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### PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2015-2020 GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### INTRODUCTION

1. At its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision [XII/7](#), in which it welcomed the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Plan includes a detailed set of possible actions to be undertaken by Parties and a framework for actions by the Secretariat, towards integrating gender considerations in work to implement the Convention.
2. Three years following its establishment, the Plan is now at the midway point, which offers a useful opportunity to consider information on the progress in its implementation made by Parties and the Secretariat. The present document provides an analysis of actions taken by the Parties and the Secretariat, and includes suggested recommendations, including those relevant to the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. More details on the activities carried out by Parties and by the Secretariat are provided in an associated information document (CBD/SBI/2/INF/11).
3. The 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action builds on the Convention's first Gender Plan of Action, which was welcomed by the Conference of the Parties in decision [IX/24](#), in May 2008. Updated to align with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the 2015-2020 Plan was also expanded to include possible actions for Parties. The four strategic objectives of the Plan remain the same: (a) to mainstream a gender perspective in the implementation of the Convention and the associated work of the Parties and the Secretariat; (b) to promote gender equality in achieving the objectives of the Convention, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; (c) to demonstrate the benefits of gender mainstreaming in the achievement of the Convention's objectives; and (d) to increase the effectiveness of all work under the Convention.
4. This review of progress in implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action is based on consideration of actions by Parties, stakeholders and the Secretariat in the light of the Plan's four strategic objectives. As the sixth national reports on implementation of the Convention are requested for submission to the Secretariat by 31 December 2018, this information is not available for consideration in the present review of progress. The present report instead draws on a number of different reviews undertaken by the Secretariat of actions by Parties and stakeholders to implement the Gender Plan of Action.

#### I. ACTIONS BY PARTIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

5. As noted above, the Gender Plan of Action identifies a number of potential actions for Parties, which include integrating gender considerations in national biodiversity strategies and action plans

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\* [CBD/SBI/2/1](#).

(NBSAPs) as well as ensuring consistency with related conventions, among others. The Secretariat undertook a number of efforts to take stock and review progress made in the implementation of actions by Parties. These include a review of submissions received from a notification on progress in the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action; a review of NBSAPs received by the Secretariat from the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties onwards; and an analysis of results of a survey on joint capacity-building needs for gender mainstreaming under the Rio Conventions.

#### **A. Submissions received on progress in the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action**

6. Via a notification dated 28 November 2017 to Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and relevant organizations, the Secretariat requested information on progress in implementing the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and any other efforts related to gender mainstreaming.<sup>1</sup> The time period for submissions was from 28 November to 31 January 2018. A total of 11 submissions were received from five Parties<sup>2</sup> and seven organizations.<sup>3</sup>

7. Submissions pointed to national policies and plans that provide the framework for ensuring consideration of gender equality in national and international priority setting. One example is the national target of Ethiopia in its NBSAP to improve women's access to and control over biodiversity resources and ecosystem services. Brazil highlighted its National Strategy for Conservation of Threatened Species, which seeks the full participation of women at all levels of planning and execution of activities. Submissions also identified a variety of relevant initiatives under way that have the potential to advance collective efforts to address gender and biodiversity linkages. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is compiling a data set on employment in aquaculture and fisheries with sex-disaggregated statistics, which is planned for release in 2018. The [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN) and the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) are collaborating to identify data and information gaps, explore national case studies, and provide specific recommendations to enhance countries' strategies and capacities for gathering gender-environment statistics, recommendations from which may inform NBSAP-related and other biodiversity efforts.

8. Submissions included actions to apply women's biodiversity knowledge or environmental leadership, such as: (a) ensuring women's participation in *in situ* conservation and improvement programmes; (b) supporting women's equitable participation in community biodiversity governance, and (c) training on the importance of access and benefit-sharing regarding genetic resources and traditional knowledge, addressing women's knowledge and conservation practices. Needs identified ranged from (a) documenting traditional knowledge related to gender issues and developing and disseminating case studies articulating gender and biodiversity linkages, to (b) undertaking an independent evaluation of the Gender Plan of Action and (c) ensuring that gender issues are explicitly incorporated in the process of developing the post-2020 biodiversity framework. Making more explicit links between actions under the Gender Plan of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>4</sup> was proposed as an opportunity to support further implementation of the Gender Plan of Action.

