

# Strengthening Gender Considerations in Kiribati's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process



**NAP  
Global  
Network**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this scoping study is to explore options for strengthening gender considerations in Kiribati's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process with a focus on its NAP document, the Joint Implementation Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KJIP), which is expected to be revised in 2018 to reflect the government's new priorities. To explore options for strengthening gender considerations in the revision of the KJIP, the NAP Global Network collaborated with the Office of the President to hold stakeholder consultations in the capital, South Tarawa, in August 2017. Based on these consultations and a desk review, we found the integration of gender considerations in the KJIP to be a major positive change because the linking of climate adaptation to gender equality is new at the policy and project levels. Gender equality has only been recently raised as a political issue and gender mainstreaming has mostly occurred in relation to domestic violence. But much more needs to be done to foster better understanding of the linkages between gender equality and climate adaptation among government officials and women's organizations. Based on lessons learned from this study, recommendations are offered to the government and development agencies interested in improving gender considerations in Kiribati's NAP process.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AMAK</b>	Kiribati national council of women
<b>DRM</b>	disaster risk management
<b>IISD</b>	International Institute for Sustainable Development
<b>IVA</b>	integrated vulnerability assessment
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>KAP</b>	Kiribati Adaptation Program
<b>KJIP</b>	Joint Implementation Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
<b>KV20</b>	Kiribati Vision 20
<b>KDP</b>	Kiribati Development Plan
<b>KNEG</b>	Kiribati National Experts Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
<b>MWYSA</b>	Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs
<b>NAP</b>	National Adaptation Plan
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SPC</b>	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>WDD</b>	Women Development Division
<b>Wol</b>	whole-of-island



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a universal human right. Kiribati needs to meet and monitor the implementation and reporting of its obligations under ratified international conventions, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, among others. Gender equality is also at the centre of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as both a stand-alone goal and an issue across a number of other goals to be reached by 2030.

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change also committed to integrating gender in responses to climate change, among which the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process is a key opportunity. The 2015 Paris Agreement refers to gender-responsive approaches, as well as to the goals of gender equality and empowerment of women. It recognizes that climate adaptation efforts will not be effective or sustainable if they do not take gender into account.

The purpose of this scoping study is to explore options for strengthening gender considerations in Kiribati's NAP process with a focus on its national NAP document, the Joint Implementation Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KJIP), which is expected to be revised in 2018 to reflect the government's new priorities. The approach to the analysis was to develop an understanding of the country's planning context as it relates to national development, gender equality and climate adaptation. The analysis helps answer questions such as: Are "gender equality" and "climate adaptation" seen as policy priorities? How have both themes been framed? What are the main gender issues being addressed? What are the capacity levels and resources available to address gender equality and climate adaptation? How has gender equality and climate change been linked? An analysis of how gender has been integrated in the KJIP and recommendations for strengthening gender integration are then provided in light of this contextual analysis.

The approach used in gathering this information combined desk-based research and stakeholder consultations. In August 2017 the research team interviewed approximately 25 stakeholders in South Tarawa and Suva, Fiji, representing government ministries, faith-based organizations, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development partners (for a full list of interviewees, see Annex A). In this report, and for simplification purposes, we use a binary (and therefore limited) definition of gender to refer to the differences between women and men.



## 2. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

This section provides an overview of the national development context with a focus on key development challenges and opportunities and an overview of the country's development planning system.

**Development profile:** The Republic of Kiribati comprises 33 low-lying atolls in the Pacific Ocean with a hot and humid tropical climate. Its total land area of more than 800 km<sup>2</sup> is dispersed over 3.5 million km<sup>2</sup>, creating important communication challenges between the capital in South Tarawa and the outer islands. In 2015, Kiribati had more than 110,000 inhabitants with about half (49 per cent) based in South Tarawa (National Statistics Office, 2016).

The country has two urban atolls (South Tarawa and Kiritimati) with marked socioeconomic differences compared with the rest of the rural atolls (Campbell & Warrick, 2014). The urban atolls are facing high population density (e.g., more than 3,500 people per km<sup>2</sup> in South Tarawa<sup>1</sup>), rapid urbanization (in part as a result of internal migration), high reliance on imported goods, pollution and poor sanitation compromising the already limited availability of fresh water and land resources. In contrast, the rural outer islands have relatively low population densities (75.7 people per km<sup>2</sup> in all the other islands combined in 2015). They mostly rely on subsistence agriculture and coastal fisheries and have more limited access to services (Republic of Kiribati, 2015).

In 2016 Kiribati held least developed country (LDC) status and the lowest GDP of all Pacific countries after Nauru and Tuvalu (World Bank, 2017). Poverty associated with access to basic needs (e.g., water and sanitation, clothing, shelter) is relatively widespread and slightly higher in the urban atolls due to higher reliance on cash (International Monetary Fund, 2015). The country faces important development challenges. Soil fertility is poor and access to freshwater resources is limited and entirely rainfall dependent. Income-generating opportunities mostly depend on the rich marine and fishery resources (e.g., seaweed, fishing licence fees, seafarers' remittances) and copra<sup>2</sup> export. The country relies heavily on foreign aid to support its development.

**National development planning:** The Office of the President has developed the country's long-term vision, Kiribati Vision 20 (KV20), with the objective to "become a wealthy, healthy and peaceful nation with the people at the centre of it all." To achieve this long-term vision, the government has identified fisheries and tourism as the two priority sectors (Republic of Kiribati, 2017).

In the medium-term, the Kiribati Development Plan (KDP) for the period 2016–2019 identifies six priorities: human resource development, economic growth and poverty reduction, health, environment, governance and infrastructure. The KDP is coordinated by a Development

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<sup>1</sup> Betio combined

<sup>2</sup> Dried sections of the meat of the coconut from which oil is extracted

Coordinating Committee (DCC) under the Ministry for Finance and Economic Development. At the island level, development planning by the local authorities, the Island Councils, is at the early stage (e.g., only seven out of 23 Island Councils have developed strategic plans as of August 2017), and traditional governance systems are still very influential.

