



Submission to the UNFCCC

by SouthSouthNorth, Fundación Futuro
Latinoamericano and ODI

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This submission responds to:

Parties, United Nations entities, the UNFCCC constituted bodies and relevant organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates and priorities, to submit their inputs on progress, challenges, gaps and priorities in implementing the gender action plan, categorized by deliverable or output for each activity under the gender action plan, and on future work to be undertaken on gender and climate change

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Approaches to capacity-building on gender

The following submission details effective strategies and actions in relation to **Gender Action Plan Area A - Capacity Building, Knowledge Management and Communication**, as implemented by the Climate & Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) and its partner organisations. CDKN is a Global South-based network led by SouthSouthNorth, South Africa, with Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano, Ecuador and ICLEI-South Asia, India. ODI has partnered with CDKN for the Gender Equality in a Low Carbon World programme to investigate the potential for women's empowerment in just transitions.

In respect of the Gender Action Plan item "A.1 - Strengthen capacity-building efforts for governments and other stakeholders in mainstreaming gender in formulating, monitoring, implementing and reviewing, as appropriate, national climate change policies, plans, strategies and action, including nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans and national communications," we wish to highlight two approaches we have tried and tested:

Key approach 1: Engage groups and individuals who are representative of diverse women and communities in an organised forum to advise governments on national gender and climate plans and to mobilise stakeholders for implementation (e.g.: the case of Ecuador).

Key approach 2: Create a community of practice across multiple departments of government to engender deeper understanding, awareness, and skill in applying gender integration tools and approaches into governance, policy and practice (e.g.: the case of Ethiopia).

We consider both of these approaches to have materially progressed women's involvement in and benefit from public policies and investments to address climate change. We detail the approaches and related challenges here.

The final section of our submission highlights important considerations for the next UNFCCC framework and plan on gender.

Key approach 1: The example of the Government of Ecuador's Technical Table on Gender and Climate Change

Ecuador's Gender and Climate Change Technical Table (in Spanish, *la Mesa Técnica de Género y Cambio Climático*, MTGCC) was formed in 2019. It was created as a forum for mainstreaming gender in climate-related public policies, programmes and projects and thus significantly strengthening the effectiveness of such initiatives. Its purpose is both to provide the government with recommendations on how to enhance gender equality via climate action; as well as to facilitate knowledge exchange and improved gender-responsive practice among its members and other actors (for instance, local organisations, local governments). The forum supports gender and climate change capacity strengthening, communications and political advocacy.

The strength of the Technical Table arises from the engagement of the national government with stakeholders who represent diverse Ecuadorian perspectives and experiences, in its membership.

Fundacion Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA, a national/regional NGO) initially served as the coordinator of the Technical Table; then IUCN's office for South America took over; and CARE Ecuador and Grupo Faro, a national NGO, are now taking on this role.

The membership comprises representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (Ministerio del Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica, MAATE), the National Council for Gender Equality (Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Género, CNIG) and several non-governmental and academic institutions.

Early in the lifetime of the Technical Table, the members identified that it would be important for the forum's activities to extend to local levels within Ecuador, outside of the capital of Quito, if the Technical Table was to fully promote gender equality and social inclusion in the design, implementation and evaluation of climate initiatives across the country.

In response to this need, FFLA, in collaboration with other Technical Table members, has promoted a series of workshops in diverse Ecuadorian localities to strengthen different actors' understanding of and ability to respond to climate change. This work includes communicating and engaging with local actors on the work of the Technical Table itself. This specific support work by FFLA has been funded by the Government of the Netherlands and the International Development Research Centre-Canada under the CDKN programme.

This outreach has enabled the Technical Table to reach local indigenous and women's organisations and local governments but this needs to be understood as a process. There are continued challenges, as members of the Technical Table have not been able to agree on a strategy to follow-up with the actors and how to ensure they can be linked to the table in a sustainable manner without falsely raising expectations. This is an important learning, which links to the need for dedicated resources for this kind of process (coordination time, modalities, etc.)

The Technical Table does not have a specific budget. Its members contribute what each can, including the Ministry of Environment. For instance, FFLA has contributed funds towards workshops to cover transportation of participants and FFLA's time. In 2023, IUCN allocated funding to cover the majority of the expenses of the two workshops undertaken, one in the highlands and one in the coast. This year, a workshop is taking place in the Amazon in November or December, and each member organisation is collaborating with the transportation and meals needed to cover the participation of the different local actors

invited. Some options to overcome these challenges are being discussed, including holding virtual meetings or holding the meetings in different rural locations around the country, but this second option will make it difficult for the Quito-based members to participate. These are ongoing conversations.