#### **B. Review of post-Nagoya NBSAPs**

9. The Secretariat undertook a review of revised NBSAPs, received in the period following the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (November 2010) through mid-February 2018 (post-Nagoya NBSAPs), to examine the extent of gender integration in the most recent set of NBSAPs. The results of this review were similar to those of the review previously undertaken by the IUCN Global Gender Office,

<sup>1</sup> [Ref: SCBD/MCO/AF/NP/TM/87003 \(2017-130\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> Brazil, Ethiopia, Iraq, Sweden and Venezuela.

<sup>3</sup> Andes Chinchasuyu Organization and Red de Mujeres Indígenas Sobre Biodiversidad para América Latina y el Caribe (RMIB-LAC) (which provided a joint submission), Global Forest Coalition (GFC), ICCA Consortium, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)), and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

<sup>4</sup> See General Assembly resolution [70/1](#), entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

which considered NBSAPs received by the Secretariat from 1993 through mid-2016.<sup>5</sup> The Secretariat's review found that just under half of the post-Nagoya NBSAPs included some reference to gender or women's issues, and a third of plans identified gender perspectives as part of national targets or actions related to a national target. The majority of these actions focused firstly on increasing women's awareness of biodiversity conservation issues and secondly on increasing women's participation in biodiversity conservation.

10. Women were predominantly characterized as a vulnerable group in NBSAPs, often in tandem with youth, with rural women identified as a particularly vulnerable or target group. Lack of involvement of women as stakeholders was identified as a challenge for biodiversity conservation, or an indirect driver of biodiversity loss, in approximately 21 per cent of NBSAPs. While not all of these NBSAPs identified actions to address such gender issues, recognition of the influence of gender on biodiversity objectives is an important step towards integrating gender considerations, particularly as many plans do not clearly acknowledge this link. Some countries that identified multiple gender-related actions also pointed to a need for more information or understanding of gender issues. In its NBSAP, Jamaica recognizes that disparities that exist along gender lines are not well understood in the country, including the roles and needs of men and women with regard to biodiversity. Brazil is working to strengthen scientific research and databases, acknowledging the potential that this holds to address gender issues.

11. Overall, even among countries that have recognized gender equality as a guiding principle, or have highlighted that the failure to involve women as stakeholders has been a challenge to biodiversity conservation, there is often limited information on strategies and actions to apply gender considerations in the NBSAPs, or on the engagement of women's groups and/or ministries of women's affairs in the NBSAP review and implementation process. Revised NBSAPs further showed no obvious pattern over time to suggest increased attention to gender issues from November 2010 until February 2018.

### **C. Rio Conventions survey on joint capacity-building needs for gender mainstreaming**

12. In partnership with the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC) and the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#) (UNCCD), the Secretariat carried out a survey on joint capacity-building needs for gender mainstreaming, which was open for responses from Parties and stakeholders from 4 October to 15 December 2017.<sup>6</sup> The survey and corresponding notification were made available in English, French and Spanish.

13. The survey had a high number of responses,<sup>7</sup> and indicated that there is considerable importance attached to gender mainstreaming in national government institutions, where the majority of respondents were based. Priority organizational needs identified were to increase staff skills and knowledge, and the availability of tools, guidelines and methodologies. Opportunities flagged for joint capacity-building among the Rio Conventions included: improving "gender literacy" or increased understanding of gender and biodiversity/environment linkages; women's empowerment and participation in the Convention; considering the regional/national/local context for implementation; and establishing/emphasizing synergies between the conventions. Training needs included the integration of gender in the design and management of projects and in the development and evaluation of policies. Developing a database or platform on linkages between gender, biodiversity and climate change was also proposed among practical actions for capacity-building.

