



Is there a connection between gender and climate change?

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Human Face

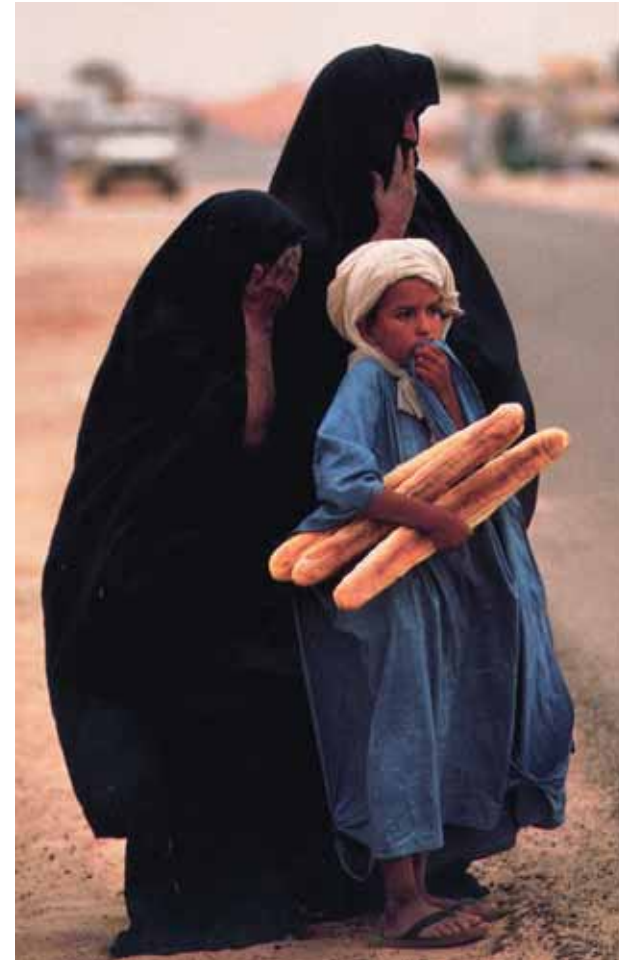
- Climate change impacts will be differently distributed among different regions, generations, age, classes, income groups, occupations and genders
- The poor, primarily but by no means exclusively in developing countries, will be disproportionately affected. Their reliance on local ecological resources, coupled with existing stresses on health and well-being, and limited financial, institutional and human resources leave the poor most vulnerable and least able to adapt to the impacts of climate change (IPCC 2001)





Causes of difference

- Avoid being simplistic and just seeing women (due to their sex) as the **VICTIMS**
- Women are not vulnerable because they are "naturally weaker": women and men face different vulnerabilities due to their gender condition. Many women live in conditions of social exclusion



Causes of difference

- Vulnerability depends in large part on the assets (physical, financial, human, social, and natural) available: the more assets, the less vulnerable one person is
- Worldwide, compared to men, women tend to have more limited access to resources that would enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change—including land, credit, agricultural inputs, decision-making bodies, technology and training services



Causes of difference

- Social prejudice keeps girls and women from learning to swim and tree climbing
- Face constraints in their mobility or behavior that hinder their ability to relocate without a male relative's consent



The other side of the coin...

After major disasters men experience:

- Large numbers of widowers
- Difficulties in raising young families – gendered roles and social norms
- Emotional trauma of men in coping with the loss



Facts- not anecdotes

London School of Economics analyzed disasters in 141 countries -decisive evidence that gender differences in deaths from natural disasters are directly linked to women's economic and social rights. When women's rights are not protected, more women than men will die from disasters. The study also found the opposite to be true: in societies where women and men enjoy equal rights, disasters kill the same number of women and men



What does this mean?