The monitoring and evaluation of the development planning process and outcomes is in its infancy and mostly done at the project level. Reporting and information management is a major gap at all levels, in part due to major communication challenges between the capital in South Tarawa and the outer islands (some islands have no phone access, poor Internet and are only accessible by boat) and resources constraints.



### 3. GENDER EQUALITY PLANNING

*“Domestic violence is seen as an issue but not gender equality.” (Key informant)*

This section describes some of the key gender issues as perceived by key interviewees, with supported information from the literature. Perceived key issues are important because, as a key informant put it, “people need to perceive the issue as being a problem to act on it.” This section also summarizes how these issues are currently reflected and managed in national policies, strategies and institutional structures.

**Gender profile:** It is hard to evaluate the status of inequalities between women and men in Kiribati and any changes over time due the lack of updated, sex-disaggregated data and information across different dimensions of socio-cultural and economic development.<sup>3</sup> Broadly, interviewees identified various key issues facing I-Kiribati women.<sup>4</sup> These can be summarized into four categories (with quote examples and supported with available data whenever possible):

- **Violence against women:** While the majority of interviewees raised this issue, it remains a sensitive topic. The Kiribati Family Health and Support Study published in 2010 (Secretariat of the Pacific Community [SPC], 2010) revealed the prevalence of violence against women (68 per cent of women aged 15–49 reported experiencing physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner). Most interviewees noted that progress is happening, especially in terms of awareness raising (e.g., “Now people see violence as something wrong, that’s the main change”). But challenges remain (e.g., “Women are not interested in trainings on ending violence against women because they fear that the impact will be negative for their family”). Some form of resistance exists. Responses from some respondents seem to indicate that violence against women is still normalized by some, including by women themselves, pointing to potential intergenerational differences among women. A few respondents also noted that “the whole gender equality issue is being reduced to domestic violence” and that “people need to be aware that gender issues are not just about violence against women.”
- **Women’s participation in decision making:** Respondents primarily referred to the lack of women’s participation in politics at the national (parliament), island (local councils) and community levels (village and church *mwaneabas*, the traditional meeting hall used for decision making and social events). Most respondents noted recent positive changes in

<sup>3</sup> For example, the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index were not calculated for Kiribati in 2016 due to a lack of relevant data (UNDP, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> In contrast, interviewees found it difficult to identify key issues for men. Most interviewees (both men and women) could not identify any issue specific to men (e.g., “They already have lots of privileges!”). The lack of employment opportunities was mentioned few times (e.g., “Culturally this is more difficult for men to be unemployed as they are expected to support the family.”).



some places, particularly in relation to women's access to government senior positions. Data from the 2015 population census confirms a contrasted picture: the representation of women as senior government officials is balanced (50 per cent), but women's participation in politics as members of the Parliament and as island councillors is very low (6 per cent and 5 per cent respectively).

- **Traditional culture and attitudes:** Culture, and especially reference to I-Kiribati as being a patriarchal society, was often cited as a barrier to achieving women's empowerment ("The culture is against women"). Key informants see culture as a determinant of people's understanding of women's role and attitudes towards them, particularly at home. Culture was often mentioned as being the root cause of many other issues, including: violence against women, unequal participation of women in decision making and unequal rights between women and men in general (e.g., "Men are more free to move around compared with women"; "Men do the talking and women do the work"; "Women are considered as men's asset"). Some interviewees highlighted that changing perceptions, attitudes and traditional practices are "very difficult to address and takes time." This supports previous findings from a study conducted in 2013 that indicates that traditional culture and attitudes were the most frequently identified barriers to increased government commitment on gender (SPC, 2015). Some respondents also referred to the predominant role of churches in the I-Kiribati society, which tend to be hierarchical and male-dominated.
- **Women's economic empowerment:** Interviewees referred to women's unemployment, the lack of economic opportunities for women to support themselves, the lack of regular income and the fact that most women are "not working" (formally). Some specifically mentioned the lack of access to natural resources (i.e., trees and fish) for handicraft making. More broadly, some interviewees referred to women's poverty, health and well-being issues, especially in relation to food supply and nutrition. A UNDP study on poverty conducted in 2010 further indicates that female-headed households had a slightly greater chance of living in poverty (UNDP, 2010). Unemployment also tends to be higher among females, particularly for young women (62 per cent of young women reported unemployed versus 48 per cent of young men according to the 2010 Population Census [Kiribati National Statistics Office, 2017]). But progress is also happening (e.g., "Women are much more empowered now due to more access to education, women access to the police force, the concepts of human rights, trainings, increased awareness..."). According to the 2014 *Kiribati Digest of Education Statistics* (Republic of Kiribati, 2014), the country had achieved gender parity in primary education, while in secondary education the number of female students outnumbered the number of males.

**Gender equality planning:** Political awareness and support on gender equality is recent and so far has mostly been focusing on addressing the issue of gender-based violence—and especially domestic violence—with a focus on ending violence against women. Gender-based violence became a policy issue following the results of a study on domestic violence conducted in 2010. Since then, the government has made various commitments and taken several actions to address domestic violence (including new legislation on the criminalization of domestic violence and a policy and action plan to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence).<sup>5</sup> These measures have contributed to raising awareness on women's rights. A Women's Development Division (WDD), created in 2011, is

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<sup>5</sup> These signals of political/government commitments to end domestic violence include: anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution; the 2010 *National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Kiribati: Policy and Strategic Action Plan 2011–2021* and the 2014 Family Peace Act, which focuses on the protection of victims of domestic violence and the prevention and elimination of the crime of violence within domestic relationships.

now located under the new Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs (MWYSA, established in 2013). A Human Rights Unit was also created in 2014 within MWYSA. There is no national gender coordination committee, but different committees and networks exist with a focus on domestic violence.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of the study, the WDD is working to finalize a draft National Gender Equality and Women's Development policy (under development since 2013). The draft policy identifies five gender priorities, which, in addition to "eliminating sexual based violence," include: 1) gender mainstreaming, 2) women economic empowerment, 3) women in decision making and 4) strategic and informed family. The policy therefore provides a basis to broaden the goals towards gender equality beyond ending violence against women. These priorities are aligned with those identified through stakeholder interviews (see previous section). So far, relatively limited focus has been given to these four priorities due to a combination of constraints (including limited technical capacity and resources within the WDD, competing priorities and heavy workload for officials combined with limited staff).