## **II. SECRETARIAT ACTIONS**

14. Actions were undertaken by the Secretariat and partners at the national, regional and international levels.

<sup>5</sup> See IUCN, "Inclusion and characterization of women and gender equality considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)", EGI Factsheet, December 2016.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2017/ntf-2017-100-gender-en.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> A total of 368 respondents completed the survey (277 English, 36 French, 55 Spanish), with a total of 220 respondents (157 English, 25 French, 38 Spanish) identifying the Convention on Biological Diversity as relevant to their work, which was the highest number of respondents identified of all the Conventions.

### A. National level

15. With generous financial support from the Government of Japan through the [Japan Biodiversity Fund](#), the Secretariat collaborated with the IUCN Global Gender Office to undertake a pilot project to build the capacity of developing country Parties to integrate gender into their revised NBSAPs. Mexico, Uganda and Brazil were pilot countries in this exercise. Women's groups and related stakeholders were engaged in a collaborative exercise to review and provide inputs on the draft revised NBSAPs. This process helped to build awareness and learning among representatives of women's groups, stakeholders who have not typically been actively engaged in Convention processes. Revised NBSAPs from these pilot countries have incorporated recommendations on gender inputs and demonstrate a considered reflection of gender issues.

16. Details of the pilot project process and some initial considerations that emerged from this initiative are included in a joint publication which was made available at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.<sup>8,9</sup>

17. As part of this initiative, IUCN also carried out an analysis of the level of integration of gender considerations in NBSAPs received by the Secretariat from 1993 through May 2016, and in fifth national reports received by the Secretariat through October 2016. Overall, the analyses found references to gender or women made in 56 per cent of total NBSAPs, and 67 per cent of the fifth national reports. Two summary fact sheets were prepared on the analyses undertaken (on NBSAPs<sup>10</sup> and on fifth national reports<sup>11</sup>), and more detailed results of these analyses were made available in documents prepared for the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.<sup>12</sup> IUCN also produced a comprehensive document on their analysis of gender considerations in NBSAPs.<sup>13</sup>

### B. Regional level

18. In collaboration with the [United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific](#), with the help of other regional partners, and with generous financial assistance from the Government of Sweden, the Secretariat undertook an initiative to develop training materials on gender and biodiversity, focusing on the South-East Asia and the Pacific. A [workshop](#) was held in Bangkok from 28 to 30 November 2017, bringing together gender and environment specialists with biodiversity experts, including Convention focal points, from across the region. The workshop generated considerable engagement and extensive input on the development of the training materials, and further helped to enhance the understanding of participants of gender-biodiversity linkages, as well as generating potential collective actions towards strengthened capacity for gender-responsive biodiversity planning and implementation. Due to the collaboration with the Regional Office and other regional partners, this initiative also helped strengthen institutional ties and identify opportunities to apply the training materials and outcomes of the workshop in upcoming activities in the region.

19. This initiative further served to validate the need for a regional approach, in which regional institutions can play a critical role in leading and maintaining exchanges and fostering opportunities for learning between different actors and different country contexts, helping to leverage the typically limited resources available to address gender and biodiversity issues. The [ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity](#), a key regional partner, engaged in this process both in a supportive role and to build its organizational capacity to mainstream gender issues in its work.

<sup>8</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature and Convention on Biological Diversity, [Integrating Gender Considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans: Pilot Project Process and Initial Considerations](#), November 2016.

<sup>9</sup> A report of the pilot country process in Mexico is contained in the progress report on implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action issued for the first session of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation ([UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/14](#)).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/gender-nbsaps-factsheet.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/gender-5th-national-report-factsheet.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> See [UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.3](#) and [UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/46](#).

<sup>13</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature, [Gender and Biodiversity: Analysis of Women and Gender Equality Considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans \(NBSAPs\)](#), January 2017.

