



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

KENYA'S SUBMISSION ON GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1. INTRODUCTION

Kenya takes the opportunity to express her views on gender and climate change in reference to Decision 20/CP.26, para. 3 requiring *“information on the progress of implementation of the activities contained in the Gender Action Plan (GAP), areas for improvement and further work to be undertaken, including, as appropriate, information on the multidimensional impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic on progress, and consideration of other diverse challenges that may impact future implementation of the gender action plan at all levels and; (Table 1, A.4, Annex to 3/CP.25) calling on experience sharing on dimensions and examples of the gender differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change and opportunities for women”*.

Kenya notes that the GAP projects a mid-term review on the progress of implementation of the activities therein at the fifty-sixth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (June 2022). The GAP further envisages an end-term review at the sixty-first session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (2024), identifying progress and further work to be undertaken.

Kenya considers the call for submissions essential in the build up to country progress reports that highlight successes, challenges and opportunities on gender and climate change as a whole. These in turn will facilitate informed negotiations and ultimately play a key role in shaping the way forward.

2. KENYA'S EXPERIENCES IN IMPLEMENTING THE GENDER ACTION PLAN.

2.1. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Kenya has continued making progress in implementation of the Gender Action Plan through various initiatives as outlined below:

- Various initiatives in capacity building and knowledge development have been undertaken by both State and Non-State actors to inform gender-responsive

climate change policies and programmes. For instance, the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES) has been implementing capacity building programmes towards building a critical mass of negotiators across sectors, some of whom are women. Other organisations have also been continuously hosting workshops and webinars on a variety of gender and climate change topics geared towards awareness creation, experience sharing and mentorship.

- Kenya has made some positive efforts in encouraging and facilitating the participation of women delegates, young and old to attend UNFCCC sessions. This has been done by both government and non-state actors. However, more needs to be done to further increase their participation across board.
- Kenya has made significant contributions to the global efforts in mitigating climate change through reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation plus the sustainable management of forests and conservation (REDD+). This programme has led to the development of the REDD+ National Strategy and its supporting documents like: Safeguards Information System, Investment Strategy, and the REDD+ Gender Action Plan. Further, a gender inclusion assessment of forest dependent communities to establish the levels of access, control and participation as well as representation of women and men in forest conservation and management was undertaken. This served to establish gaps and recommended interventions as appropriate.
- At regional level, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) that comprises eight African member states including Kenya, has frequently facilitated forums for the member States. One of the forums is on gender and resilience that provides an excellent opportunity for experience sharing as regards gender and climate change policies, plans, strategies and programmes.
- At international level, Kenya actively participated in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66) whose 2022 main theme was "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes." The platform serves to enhance the country's commitment to addressing gender related issues in climate actions as well as provides opportunities for networking, experience sharing and resource mobilization as appropriate.

2.2 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED AND/OR ENVISAGED

Kenya notes that some of the climate change financing opportunities are very bureaucratic and an impediment for vulnerable groups, among whom are women. The relatively low educational levels of women and other vulnerable groups also affects uptake of related information necessary for successful access to the funds.

The COVID 19 pandemic has been a great impediment in implementing the GAP. The restrictions on movements and congregating affected climate related initiatives including conservation activities and forums. The pandemic also created a shift to virtual engagements that are a challenge to the majority of vulnerable groups to whom the accessibility in terms of connectivity, technology and associated resources are prohibitive to participation.

Kenya notes that the UNFCCC documents are not disability friendly. For instance, the documents are not available in braille or audio for the visually and hearing impaired. This excludes persons with disabilities who ought to be part and parcel of the implementation of climate actions as well as participation including in decision making.

Socio-cultural norms and beliefs in most of the Kenyan communities affect participation of vulnerable groups in climate actions. For instance, women are limited in access to and ownership of natural resources like land and forests which negatively affects their role in fully participating in mitigation and adaptation measures.

Kenya's delay to appoint a National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point(s), who play a key role in implementation of the GAP. This has had implications for Kenya in terms of loss of opportunities for capacity building, information sharing and resource mobilization. Kenya is fast-tracking this process.

Kenya has invested in conducting research on matters climate change across sectors. However, most of the data is gender neutral affecting policy decisions and interventions that should be informed by the appropriate gender disaggregated data.

2.3 IMPACTS OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Kenya notes that, on matters of technology, the COVID 19 pandemic has had both positive and negative impacts. Migration to technology-based dissemination of information as well as engagement has supported discharge of gender roles. Women were able to take care of their children and families as well as participate in online meetings and decision making. On the reverse side, technology-based dissemination of information as well as engagement has advanced marginalization of gender voices, and reversed gains made on inclusion in decision making processes. This has especially adversely affected communities in situations where physical engagements would have been more productive than virtual alternatives that are occasioned by social-distancing protocols and restrictions in movement.

The pandemic led to loss of livelihoods through job losses, and constricted opportunities for income generation occasioned by reduced hours of productivity due to restrictions in movement and long curfew hours. This negatively affected involvement in climate actions as well.

There was an increase in unpaid care work: with most people at home, the burden of domestic work increased for women and girls, who were doing more even before COVID-19 outbreak. This was, especially at the peak of the infections, aggravated by the requirement for home-based care, thereby decreasing their capacity to effectively participate in climate change actions at all levels.