Gender integration in sectoral policies and strategies is mostly done on an ad hoc basis and occurring for those ministries engaged in ending domestic violence (labour, education, health, energy, police services). Some ministries have officers that support gender mainstreaming (e.g., the inclusive education coordinator at the Ministry of Education, gender focal point within the Ministry of Public Work and Utilities). In addition, each island council has a women's development officer paid by the government under the Ministry of Internal Affairs to support training and coordination. The lack of resources and capacity to support gender mainstreaming within the WDD and among ministries and divisional staff was already highlighted in a gender mainstreaming study conducted in 2013 (SPC, 2015).

Development assistance to Kiribati for the promotion of gender equality is concentrated in relatively few bilateral and multilateral agencies (including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Health Organization). They have played a key role in supporting the reduction of gender-based violence and, to some extent, gender mainstreaming. Budget from development partners to the WDD has also increased regularly since 2011. Sources of gender expertise within the country are thin (two I-Kiribati women have a university background on gender), but a network of NGOs led by women and focusing on women's issues exists—with a focus on domestic violence and women's empowerment. It includes two national women's associations working on raising awareness and capacity building at the community level (i.e., the Kiribati National Council of Women, AMAK, and the Kiribati Health Family Association) and hundreds of faith- and non-faith-based women's groups at the community level, which appears to be a new movement.<sup>7</sup> Churches are also involved in advocacy and awareness raising through workshops and trainings to women on home gardening, sewing, cooking, financial literacy, water safety, nutrition, waste management, etc. A Catholic Crisis Center supports women that are victims of domestic violence.

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<sup>6</sup> These are: the Task force on Eliminating gender-based violence under MWYSA; the Case Review Committee coordinated by MWYSA and SafeNet, a network for the safety of domestic violence victims, set up in Tarawa and the outer islands and involving the ministries of health and education as well as in the police service.

<sup>7</sup> Every village has one or two women's groups where women help each other on a voluntary basis in fundraising, cleaning and gardening activities (personal communication with Claire Anterea, KiriCAN, August 2017).



## 4. STATUS OF THE NAP PROCESS

**Climate profile:** Kiribati is exposed to high year-to-year rainfall variability due to the impact of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation. Coastal floods and tropical cyclones are the most frequent climate hazards, with two events respectively recorded from 1900 to 2017, followed by droughts (one event). During this period, drought was the climate hazard that affected people most, impacting nearly 84,000 people, followed by tropical cyclone (2,200 people) (EM-DAT, 2017). Historical data show no significant rainfall trend but an increase of sea-surface temperatures and the rise of sea levels (Government of Kiribati, 2014; Australian Bureau of Meteorology & CSIRO, 2011). This is a major concern in the medium and long terms, considering that all atolls (except for Banaba) are no more than 5 metres above sea level and the majority of the population and infrastructures are located on the coast with limited options for relocation (Republic of Kiribati, 2013). Increasing temperatures and mean sea-level rise are projected to continue in the future together with increasing intensity and frequency of extreme climate events. Climate change is expected to exacerbate existing development challenges, particularly in relation to access to freshwater resources and arable land for agriculture. The government has identified the water sector, coastal zones, coastal infrastructure and agriculture as the most vulnerable sectors to climate change (Republic of Kiribati, 2007). Some climate change vulnerability assessments have been conducted over the past decade through projects such as the Kiribati Adaptation Programme (KAP), which started in 2003 with a particular focus on coastal vulnerability.

**Climate adaptation planning:** High political awareness and support on climate change have existed at the national level since the early 1990s. Kiribati has been outspoken about the impact of climate change at the international level. The former president, Anote Tong, established a relocation strategy, “migration with dignity,” which planned for gradual international migrations in response to climate change through creating opportunities for those who wish to migrate and improving the levels of qualification of future potential migrants (Kiribati Office of the President, 2017). But the new president is shifting the discourse away from resettlement, focusing on Kiribati as a place to stay and resilient development based on four pillars: wealth, peace and security, infrastructure, and governance (Republic of Kiribati, 2017). At the time of the study, the draft Climate Change Policy is being reviewed to address the orientation and priorities of the new administration. Climate change priorities in the medium term will likely focus on coastal protection, water and sanitation, and renewable energy (personal communication, Choi Yeeting, Office of President, August 2017).

Climate change is coordinated under the Office of the President and generally framed as a cross-cutting issue that threatens economic development, infrastructure and natural resources (Republic of Kiribati, 2016a). The government recognizes the need for a “whole-of-government” approach to climate change with a focus on mainstreaming and coordination across sectors and scales (Republic of Kiribati, 2015). Two coordination bodies have been established to guide climate change actions at the national level: the Parliament Climate Change Committee (PCCC) and the Kiribati National

Experts Group of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KNEG). The Parliament Climate Change Committee is a high-level committee under the House of Parliament with members of Parliament who represent the interests of the islands. Coordinated by the Office of the President since 2014, the KNEG is a technical, cross-sectoral advisory committee that is expected to be composed of senior technical officers from government, NGOs, civil society and faith-based organizations.

