Submission by the United States of America
August 22, 2019

**Introduction**

The United States welcomes the invitation from the Adaptation Committee to present its views and share its experience in mainstreaming gender considerations in programming, including adaptation planning and action.

The United States recognizes that societies that empower women economically and politically are more prosperous and peaceful, and is committed to investing in women’s empowerment and equality between women and men. One way the United States is harmonizing these goals is reflected in a new U.S. law – the Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act of 2018. Under the WEEE Act and its existing policies, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) performs a gender analysis on each of its programs across all sectors, including those related to climate change and the environment. The WEEE Act codifies portions of USAID’s Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (GEFE) policy. Following implementation of the GEFE Policy, USAID has gained significant experience in integrating gender considerations in programs and policies. This submission presents some of the findings from USAID’s experiences in integrating gender consideration in development programming. While not specific to adaptation planning and action, the lessons learned from USAID’s experiences are relevant to the Adaptation Committee’s activities on incorporating gender considerations.

**Good practices for incorporating gender in policies, programs, and adaptation interventions**

In the United States, it has become common practice to include gender-sensitive indicators in international development policy and project monitoring and evaluation as a method for promoting, and measuring the progress of, the integration of gender considerations. While this has been effective in counting the number of women and girls who benefit from specific interventions and highlighting gaps in the equitable benefit of development programs, sex-disaggregated data alone cannot fully advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. As a result, more deliberate approaches have been designed to ensure that gender considerations are incorporated at the beginning of the planning process and throughout the program cycle in order to increase the likelihood of achieving policy goals and objectives associated with environmental policy responsive to the realities faced by women and girls.

One example of the U.S. government’s overall approach to advancing programming responsive to the needs and experiences of women and girls is USAID’s GEFE policy itself, which requires the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment in all phases of programming, budgeting, and reporting. To facilitate implementation of this policy, USAID has developed guidance on pursuing more effective, evidence-based investments in gender equality and female empowerment and on incorporating these efforts into USAID’s core development programming, including climate change and environment programming. More specifically, it explains how to implement USAID’s GEFE policy and related strategies across the program cycle, with a particular focus on applying analytic rigor to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and support for local ownership and the priorities of local actors and stakeholders. This integration process, described in detail below, can be replicated to support efforts to integrate gender considerations in the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs).

The first step in the integration process is the gender analysis. Such analysis typically involves examining:

* Differences in the status of women and men and their differential access to assets, resources, opportunities, and services;
* The influence of gender roles and norms on the division of time between paid employment, unpaid work (including subsistence production and care for family members), and volunteer activities;
* The influence of gender roles and norms on leadership roles and decision-making; constraints, opportunities, and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering females; and,
* Potential differential impacts of development policies and programs on males and females, including unintended or negative consequences.

When applied to the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans, the gender analysis can highlight existing and expected barriers and opportunities for designing and implementing gender-responsive adaptation actions. For example, producing sex-disaggregated data can highlight the different conditions facing women and men and help implementers develop the NAP so that it responds to the unique needs of women and girls. Additionally, utilizing and understanding the ways that women participate in adaptation activities throughout NAP development can unlock opportunities for women’s leadership and empowerment in government and employment[[1]](#footnote-1).

One of the key challenges to date in conducting a gender analysis has been identifying the relevant qualitative and quantitative data and information in order to ensure that the results of the gender analysis are specific enough to inform the project and activity. It is important to consult with a wide variety of key stakeholders, including academic institutions, civil society organizations, and think tanks. Other sources might include:

* Regional or sectoral gender analyses;
* Official national- and regional-level data and statistics;
* Relevant public data from bilateral and multilateral projects and activities;
* Research reports from UN and regional intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and implementers.

It is important that the gender analysis is informed by the specific country context and national circumstances. If a gender analysis is determined to be too broad, one option is to conduct a supplementary gender analysis that focuses on the specific adaptation intervention (i.e. the project level, rather than at the higher level planning process).