Moreover, the Climate Change and Gender Action Plan (CCGAP), led by IUCN in Latin America and supported by the Technical Table during 2023, was adopted by the Government of Ecuador in December 2023. The Technical Table has identified in 2024 that there is a need to help socialise the CCGAP with local governments and organisations. The workshop that will take place in the Amazon this year will initiate this work, however, the Technical Table has yet to define whether it has resources for a wider socialisation. The Technical Table is also analysing whether it can support local governments in integrating gender and climate change in their agendas and how and where to focus efforts.

The creation and ongoing work of the Technical Table has enabled the country of Ecuador to produce a government-backed plan for the full leadership and participation of women and promotion of gender equality in responses to climate change. The diverse membership and local and national inputs to the plan mean that its content is strong and relevant, and it has created a sense of ownership for implementation.

Identifying and deploying sufficient resources for ongoing coordination among these diverse groups and ongoing capacity building continues to be a challenge. However, keeping the forum as an autonomous, horizontal and self-convened space brings in the true added-value of its member organisations, too. This model offers the flexibility to look for different and creative options to leverage resources, to add new members from local organisations and to be able to continue organising workshops in different localities of the country. These are opportunities which can be identified only on the basis of the interest, commitment and enthusiasm of the Technical Table's members.

Key approach 2: The example of the Government of Ethiopia's Gender and Climate Community of Practice among ministries

The Government of Ethiopia has developed a number of policies concerning gender equality and climate action, such as the [gender mainstreaming strategy](#) of the cross-governmental Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Facility. Climate Landscape Analysis for Children (CLAC) which is a multi-sector strategy for child responsive climate action with a strong focus on women as caregivers, was launched in October 2024. The Women Empowerment Policy is currently under development with a section on climate change; and there is a concerted effort to make the NDC 3.0 gender responsive. The Government of Ethiopia also engages in the UNFCCC experts dialogue on children and women.

An [assessment](#) in 2019 identified an opportunity for strengthening the integration of gender equality into sectoral ministries' climate actions and scaling up this integration based on lessons learned about what works. The Government established the need for a forum to accelerate understanding, learning and action on gender mainstreaming in climate action.

In late 2020, a community of practice for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in climate change actions was created under the leadership of the Ethiopian government agencies that have express climate mandates. Focal persons from the agencies' respective climate, environment and gender units were nominated to participate in the community of practice.

While this started with the participation of government personnel, it has since expanded to include two youth groups in recognition of the dominance of young people in Ethiopia's

population. The community of practice comprises 26 individuals (14 female and 12 male of which two (1F, 1M) are from youth groups) representing: Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Ministry of Urban Infrastructure, Ministry of irrigation and Lowlands, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transport and Logistics, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of mines, Environmental Protection Authority, Enfluencers youth group and Ethiopian Women and Youth Climate Assembly. The latest community of practice meeting, held in October 2024, extended its invitation to more CSOs and consortium organisations including youth-led ones. High interest to join the community of practice was expressed in this meeting along with a suggestion to incorporate virtual meetings as part of its convening approach.

By promoting the tangible integration of GESI to ensure inclusive and climate-resilient development, this community of practice contributes towards the implementation of national climate plans, including the national 10-year development plan and adaptation plan and international commitments such as the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategies (LT-LEDS).

The initiative's achievements in the past 3+ years have included¹:

- Strengthening the technical capacity of members of the community of practice to mainstream appropriate GESI approaches into climate action, for example by providing [GESI-Climate Change training](#). The training provides stepwise operational guidance and supports participants to share learning from their gender mainstreaming operational experiences. It is a 'training of trainers' approach aimed at capacitating the core members of the community of practice, who will go on to champion and cascade skills and knowledge in their agencies and departments.
- Support to the Ministry of Planning and Development, which chairs the community of practice, to elaborate a bespoke [GESI training manual](#) and a [GESI mainstreaming guideline](#) for use by all their personnel. The Ministry has a mandate to review all sector and national plans, and also, since 2023, the Ministry has taken the national climate coordination role. Therefore, it is a key institution that leads GESI integration in various national plans.
- Key training materials and mainstreaming guidelines have been or are in the process of being translated from English to Amharic to optimise uptake and use.

