



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FOR A LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRAL WORLD
UNCCD COP12 Gender Day, Friday, 16 October 2015, Ankara, Turkey

Summary of priority actions and the way forward emerging from the main findings of the sessions

The UNCCD COP12 Gender Day focused on three dimensions of policy action to ensure women are agents of positive change and that they are able to eradicate poverty and become resilient to climate change. These dimensions are land rights, decision-making and resilience. The UNCCD COP12 Gender Day builds on the Windhoek Initiative on Women's Empowerment contained in the Namibia Declaration, a key outcome of the UNCCD COP11 Gender Day, held in Windhoek, Namibia. COP12 Gender Day was informed by a three-part series global study titled, *Women's Empowerment in the drylands*,¹ which was jointly commissioned by the UNDP and UNCCD, as a follow-up to the recommendations of the COP11 Gender Day. The COP12 Gender Day was jointly organized by FAO, IUCN, UNCCD, UNDP, Gender Unit of the University of Namibia (UNAM) and WOCAN and was made possible through the financial support of the Government of Finland.

The main goal of the event was to identify the policy actions needed to boost women's empowerment so that they can play a more effective role in creating wealth for their families and minimizing the negative effects of climate change that they face at the family, community, national and global levels.

The Executive Secretary of UNCCD, the Namibian Minister of Environment and Tourism and the Ambassador of Finland opened the event while the South African Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs delivered the Keynote address.

The opening session was followed by four interactive sessions each with four presenters in the panel:

- Session 1: Ensuring women land rights for a Sustainable Future
- Session 2: Drylands women and resilience building
- Session 3: Land Degradation Neutrality: seeing through the gender lens
- Session 4: Where are the women in decision-making?

The final session looked at priority actions and the way forward emerging from the main findings of the sessions.

¹ A Policy Brief summarizing the studies is available at COP12. It is titled, *Empowering Dryland Women: Capturing Opportunities in Land Rights, Governance and Resilience*.

Recommended Policy Actions

- Recognize women rights and enhance their representation in policy-making processes at all levels
- Promote gender-equitable policies design across all sectors enhancing women access to climate change, SLM and development initiatives.
- Design action plans for gender mainstreaming at Party level and at the secretariat level
- Commission studies on resilience and gender-equity and facilitate high-level policy dialogues to inform effective policy-making
- Increase funding to decentralized governance and to support gender activities
- Design framework to strengthen gender mainstreaming, in particular, for gender analysis and to monitor gender mainstreaming focusing on how women's interests are being addressed
- Promote redistributive policies, including social protection measures
- Acknowledge women's indigenous and local knowledge in policy-making processes
- Recognize the value of adaptive pastoral livelihood systems, particularly mobility
- Encourage private sector sourcing from female producers
- Improve health and education service provision to women
- Increase women voices in decision-making to hear how they are affected by climate change and land degradation
- Encourage transformation in perceptions about rural women to increase their potential to participate in decision-making and dialogues
- Advocate for gender transformation in policies and laws that support LDN initiatives

Recommended Institutional arrangements

- Build the organizational capacity of the partners, particularly the community and civil society organizations
- Support gender-equitable programming and implementation in all sectors
- Decentralize governance and remove institutional barriers to enhance women empowerment for LDN
- Mobilize women into decision-making groups and enhance their representation in institutions
- Create mechanisms to gather and share best practices on gender mainstreaming
- Strengthen customary institutions while challenging constrictive norms - Undermine women's health, wellbeing, dignity, limit their access to decision-making
- Promote equitable access for women for basic services - education & health - appropriate resources, networks and markets.
- Encourage flexible, adaptive management and promote participatory assessments
- Conduct context-specific and gender-equitable assessments of resilience to develop locally-tailored solutions, across multiple scales and sectors
- Conduct gender analysis before project inception and apply gender responsive approach in programming
- Build capacity of organizations and activist to use the various tools for gender mainstreaming, such as gender analysis, monitoring tools for assessing gender mainstreaming, participation in order to capture diverse voices
- Train the Secretariat staff on gender mainstreaming in order to ensure programmes and projects mainstream gender

Recommended Actions for Capacity Building

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- Strengthen the capacity of the three Rio Conventions to mainstream gender and enhance synergy
 - Establish a Joint Gender Working Group to support gender activities across the three Conventions and harmonize gender activities among the Conventions
 - Increase the role of women in governance structures
 - Establish quantitative benchmarks for women's participation that are linked to financing to motivate action
 - Raise awareness on women as important players in building resilience
 - Work with CSOs as entry point to the communities
 - Create mechanisms to connect communities to investment/investors and markets
 - Improve access to information so that affected people and women are aware of their rights
 - Identify and work with community animators/mobilizers to motivate women's mobilization and appoint women as social mobilization workers
 - Involve key stakeholders (local people, government official – extension officers) so that there is continuation of the efforts after programmes have ended
 - Promote participatory approaches and social learning
 - Strengthen capacity of female leaders and of local authorities on gender equity and resilience building
 - Implement capacity-strengthening programmes including in resilience assessments, service delivery to women and in policy and program design to ensure they are gender-equitable
 - Facilitate knowledge sharing and experience exchange
 - Set-up accountability mechanisms in which communities are involved
 - Improve capacity to analyse problem together and encourage inclusiveness because there is a lot of diversity at local level.
 - Trust local women and men and give them equal opportunities to participate in LDN initiatives