendations contained in Document ICCD/COP (14)/20 New and emerging issues – "Land tenure" discussion confirmed that land is the most critical economic resource for the vast majority of the rural poor who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

is better equipped to analyze the specific situation of men and women and are more effective in helping both male and female farmers to better adapt. Thus, capacity building activities of participating countries should be developed accordingly.

With regard to expanding collaboration and partnerships with agencies such as WMO, FAO, GWP, UNEP and UNESCO to design and test innovative approaches to supporting countries in mitigating the impacts of drought participants called for inclusion of UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP.

As to the use of a variety of technical approaches discussants recommended to acknowledge the value, use and sharing of traditional approaches and techniques often held by female farmers. Participants highlighted that financing instruments for addressing drought must ensure equal access for women and men alike. It was highlighted there's too little money for addressing the gender inequality of risk. Women need investment in things like social protection and affordable insurance.

Finally establishing global principles for mitigating the effects of drought should not be done without consulting CSO's, and rural women's organizations.

Sand and dust storms (SDS)

The group then reviewed the recommendations on approaches and priorities for future action to strengthen capacity and ongoing efforts in addressing the negative impacts of sand and dust storms. (Document ICCD/COP (14)/17).

In terms of establishing mechanism to mainstream efforts of like-minded Parties to boost cooperation and enhance SDS source

In particular, women's land rights are fundamental to rural development outcomes, as women's ownership and control over land can affect what households produce and how the proceeds from agricultural production are allocated within the family.

While the recognition and protection of customary land tenure systems were perceived as important it was highlighted that customary land tenure also inhabits gender inequalities. To ensure that all land tenure regimes are gender responsive the issue of gender equality and women's rights issues needed to be detected and addressed taking into account not just equal land access and control of natural resources for both men and women but also participatory decision making over land. The need for proper records of land tenure as well as the collection of sex-disaggregated data vis a vis land tenure/rights were also stressed.

Finally, participants underscored that the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) offer ample opportunities to further translate the ambitions on gender equality in land tenure into concrete measures.



Discussion Group the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and Reporting Facilitator: Jackie Siles (IUCN) Corinna Voigt (UNCCD)

To further boost the effectiveness and implementation of the Gender Action Plan GAP, participants reviewed the related recommendations contained in Document ICCD/COP (14)/18. After the review participant main comments were:

- The four priority areas of action of the GAP are good and inclusive;
- It is important to recognize and value women's traditional knowledge (GAP priority area 4);
- All the efforts for application of the GAP at the national level should start at local level. Women and men should be equally and involved in any local level planning;
- The use of social impact assessment should be encouraged to unveil the differentiated impacts of planned actions for women and men;
- It would be necessary to develop capacities at the level of national institutions but also at the local and community level.
- It is necessary to empower women by developing their human capital, agency and spiritual capacity to strengthen their human and social-collective capacity.
- Womens economic empowerment and inclusive integration in value chains can support the development of local economies;
- It is necessary to collect and gather good practices of how women have been successful participated and engaged;
- Strengthen women's groups for collective solidarity but their political – voice in order to be heard by policy makers;
- It is important that projects at local level use the *Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)* as a tool to help them measure impact on women's life.

Reporting

To improve the participant were informed though the GAP recommends using national reports to document the efforts made to address gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the UNCCD the late development of the GAP means that the 2017–2018 reporting process did not include any specific entry points for reporting on the GAP or gender-related matters. The working group produce the following challenges in relation to the reporting process:

- It is hard to measure the impact of the projects at the local level because of the lack of information at national level on the impacts of projects implemented. Further to this, who has or gather this type of the information? And how to get it?
- There must be a balance between a good reporting and reporting burden;
- It is necessary to find ways to collect results for the UNCCD reporting process. To report the results a space in the reporting templates are necessary. Parties can include success stories or other qualitative data to complement the quantitative information;
- It is a challenge to get sex-disaggregate data, but it is also necessary to gather information about the youth.

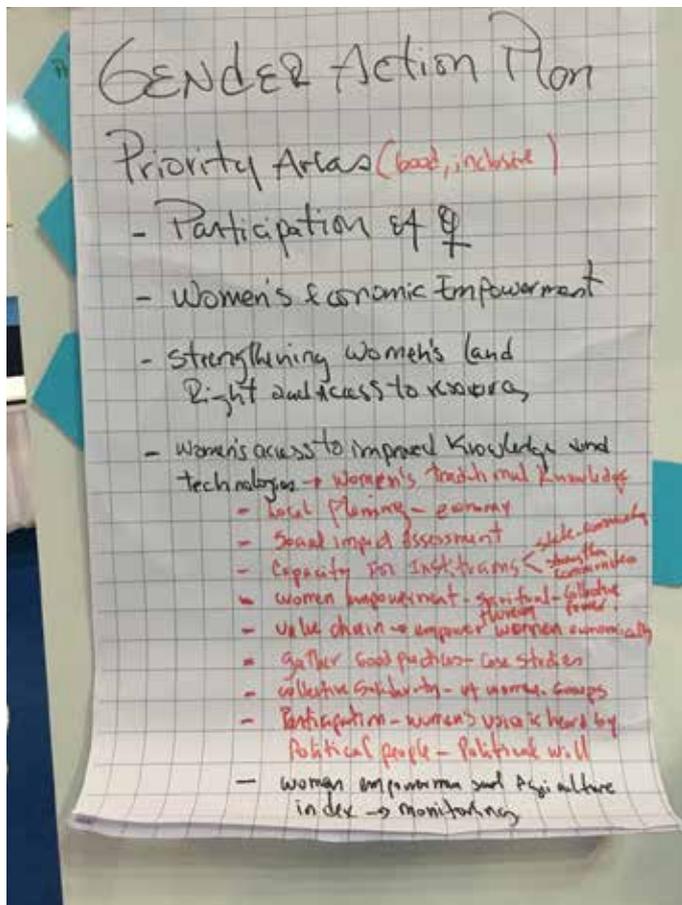
National commitment to gender equality

The participants in the group stressed that national commitment is fundamental to achievement gender equality. Governments need to be the guardians for establishing, monitoring and enforcing regulations that promote gender equality. Participants found that still despite solid evidence demonstrating the centrality of women's empowerment to realizing human rights, women and girls still have less access to property ownership, credit, training



and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence.

Finally, participants emphasized that the gender caucus is a good activity and it should continue through the COPs and intermediate events of the convention. To ensure inclusive participation translation services should be considered and it would be good if the information to cover during the session could be sent previously.



Discussion Group on gender-responsive LDN transformative programmes and projects. Facilitator: Aurélie Lhumeau GM

Participants reaffirmed the importance gender equality for LDN and welcomed the work done by the Global mechanism (GM) and the secretariat.

The manual for gender-responsive land degradation neutrality transformative projects and programmes prepared by the GM in partnership with UN-Women and IUCN is considered as important foundation and valuable resource to support country parties to develop gender-responsive LDN programmes and projects.

To make full use of the manual the need of capacity building and training respectively at national level and subnational for various stakeholders involved in LDN implementation such as National Focal Points, accredited CSO's, youth and women's groups were noted. Many participants underline the need to set up a mechanism to ensure involvement of key stakeholders in LDN programmes and projects. In particular, it was argued that LDN programmes and projects should include clear gender targets in order to measure success and failures.

The need to establish a knowledge sharing platforms for success stories and good practices and to develop awareness raising tools for countries that make the case for gender mainstreaming in LDN were also proposed.





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