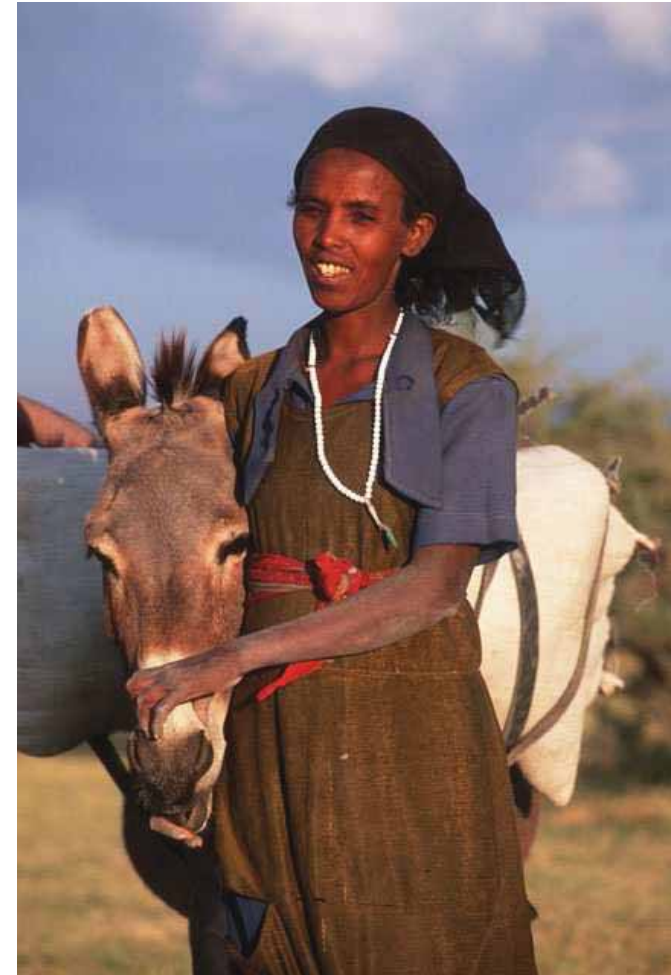
**That women's
EMPOWERMENT
should be one of the
priorities in
adaptation and risk
reduction
strategies/initiatives**



But what are the other linkages in relation to gender, adaptation and mitigation strategies?



Women are **powerful agents of change** and their leadership is critical. Women have always been leaders in community revitalization and natural resource management



Facts

- Women from many indigenous communities possess repertoires of “coping strategies” that they have traditionally used to manage climate variability
 - In Rwanda, women are reported to produce more than 600 varieties of beans,
 - Peru Aguaruna women plant more than 60 varieties of manioc



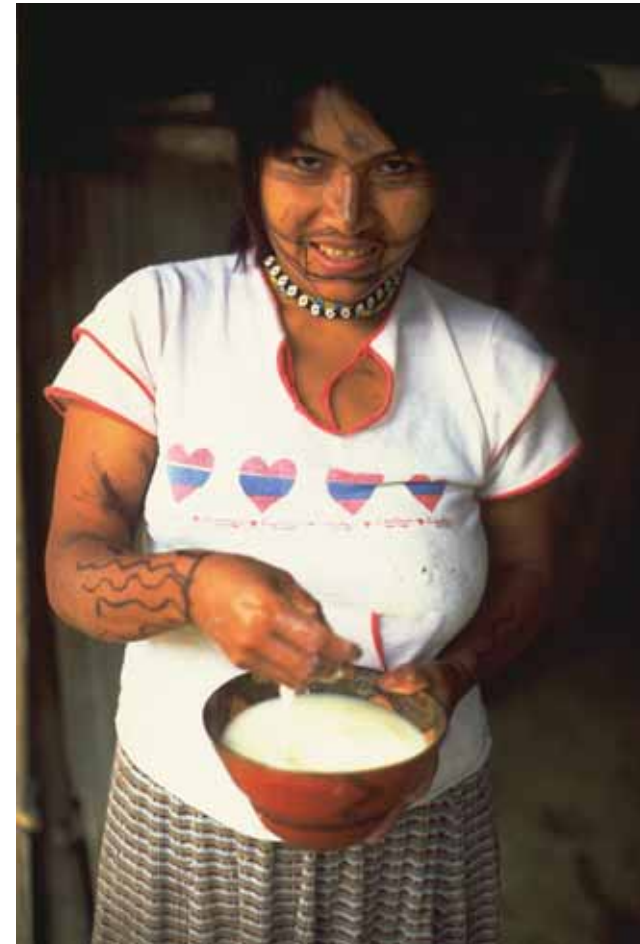
Facts

- Men and women have different roles with regard to forest resource management. They play different parts in planting, protecting or caring for seedlings and small trees, as well as in planting and maintaining homestead woodlots and plantations on public lands
- Women's role in reforestation, deforestation and afforestation



Facts

Female earnings from the sale of forest-related products are more likely to be spent on family needs (90%); male earnings from forest-related products are more likely to be spent on their own personal expenses (15% on family needs)



Facts

- Both women and men rely on energy for most of their daily activities but they have different needs and roles and the various energy services have different impacts on men and women
- A gender perspective in the analysis of biofuels will enable initiatives to embrace the various requirements and fulfil, in an equitable manner, the community's energy needs



Facts



Studies conducted by the OECD gender has a huge influence on sustainable consumption, partly due to the differing consumption patterns of men and women:

- In some OECD countries, women make over 80% of consumption decisions
- Women are more likely to be sustainable consumers, e.g. they tend to buy eco-labelled or organic food, have a higher propensity to recycle and place more value on efficient energy than men
- Women pay closer attention in their purchases to ethical issues such as child labour and fair trade

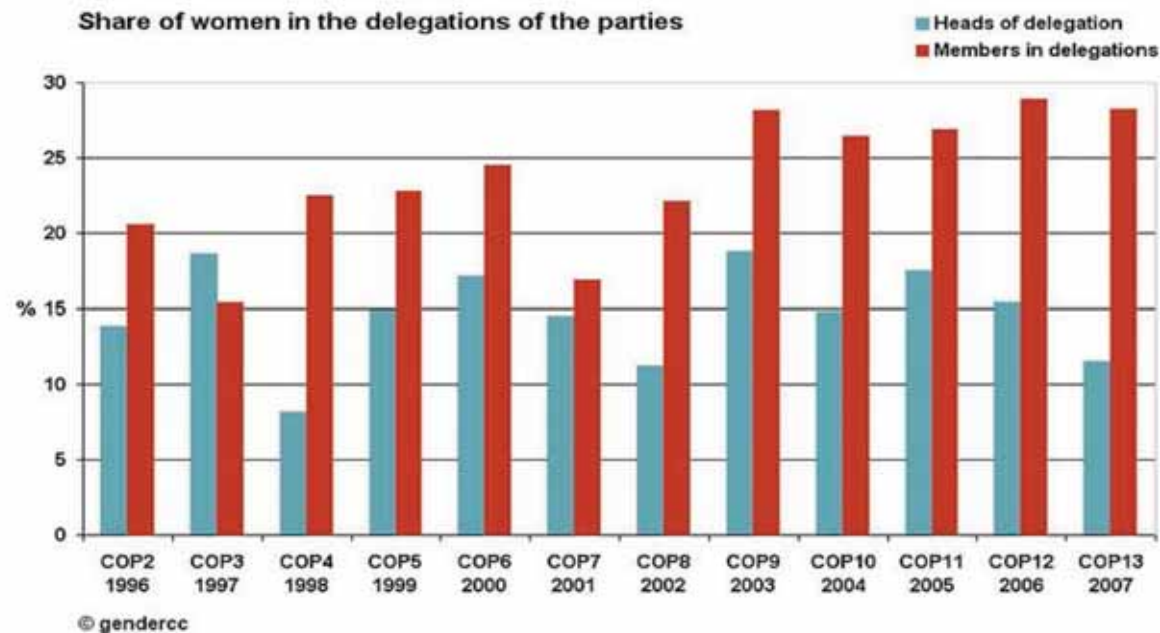




Despite these facts, women have not been afforded an equal opportunity to participate in decision making related to adaptation and mitigation policies and initiatives at the international and national level related to climate change



Facts



- At the highest level - heads of delegations - women are substantially less represented. For example, in 2006, the percentage of female heads of delegations was 15.7; in 2007 it was 12%.

Source: Hemmati, M. Interactive expert panel on the theme. 52nd session, 2008

Climate change and gender inequality are inextricably linked

- By exacerbating inequality overall, climate change slows progress toward gender equality and thus impedes efforts to achieve wider goals like poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- Gender inequality can worsen the impacts of climate change; meanwhile, taking steps to narrow the gender gap and empower women can help reduce these impacts.



DIRECT EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**Increase in
ocean
temperatures**

**In 2005 coral
in the
Caribbean
suffered a
bleaching
event due to
thermal stress**

- **The tourism industry is a particularly important sector for women -46 % of the workforce are women**
- **Reduction, mobilization, or extinction of marine species used by women for household consumption or for productive activities**

**Increase
droughts and
water
shortages**

**Increase in
frequency
and intensity
of drought in
many African
regions**

- **Women are most often collectors, users and managers. Decreases in water will jeopardize their families' livelihoods and increase their workloads**
- **Girls and women responsible for collection water and fuelwood. If time increases, their capacity to attend school is at risk**
- **In India rainfall shortages are more strongly associated with deaths among girls than boys**

DIRECT EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**Increase in
extreme
weather
events**