Kiribati developed a Joint Implementation Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KJIP) in 2014. The KJIP consolidates existing national and sectoral policies and strategies developed on climate change and disaster risk management (DRM). It identifies 12 strategies and associated priority climate change and DRM actions for the period 2014–2023. Kiribati’s Nationally Determined Contribution refers to the KJIP as its national NAP document. It is difficult to assess the level of implementation of the KJIP to date due to the absence of centralized monitoring and evaluation systems. Information may be available at the sectoral and project levels.

One objective of the KJIP is to mainstream climate change and DRM in all outer island council strategic plans. To do so, the Office of the President through the KNEG has been piloting a “whole-of-island” (Wol) approach on two islands: Abaiang (KNEG et al., 2016) and Tabiteuia North (ongoing at the time of this study). The approach aims to promote greater awareness and coordination among different sectors (among ministries and between ministries and development partners) and scales of governance (national, island, village and community levels) to climate-proof local development plans. This is being done through integrated (i.e., cross-sectoral) vulnerability assessments to climate variability and change at the island level. In Abaiang, the Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (IVA) team was composed of trained KNEG members and development partners working with key local decision-making bodies, the Island Council and the *unimwane* (traditional). The process includes the identification of adaptation options through a participatory process at the village level. The results informed the development of the Abaiang development plan (personal communication, Choi Yeeting, Office of President, August 2017). The Office of the President is interested in replicating this approach in the different islands.

The integration of climate adaptation in some sectoral policies and strategies (and/or the development of standalone sectoral climate change strategies) is still relatively new.<sup>8</sup> The development of the KJIP between 2012 and 2014 and the piloting of the Wol in Abaiang in 2016 contributed to raising awareness on climate change among different ministries and at the island council level. The Office of the President has also been supporting the mainstreaming of climate change at the sectoral level through capacity building of the KNEG members.

A lack of capacities and resources to support climate change mainstreaming is identified as a major constraint (Republic of Kiribati, 2015; UNDP, 2009). Ministries tend to be under-staffed (e.g., the Ministry of Environment’s Climate Change Unit includes one climate change officer and one senior environment officer who is also responsible for biodiversity). Most of the work on climate change has been supported by a few bilateral (e.g., Australia, Germany, the United States, Japan) and multilaterals donors (i.e., Asian Development Bank, World Bank), the UN (UNDP, UN Environment), the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific agencies (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and SPC) and some international NGOs (e.g., Red Cross). Only two local NGOs have been active on climate change: Kiribati Climate Action Network and Kiribati Association

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<sup>8</sup> Examples of sectoral integration include the integration of climate change in school curricula and the development of a course on climate change for teacher trainees.

of Non-Governmental Organization.<sup>9</sup> Some churches are also involved in awareness raising and support mangrove planting at the community level. For example, the Kiribati United Church is in the process of developing an internal climate change policy.

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<sup>9</sup> Kiribati Climate Action Network includes nine members working on a voluntary basis. They meet once a month and organize a specific activity once a month (e.g., planting mangroves, workshop, cleaning). Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organization is currently not very active.



## 5. CONNECTING THE DOTS: LESSONS LEARNED ON THE LINKAGES BETWEEN GENDER EQUALITY AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

This section explores how gender equality and climate adaptation planning have been linked and what that means in relation to the KJIP more specifically.

1. **In its national development plan, the government identifies gender equality and climate change as two cross-cutting policy priority issues—which provides a basis/a mandate for integrating gender in the KJIP. These priorities are also reflected in the new government’s 2016 policy statement (Republic of Kiribati, 2016b).** Institutional arrangements for coordinating both themes are in place. The WDD is expected to finalize the National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy before the end of 2017. The draft Climate Change Policy is also under revision to integrate the new priorities of the government. The government has been receiving support from development partners to address both priorities.
2. **However, the linking of climate change to gender equality is new and lagging behind at the policy and project levels—a gap that constrains gender integration in the KJIP due to limited awareness and availability of sex-disaggregated data and documented knowledge.** Beyond the ministries involved in ending violence against women (i.e., women, health, education, police, justice), gender mainstreaming has not really occurred, including for climate change. Climate change is mentioned in the draft National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy. The draft policy also identifies gender mainstreaming as one of the key priorities. But the draft Climate Change Policy (reviewed at the time of the study) is gender blind. Kiribati’s two flagship initiatives—the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade-funded Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) on gender and women empowerment and the World Bank-funded Kiribati Adaptation Program (KAP) on climate adaptation—have not explicitly explored the linkages between gender equality and climate change.
3. **A combination of factors explain the lack of linkages between gender equality and climate change at the national level.** These include:
  - a) The country is still in the process of finalizing its policy frameworks for gender equality and climate change (some development partners indicated that they are waiting for the gender policy to be released to expand their focus and look at the linkages between gender and climate change).

- b) Cross-cutting priorities may be competing with one another, especially in the context of limited financial and human resources and capacities.
  - c) Gender equality has only been recently raised as a political issue—and it is mostly understood as another word for “women” because “when talking about gender most people think about violence against women.”
  - d) Gender mainstreaming has mostly occurred in relation to addressing domestic violence—but it is not easy to link domestic violence and climate change (no direct linkages, sensitive topic).<sup>10</sup>
  - e) The understanding of the linkages between gender equality and climate variability and change, especially among the civil society organizations/women’s organizations, is limited (e.g., “Most actors have a hard time to see the impacts of climate change on gender. This is a new concept”; “Lots of discussion are happening on how to integrate gender in climate change adaptation but this is mostly happening at the regional level. How to bring this message back at the national level?”).
  - f) The impacts of climate change are not yet very tangible for most people. Most interviewees had a hard time remembering any specific climate hazards that affected them (e.g., “Climate change has not touch everyone in a serious way yet”). Cultural and religious barriers to awareness and action also exist (e.g., “Older people doubt that climate change will happen because they believe that God is there to save them”). The concept of climate change is still relatively new to most island councils.
4. **Resources and capacities on gender equality and climate change are also thin, both within and outside the government, further constraining a deep and broad consideration of gender issues in the KJIP.** For example, the WDD has limited resources and capacity to work on gender issues beyond domestic violence. In August 2017, the WDD was comprised of eight full time staff with the majority (62.5 per cent) focusing on domestic violence. While the WDD has participated in climate change negotiations at the international level, it has not yet been active on climate adaptation at the national level, including in the development of the KJIP and the Wol approach. Similarly, the team supporting climate change and DRM under the Office of the President is comprised of four permanent staff. Travel requirements within the country and in the region add a major burden to the workload of government officials. This is creating a push to improve coordination across sectors, scales and actors (i.e., whole-of-government, Wol approach on gender-based violence and climate change promoted by the Office of the President and development partners). Within civil society organizations, out of the four NGOs is working at the national level on gender and climate change respectively; two were inactive at the time of the study due to lack of human and financial resources (i.e., AMAK and Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organization).