Once a gender analysis has been conducted, the results are reviewed and used when identifying the objectives for the specific project and activities. At the project level, the gender analysis should go one step further to identify the following:

* Relevant gender gaps in the status and anticipated levels of participation of women and men that could hinder the key results to be achieved by the project;
* Key gender inequalities or needs for female empowerment that could be addressed through the project; and,
* Any potential differential effects (including unintended or negative consequences) on women and men.

At the project level, a gender analysis should influence the project design to ensure that it explicitly addresses any disparities and includes actions to reduce the gaps and inequalities that are revealed. Results from a gender analysis may also lead to building in standalone programming components that specifically focus on empowering women and girls, if the analysis suggests that this is important for achieving the project objective and related results. The analysis should also examine anticipated levels of and possible barriers to participation of men and women in the activity as well as whether and how the activity might affect men and women differently. The findings and recommendations of the analysis should inform and be integrated into the activity design and associated indicators.

Gender integration does not end with activity design and solicitation, and should continue throughout project implementation. One best practice for increasing the effectiveness of gender integration throughout the period of implementation is to ensure gender considerations are integrated in the work planning process as well. The work planning process is often the final step before on-the-ground implementation of a project activity begins. In addition, it is good practice to gather gender-sensitive data during activity implementation to track progress towards gender-related results and ensure that any observed, unintended gender-related consequences of the activity are being documented and addressed.

The final step in the program cycle is monitoring, evaluation, and learning. During this stage, the focus should be on collecting sex-disaggregated data for all people-level indicators, developing context indicators to track changes in key gender gaps which have occurred from the beginning of project design to the end of the activity, and utilizing appropriate qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gather and analyze relevant gender-sensitive data. This stage also presents a critical opportunity for course correction if the monitoring and evaluation process reveals that project design did not sufficiently address gender gaps and female empowerment.

A gender-sensitive evaluation means that all stages of the evaluation reflect:

* An awareness that the degree and meaning of program participation, program results, and potential sustainability are shaped by gender;
* A recognition that explicit attention to gender issues must be integrated into the evaluation if gender equality objectives are to be addressed; and,
* A commitment to examining the extent to which gender equality was achieved as a result of the program or project that was implemented. Without evaluation, a project implementer will be unable to examine the extent to which its programming achieves positive results and improves quality of life for women as well as men, reduces gender gaps and empowers women and girls.

**Case Study: Techniques in practice**

This case study illustrates the techniques employed by the United States, described above, to integrate gender in an adaptation project focused on urban disaster preparedness through flood protection activities in Bangladeshi secondary towns.

Frequent flooding in Bangladeshi secondary towns, exacerbated by climate change, leads to loss of viable land, damage to infrastructure, unsanitary conditions, and forced resettlement or migration, among other challenges. This project, funded by USAID and implemented by the Asian Development Bank, works to reduce and adapt to flooding while promoting economic growth and decreasing poverty by establishing a framework of integrated flood protection.

Both women and men were consulted during project preparation, including through a comprehensive sex-disaggregated baseline survey leading to data used in project development. The project also considered how sanitation development (for example, toilet design and location), resettlement compensation, and subsequent actions should respond to the unique needs of women and girls.

Gender integration and analysis throughout the project resulted in increased female participation in and leadership of local government, including town-level environmental committees and slum improvement works led by women’s groups. The project exceeded its goal of employing 25 percent women in infrastructure construction, employed nine female engineers, and provided training, guidelines, and monitoring forms to contractors on equal wages and appropriate working conditions for women.

**Conclusion:**

Although gender-sensitive metrics in policies and project monitoring are quite common, gender considerations throughout the lifetime of a project or policy are only now beginning to take root. Understanding the differences facing women and men in adaptation activities can unlock barriers to successful NAPs and provide opportunities for women’s economic and governmental leadership.

By empowering both men and women, we can address this global imperative faster and more effectively. USAID’s gender-responsive environment programming advocates for conservation and land use rights and positions women both as decision-makers in their communities and as early adopters of renewable energy and climate resilience.

1. IUCN: “Draft Guidelines to Mainstreaming Gender in the Development of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)