**Increase in
intensity
and quantity
of cyclones,
hurricanes,
floods and
heat waves**



- **Women and children 14 times more likely to die than men during a disaster. In 1991 cyclone which killed 140,000 in Bangladesh, 90% of victims were women**
- **High mortality rates of mothers/women/spouses during result in increase: numbers of orphans and mortality rates; early marriages for young girls (new spouses) causing drop out of school; trafficking and prostitution which increase exposure to HIV/AIDS**
- **More women than men died during the 2003 European heat wave**
- **During Hurricane Katrina in USA, African-American women who were the poorest in that part of the country faced the greatest obstacles to survival**
- **More women than men work in the informal sector and in small enterprises. These sectors are often the worst hit and least able to recover from the effects of disasters, due to lack of capital, and limited access to credit and information, among other obstacles**

INDIRECT EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Decrease in food production

In Africa crop production expected to drop 20-50% if global changes move towards el Niño like conditions

- Women produce more than 50 percent of the food worldwide. In Africa the percentage of women affected by these changes could range from 48% in Burkina-Faso to 73% in the Congo
- Atmospheric brown clouds due to aerosol loads and GHG concentrations have reduced historical rice harvest. Rice major caloric intake of developing countries. Women are more vulnerable to nutritional problems - 50% of the women and children in developing countries are anaemic

Loss of species

By 2050

- Minimal climate change scenarios 18% extinctions
- Mid range projections 24% extinctions
- Maximum expected climate change 35% extinctions

- Women often rely on range of crop varieties to accommodate climatic variability, but permanent temperature change will reduce agro-biodiversity and traditional medicine options
- Rural women in developing countries collect forest products and used them as fuel, food, medicines or food for their animals. The reduction or disappearance of these products will have a negative impact in the well-being and quality of life for them and their families.
- Loss of medicinal plants used by women

INDIRECT EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**Increase
in
epidemics**

**EI
Niño/Southern
Oscillation
(ENSO)
accounts for
70% of
variation of
recent cholera
series in
Bangladesh
and climate
variability
played an
important role
initiating
malaria
epidemics in
East African
highlands**

- **An increase in outbreaks will have gender-differentiated impacts because women have less access to medical services than men and women's workloads increase as they have to spend more time caring for the sick**
- **In developing countries, the poorer households affected by HIV/AIDS have less resources to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The need to adopt new strategies for crop production (such as irrigation) or mobilization of livestock is harder for female-headed households and for houses with HIV infected people**
- **Pregnant women are particularly susceptible to water-borne diseases. Anemia – often resulting from malaria – is responsible for a quarter of maternal mortalities**



Ideas for Moving Forward

Promote international policy action on climate and gender

Negotiations toward a new post-2012 climate framework under the UNFCCC, as well as regional, national, and local policies on climate change, should incorporate the principles of gender equity and equality at all stages, from research and analysis to the design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies



Ideas for Moving Forward

Promote national and local action on climate and gender

- Develop strategies to improve women's access to and control over resources
- Use specialized knowledge and skills of women in the strategies for survival and adaptation to disasters
- Create opportunities to educate and train women on climate change
- Provide measures for capacity building and technology transfer
- Assign specific resources to secure women's equal participation in the benefits and opportunities of mitigation and adaptation measures



Ideas for Moving Forward

Encourage gender-sensitive financial mechanisms and instruments

All financial mechanisms and instruments associated with climate change should include the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and women's empowerment. Essential stages are in design, implementation, proposal evaluation and monitoring, and evaluation systems. Developers could integrate gender-sensitive criteria into the creation of programs, projects, or initiatives that fall under these financial mechanisms



Ideas for Moving Forward

CDM has not been responsive to disadvantaged populations or poor women

- Channeled eighty-five percent of its resources to emerging economies, such as Brazil, India and China, which have highly developed infrastructures and absorptive capacity, neglecting those LDCs which would need its resources most desperately
- Other mechanisms, such as the MDG Carbon Fund, may have more potential to respond to women's needs and to advance gender-equitable results, but lack the operational guidelines and capacity to do so. Women's views are rarely sought or incorporated into such mechanisms



Ideas for Moving Forward

Promote the active participation of women's organizations

Organizations, ministries, or departments that address women's issues, as well as UNIFEM, should play a more active role in the discussions and decisions being made on climate change. Climate change cannot be considered an exclusively environmental problem; rather, it needs to be understood within all its development dimensions



Ideas for Moving Forward

At the level of the UNFCCC

- Conducted a systematic process to promote gender mainstreaming and invest in specialized research on gender and climate change
- Establish a system of gender-sensitive indicators for its national reports and for the planning of adaptation strategies and projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)
- Parties should seek to guarantee the participation of women and gender experts during the preparation of national and international reports and at all national and international meetings



We cannot afford to make the same mistakes. By neglecting the importance of gender we are responsible for the deaths and impoverishment of thousands of people