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<sup>10</sup> “Gender equity and the empowerment of women” is also one of the 12 guiding principles of Kiribati’s National Development Plan and is included in one of the key priority areas on governance. However, references to “gender” and/or “women” mostly refer to gender-based violence, family planning services (health priority area) and the finalization of the gender policy (governance priority area).



## 6. OPPORTUNITY AND GAP ANALYSIS RELATED TO GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN THE KJIP

A review of the KJIP document reveals a number of opportunities and challenges for advancing gender considerations in the document. In many ways, these are very similar to those identified in national NAP documents reviewed for other developing countries (Dazé & Dekens, 2017).

1. **Initial efforts have been made to integrate gender, and this is a major positive change compared with previous national documents on climate change, which are gender blind.**<sup>11</sup> It provides an important basis for strengthening gender considerations moving forwards. In line with the KDP, gender inclusion is identified as a key principle that should be integrated in all strategies and actions (“all strategies and actions in the KJIP shall be inclusive of vulnerable groups, considering gender, youth and children, the elderly and people with disabilities”)—although there is no guidance on what it means and how to do it in practice. In addition, one of the 12 strategies prioritized in the KJIP also explicitly targets vulnerable groups with a focus on equal participation and training of women. The framing of gender tends to make references to both women and men.
2. **Women are systematically positioned as victims of climate change.** Women are positioned as a marginalized group that is particularly vulnerable to climate change, together with youth and children, the elderly and people with disabilities. This is important, as it makes the case for focusing on gender equality and women empowerment within adaptation strategies, and the KJIP does identify women as beneficiaries for some adaptation actions. But there is a need to also emphasize women’s capacities to identify solutions and solve problems (women as agents of change) to support the identification of adaptation strategies that are tailored to the different needs, opportunities and capacities of women.
3. **Evidence of a gender analysis to inform the identification of climate adaptation options is limited.** The KJIP makes some references to gender differences and inequalities—in few cases backed-up with sex-disaggregated data.<sup>12</sup> But this information is rarely linked with an analysis of what it means in terms of women’s and men’s vulnerability and exposure to climate change. There is no explanation as to which women (e.g., from a specific social

<sup>11</sup> For example, the words “women” and “gender” are mentioned nine times and 21 times respectively in the KJIP and 47 times and six times respectively in the Abaiang IVA. Neither word is mentioned in the 2005 Kiribati Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and they are only mentioned twice respectively in the 2013 Second National Communication. The word “gender” is mentioned once (“women” is not mentioned) in the 2013 National Framework for Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation. The words “women” and “gender” are mentioned twice and once respectively in the Kiribati’s 2015 Nationally Determined Contribution. The word “gender” is not mentioned in the Republic Kiribati (2007) National Adaptation Program of Action, while the word “women” is mentioned twice.

<sup>12</sup> The document refers to the different roles in fisheries and at the community level as well as different health risks and traditional knowledge between women and men. It also refers to existing gender inequalities in terms of access to employment and participation in decision making using sex-disaggregated data. But there is no explanation as to how this is linked to women’s vulnerability to climate change and how climate change may exacerbate existing inequalities and/or create new ones.



group and/or location) may be more vulnerable and exposed to specific climate hazards, why they are particularly vulnerable to climate risks in the context of Kiribati, and how this is possibly changing over time. This makes it difficult to identify adaptation options that address adaptation needs, interests, and capacities for women and men. Some interviewees indicated that baseline information collected in 2013 for the Abaiang IVA informed the KJIP, but there is no reference to the Abaiang IVA in the KJIP.

4. **The Abaiang IVA document does not provide a significantly greater level of information on gender compared with the KJIP.** Further analysis of the raw data collected as part of the assessment could possibly be done using a gender lens. The Abaiang IVA document makes clear reference to gender inequalities in relation to access to decision making at the island level, but other dimensions of gender equality are not really covered. There are few references to gender differences (i.e., in terms of the perceived climate hazards; women's and men's roles in some sectors of the economy [fisheries]; frequency of travel and primary school enrolment based on sex-disaggregated data; examples of traditional and modern knowledge and skills held by women and men). But there is no analysis of what it means in the context of vulnerability and responses to climate variability and change. Only two proposed adaptation options (out of 65) explicitly target women in relation to local skills development (i.e., identify specific training needs for women) and institutions (i.e., encourage women representation in local decision making).
5. **Overall reference to women/gender is more prominent in the context analysis but less so in other sections of the document, including in the identification of adaptation options.** In total and across the 12 strategies identified, only four adaptation actions (or related sub-actions) (out of 71 actions) explicitly mention gender/women/girls in relation to the strategies related to water and food security, health, and early warning and disaster emergency management.<sup>13</sup> There is no or limited reference to gender/women in the other sections of the document, including institutional arrangements, financing strategy, communication strategy, and monitoring and evaluation. For example, among the lead and support agencies identified for the implementation of the adaptation strategies, only few make reference to women's organizations and/or the MWYSA. MWYSA is listed once as responsible lead agency and "fisher associations/cooperatives (including women)" are listed four times as support agencies. In the Abaiang IVA document, only two proposed adaptation options explicitly target women.
6. **Limited information is provided on the organizations and individuals that participated in the process of developing the KJIP.** This makes it difficult to determine the gender balance in participation and to assess the degree of influence that organizations promoting gender equality and women's empowerment may have had. There is a need for clear communication of who was involved and how they participated in the development of the KJIP. Interviews with key informants clarified that, due to "consultation fatigue," the development of the KJIP largely focused on consolidating existing yet scattered information across sectors. Two consultations were organized, at the national level and on Christmas Island, but no report is available from these consultations. The Abaiang IVA document indicates that consultations were conducted by members of the KNEG and involved separate focus group discussions with men, women and youth at the village level combined with household surveys. But there is no report of how information about women and men was collected through the households survey. The KJIP was developed by the Office of the

