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# Canada’s Submission to the Adaptation Committee seeking views on how to mainstream gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation

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Gender equality and climate change are both priorities for the Government of Canada, with recognition that climate action is most effective when issues of gender inequality are addressed. Women, girls, and other disproportionately affected populations, such as Indigenous peoples and northern and coastal communities, are among the most vulnerable to climate change. These groups of people also demonstrate great resilience in the face of climate change impacts and are active drivers and agents of change contributing to vital knowledge, experience, and leadership to climate action across Canada, and globally.

Canada respectfully submits the following reflections on mainstreaming gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation with a view to contribute to the work of the Adaptation Committee under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

***What are good examples of lessons learned and best practices in prioritizing/incorporating gender in the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans in your country or constituency?***

The Government of Canada uses an analytical tool called Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience public policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that this analysis should go beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences and consider other identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability. In developing the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, Canada’s national climate change plan, Canada undertook a comprehensive GBA+. First, the analysis highlighted the important and unique roles of Indigenous women in addressing climate change in Canada and the need to engage Indigenous women to develop crucial solutions for both adaptation and mitigation actions at the community-level. Second, the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change also emphasizes the importance of effective adaptation action, and explicitly recognizes that some groups are disproportionately affected by climate change. Canada has learned that a best practice is to apply the GBA+ lens from the outset of public policy research and development in order capture gender considerations in a meaningful way.

The Government of Canada also includes gender considerations in domestic adaptation action across jurisdictions and sectors, such as agriculture, energy and forestry, through Canada’s Climate Change Adaptation Platform (“the Platform”). The Platform is a national forum that brings together diverse actors from across Canada including representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments, national Indigenous organizations, industry and research associations, and academia. Its objective is to strengthen the collaboration between public and private sectors, build cohesion that enables adaptation policy processes in Canada, and help to align resources towards effective adaptation action. More recently, the Platform focused on the social dimensions of adaptation by integrating social considerations, such as gender, and learning from Indigenous-led adaptation approaches. This helped align public policy making across jurisdictions to facilitate more equitable action and institutional change. Going forward, the Platform will continue to explore opportunities to accelerate adaptation in a more comprehensive and systemic manner and to engage and empower marginalized communities.

In addition, Canada’s forthcoming National Climate Change and Health Assessment (CCHA) report, *Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate: Advancing our Knowledge for Action*, will include an analysis of health equity, intersecting vulnerabilities and populations of concern. Consideration will also be given to non-climatic factors, such as individual identity factors (including sex, gender, location, income, race, etc.), and how they are affecting health risks caused by climate change and barriers to adaptation. This information will support health officials and decision makers in developing and implementing more effective adaptation actions across Canada and will ensure that actions do not inadvertently exacerbate inequalities.

During its G7 Presidency in 2018, Canada had gender equality as a crosscutting theme. One focus area from the 2018 G7 meeting was global economic resilience to disasters, which led to the development of the G7 Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans and Resilient Coastal Communities. As part of this initiative, the G7 Leaders committed to develop gender-sensitive adaptation planning strategies for emergency preparedness and recovery as well as to support women’s equal participation in decision-making for disaster risk reduction and recovery.

In June 2017, Canada adopted the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), which puts gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the heart of its international assistance efforts. One of the paths to action under the FIAP targets environmental practices that support healthy, resilient, adaptive communities by supporting the leadership and ownership of women, youth and vulnerable groups in developing local practices and technologies. As part of Canada’s $2.65 billion climate finance commitment, Canada provided $2 million over 2017-18 to support the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network, which aims to enhance national adaptation planning and action in developing countries and to facilitate international peer learning and exchange. In particular, Canada’s funding supported a training workshop in Fiji in February 2018 that enabled a wide range of adaptation policy-makers and adaptation practitioners from 21 countries to build their capacity to integrate gender considerations into their national adaptation planning processes. Canada’s support also facilitated in-country NAP programming for several Pacific island states, including enabling Fiji to launch its national adaptation plan framework, and providing assistance to Kiribati and the Solomon Islands to explore options to strengthen gender considerations as part of adaptation planning at the national level.

***How can gender best be incorporated into adaptation action?***

From Canada’s experience in mainstreaming gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation, three key priorities stand out:

1. **Apply a GBA+ lens meaningfully and early:** Gender and related social considerations need to be incorporated into adaptation planning processes from the start and in a meaningful way to ensure that adaptation actions address the unique needs and circumstances of marginalized and at-risk groups and communities.
2. **Empower at-risk and marginalized communities to be agents of change:** There is growing evidence showing that companies with a higher representation of women in executive leadership tend to outperform in terms of competitiveness and financial performance. In addition, research shows that having women on corporate boards foster creativity and innovation[[1]](#footnote-1). As such, beyond only considering their issues and needs, women and other marginalized groups need to be an integral part of decision-making on environmental and climate matters. In order to mainstream gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation, a first step is to increase the level of social inclusion in adaptation processes by supporting community involvement and facilitating research and policy agendas shaped by the needs of the communities. Through this, inclusive adaptation action can empower at-risk and marginalized groups to participate, mobilizing local knowledge, culture, skills, and resources, in order to change the narrative from one of vulnerability to one of leadership. This is particularly true for the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous communities, whose knowledge and experience is critical for shaping innovative solutions.
3. **A strong evidence base is key for incorporating gender into adaptation action:** Sex-disaggregated data is critical to inform decision-making and to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of policies, plans and programs aimed at incorporating gender considerations into adaptation action. In May 2019, the Government of Canada launched the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics, a new online data hub to provide easy access to information about education, families, health, immigration, labour and income from a gender, diversity and inclusion perspective. This initiative will help citizens make informed decisions and will support city planners, business owners and policy-makers at all levels.

***In your experience, what are remaining gaps related to incorporating gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation?***

Canada recognizes that overarching priorities and tools such as GBA+ do not lead to good policies by default. Effectively mainstreaming gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation requires continuous assessment and improvement of tools and operational practices based on the best available data.

Regardless of the level of advancement of the work of integrating social considerations into adaptation, there is a need for more studies and data relevant to the developed country context. Enhancing this evidence base will help ensure that mechanisms, such as GBA+, are used to their full potential and that they contribute to a positive change in mentalities regarding the role that women and girls can play in adapting to climate change.

***What are useful sources relevant to this topic?***

Government of Canada's Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics, new online data hub on gender can be accessed here: <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/topics-start/gender_diversity_and_inclusion>

Further information on GBA+ (as well as a training course provided free of charge by the Government of Canada) can be found online at the following link: <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html>

1. Government of Canada, Women on Boards: A Competitive Edge: <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/abu-ans/wwad-cqnf/wldp/wb-ca/booklet-en.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)