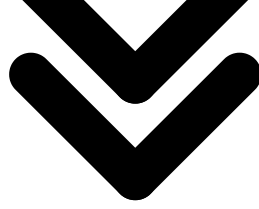


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The Role of National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points (NGCCFPs)





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Insights from WEDO's collaborative NGCCFPs program with the countries of Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Liberia, and Senegal

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The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) has been on a collaborative journey with four countries working to strengthen their capacity to further elaborate specific Terms of Reference (ToR) for the role of UNFCCC National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point (NGCCFP). Through various engagement pathways with the national climate entities of Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Liberia, and Senegal, WEDO is working with appointed NGCCFPs and their in-country colleagues to understand and raise awareness and action at the national level based on national context, mandates and institutional arrangements. This process to advance gender-responsive climate action has particularly supported the NGCCFPs in leading national multi-stakeholder dialogues to identify key directions, priorities, and opportunities for the NGCCFP scope of work to continue facilitation across sectors on gender-responsive climate justice.

This work builds from the foundational work of the UNFCCC Secretariat and a multitude of international and national advocates now working to more deeply understand the potential and appreciate the work of the NGCCFPs. This effort is in accordance with UNFCCC decision 3/CP.25, Gender Action Plan (GAP) activity A.2:

“Discuss and clarify the role and the work of the national gender and climate change focal points, including through providing capacity-building, tools and resources, sharing experience and best practices, workshops, knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer learning, mentoring and coaching”

Through capacity building and coordination, this work the articulation of a Terms of Reference is situated within the individual country context, with an invested community to support the role and terms. The approach ensures that the contributions and capacity not only of individual(s) in this role, but also of relevant individuals and institutions are considered, noting that the NGCCFPs will need the support of other actors, such as sectoral gender focal points, to succeed in their various scopes of work. Additionally, the process of developing these individualized Terms of Reference ultimately highlights elements to be considered in the near, medium, and long-term workplans of the individuals serving as NGCCFPs.



Emerging Insights

Institutional arrangements matter. The remit, direction, and overall set of activities possible for an NGCCFP is largely influenced by existing in-country institutional arrangements for coordinating gender and climate change, usually as two separate areas of work. As the NGCCFP bridges these areas, they must navigate systems that have not historically coordinated together, and do not often speak to each other. Despite the opportunity for coordination as one of the potential purposes of the role, what this means in reality is that the NGCCFP cannot first navigate their role without engaging with the dynamics and expectations of existing institutions. Countries with an established gender focal point system--representatives across different ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) appointed as a gender focal point in their respective areas, for example, work within their set institutional framing that is often siloed to their sector, whereas climate change remains and increasingly demands cross-sectoral and systems-thinking approaches, coordination and engagement across ministries (e.g., agriculture and education). While various institutions may have capacity in either gender or climate change, a key aspect of the NGCCFP role, as well as an enabling factor for its success, may be building a sense of ownership on the interlinkages between gender and climate in order to leverage existing capacity for the development and implementation of gender-responsive climate policies.

The NGCCFP role exists outside of one individual and can include a working body. Several trends speak to the recognition for an overall institutionalization of the role since it emerged several years ago, including within this sample set of countries. First, as an appointed NGCCFP transitions onto another position, staying the course with a handover and transition to the new NGCCFP for continued coordination and advancement of progress, such as is happening in Senegal, is necessary. If these transitions happen regularly across the many NGCCFPs appointed globally, this development is noteworthy because many of the original appointees to the NGCCFP position were appointed in part because of their outspoken passion and motivation for issues at this intersection of gender and climate change. The decoupling of the role from its prime advocates speaks to the recognition of this position as a role with responsibilities beyond general advocacy, as well as a role that has a purpose and function extending beyond the person already doing a certain kind of work. This role does not need to be limited to recognizing work already being done. Secondly, as has long been noted in the NGCCFP appointments, this role is often shared between more than one person, as is the current case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the lead NGCCFP is supported by others, as in Haiti. The co-NGCCFPs or NGCCFP team often bring different institutional backgrounds and experiences to the role and body of work, speaking to the variety of cross-sectoral work, multi-level facilitation of advocacy and representation in decision-making spaces, along with coordination and support for on-the-ground work.