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<sup>13</sup> For example, recognition of: the traditional knowledge of women and men in relation to cultivation, preparation and food preservation; the different needs of women and men in relation to health information and DRM trainings.

President through the KNEG with support from development partners. Discussions with key informants clarified the KNEG is not formalized yet, and it is still building its reputation. So far, the KNEG has been mobilized in a flexible manner, drawing from different members on an ad hoc basis depending on needs. A 2015 participant list of the KNEG members show a higher number of women participating (24 women compared with 12 men)—an observation that was confirmed at a KNEG meeting in August 2017.

7. **There is no information on the inclusion of the MWYSA in the institutional arrangements for the KJIP.** The members of the KNEG have mostly included representatives from some sectoral ministries who are already engaged in climate adaptation. The WDD has not been part of the KNEG so far. It is important to include the WDD in the KNEG to build the capacity of the ministry on climate change and to ensure that gender equality aspects are integrated in the KJIP.



## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KIRIBATI'S NAP PROCESS

The following recommendations are offered to the government and development partners who are interested in strengthening gender considerations in Kiribati's NAP process, with a focus on short-term actions and some specific references to the KJIP. Each recommendation is aligned to one or more than one of the key themes identified in the draft gender policy—noted in brackets. It conveys the message that the NAP process can help achieve Kiribati's gender policy objectives, as much as it can prevent its success if gender equality is not appropriately addressed.

1. **Frame the gender equality issue in line with the I-Kiribati culture—with an emphasis on building a climate-resilient family [strong and informed families and eliminating sexual based violence].** Many interviewees perceive that the root causes and challenges related to gender equality are located in the family unit (e.g., “At work women are represented in senior positions but at home that's where the gender issues are”). The government acknowledges the important role of the family unit in ending violence against women (e.g., focus on “peaceful families”) and in supporting gender equality more broadly. The new government's policy statement recognizes “women as backbone of the family unit” (Republic of Kiribati, 2016b).

A family-focused approach to gender equality recognizes that women and men are part of a complex web of institutions (e.g., educational, political and religious) among which the family—defined as the household and extended family<sup>14</sup>—continues to play a very central role in I-Kiribati society.

Building a family that is resilient to the negative impacts of climate change involves a recognition of the different roles (and related vulnerabilities) of women and men in the family and their different climate adaptation needs and capacities. It can help to understand that not everybody is the same within the household or the community. For example, women often shoulder the burden of care for children, older people, people with health conditions and other vulnerable people. As such, a family-focused approach still needs to look at the power dynamics within the family to identify the causes of differential vulnerability to climate change embedded into gender roles, access and control over family's resources, decision-making processes, conflict resolution process, etc.

A family perspective is missing from the KJIP (e.g., the word “family” is only mentioned one time). But a family-focused approach to gender equality may be more aligned with the I-Kiribati culture compared with a more Western approach centred on individuals. For example, a first version of the draft National Gender Equality and Women's Development

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<sup>14</sup> According to the National Statistics Office (2016), “if a person is asked where did he stay within a week period, or even within a day, he may give several locations because people tend to move frequently, especially in Kiribati where the extended family system is still very strong.” However, some authors (Talu, 1985 cited in Kuruppu, 2009) also noted that the immediate family, rather than extended family, is now the most important unit in Kiribati.

Policy was turned down by secretaries in 2013, as it was perceived as being “too women focused” and lacking of data and evidence (personal communication, Anne Kautu, Women’s Development Division, August 2017).

Finally, the family is the building block (the finest grain social unit) of community, village, island-level and higher-level institutions. As such, a focus on gender equality that is central to building climate-resilient families provides a good entry point for addressing the vertical integration objective of the NAP process; that is, the need to make intentional and strategic linkages between national and subnational climate adaptation planning efforts.

- 2. Strengthen the linkages between women’s economic empowerment and climate adaptation [*women economic empowerment*].** The government is starting to broaden the gender equality agenda beyond domestic violence to include a focus on women’s economic empowerment (i.e., moving beyond addressing the causal factors, “peaceful families”) to addressing the root causes of gender inequality (“strong and informed families”). The importance of women’s economic empowerment is already highlighted in the national development plan and the new government’s 2016 policy statement.<sup>15</sup> The new administration emphasizes women’s economic empowerment to improve women’s status and livelihoods—which is to say, improving women’s access to income-generating activities, especially through handicraft making and access to market and agriculture. Strengthening women will contribute to strengthening the family, where many of barriers to gender equality are rooted (e.g., “We see that lots of women impacted by violence are women with no income, this tends to increase stress within the family and domestic violence”). Since 2016, the WDD has a new permanent women economic empowerment officer who focuses on training for women (e.g., cooking, sewing, financial literacy, handicraft making). This is significant considering that all the other posts within the WDD—except for the principal women’s development officer and outer island liaison officer—are project staff working on ending violence against women.

