

Submission by the United States of America

Submission on progress in advancing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in line with the priority areas of the gender action plan, progress of implementation of the activities contained in the gender action plan, areas for improvement and further work to be undertaken, including, as appropriate, information on the multidimensional impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic on progress, and consideration of other diverse challenges that may impact future implementation of the gender action plan at all levels.

1. Overview

The United States of America stands committed to support the realization of the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) and its Gender Action Plan (GAP) (Decision 3/CP.25). This submission includes the following elements: 1) progress in advancing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in line with the priority areas of the gender action plan, including progress of implementation of the activities contained in the gender action plan, and 2) areas for improvement and further work to be undertaken.

2. Progress in Advancing Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women and Girls in Line with the Priority Areas of the GAP and Implementation of the GAP Activities

Women, girls, gender-diverse persons, and other marginalized populations play a critical role in addressing the climate crisis, including limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius and reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Women and girls are creative and vocal advocates in our collective fight against the climate crisis and are already leading climate solutions around the world. Their efforts and leadership must be recognized and enabled—as innovators, entrepreneurs, and founders of initiatives and enterprises with meaningful environmental and social impact. The United States has been working towards the implementation of GAP activities since the agreement of the 5-year enhanced Lima Work Programme on gender. U.S. efforts to advance gender equity and equality and the empowerment of women and girls have accelerated through a renewed whole-of-government commitment to gender equality and specific gender and climate policies and programs announced at COP26.

Below are examples of efforts undertaken by the United States to further gender-responsive climate action as well as implementation of specific GAP activities, categorized by GAP priority areas.

2a. GAP Priority A: Capacity Building, Knowledge Management and Communication

The United States identified two national gender and climate change focal points to better represent U.S. projects and programs related to gender and climate change and communicate best

practices and lessons learned from such U.S. efforts with the international community. The nomination directly supports GAP Activity A.2.

Through the *Innovation Station* initiative, the State Department is amplifying woman and girl innovators developing technological, programmatic, or initiative-based solutions to climate-related community challenges. The initiative seeks to expand these innovators' impact by connecting them to new domestic and international communities that could benefit from their work, whether through the sharing of best practices or the development of new on-the-ground collaborations. As of April 2022, the initiative has engaged audiences in 79 countries and 38 U.S. states and made more than 160 connections for woman and girl innovators.

Additionally, the State Department hosted three virtual roundtable discussions in which 23 diverse civil society organizations, based domestically and internationally, were able to engage directly with Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Samantha Power, and Gender Policy Council Executive Director Jen Klein to inform U.S. government leadership on the relevance and nuances of the gender-climate nexus, including on innovation and entrepreneurship, health and human rights, and state fragility. In 2022, to ensure that current research continues to inform policy and programming efforts, the State Department is convening an internal "lunch and learn" series featuring presentations from and discussions with U.S. academic experts examining various aspects of the gender-climate nexus.

2b. GAP Priority B: Gender Balance, Participation and Women's Leadership

While the GAP primarily focuses on achieving and sustaining full, equal, and meaningful participation in the UNFCCC process, the United States also recognizes the need to empower women in policymaking as well as women and girls' on-the-ground contributions to climate action. Beyond the specific GAP priority areas, the United States invests in women's leadership across various sectors and approaches, including clean energy, agriculture and land use, development, and peacebuilding.

The Biden-Harris Administration recognizes the importance of women and girls' leadership and acknowledges the role of women in tackling the climate crisis at all levels of government. The U.S. delegation to COP26 included USAID Administrator Samantha Power, Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, and Department of State Assistant Secretary Monica Medina, among numerous women leading on various negotiations streams within the UNFCCC.

Beyond UNFCCC activities, the United States is fostering women and girls' leadership globally through robust and innovative initiatives that bridge gaps between sectors and across borders.

As announced at COP26 and outlined in greater detail in *GAP Priority Area D* section below, U.S. government agencies, including the Department of State, USAID, the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and Department of Energy, are investing more

than \$20 million towards a range of initiatives to increase opportunities for women in the clean energy sector and beyond.

The State Department is leading a *Female Leaders in Energy (FLIE)* career advancement initiative in Southeast Asia, where the transition to clean energy promises new opportunities. The State Department is also working on a gender equality energy sector engagement initiative focused on East Asia and the Pacific to boost institutional reform, link U.S.-trained women professionals with new career opportunities, and connect U.S.-trained women's businesses with new markets across public and private energy sector institutions. There are also a handful of programs operational in East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, and South America focused on increasing women's participation in decision-making processes by addressing issues affecting women environmental defenders, including indigenous women and girls, empowering them to play an active role in gender-sensitive environmental policy development and governance, and helping to secure women's land rights.

A new partnership with USAID and the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Lab and Lawrence Berkeley National Lab will increase women's economic opportunities in the clean energy sector as well as strengthen and scale women's business opportunities in East Africa through productive energy use.

Launched in 2015, USAID's Engendering Industries program supports organizations in developing countries to increase economic opportunities for women and improve gender equality in the workplace. Beginning in the energy sector and subsequently expanding to water, Engendering Industries now works to advance gender equality in male-dominated sectors, including climate-related sectors, throughout the world. Expanding women's participation in male-dominated sectors leads to tangible economic empowerment outcomes for women, such as formal employment opportunities and higher income. Increased gender equality also improves an organization's business performance, helping companies meet their bottom-line by enhancing employee satisfaction, reducing turnover, and driving productivity. Well-functioning organizations are also vital in supporting stronger and more resilient economies.

