

PAPER PRESENTATION:

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**Theme: Gender In Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster
Risk Reduction**

**MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN LEGISLATION IN AID OF
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK
REDUCTION: THE CHALLENGE TO WOMEN IN POLITICS
AND GOVERNANCE**

**Title: Setting the Stage for Gender Responsive
Legislation n Aid of Climate Change adaptation and
Disaster Risk Reduction from the grassroot level- Africa
in Retrospect.**

PROTOCOL.

Climate change impacts and development processes are linked in a number of ways. Developing countries, despite having contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions, are likely to be the most affected by climate change because they lack the institutional, economic and financial capacity to cope with multiple impacts. Poorer developing countries are at risk as they are more reliant on agriculture, more vulnerable to coastal and water resources change, and have less financial, technical and institutional capacity to adapt.

Africa is a particularly vulnerable continent, due to existing land degradation and desertification, declining run-off from water catchments, high dependence on subsistence agriculture, the prevalence of HIV and AIDS and other diseases, inadequate governance mechanisms and rapid population growth.

Social and economic indicators for developing countries consistently show that women bear the brunt of hardship in poor communities, they are more vulnerable to the effect of Climate Change and yet they are excluded in the decision making process.

At the same time, women are key agents for effective grassroots implementation of poverty reduction programmes and economic regeneration. The efforts of developing countries to modernize discriminatory laws and galvanize women's participation can be frustrated by the deep-rooted cultural barriers that so often run in parallel with poverty.

The risk in politics and leadership positions in Government, scares women from participating and this bring bad leaders to perpetrate themselves to stay in office irrespective of how the people feel about their leadership. This is another factor

towards breeding disaster in our communities. Therefore, it is obvious that we need climate change to reduce the disaster in our political participation.

In the context of climate change, mainstreaming implies that awareness of climate impacts and associated measures to address these impacts, are integrated into the existing and futures policies and plans of developing countries, as well as multilateral institutions, donor agencies and NGOs. At the national level, mainstreaming shift responsibilities on climate change adaptation from single ministries or agencies to all sectors of government, civil society and the private sectors. Fragmented and the priority given to it being reduction, a coordinating mechanism such as a multi-stakeholder committee is required, which is afforded political power by being attached to a senior political office or powerful ministry of government.

In the past, many governments responded to the threat of climate variability with a range of isolated structural and non-structural responses. Often these ignored the most vulnerable for example, engineered flood control measures, drought early-warning systems and flood wall construction. More generally, government actions and plan which have the potential to reduce climate vulnerability are either restricted to single ministry with few resources or fragmented across sectors with no co-ordination mechanism, and as a result have not been fully implemented.

Most developing countries are still in the early stages of identifying appropriate recourses to climate change risks, limiting practical experience of mainstreaming gender in

climate changes adaptation into development planning. However, the experiences described in available literature give some indications of barriers and opportunities for mainstreaming gender in climate change adaptation.

In a world where climate change is increasingly raised as an issue in the mainstream media, low levels of awareness relate most crucially to the way information is presented.

The issues may be circulating but because it is presented as a global environmental issue, stakeholders may fail to make the connection with their own interests and activities.

A major challenge for mainstreaming climate adaptation therefore is not in simply raising awareness per se, but in presenting issues to the context of the audience, paying attention to both content and manner of delivery. This could mean the data presented is made more relevant to a particular sector (e.g. total yearly rainfall for reservoir planning or number of days with no rainfall for agricultural extension work); or it could require that communication is tailored to the specific way information is consumed by different stakeholders understanding the different ways that climate information is already used is vital in framing the issue to future climate. Without such framing, multiple actors, whether planner or planter, are likely to see little relevance in future predictions.

Today, in the Niger Delta Region, gas flaring and oil spillage has rendered agriculture especially fishing and farming, a profession that is predominantly for women impossible. This has brought untold hardship and poverty to them. As a result, many men have abandoned their wives to look for greener pastures.

