Gender Data for Climate Action: COP28 and Beyond

Gender equality has been identified as a thematic priority within the COP28 agenda,[1] with the aim to ensure women's equal participation in UNFCCC processes, promote gender-responsive climate action, and drive the systematic transformation needed to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Achieving an inclusive and transformative COP28 agenda – and Parties' ultimate ability to take gender-responsive climate action – depends upon leaders' prioritization of the collection, analysis, and use of gender data for decision-making.

> **"Gender data"** is data that captures information on the different lived experiences of women, men, and gender-diverse people. It includes data that is disaggregated by sex or gender; data that pertains to women, girls, and gender-diverse people exclusively or primarily; and data that reflects gender issues, including roles, relations, and inequalities. It can be both quantitative and qualitative, with collection methods that account for stereotypes, social norms, and other factors that may introduce gender biases.[2]
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> **"Gender-responsive climate action"** goes beyond sensitivity to gender differences to actively promote gender equality. It involves three key elements: recognition of gender and social/intersectional differences in needs, opportunities, and capacities related to climate action; gender-equitable participation and influence in climate-related decision-making; and equitable distribution of benefits from investments in climate action.[3]

Gender data is instrumental for advancing gender-responsive climate action under the Paris Agreement. It can help to illuminate the unique and often disproportionate impacts of climate change for women, girls, and gender-diverse people, as well as their contributions to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience efforts.[4] When gender data is integrated within UNFCCC processes and mechanisms, it can highlight imbalances in participation and power in climate change-related decision-making processes.[5] It can also inform the gender-responsive design, implementation, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) components of national climate change commitments, like National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)[6] and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),[7] as well as global climate change frameworks.

Conversely, the failure to include gender considerations illustrated by robust gender data in climate policies can perpetuate existing inequalities and leave women, girls, and gender-diverse people more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. According to the latest IPCC report, which has been agreed by governments, actions that address inequities based on gender and other intersecting factors and are grounded in meaningful participation and inclusive governance lead to more effective and sustainable adaptation outcomes.[8]

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Unfortunately, efforts to collect and use gender data to inform national and global climate policies have been slow, and high-quality, regularly collected, and internationally comparable gender data remains widely unavailable for many environment and climate change issues.[9]

WHY DOES GENDER DATA MATTER FOR COP28?

The decisions taken at COP28 have enormous implications for global ecosystems, economies, and the people who rely on them. It is essential that these decisions are evidence-based and reflect the diversity of people affected by and involved in climate action. Recognizing this need, the enhanced collection and use of gender data must inform gender-responsive climate action at the global, regional, and national levels, and be used to monitor progress on commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Gender data is especially relevant for advancing several priorities on the COP28 agenda:

THE FIRST GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

The first Global Stocktake (GST) of the Paris Agreement will conclude at COP28. This offers a significant moment to assess progress and chart next steps to advance gender-responsive climate action. Despite its importance, gender data and analysis in the implementation of the Paris Agreement is currently lacking. The key findings of the GST technical dialogues – a series of workshops and exchanges between scientists, experts, country representatives, and other stakeholders to assess and discuss the information collected through the GST process – demonstrate limited engagement with gender issues, and do not identify any specific actions or recommendations for the enhanced collection and use of gender data by Parties.[10] Gender is mentioned just four times within the 46-page synthesis report produced from the technical dialogues. Women are mentioned seven times, almost always in reference to their vulnerability to climate change impacts and their marginalization from traditional climate change processes and decision-making. This limited attention to gender issues undermines the importance of equity in outcomes from climate action, as well as the important contributions made by women and other groups who are typically underrepresented in decision-making.

What Parties can do:

- **Apply a gender lens to the political phase of the first GST process** to agree on strong and clear outcomes that emphasize the importance of gender equality, social inclusion, and human rights, and encourage Parties' MEL efforts to include robust gender data and analyses.

- **Ensure that gender-relevant outcomes from the first GST are used to strengthen gender-responsive approaches in Parties' nationally-determined actions** – in particular, successive NDCs and NAPs.

- **Conduct a thorough review of the organization and information collection process of the first GST with a gender lens,** to inform and strengthen gender data collection and ensure the equitable participation of experts, gender equality and women's rights organizations, and facilitators in the second GST.

THE GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION

Negotiations to establish the framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) will continue at COP28, providing an opportunity for Parties to embed gender considerations within its main elements and modalities, supported by the collection, analysis, and use of gender data. In particular, the inclusion of gender targets and indicators as part of the GGA framework and

decision text will help to ensure that countries monitor, assess, report, and ultimately generate learning about the gendered impacts of the climate crisis and equity in adaptation efforts. Negotiations to establish the GGA framework should also be country-driven, inclusive, and participatory in order to set realistic expectations responding to local contexts and realities.