### C. Global level

20. The Secretariat has developed a range of capacity-building materials and initiatives with global relevance, in part in collaboration with key international partners. Generous financial support from the Governments of Canada and Japan has enabled the production of materials including the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action Pocket Guide, which provides a summary of the plan and examples of actions undertaken by Parties. This document is now available on the Convention website in all six official languages of the United Nations.<sup>14</sup> This support has also enabled the Secretariat to prepare a package of materials on gender mainstreaming, and a guide on gender linkages with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which will be available later in 2018.

21. Working with the [Global Environment Facility](#) (GEF) and its Small Grants Programme, and the [United Nations Institute for Training and Research](#) (UNITAR), the Secretariat has provided extensive input into the development of an online module on gender and biodiversity, which will be part of an open-access course on gender and environmental issues. The gender and biodiversity module is expected to be available online in 2018. The Secretariat is also an active partner in the GEF Gender Partnership, a network of gender focal points from GEF-financed conventions and implementing agencies, which has worked to strengthen the integration of gender considerations in programming undertaken by GEF. Actions under this partnership include supporting the development of the new GEF gender policy adopted by the GEF Council in November 2017,<sup>15</sup> and the development of associated gender guidelines, among related efforts.

### III. INITIAL FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

22. Some of the consistent themes that emerged from the analysis of actions by the Secretariat, Parties and stakeholders include the importance of ongoing capacity-building, shared learning, and fostering a critical mass of actors who are aware of and committed to addressing gender and biodiversity issues and who have the tools and resources as well as the collaborative structures within which to do so.

23. Actions by the Secretariat — such as undertaking participatory processes to develop gender-responsive NBSAPs that can serve as examples, and developing a range of capacity-building and informational resources and training tools, including at the regional level — have served both to engage a diverse range of stakeholders, many of whom have not previously participated in Convention processes, and to provide means and opportunities to strengthen this engagement. The awareness and involvement of women's groups and gender-environment specialists in particular has the potential to expand the reach of efforts towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Effective engagement of these stakeholders presents opportunities to take advantage of synergies to support NBSAP implementation in a gender-responsive manner, and to maximize alternative funding streams. Supporting engagement and leadership of key regional partners on gender issues also serves as an important means to enhance coordination, exchange of information and learning, and build on successful outcomes.

24. Submissions received from Parties and stakeholders on progress in implementing the Plan of Action were a positive reflection of efforts to address gender issues, highlighting national plans and frameworks that provide a foundation for increased attention to gender, as well as initiatives that have the potential to further advance understanding and capacity on gender-biodiversity linkages.

25. The review of post-Nagoya NBSAPs suggests that many Parties recognize gender issues as relevant in some way to the achievement of biodiversity objectives; yet, gaps remain in addressing gender consistently in strategies and actions, and in engaging women's representatives meaningfully in planning and implementation processes. Continued calls for capacity-building suggest that lack of understanding of ways to integrate gender issues may be a factor in addressing gender effectively in planning and implementation processes. The survey undertaken with the Rio Conventions on joint capacity-building needs further underscored issues around “gender literacy” or understanding of gender and

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/CBD-GenderPlanofAction-EN-WEB.pdf>; <https://www.cbd.int/gender/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/policy-gender-equality>



biodiversity/environment linkages, identifying the need to increase staff skills and knowledge, and the availability of tools and guidance information. A lack of understanding of the “how” of addressing gender or of the full impact of gender inequalities on the achievement of biodiversity outcomes is also likely to influence political commitment to apply resources needed to fully address gender in the NBSAP and other processes under the Convention.

#### IV. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE POST-2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

26. The development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework provides an opportunity for further integration of gender considerations in the context of the Convention. As the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Aichi Biodiversity Targets have few references to gender issues, opportunities to promote gender actions in implementation are accordingly limited. Increased attention to gender dimensions in the post-2020 framework is therefore an important means to strengthen the achievement of gender-biodiversity objectives.

