

Gender and Climate Change

Submission by the International Transport Forum (ITF) at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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This submission is a contribution to Activity E.1 (b) Integration of gender considerations into adaptation, mitigation, capacity-building, Action for Climate Empowerment, technology and finance policies, plans and actions of the Gender Action Plan. It reflects research conducted by the ITF and consultation efforts with ITF's Corporate Partnership Board members, as well as other stakeholders on gender in transport¹².

The promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in the transport sector is critical to its sustainable development and climate change mitigation efforts in both developing and developed countries and will serve the needs of all transport users and workers in the transport workforce. Low-carbon transport modes, such as public transport, biking and walking are often not the preferred mode choice of women when they have access to private vehicle use, taxis or other for-hire ride services, due to transport safety and security concerns, preferences and services that do not meet their needs.

As economies transition to low carbon transport infrastructure and services, a better understanding of the factors that influence individual travel behaviour can thus reveal different preferences and attitudes by gender, provide insights to existing travel patterns, improve transport planning, prepare for future infrastructure needs and services, and help better design and implement low-carbon transport policies that will meet emissions reductions goals and improve gender equality and safety. Actions are required to make public space safe and secure through infrastructure and operational improvements, public awareness campaigns, well-trained transport employees, and better reporting systems, combined with a zero tolerance approach to harassment.

The Development of Gender-Neutral Transport Policies

Understanding travel behaviour by gender will help better design policies to improve gender equality and safety in transport, which will then lead to higher levels of public transport, biking and walking use. A better understanding of the factors that influence

¹ Ng, W. and A. Acker. (2018) *Understanding Urban Travel Behaviour by Gender for Efficient and Equitable Transport Policies*. International Transport Forum Discussion Paper No. 2018-01, OECD/ITF. <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/urban-travel-behaviour-gender.pdf>

² ITF (2018), *Women's Safety and Security: A Public Transport Priority*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

individual travel behaviour can reveal preferences and attitudes, provide insights to existing travel patterns, improve transport planning, prepare for future infrastructure needs and services, and help better design and implement sustainable and inclusive transport policies that will meet emissions reductions goals.

Travel behaviour studies have shown that women have specific characteristics in terms of transport mode, time of travel, trip purpose, route, trip chain, and travel distance. Such differences are mostly due to the complexity of activities more often experienced by women than men. Multiple tasks and activities due to gender-based division of work lead to women having more varied obligations, including employment, household-related activities and caregiving. As a result, women are more likely to have shorter commute distances, more complex, multi-leg trips and non-work related trips, travel at off-peak hours, use a greater variety of routes, and choose more flexible modes depending on other social characteristics, such as age, income, household size, or number of dependents.

There may be gender bias in existing transport policies and services, as gender differences in travel behaviour is often overlooked. For example, women's use of public transport can be affected by the physical and practical considerations relating to the structural design of buses, trains and trams, yet not all design of vehicles and carriages address women's preferences or needs. Transport services that provide equal benefits across genders can only be provided if there is a better understanding of the needs of all users.

In order to implement efficient, equitable and sustainable transport policies that will benefit all users, reduce gender bias and improve existing transport services for women, gender analysis needs to be incorporated in transport planning and policy making processes.

The Importance of the Engagement of Women in the Transport Sector

In order to plan travel and transport with women in mind, women need to be part of all aspects of the transport workforce. Action from both government and the private sector is necessary to attain the policy objective of a more diverse and inclusive transport workforce.

The Corporate Partnership Board of the International Transport Forum is ITF's official platform for engagement with the corporate sector. It comprises a group of companies³ whose employees jointly comprise in excess of 2.25 million employees globally. They recognise their role in contributing to ensuring broader engagement of women in the transport workforce and wish to contribute to achieving real results and to enhancing policy discussions on this and other related topics.

³ Corporate Partnership Board, International Transport Forum. <https://www.itf-oecd.org/corporate-partnership-board-members>.

On International Women's Day (8th March 2019), the Corporate Partnership Board launched its Workstream on Gender⁴, and also held a workshop to explore the challenges of achieving better gender parity in the transport sector. The discussions focussed on how to make the transport sector more attractive to women and how to hire and retain a gender diverse workforce. An increase in the engagement of women in the transport sector will improve the consideration of women's needs in transport policies and ultimately lead to more sustainable and inclusive travel choices.

⁴ International Transport Forum's Corporate Partnership Board, Gender and Transport Workstream. <https://www.itf-oecd.org/gender-transport-workstream-launched-itf-corporate-partnership-board>