Many government agencies and NGOs deal with sectors and areas where climate is a major driver, including agriculture, water resources management and disaster preparedness. While progress has been made on improving the relevance of scientific outputs, communications between scientist and policymakers working in these sectors need urgent attention. Tailoring information in these contexts will require a more in-depth understanding of how targeted audience, consume information in different cultural and organizational contexts, as a preparedness towards experiencing any form of disaster or the other.

It will also require greater connectivity on the sort of climate information currently generated and used in developing countries make forecasting as well as disaster early-warning mechanisms.

Raising awareness of the likely impacts of climate change remains a key first priority, particular among senior politician and high-level policymakers. Governments will need to engage more actively with the scientific community (natural and social scientists), who must provide easily accessible and up-to-date climate risk information relevant to the demands of different sectors. Improving the capacity for developing countries to generate such information within the countries is a crucial building block for enhancing the effectiveness of information flow. Education and training on climate change issues, set within a development rather than environmental context will bolster people's ability to demand/generate and interpret information. Importantly, this information must put current and future climate in the perspective of national development priorities to improve

assessment of its relative importance to these priorities. In addition, the information needs of different actors must be understood more through and communication tailored to suit end-users.

To create effective awareness for stake holder to understand and contribute the Governments should engage more actively with the scientific community, who in turn must be supported to provide easily accessible climate risk information.

National government must ensure that the national adaptation strategy is consistent with existing policy criteria, development objectives and management structures. This means that the initial period of assessment of climate change risk should be accompanied by and assessment of the policy and management structures through which adaptation will be integrated. Policy-makers should look for 'no regret' or 'win – win' policies and laws to achieve this. These address current vulnerabilities and development needs, as well as potentials climate change risks, and therefore produce benefits even if climates change does not occur. These options are much more likely to gain politician support given that some change impacts will only be felt over the medium term.

Reducing reliance on structural and technological approaches to adaptation

Top-down climate impact models tends to favour prescriptions for adaptation based on structural measures and technology. While this approach allows a simple delineation of adaptation, it may also be inflexible, insensitive to local needs and

technologically and financially demanding. Effective mainstreaming will rely on a broader approach where adaptation is not reliant solely on such approaches. Actions to address vulnerability to climate change can also be pursued through education at the grassroots level and as social development service provision and improved natural resource management techniques. These can better seek 'win-win' opportunities, incorporate local knowledge, are cheaper and can more easily be implemented at lower levels of government and with greater participation from communities. Legislation on early warning signs into our school's curriculum and workplace policy is inevitable in this stance.

It is rare to find participation of a broad range of stakeholders in policy-making related to climate change. Civil society in particular has commonly had little or no involvement in national policy-making. In some LDGs, the NAPA processes appears to have encouraged greater participation across different sectors of government and civil society in the identification of climate change impacts and adaptation policies. However, it remains to be seen whether this leads to a shift in responsibility for implementation away from single ministries currently promoting the issue, to other key sector of government, civil society, academia and the private sector.

A number of frameworks and initiatives are reliable to developing countries through which they can identify climate change risk and put together policies, laws and programs that could reduce this risk and poverty. Coherence in mainstreaming climate change adaptation does not only

select one approach. In fact, given the scale of the problem and the limited awareness of how to deal with it, it makes more sense for developing countries to use all the instruments at their disposal, so that experiences are shared among different actors including donors, across governments and between different countries.

Conclusively, as a high proportion of people living in developing countries rely on ecosystem for their livelihoods, measures to protect their environments must form a core element of poverty reduction strategies. At the current time there is limited evidence of the inclusion of environmental consideration in such strategies and this must change. This may be achieved by raising awareness on climate change and of the importance of protecting our environments from insensitive development project on the environment in international meetings dedicated to poverty reduction will also contribute to addressing the current omission of many environmental issues.

It can be said that legislation is a life tool in this regard, towards achieving the desired result.

THANK YOU.