Party priorities shape the Terms of Reference. In many ways, this insight is a reflection of the entire purpose of this effort, recognizing that the NGCCFP role may be operationalized differently for each Party considering national context, needs and capacity. Recognizing that Party priorities influence the key ToR responsibilities includes acknowledging that national priorities may exist outside of the Convention and can vary widely, from the desire to build and expand upon governance structures for efficient and effective public service to advancing a specific programme of work. Liberia, for example, continues to call for real climate finance for LDCs, and for the NGCCFP, the demand for finance translates into a priority to identify funding solutions for grassroots women's environmental activism. Haiti, in turn, recognizes this role offers a key opportunity to activate the gender and climate coordinating as a designated group of key participants within the National Committee on Climate Change to strengthen knowledge and capacity of gender and climate across sectors, supporting the UNFCCC Focal Point. With the coordination of the Committee and gender focal points, the NGCCFP role will support anchoring and advancing also Haiti's upcoming National Gender and Climate Change Action Plan.

Terms of Reference are not workplans. One of the critical discussions of this work has been the scope, detail and scale of the NGCCFP role, and recognizing how short, medium, and long-term activities map to certain responsibilities. A Terms of Reference should be revisited over time but should be general enough to encompass workplanning and programming within the next one to two years. A ToR should be relevant to the role, not a particular individual, so that if an individual does transition, the scope of work and responsibilities for the incoming NGCCFP is defined by the existing ToR, though ToRs may be updated periodically as appropriate.



Country Examples

Two countries' different contexts when approaching the NGCCFP role.

COUNTRY	SENEGAL	LIBERIA
Who	A designated NGCCFP is providing orientation to her successor as she transitions to the new appointee.	An early-appointed NGCCFP, with several years' experience within the UNFCCC, contemplating implementation on the ground.
Institutional Arrangements	NGCCFP sitting and supporting the National Focal Point of the UNFCCC.	Coordinated with in-country gender machinery, as well as some international partners doing gender-related work in country.
National Dialogue participants	Cross-institutional arrangements and participants.	Multi-stakeholder participants with NGOs, CSOs, with local leadership in climate action and programme implementation, along with national level entities.

COUNTRY	SENEGAL	LIBERIA
ToR facilitation and process	<p>Draft TOR based on review and analysis of climate instruments and existing policies</p> <p>Gender focal points across government entities providing feedback and input on the drafted ToR</p> <p>Revision of priority responsibilities for NGCCFP</p> <p>Review and validation by national gender and climate stakeholders</p>	<p>Identification of key issues and priorities by stakeholders in discussion forum</p> <p>Drafting of Terms and consultation with National UNFCCC Focal Point</p> <p>Finalization by validation workshop</p>

Challenges and Gaps

- Identifying funding sources to support this role so that the staff time of this role, whether part or full-time, for one individual or across a team, is covered along with resources for meetings, travel, capacity-building, research, and other functions as appropriate
- Connecting potential programming to climate finance resources that could support the institutional capacity to develop longer-term programs, such as small grant support to grassroots women, a gender and climate data hub, etc.
- Continuing to coordinate and engage multiple stakeholders, which may require new coordination mechanisms or building on existing, even longstanding, frameworks and mechanisms to insert a gender lens that has previously been absent
- Limited capacity due to competing priorities and additional responsibilities--no one in these Parties holds the role as a full-time position--but further resources are elusive without demonstration of impact



Upcoming Toolkit

While this NGCCFP workshop is the last planned single event under the GAP for this activity (A.2), it is critical that capacity-building efforts relevant to this activity continue to COP30 as envisioned under the GAP.

Strengthening capacity, knowledge and exchange of experiences is necessary while NGCCFPs are appointed and current NGCCFPs shape and define their roles within their country context and institutional arrangements. That's why resources from this work are being compiled into an upcoming toolkit, featuring a case study for each country that will include a brief on their particular climate and gender interlinkages, key considerations informing the development of their Terms of Reference, and their resulting Terms of Reference. The toolkit intends to spur enhanced uptake of the NGCCFP role through lessons learned and promising practices to facilitate the TOR process via coordination, discussion, decision-making and mobilization of resources--human and financial--to synergize outcomes. Drawing from across each country, an extensive list of possible ToR responsibilities and activities and a guiding set of questions for ToR's can help veteran, new, and potential NGCCFPs consider and engage with their roles in conversation with their colleagues. Look for this toolkit in 2022!

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