Further lessons include:

- Not every person in the community of practice who received intensive GESI training expressed the willingness to become a trainer in their own right. Some trainees want to become champions. There is a difference between trainers and champions.
- When developing the GESI mainstreaming guidelines for the Ministry of Planning and Development, it has been vital to obtain feedback from all the Ministry departments to validate the draft produced. It is important as it will influence the ownership and implementation of the guidelines in the future. Further, validation must be done at a chief executive officer (CEO) level and ample time is necessary for this approval process.
- It has been crucial to involve Ethiopian national experts whose expertise lies at the intersection of gender and climate change to drive forward the delivery of different trainings and meetings and the development of a manual and guidelines.

¹<https://cdkn.org/project/ethiopia-community-practice-gender-equality-and-social-inclusion-gesi-climate-change>

Although the leadership of the Government of Ethiopia has been key in the work done so far through the community of practice, support from development partners was also significant. Funding from the CDKN programme of SouthSouthNorth has resourced a lot of the coordination and the development of different tools. This funding has come from the Government of the Netherlands and the International Development Research Centre-Canada. There has also been support from other institutions such as the Global Green Growth Institute and UNICEF, which have taken different roles during various events.

The community of practice aims to strengthen capacities that ensure gender-responsive and socially-inclusive climate actions via coordination and experience-sharing among key actors assigned to gender and climate change mainstreaming. Having it in place has created a unique opportunity for gender and climate experts to come together and learn how best to implement GESI integration in climate action and share experiences, challenges and potential solutions. It has also enabled development partners to direct their support to what the government has identified as a priority. Even though it is still at its early stage, the community of practice has proved to be a useful model to promote GESI integration in national climate actions.

Views on future work by the UNFCCC on gender:

Regarding the UNFCCC's future work, we present the following views for the consideration of Parties, Groups and Observer Organisations:

- Women can and do make essential contributions to the effectiveness and sustainability of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. However, women's potential to contribute climate leadership in their communities, countries and regions can be constrained by discriminatory beliefs and behaviours.
- Women's actual contributions are often under-recognised and under-valued, rendered less visible or even invisible by beliefs and practices that suppress their leadership, participation and voice.²
- As a consequence, significantly greater efforts are needed to make space for and enable diverse women, especially those from the most climate-affected communities, to act effectively as decision-makers, planners, managers and innovators of climate action across societies and in the context of just transitions to climate-resilient, low-carbon futures.
- Differential climate vulnerabilities are gendered and they are real. *However*, it does a disservice to women and girls to focus only on climate vulnerability. The COP29 decision text should emphasise the *strengths and capabilities* (both demonstrated and potential) that women bring in all their diversity as well as their vulnerabilities.
- The next iteration of the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and Gender Action Plan should put a greater focus on progressing gender equality as an integral part of climate action in all of society, so rebalancing the heavy focus on UNFCCC bodies and processes in the existing Work Programme and Gender Action Plan. This broader view should embrace a commitment to identifying and developing women's

² Dupar, M. and Velasco, P. (2021). *Advancing gender equality and climate action: A practical guide to setting targets and monitoring progress*. Cape Town: CDKN. Available from:

<https://cdkn.org/genderequality>

Global Center on Adaptation and Climate & Development Knowledge Network (2023). *Stories of Resilience 2023: Lessons from Local Adaptation Practice*. Rotterdam and Cape Town: GCA and CDKN. Available from: <https://cdkn.org/resource/stories-resilience-lessons-local-adaptation-practice>

and girls' latent talents, capabilities and energies to participate in climate leadership and action.

- The direct implementation experience of the CDKN programme (outlined above) and of the Gender Equality in a Low Carbon World programme³ demonstrate that there is a particularly strong need to build the capacity of local government officials on climate action that is truly gender-responsive and empowering for women. This includes building local government capacity on how to implement existing gender equality legislation in the context of local climate programmes and how to confront discriminatory attitudes and behaviours to enable women's knowledge and leadership on climate action to come to the fore.

The existing Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender (2019-24):

“Recognizes that the full, meaningful and equal participation and leadership of women in all aspects of the UNFCCC process and in national- and local-level climate policy and action is vital for achieving long-term climate goals...”

It recognises “multidimensional factors” affecting people’s climate vulnerability and their ability to take climate action, not just gender – and particularly acknowledges indigenous and local women.

It recognises Parties’ human rights obligations, saying that “Parties should... respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.”

These are vital and robust texts. We see in the world at large that there are backlashes against the rights of women and people of other genders and identities. It is important that the COP29 decision maintains the key elements elaborated here from the 2019-24 Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender without weakening or back-tracking on this language. The future UNFCCC gender framework should retain these elements and build upon them.

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³ GLOW (2024). *Empowering women in just transitions*. Cape Town: Gender Equality in a Low Carbon World. Available from: <https://just-transitions.cdkn.org>