27. On the margins of the twenty-first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the Secretariat held a side event on 13 December 2017 in the form of a workshop/informal consultation on the Convention’s Gender Plan of Action in the context of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The event was well attended by participants from among Parties and observer organizations, and generated useful feedback for consideration of future steps for strengthened attention on gender under the Convention. Proposals that emerged from the discussion included: (a) aligning the development of a new/next gender plan of action for the period beyond 2020 with the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework; (b) identifying more precise and enforceable targets rather than broader goals, with the same targets for all countries; (c) considering the nomination of national gender focal points; and (d) determining gaps and lessons learned from the Gender Plan of Action for the purpose of informing the process for developing the post-2020 framework. Additional needs related to clarifying language and messages around gender, and gender and biodiversity, to avoiding resistance to the term “gender”, and to ensuring that language is inclusive, as well as ensuring that those implementing biodiversity-related activities receive training and support for capacity-building on gender issues.

28. Requests for increased attention on gender issues were also repeated in submissions received from Parties and other stakeholders in response to notifications<sup>16</sup> inviting contributions to the development of the process for developing the post-2020 biodiversity framework. Calls were made to address gender as a cross-cutting issue and to integrate gender in the framework, including as a stand-alone target. Further articulation was requested on how the process for the framework will be gender-sensitive. A request was also made for consideration of culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive tools and methods, and indigenous languages as part of the channels of participation, in order to promote gender mainstreaming at all levels throughout the preparatory process.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

29. The positive momentum towards increased gender mainstreaming as indicated in the actions and analyses described above corresponds with the increasing international attention to gender issues in all aspects of sustainable development, notably as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals, where gender equality is represented both as a stand-alone goal and as a critical cross-cutting component.

30. Returning to the objectives of the Gender Plan of Action, it is clear that actions to mainstream a gender perspective are being undertaken on a variety of fronts, which also contribute to promoting gender equality in achieving the objectives of the Plan. Yet, much work remains in integrating gender considerations, and in strengthening the case for how gender-responsive strategies and actions can support the attainment of biodiversity objectives, in order to generate greater commitment and investment to address gender issues. Ongoing capacity-building and exchange of shared learning are critical measures to

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2017/ntf-2017-052-post2020-en.pdf>; <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2017/ntf-2017-124-post2020-en.pdf>

realize demonstrable gender-biodiversity outcomes, and there remains a need for dedicated resources to support such work.

31. These analyses also point to valuable opportunities for moving forward on a gender-responsive biodiversity agenda. National and regional plans and strategies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals offer a means to take action on gender and biodiversity issues, such as in addressing targets to ensure equitable access to land and natural resources.<sup>17</sup> The adoption of the first gender plans of action under UNFCCC and UNCCD<sup>18</sup> offers the potential to consider focusing and harmonizing actions to achieve shared objectives among the Rio Conventions. Given the strong and growing recognition of gender issues with respect to climate change in particular, it is important to ensure that gender-biodiversity linkages are taken into account as part of the solution in mitigation and adaptation actions.

32. Inputs from Parties and stakeholders related to the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework emphasized the need to address gender issues more fully and explicitly in this process and in the framework itself. A review of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action was identified as an important step for determining which areas need to be strengthened in a revised or updated Plan and in the post-2020 framework. The development of a follow-up gender plan of action or strategy for the period beyond 2020 would also be a necessary step to ensure that efforts to mainstream gender are taken forward, given that the time frame of the current plan does not extend beyond 2020. In order to align the process of developing a new/revised gender plan of action with the development of the post-2020 framework, it will be critical for gender to be well integrated into all the aspects of the framework development process, as has been recommended. Thus, the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework offers a significant opportunity to increase attention and focus on gender in work to implement the Convention.

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<sup>17</sup> Targets 1.4; 2.3; 5.a under the Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>18</sup> UNFCCC gender plan of action was adopted at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Bonn from 6 to 17 November 2017; the UNCCD gender plan of action was adopted at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Ordos, China, from 6 to 16 September 2017.