What Parties can do:

- **During negotiations, champion the benefits of generating and using gender data** to inform a more inclusive and effective GGA framework. Recognize that true progress on adaptation must be equitable and guarantee the rights and perspectives of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

- **Incorporate gender data within the GGA framework,** including as a key cross-cutting consideration, and in the establishment of targets and indicators for tracking progress on adaptation.

- **Establish and strengthen national MEL systems for adaptation that enable tracking of progress on gender equality,** including incorporation of gender-responsive results, targets, and indicators; collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data; monitoring and evaluation methodologies that enable assessment of equity in adaptation outcomes; and specific questions to explore lessons and guidance in relation to gender-responsive adaptation action.

- **Deliver the financial and technical support necessary to help low- and middle-income countries collect, analyze, and use gender data** to inform gender-responsive adaptation policies and action, including via bilateral development assistance and domestic resource mobilization to strengthen national MEL systems.

HOW PARTIES CAN STRENGTHEN GENDER DATA FOR CLIMATE ACTION BEYOND COP28

- **Use gender data to report progress toward the Paris Agreement.** Parties should utilize the existing reporting, review, and transparency mechanisms under the Paris Agreement to include gender data on stakeholder participation and the gender impacts of climate change and adaptation efforts, such as through the Biennial Transparency Reports under the Enhanced Transparency Framework and the NAP Review, both set to begin in 2024. These mechanisms also present an opportunity to acknowledge gaps in gender data and the challenges Parties are encountering in integrating gender considerations in climate action.

Looking for guidance? Parties can look to the UNSD Global Set of Climate Change Indicators, or to regional guidance like the Environment-Gender Indicator Set for Asia and the Pacific developed by UN Women, ESCAP, UNEP, and IUCN to help develop their own sets of gender-relevant climate indicators in accordance with national priorities and resources. UN Women has also developed a Model Questionnaire: Measuring the Nexus Between Gender and Environment that can be implemented as a standalone survey or as part of other multipurpose surveys..

- **Invest in gender data systems to support climate adaptation and resilience goals.** Gender data has long suffered from underfunding, and this situation has only worsened in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of competing crises on donor and national government budgets.[11] Of the limited funding that is available for gender data, most does not go to environment or climate sectors.[12] To fill the gender data financing gap, an additional $500 million is needed every year through 2030.[13] At the same time, countries

are working to establish MEL systems for adaptation, which will ideally incorporate gender data, making it all the more important to invest in core data systems and national statistical offices, especially those in developing countries, with financial assistance, technical assistance, and training to improve effectiveness. This should include support for cross-sectoral and cross-institutional capacity-building to enhance collaboration and coordination among stakeholders working on gender data and on climate change data.

- **Seek out opportunities to enhance the collection and use of gender data to inform UNFCCC processes.** Gender data should be collected and used to strengthen gender-responsive climate action across UNFCCC processes and mechanisms. This should include incorporating gender targets and indicators within the GGA framework to track progress on adaptation, and taking action to enhance the measurement and reporting of gender equality metrics in the second GST. Further, 2024 marks the final year of the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan (GAP) – which currently reflects the necessity of gender data for gender-responsive action, but provides Parties with little direction on priority areas for increased gender data collection and analysis, and fails to hold Parties accountable for using gender data to inform national climate change action plans, strategies, and policies. Parties should strengthen any future iteration of the GAP by working to develop a more robust and detailed gender-responsive indicator framework.

- **Track and transparently communicate data on the meaningful, inclusive and effective participation of women, girls, and gender-diverse people in climate decision-making within countries.** This is currently being tracked at the UNFCCC level,[14] which has helped to make the case for more equal participation of women. Yet, there is little transparency about who has and has not had a voice in decision-making within country processes, including NAPs, NDCs, and national climate change action plans. To effectively design and implement climate action strategies, the voices and experiences of women, girls, and gender-diverse people must be prioritized – and data on meaningful, inclusive, and effective participation is essential to track progress.

- **Disaggregate climate data by gender and other characteristics to enable intersectional analysis and effective decision-making.** Many women, girls, and gender-diverse people are disproportionately affected by climate change due to poverty, disability, or other factors. Wherever possible, gender data collection should include multiple levels of disaggregation to capture differences based on income, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, geographic location (urban/rural), indigenous status, migration status, and other relevant characteristics. Investments in capacity to analyze disaggregated data using an intersectional lens are crucial to ensure it can be applied for effective decision-making.

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The co-collaborators on this brief are members of the Gender and Environment Data Alliance (GEDA). To learn more, see GEDA's webpage and sign up for its newsletter.

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