



UNEP's Gender Plan of Action



IUCN GENDER OFFICE





Contents

Introduction	2
Policy Sphere	4
Organizational Sphere.....	6
Delivery Sphere.....	10
Constituency Sphere	14

This guide is based on the UNEP Gender Plan of Action developed by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) with the help of the Global Gender Office of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), in 22 September 2006.

The full text of the Gender Plan of Action is available online at:
http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/Unep-Gender-Action-Plan-5Feb07.pdf



Introduction

In the two decades since the Earth Summit (1992) and the inception of the three Rio Conventions, it is evident that, without gender equity and –equality, the poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and long-term economic development goals that they aim to achieve, will not be possible. Women and men experience poverty differently; they also have differentiated knowledge of natural resources, in particular. Both effect change in society, yet their contributions are unequally recognized. Improving environmental management and achieving poverty eradication will require fully acknowledging both the roles of both women and men in effecting change.

The importance of gender mainstreaming in environmental and poverty eradication policies has been reflected in several forums and global agreements signed over the last 20 years. Yet, despite this, gender has been unevenly integrated into international conventions and implementation mechanisms. In 1992, only the original text of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) explicitly stated the need for a genuinely inclusive gender approach. In light of the challenges ahead, there is an urgent need for renewed momentum towards gender mainstreaming in global decision-making bodies.

As an organization involved in environment and development, UNEP has a unique role in efforts to integrate gender within the policies and activities of global decision-making bodies. Since 1993, successive UNEP Governing Council decisions have called upon UNEP to integrate gender and women’s perspectives more closely in its activities and policies. In 2006, UNEP called upon IUCN and WEDO to develop a strategic Gender Plan of Action to work towards the full integration of gender issues and women’s perspectives, in particular, in all the activities of the organization. The Plan has three strategic objectives: to ensure that equality, equity and rights are well respected across gender, and especially across the top levels of management; to promote equality of opportunity and treatment between women and men in the environmental sector at national, regional and global levels; and to increase the quality and efficiency of UNEP’s work in environmental conservation and promotion of sustainable development.

UNEP’s Gender Plan of Action establishes strategies and targets and proposes instruments to address gender concerns within the organization. It is based on the concept of the ‘Web of Institutionalization’, whereby gender is integrated at all levels and in all aspects of an organization’s activities. Its substantive activities are concentrated in four spheres: policy, organizational, delivery and constituency.

Although developed 6 years ago, this Plan of Action remains highly relevant today. Crucially, and as a starting point, it could serve as a model for, and be replicated by, other organizations working to implement a gender mainstreaming strategy. The pages that follow offer a brief overview of the four core areas of the Plan of Action with their related objectives and actions.



Policy Sphere

Target 1

Secure High-Level Commitment towards Gender Equality and the Environment

Efforts to mainstream gender within an organization and its activities require top-level commitment from the leadership and management. Securing this demands pro-active sensitization, engagement and building political momentum.

Target 2

Develop a Gender Policy for the Organization

To be truly successful, a gender policy must be developed through a consultative process involving management and global and regional staff, as necessary. Decisions and activities must be communicated to all staff to secure buy-in. The policy also needs to include accountability mechanisms and performance indicators.

Target 3

Allocate Sufficient Resources

Gender mainstreaming efforts must be accompanied by adequate funding. The process involves all parts of an organization; the budget process needs to take this into account. This may require gender-sensitive analysis and fundraising.

Target 4

Ensure that All New Policies are Gender-Sensitive

Gender must be incorporated at all levels of an organization and in all its activities. New policies, projects and activities developed need to integrate gender. Similarly, dealings with external parties including peers, donors, governments and private enterprises must also include gender criteria.



Within the Policy Sphere the focus is on the establishment of a gender policy within an organization, on incorporating gender equality and equity in all organizational policies, allocation and spending of resources, and political commitment by the organization's leadership.

Target 2 Achievements to Date

The UNEP Gender Policy was developed from 2006-2007 through a consultative process that included governments, UNEP staff and partner IGOs.

Target 3 Achievements to Date

UNEP Governing Council Decision 24/7 calls upon the Executive Director to allocate resources to support capacity building for staff on gender mainstreaming.



Organizational Sphere

Target 5

Establish a Permanent and Senior Staff Position to Advise on Gender

A senior-level individual with experience in gender and environment should be appointed to oversee all policies and processes. High-level contacts with like-minded organizations are essential to foster engagement and partnerships, create synergies, and capture lessons learned. The position must be adequately resourced and supported to monitor elaboration and implementation of gender-based activities.

Target 6

Create a Cluster of Gender Focal Points

Gender focal points should be identified throughout the organization in the different divisions, offices and locations, where relevant. These should be gender-sensitive individuals with other responsibilities whose functions include overseeing gender-related activities; this should be reflected in their Terms of Reference.