The diversification of livelihood activities and sources of income are often a key strategy to enhancing resilience to the negative impacts of climate change—hence the importance of supporting women’s economic empowerment to build their resilience and the resilience of their families. The broadening of the gender equality goals to a focus on guaranteeing the integration of women in economic and development processes provides a good entry point to strengthening the integration of gender issues in the NAP process (including in the KJIP) and to positioning women as agents of change. As previously mentioned, linking domestic violence and climate change is hard because the topic remains sensitive, and the impacts of climate change on violence are mostly indirect. The KJIP makes reference to the linkage between climate change and domestic violence<sup>16</sup> but does not make explicit reference to women’s economic empowerment and how it relates to climate change.<sup>17</sup> The KJIP provides an opportunity to explore equitable access to, and control over, assets and services (e.g., natural resources, technology, innovation and credit, banking and financial services) between women and men, which is essential for women’s economic empowerment. These assets and services also influence how climate hazards affect the capacities of women and

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<sup>15</sup> Under the theme “increasing prosperity for our people at the household and community level,” the document mentions: “The development and protection of the women of Kiribati remains a key priority for our Government as we all know that the women are the backbone of any family unit and their development through increased support of their individual talents in local handicrafts and produce to name a few would reap direct benefits at the household level” (Republic of Kiribati, 2006b).

<sup>16</sup> i.e., “Violence against women and children (...) can be exacerbated in times of disaster when normal social protection may be missing.”

<sup>17</sup> References are made to “women in the fishery sector not being granted the same status or public recognition as fishermen” and “the increased incidence of prostitution involving young women and teenagers in relation to transshipment activities in Tarawa.”

men to access and benefit from these resources, as well as appropriate adaptation needs and capacities between women and men.

3. **Linked to the above, conduct an analysis of the impacts of climate hazards on women and men to provide a more detailed analysis of gender issues in Kiribati in the context of climate variability and change [*gender mainstreaming*].** Such gender analysis can contribute to informing the revision of the KJIP, in particular to: a) broaden the understanding of gender issues (i.e., beyond gender based violence and women’s participation); b) deepen the understanding of gender issues (i.e., understanding which men and women are most vulnerable to climate variability and change; also how and why this changes over time); and c) create an evidence base and a baseline. The analysis should be done with the close collaboration and participation of the KNEG, including the WDD. The results of the analysis should be presented and discussed in a meeting of the KNEG members including WDD, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and civil society organizations. More broadly, the NAP-focused gender analysis could support the mainstreaming of gender issues in relation to climate adaptation in key sectoral policies and strategies, which is a key objective of the NAP process and in line with the objective of the draft gender policy. Generating sex-disaggregated data in all sectors, including on the impacts of disasters on women and men, is essential to supporting the reduction of gender inequalities. Data and information generated through such analyses are key to informing the design of adaptation initiatives and to monitor the impacts (positive or negative) of climate change on women and on men.

Possible elements to consider in the analysis include:

- Reviewing *existing* raw data collected as part of the Abaiang IVA *with a gender lens*—this is important to convey the idea that gender analysis may not always require more resources.
  - Focusing on the fishery and tourism sectors to address KV20’s priorities (KV20 seeks to achieve the country’s development aspirations by maximizing the development benefits from fisheries and tourism as key productive sectors) because these sectors are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.
  - Exploring geographical differences (i.e., between the northern and southern islands of Kiribati; between urban and rural atolls; between work and home) and the implications for gender issues and climate adaptation.
  - Exploring the impacts of rapid changes in lifestyle on gender relationships and the possible implications for the vulnerability of women and men to climate change (e.g., growth of substance abuse [kava] and gambling [Bingo]; erosion of the “bubuti” system especially in urban atolls; loss of traditional knowledge; change in diets).
4. **Build the capacity of civil society organizations working on women’s empowerment and climate adaptation so they are empowered and can contribute to the NAP process [*women in decision making*].** The network of civil society organizations working on women empowerment at the community level could contribute to supporting the integration of women’s views and perspectives in the NAP process. Since both their involvement in the KNEG and their understanding of the linkages between gender equality and climate change have been limited so far, a separate meeting, outside of the KNEG, could be first organized with them—for example, to discuss the results of the gender analysis. Some civil society groups and island council women’s development officers could be engaged in consultations as part of the gender analysis and to inform the KJIP review and the NAP process more broadly. In addition, churches’

influence in shaping social relations in Kiribati is profound and, as such, faith-based organizations also need to be trained on the linkages between gender equality and climate adaptation and involved in the process. It may be very strategic to build the capacity of some of these organizations to conduct NAP-focused gender analysis.

5. **Reinforce the role and relevance of the MWYSA in the NAP process [*women in decision making; gender mainstreaming*].** The active involvement of MWYSA, and more specifically of the WDD, is crucial for the success of the NAP process. The WDD should be included as a key stakeholder in the KNEG. To effectively participate in the NAP process, including in the KNEG, capacity development of the WDD staff is required since climate change is a new area for the ministry.
6. **Build the capacity of the KNEG members on the linkages between gender equality and climate adaptation [*gender mainstreaming*].** To facilitate the integration of gender in the NAP process, including in sectoral policies and strategies as well as in the WoI approach, KNEG members should have a deeper understanding of gender equality and how it relates to climate change in different sectors. Again, a first step towards this could be to involve the KNEG in the development of the NAP-focused gender analysis. Such analysis could build on existing tools such as the 2015 Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit (Vunisea et al., 2015).



## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REVISION OF THE KJIP

This section identifies more specific/technical suggestions that can be included directly in the revision of the KJIP.