There has been an unprecedented increase in Gender Based Violence and vulnerability to harmful cultural practices especially affecting women and girls. There was therefore a double impact since climate change impacts also exacerbate GBV that is ordinarily fuelled by among others conflicts and scarce resources. Further adversities were due to reduced capacity of GBV service providers due to diverted focus towards the pandemic and mental health all of which affect the capacities for women and girls to meaningfully participate in climate change interventions.

2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Kenya will fast-track the appointment of the National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point(s) from institutions responsible for Gender and Climate Change. This will enhance and accelerate the implementation of the GAP as appropriate.

Despite it being a double-edged sword, technology-based dissemination of information as well as engagement should be harnessed to enable the participation of women and girls in climate actions including decision making while allowing them to undertake their gender roles.

The development and implementation of Gender and Intergenerational Civic Educational Programmes as provided for in the Climate Change Act 2016 is critical in promoting inclusive climate actions that cut across the education and other social systems. The programme will also play an important role towards transformation of socio-cultural norms with the intention of having women and girls progressively allowed to access and own natural resources.

There ought to be concerted efforts by both state and non-state actors in developing and implementing negotiation training and skills that should include all especially the vulnerable groups.

Based on its role as an agent of change, capacity building of the media fraternity on gender and climate change needs to be a priority. This will play a key role in appropriate reporting, awareness creation and appropriate policy influence.

3. GENDER DIFFERENTIATED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN KENYA.

3.1 DIMENSIONS AND EXAMPLES

Kenya notes that that loss of natural resource base especially forests and water sources among others are attributed to climate change. Drought and floods are common hazards of climate change in Kenya which adversely impact on men and women alike. However, men and women have different coping mechanisms. For instance, women walk longer distances in pursuit of firewood and water, while men migrate in search of pastures and water for their livestock. The effect of drought on agricultural productivity also affects men and women differently. Men incur losses in terms of cash crop farming upon which they depend for their livelihoods while women incur losses in small scale farming for domestic food supply that impacts on their families' food security.

Based on their lower social economic status in most communities compared to men, women suffer more during climate induced adversities due to their low purchasing power. They are therefore unable to afford basics for their survival and that of their families.

Climate change impacts also exacerbates Gender Based Violence (GBV) fuelled by pressure to provide among other causes. Much as GBV affects both men and women, women and girls bare the most brunt. In periods of prolonged drought, women and girls make more frequent and longer journeys to obtain food and water, which makes them vulnerable to sexual assault. Some communities also opt to marry off their girls early in exchange for livestock and money during scarcity.

Climate change has also led to a shift in traditional gender roles. When men migrate in search for pastures for their livestock for example, women are left as the sole breadwinners for their household. They have therefore been seen to venture into formal economic activities like trading and seeking formal employment to provide for their families. They therefore have increasingly taken up men's roles as providers.

3.2 THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE.

Women and girls are early adapters to innovative agricultural practices, first responders in disasters, and key decision-makers at home when it comes to matters energy, water and waste based on their domestic roles.

Women are essential to the success and sustainability of climate action. They have a unique role to play in intergenerational knowledge transfer as custodians of indigenous knowledge which is seen as a key solution to climate change impacts. This is especially so due to their role in the socialization process.

Women involve themselves in several economic activities as a source of livelihood. Among them is for example table banking, a funding strategy through which one can save and borrow money to help cushion against the effects of climate change.

3.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Access to climate services and information: Access to timely and accurate climate and weather information and technologies is crucial for preparedness, mitigation and adaptation measures. The Metrological department needs to ensure gender sensitive channels are explored for women and girls to get this information.

Access to clean water and sanitation: Having a close clean water source means time saved for women and girls, and they are able to focus on school and income-generating activities. The county and national government investments in water projects provide golden opportunities for women and girls.

Economic empowerment/gender finance gap: the various affirmative action funds and climate funds are an excellent opportunity for women empowerment. Women re-invest their income in education, health and nutrition (climate smart agriculture) of their families and communities at large. Empowering them economically therefore goes a long way in improving livelihoods as a whole.

Decision Making: if meaningfully engaged in climate change decision-making processes women can make a difference. They ought to contribute to climate-relevant planning, policy-making and associated implementation processes. This will decrease existing inequalities and increase the effectiveness of policies and projects.

Review of policies and legislation: in the process of reviewing existing climate change legislation, policies and strategies gender and socially inclusion should be a priority. This will ensure realization of intended objectives without leaving anyone behind, especially women and girls.

4. CONCLUSION

Kenya remains committed to integrating gender into all climate actions across sectors. Most importantly, women, girls and other vulnerable groups ought to meaningfully participate in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of climate actions as well as in decision making. Kenya believes that effective implementation of the GAP will contribute to the realization of gender equality and social inclusion in climate change. To this end, the country commits to appointing National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point(s) to spearhead and help track implementation of the GAP in Kenya. Further, the country will upscale efforts in demystifying the bureaucracy surrounding climate funds through awareness forums as appropriate and will also advocate for the same at regional and international levels in order to improve women's access.