Target 7

Implement the Gender Plan of Action

The Gender Plan of Action must be implemented at all levels of the organization, including at headquarters and out-posted locations. Different locations should implement their Gender Action Plans independently, but in consultation and with support and guidance from one another.



The Organizational Sphere focuses on gender equity and equality within an organization, including procedures, staffing, job descriptions, employment opportunities and staff development.

Target 5 Achievements to Date

A permanent Senior Gender Adviser (SGA) at senior (P5) level was appointed in 2007.

Target 6 Achievements to Date

A gender focal team composed of 81 staff spread over the Divisions and Regional Offices has been established to support gender mainstreaming actions in programs and operations.

Target 7 Achievements to Date

During 2008/2009 Division and Regional Office-level Gender Action Plans were developed and implemented. During 2010/2011 Thematic Gender Action Plans were developed and implemented through sub-programs. Thematic Action Plans are used to monitor the implementation of gender actions in projects.



Photo: Jonathan Davies

Organizational Sphere

Target 8

Strengthen Gender-Specific Capacity of all Staff

Workshops and training seminars should be organized to build gender capacity among all staff, not only so-called 'gender specialists'. Training needs to target specific issues, e.g. gender and coastal management, gender and climate. 'Learning by doing' should be a key part of such training, as it has proven an effective means for individuals to assimilate and replicate concepts.

Target 9

Ensure Gender Equity and Equality in Human Resources

Gender issues and awareness need to be an integral part of all contracts of employment and job descriptions. Human resources policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines should all include a gender component. Strict policies and guidelines governing sexual harassment and gender discrimination must be an integral part of human resources policy.

Target 10

Increase Awareness Among all Staff about Responsibility for Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all staff. Efforts should be implemented to increase this awareness and demonstrate to staff where they can incorporate gender in their daily activities.

Target 11

Include a Gender Perspective in Reporting and Evaluation

Gender-disaggregated data and analysis should be a key component of all reporting and evaluation, as well as staff appraisals. If necessary, training should be organized to assist staff with this requirement.



Target 8 Achievements to Date

From April 2008 to December 2010 more than 550 staff were trained using the 'learning by doing' approach in gender mainstreaming tools and methodologies relevant to their work.

Target 9 Achievements to Date

The SGA is a member of all recruitment committees and reviews job descriptions and interview processes for gender sensitivity.

Target 11 Achievements to Date

Sex disaggregated data is collected and collated as far as possible given challenges of availability of statistical data in various countries. Gender balance among participants is ensured in all workshops or seminars as far as is practicable.



Delivery Sphere

Target 12

Collect and Disseminate Gender-Environment Methodologies

The SGA should collate knowledge on methodologies, tools and instruments and promote development of those that facilitate gender mainstreaming: gender analysis frameworks, checklists, case studies, gender-disaggregated data, monitoring instruments and indicators. Methodology and instrument development should be tailored to specific topics and provide guidance to particular initiatives or processes in areas such as biodiversity, oceans, water, chemicals, climate change, poverty, post-conflict, disasters and risk management. Alliances should be established with a range of organizations, institutions, secretariats, NGOs and donors, especially those which focus on women's and gender issues.

Target 13

Link Gender, Environment and Poverty Reduction

The SGA should develop and/or enhance guidelines on integrating gender equality and equity into national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, with particular attention to the root causes of inequality and inequity between women and men.

Target 14

Generate Knowledge on Gender and Environment and Gender Mainstreaming in Environmental Programs and Projects

Programs, country offices, projects, partners and allies should generate knowledge to strengthen gender-related work. Experiences of women and men in environmental management should be shared across all stakeholders. Linkages between conflict, environment and development should be analysed to draw lessons from gender-related environmental issues in conflict situations.

Target 15

Incorporate Gender Criteria and Gender Sensitivity into Project and Program Development

Gender criteria should be included at all stages of project and program development. Where these are not applicable, reasons should be given. Gender guidelines for project development should be elaborated and fully implemented. To facilitate this, the SGA should be included in any project appraisal group.

The focus in the Delivery Sphere is on mainstreaming gender equality and equity in development and implementation of programs and projects; as well as how gender is addressed in the theories, methodologies and applied research underpinning interventions.

Target 12 Achievements to Date

Existing and relevant gender mainstreaming methodologies are available through the UNEP intranet and staff are encouraged to utilize them. These include mainstreaming tools developed by partner organizations that are relevant to the priority areas of UNEP. The UNEP website has a dedicated Gender and the Environment section that is easily accessible.

Target 13 Achievements to Date

A Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming Manual was developed in collaboration with the UNEP Gender Unit to highlight the linkages between poverty and gender issues, in particular those relevant to women.

Target 14 Achievements to Date

UNEP in collaboration with UN Women has conducted a study on gender issues in natural resource management in disasters and conflict zones. A series on Women and Climate Change in Mountain Areas has been developed in collaboration with ICIMOD. Publication of research undertaken by UNEP continues to address emerging gender issues in respective focus areas.