Key sections of the KJIP	Suggestions to strengthen gender considerations
<p><b>1. Background</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the subsection “Economy” (p. 17–18), add some information on the status of I-Kiribati <b>women’s economic empowerment</b>.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If possible, specify how women and men contribute differently to the economy (formal and informal). Describe the division of labour between men and women in terms of access and resource use (e.g., land, coastal/marine resources) as well as the associated livelihood activities performed and unpaid care work—and how this is leading to differentiation of income levels between women and men.</li> <li>○ Highlight the limited employment opportunities for women compared with men and women’s contribution. Figures are already included under “economic information” (p. 18) but not commented on in the text (e.g., unemployment tends to be higher among female, particularly young women).</li> <li>○ Note the importance of women’s economic empowerment as a key pillar for building strong, resilient I-Kiribati families</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the subsection “Communications and Transport” (p. 18), note any differences of ownership and use of transport and communication assets between women and men (possibly based on information collected through the WoI IVA in Abaiang). (This is important as it is a key component of adaptive capacity.)</li> <li>• In the subsection “Government and Governance” (p. 19), strengthen the paragraph that comments on <b>women’s participation in decision making</b> with additional information and data provided in this report (see the sections on gender equality planning and women’s participation in decision making) and propose/adopt concrete measures to support equitable participation of women and men in decision making to ensure that their respective needs and priorities are being addressed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Climate change and disaster risk context</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, this section should include information that highlights <b>the main gender and climate change issues</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Gendered impacts of climate change</b> – Under the subsection “Vulnerabilities and Impacts,” strengthen the paragraph on p. 27 that indicates that women are more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change (“The effects of climate change.... culture and homeland.”). Clarify if there are differences in how specific climate hazards affect women and men, describe any differences and explain why they exist—i.e., why women in general tend to be more vulnerable and which women more specifically (e.g., uneducated and unemployed women, women</li> </ul>

	<p>with many children). Note that gender analysis should be conducted across all sectors affected by climate change (water and sanitation, nutrition, agriculture, fisheries, etc.). Highlight the importance of building climate-resilient families in line with the recommendations of this report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include some brief examples of climate impact chains on women and their families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drought &gt; reduced access to groundwater quality and quantity for drinking, washing, cooking and gardening &gt; women need to fetch water with kids in longer distances &gt; increased women’s workload at home &gt; reduced agricultural production from gardening &gt; reduced women’s income from selling food items &gt; reduced access to nutritious foods (vegetables and fruits) affecting health of children and mothers &gt; increased tensions within the family</li> <li>• Floods, storm surges &gt; reduced access to pandanus trees &gt; reduced women’s income from selling handicrafts &gt; impacts on food security</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Vulnerability of women and men to climate variability and change</b> – If we understand vulnerability to be a function of women’s and men’s sensitivity and their adaptive capacities, this chapter should include additional information on gender differences in adaptation needs and capacities as well as access to resources. It is important to recognize that social factors are as (or even more) important than physical or environmental factors in determining vulnerability to climate change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tables on sensitivity and impacts (p. 28–35) should highlight how other non-climatic variables, such as poverty, population density, livelihood strategies, influence women and men’s vulnerability to climate risks and what it means in terms of impacts. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under Table 9 “Sensitivity and impacts—fresh water and sanitation,” clarify the impacts of the limited access to quality freshwater resources on women and men’s activities and needs (e.g., drinking, washing, gardening)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Under the subsection on “the current status of <b>mainstreaming</b> climate and DRM in sectoral policies and strategies” (p. 36), note how climate change and DRM are integrated in the draft gender policy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Development of the KJIP</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the subsection “Rationale and Guiding Principles for the KJIP” (p. 37), add gender equality as one of the key principles of the KJIP in line with the country’s development plan and draft gender policy as well as the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2017-2030 (FRDP) (Pacific Island Forum Leaders, 2016).</li> <li>• Under subsection 3.3 “KJIP Linkages to Relevant Regional and International Framework,” indicate how the KJIP can also respond to the gender equality policy imperative established by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the SDGs, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (Pacific Island Forum Leaders, 2012). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Women in decision making:</b> Under the subsection 3.4 “KJIP Development Methodology,” clarify the participatory process for developing the KJIP including what efforts were made to ensure gender balance and participation of organizations promoting gender equality. Explain to what extent women were recognized as a distinct stakeholder group in the process and how their inputs were captured. If possible, provide evidence that women were able to influence the process. Make explicit reference to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p>the WoI approach and how gender considerations were integrated into this process and informed the KJIP.</p>
<b>4. The KJIP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P. 41, explain what it means in practice that “all strategies and action in the KJIP are inclusive of vulnerable groups, considering gender...” (and how this will be done). The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific provides many advices on this.</li> <li>• Linked to the above, expand the list of results expected under Strategy 12 “Enhancing the participation and resilience of vulnerable groups”—possibly including results focusing on climate-resilient families and women’s economic empowerment in the context of climate variability and change in line with the draft gender policy.</li> </ul>
<b>5. KJIP Implementation arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the subsection on institutional arrangements “KNEG” (p. 47), clarify efforts made to ensure gender balance and participation of organizations promoting gender equality in the KJIP implementation arrangements—specifically highlight how the MWYSA has been/is going to be involved.</li> <li>• Under subsection 5.2 “Financing Strategy,” acknowledge the need to ensure that the allocation of financial resources is gender-equitable and the need for gender-responsive budgeting as the country develops its implementation and financing strategy.</li> <li>• Under subsection 5.3 “Communication Strategy,” acknowledge the need to address gender-specific barriers to information access in communication and dissemination strategies and the need to ensure equitable representation of women in communication platforms and networks.</li> <li>• Under subsection 5.4 “Monitoring and Evaluation,” acknowledge the need to include indicators of gender equality and women’s empowerment and to evaluate the differentiated impacts of adaptation actions on women and men.</li> </ul>
<b>Glossary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a definition of gender, gender equality, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Annex 1: KJIP detailed action matrix</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the performance indicators to ensure that the benefits for women and men are captured.</li> <li>• Review the list of responsible lead agencies, support agencies and development partners to ensure that the MWYSA and women’s organizations are included.</li> </ul>

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# NAP Global Network

Coordinating Climate-Resilient Development  
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