2c. GAP Priority C: Coherence

While the GAP priority area primarily focuses on coherence within the UNFCCC constituted bodies and other UN entities, the United States recognizes the necessity to develop a coherent, whole-of-government approach to raise climate ambition domestically and internationally. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI), the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC), the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES), and other State Department bureaus and offices, and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev) at USAID, in coordination with the White House Gender Policy Council, National Security Council, and other agencies, are working to link and integrate climate action and efforts to advance gender equity and equality. The U.S. commitment to gender responsive climate action is embedded at all levels of policymaking. The National

Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality showcases avenues of future progress towards gender equity.

President Biden reaffirmed the need to empower women and girls politically, economically, and socially in his Executive Order on March 8, 2021, with the Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council, which was designed to coordinate efforts across the Federal Government to advance gender equity and equality. The Executive Order recognized that advancing gender equity and equality is a matter of human rights, justice, and fairness, and that the participation of women and girls “across all aspects of our society is essential to the economic well-being, health, and security of our Nation and of the World.” It lays critical groundwork for the integration of gender considerations into climate policies and regulations as well as the integration of climate considerations into gender policies and regulations.

To this end, promoting gender equity and equality in mitigating and responding to climate change is one of ten strategic priorities defined by the first-ever U.S. [National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#). The landmark strategy calls for domestic and foreign policy action to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls, and to facilitate women and girls’ leadership in overcoming the climate crisis. This includes the pursuit of equal access to participation in climate negotiations and climate science; support of an inclusive clean energy economy; and actions to address gendered public health effects related to climate change. The National Strategy will enable the mainstreaming of gender throughout U.S. government climate action, while simultaneously supporting capacity building, women and girls’ leadership, and gender responsive intervention activities.

Additionally, the USAID Climate Strategy, 2022-2030, currently in development, will recognize that climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth. The strategy will guide efforts to integrate gender equity and environmental justice considerations into USAID’s climate change programming and partnerships.

In addition to the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality and USAID’s Climate Strategy, the U.S. government is designing another first: a global Women’s Economic Security Strategy. The climate crisis is a significant threat to economic security, and women and girls must be empowered as leading innovators and entrepreneurs developing solutions to this global challenge.

Finally, this year the U.S. government will release a first-ever National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence and an updated United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally that will address the multi-sectoral dimensions of gender-based violence, including intersections with the climate crisis.

2d. GAP Priority D: Gender-Responsive Implementation and Means of Implementation

Gender responsive approaches must be embedded in all climate messaging, policies, and programming. Solutions to climate impacts developed by women and girls for their local communities will not only contribute to accomplishing shared climate goals, but may provide insights and best practices for other communities around the world facing similar climate challenges. A sample of U.S. gender responsive implementation includes the following programs.

The United States will invest at least \$14 million of the Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund toward gender-responsive climate programming, which will include activities that advance women's leadership in climate action, increase women's economic participation in green industries, and build women and girls' resilience to climate shocks and stressors.

Ongoing programming includes the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) efforts to scale up Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT), a \$20 million, 15- year multi-faceted partnership between USAID and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to increase the effectiveness of environment and climate-related programming through robust gender integration and improve gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes in a broad range of environmental sectors. Central to this effort will be continued support to the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Environment Linkages Center, a platform for gathering resources and tools and forging action on the intersection of GBV and the environment; the Resilient, Inclusive, Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge to prevent and respond to GBV in climate-related sectors; and providing tailored support to countries to develop climate change Gender Action Plans.

The U.S. government is also bolstering SERVIR, a partnership between USAID and NASA, with an additional \$3 million investment build the climate resilience of women farmers in East Africa through the advancement of gender-sensitive index-based insurance and increase opportunities for women in the geospatial sciences.

The Gender Climate and Nutrition Integration Initiative (GCAN) continues to generate data and evidence that enhances the understanding of linkages between climate, gender, and nutrition to improve resilience, women's empowerment, and nutrition outcomes and that improves integration of gender into climate smart and resilient agriculture programming.

2e. GAP Priority E: Monitoring and Reporting

This submission, along with the U.S. submission on the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change, and opportunities for women, is contributing to GAP Priority Area E by strengthening the monitoring and reporting of the implementation of gender-responsive climate policies, plans, and programs supported by the U.S. government.

USAID joined the Gender and Environment Data Alliance (GEDA), launched by IUCN and the Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) as part of the Generation

Equality Forum commitments. The Alliance aims to improve accessibility, understanding, and application of gender-environment data, all of which are key to implementing gender-responsive climate action at every level.

To ensure the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality is fully implemented, U.S. agencies are working to create action plans to ensure efforts are coordinated, monitored, and evaluated.

The United States appreciates the Secretariat's efforts to report on the implementation of gender-responsive climate policies, plans, strategies, and action through the compilation and synthesis report as well as the inclusion of additional data in the gender composition report.

3. Areas for Improvement and Further Work to be Undertaken

The United States appreciates the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and the implementation of its GAP activities to ensure adequate progress is made before the end of the work programme. The United States looks forward to sharing best practices and learning from Parties the most effective and innovative ways to foster and implement gender-responsive climate action at all levels.

Given the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States appreciates the Secretariat's flexibility and creativity to utilize virtual platforms to connect national gender and climate change focal points and respond to mandated events. Indeed, virtual environments have proven enabling for the United States' efforts to advance women and girls as climate leaders and agents of change, and we hope to continue utilizing these platforms to maximize engagement with and facilitate relationship-building for these women and girls around the world.

The United States remains wholly committed to the full implementation of the GAP. It is crucial to dismantle existing silos between gender equality and climate change policy by recognizing the critical role of women and girls as leaders in mitigating and adapting to climate change. By doing so, our efforts to combat the climate crisis will be more effective for all of society.