Target 15 Achievements to Date

The SGA is a member of the Project Appraisal Group, the Project Review Committee and the Publications Board. Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in Publications have been developed and disseminated to all publications focal points to ensure gender sensitivity in forthcoming publications. Gender criteria are integrated at all levels of program development starting from the Medium Term Strategy, Strategic Framework and Program of Work. Some 80% of projects approved in the 2010/2011 biennium included gender actions for implementation.



Delivery Sphere

Target 16

Collaborate with Scientific Institutions to Promote Exchange Programs on Gender and the Environment

Collaboration with scientific institutions facilitates cross-fertilization and synergies across different initiatives and campaigns being implemented as part of efforts to achieve sustainable development. Gender perspectives in the organization's scientific work should be enhanced through development of, or support to, gender-environment science projects, e.g. projects focusing on biodiversity, chemicals, or global environmental change.



Target 16 Achievements to Date

UNEP's partners continue to address emerging gender issues in research undertaken. For example, in December 2011, Grid Arendahl (in collaboration with ICIMOD) released the first publication in a series on women and climate change entitled *Women at the Frontline of Climate Change: Gender Risks and Hopes*.



Constituency Sphere

Target 17

Cooperate with the Network of Women Ministers for the Environment (NWMLE) and Gender-Environment Organizations

The Network of Women Ministers for the Environment and specialized NGOs could help support inclusion of gender-related statements delivered to meetings of multilateral environmental agreements and conventions. It could also support inclusion of women in official meeting delegations. Guidance could be sought from the Network about additional resources for the implementation of a Gender Plan of Action.

Target 18

Provide Technical Assistance on Gender to Ministries of the Environment to Develop Gender Policies and Plans of Action

Based on a survey of gender mainstreaming in environmental programs and policies, support should be offered to environment ministries to facilitate gender mainstreaming and development of gender policies. Alliances should be formed with other organizations active in this area to share experience and lessons learned to further encourage and facilitate gender mainstreaming.

Target 19

Develop a Mentorship Program for Young Professionals

Through environmental coaching and experience-sharing, young women's capacities and skills can be enhanced thereby empowering them to take an active role in environment and sustainable development policy formulation and implementation. This does not preclude gender and leadership training for men.

Target 20

Support the Secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Commission on Sustainable Development in Gender Mainstreaming

Alliances should be formed with civil society, networks and I/NGOs with gender mainstreaming experience, e.g. ENERGIA Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, IUCN, LIFE, Women in Europe for a Common Future, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, and WEDO. This strategy should foresee sharing of lessons learned and procedures developed by some of the Conventions (e.g., UNCCD); support improved equal participation of women and men at meetings of conferences of the parties to environmental agreements and sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development; elaborate position papers on relevant themes; and other initiatives.

This Constituency Sphere concerns outreach and focuses on stakeholders beyond the organization including members, governments, and civil society and both men and women at the grassroots level. It is particularly relevant to Outposted and Regional Offices.

Target 17 Achievements to Date

Since 2008, UNEP has provided Secretariat services to the NWMLE and organized annual meetings. In 2009, UNEP and the NWMLE hosted a 1-day High-Level Gender Forum attended by over 200 participants from different parts of the world.

Target 18 Achievements to Date

Technical support has been provided to the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs (South Africa) and Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources (Kenya) on gender mainstreaming. At regional level, technical support provided to the AMCEN on gender and climate change, and at national level capacity-building programs on gender and climate change conducted in Africa for government ministry staff with environmental responsibilities.

Target 19 Achievements to Date

The Tunza program, a Youth and Environment initiative developed and implemented by UNEP's Division for Communication and Public Information (DCPI), has initiated projects that target and build capacity among young women and men.

Target 20 Achievements to Date

Capacity building sessions on gender mainstreaming have been held for staff in the Secretariats of the three Chemicals Conventions (i.e. Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam).



Constituency Sphere

Target 21

Strengthen Alliances with Other Organizations

Strengthen cooperation with other UN organizations: ILO, UNICEF, UN Division for the Advancement of Women, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, and WHO to share information and technical assistance. Enhance collaboration with UN human rights bodies e.g. CEDAW, to promote recognition and promotion of gender-environment commitments from a human rights perspective.



Target 21 Achievements to Date

Collaborations have been established with UN sister agencies, IUCN, WEDO, ENERGIA, Gender CC, GWA and GWP. UNEP is a beneficiary of the Council of World Women Leaders' Graduate Fellowship program which provides graduate fellows to UNEP for 10 weeks in the summer; and a founder member of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) currently comprising of over 50 organizations, including several UN Agencies, Inter-Governmental and I/NGOs.





Global Gender Policy Series



IUCN Gender Office

For more information, please contact iucngenderoffice@iucn.org or visit our website on www.genderandenvironment.org

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