

## **Climate Adaptation Fund: a gender assessment and implications for women**

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### **BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**

The impacts of climate change are already making themselves felt around the world, particularly in the newly emerging and developing countries. While the international community's focus is on the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions over the coming decades, the need for countries to act quickly to adapt to more frequent natural disasters and extreme weather events, growing water scarcity, coastal flooding and accelerated biodiversity is no less urgent. Failure to avert the most dramatic impacts will not only entail immense economic costs; it will threaten the livelihoods and lives of millions of women, men and children.

The Adaptation Fund will finance adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. It has a number of unique features in the areas of ownership and access, funding and revenue generation, as well as governance and legal structure. The fund has garnered a heightened sense of awareness and anticipation in the international environmental community: developing countries expect the fund to provide a steady and sustainable stream of funding for adaptation measures, and developed countries are eager to assess how the fund's novel governance and financing instruments — in which developing countries play a lead role — deliver on its promise.

The Adaptation Fund does not depend on traditional development assistance — it is self-financed through the evolving carbon market. The Adaptation Fund expects to be financed primarily through a two percent share of the proceeds realized from the sale of certified emissions reductions (CERs) issued for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects, and with funds from other sources. This innovative mechanism points to new and potentially self-sustaining financing models for the future.

To date, the World Bank, as the Adaptation Fund's trustee, has completed sales of certified emission reductions certificates, generating over \$31 million. Under current pricing, the Adaptation Fund would have approximately \$500 million at its disposal until 2012.

Though established in 2007 at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali, the Adaptation Fund has yet to establish its funding priorities and criteria, define or determine which countries are more vulnerable than others, strengthen and widen its funding base, or disburse revenues.

With these and other issues being negotiated and resolved, the Adaptation Fund's relatively fluid state presents stakeholders with the opportunity to lobby for greater gender sensitivities and policies, and to incorporate gender issues into the fund's governance and funding architecture.

### **What types of projects are funded by the Adaptation Fund?**

A first call for proposals is expected in 2010, with first projects being funded in the second half of 2010. Based on discussions in the Adaptation Fund board adaptation programmes and projects that reduce the adverse effects of climate change facing vulnerable communities, countries and sectors will receive priority funding consideration, as will low-lying countries and small island states; countries with low-lying coastal, arid or semi-arid areas; areas liable to floods, drought and desertification; and those with fragile mountain ecosystems.

### **Who oversees the Adaptation Fund, and what is its operational structure?**

The Adaptation Fund board is the principal governing and managing body of the fund. It is responsible for the strategic oversight of projects, programmes, policies and guidelines. It is also responsible for funds allocations, monitoring and reviewing their implementation. It is comprised of 16 members, with two members representing each of the five United Nations regional groups, one member representing each of Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, and two members each representing Annex I (developed) and Annex II (developing) countries. This structure creates a *de facto* developing country majority, and thus embodies the principle of equitable and balanced representation.

### **What is the process for accessing funding?**

A central feature of the fund allows country-level national implementing entities (NIEs), after completing an accreditation process, to directly access Adaptation Fund funds for approved projects and programmes. In this way, the Adaptation Fund represents a departure from decades of donor-driven and donor-dependent assistance and could be a first step toward direct ownership by intended beneficiaries<sup>1</sup>.

Direct access and working through NIEs can provide significant opportunities for making the fund more gender-sensitive in its programmes and projects. Since climate-change impacts are often socially and culturally specific, NIEs need to include voices of men and women in climate-change debates at all levels. The equal involvement of men and women in adaptation planning through NIEs is critical, both to ensure that the measures developed are beneficial for all those who are supposed to implement them, and also to ensure that all relevant knowledge is integrated into policy, programmes and projects.

### **How does this fund relate to poor women's and men's livelihoods?**

#### **Linkages between the fund and local livelihoods**

Though the fund has yet to define or determine its funding priorities and allocations, given the close links between development and climate change, the Adaptation Fund board should be encouraged to pursue and promote policies and projects that prioritize and enhance ecosystem resilience, support

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<sup>1</sup> After almost two years of intense and contentious discussions on the Board about direct access to AF resources, both Annex I and Annex II Board members agreed that while national implementing agencies –(NIEs) would be given full responsibility for overall management — including financial integrity, monitoring and reporting responsibilities of projects and programs — countries with weak institutional capacities would have the option to use existing international development agencies (or Multilateral Implementing Entities – MIEs) to access the AF's resources.

resilient and adaptive capacity of communities for adaptation planning and implementation, and share knowledge on best practices from the local to the global level.

While both women and men have their respective roles and responsibilities in securing the livelihoods of their families and communities, they greatly differ in how they manage and maintain the use of natural resources. Failure to understand and factor in gender dimensions in the production and use of ecosystem services and, by extension, enhancing their resilience will inevitably lead to wasting scarce development resources, and negative effects on household welfare, and will undermine environmental sustainability, both locally and globally.

Adaptation strategies and action should therefore focus primarily on the most vulnerable systems and communities affected by climate change: endangered ecosystems and poor people. Given local livelihoods' dynamics, the fund needs to enhance the support of women in particular, for they are the primary managers of local food, water and the building and maintenance of natural adaptation infrastructures in local communities.

#### **How can moneys dispersed through this fund contribute to poor men and women's livelihoods?**

Given the country-driven development and climate change mandates, the Adaptation Fund's resources must support national adaptation plans of action. Both NIEs and multilateral implementing agencies (MIEs) must be responsive to the larger development priorities of the eligible countries. And while the fund's expected revenues and allocations are likely to be on a large scale, its direct-access provisions provide the NIEs in principle with the levers necessary to ensure that funds reach the most vulnerable in a community. Very often, the most vulnerable will comprise farmers, herders, fishers and hunters who live on and depend upon the land for their livelihoods.

They also include, particularly in rural communities, women who make up 70 percent of the world's poor. Women play complementary roles in guaranteeing food security by growing, processing, managing, and marketing food, and they manage other natural resources. They are often also responsible for raising small livestock, managing vegetable gardens and collecting fuel and water. But when natural disasters and extreme weather events, growing water scarcity, flooding and other dramatic environmental shifts take place, women are particularly vulnerable because of their multiple social roles, responsibilities and dearth of access to support<sup>2</sup>.

#### **How might this fund have different impacts on men versus women?**

Adaptation Fund board decisions about the scale of adaptation projects and programmes will greatly determine who benefits most. Should the board determine to primarily support large-scale infrastructure projects, then benefits to women are more likely to be indirect. Support for small-scale, nature-based adaptation strategies and projects (to protect agricultural lands, marshes and mangroves that shield particularly low-lying coastal areas from wind and wave damage in developing countries), on the other hand, might have a more direct result for women if they have tenure to those lands.

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<sup>2</sup> Nidhi Tandon, "Biopolitics, climate change and water security: impact, vulnerability and adaptation issues for women" in: AGENDA No: 73 2008, Durban, South Africa, [www.agenda.org.za](http://www.agenda.org.za), pp. 4–17; [http://www.networkedintelligence.com/Biopolitics\\_of\\_water.pdf](http://www.networkedintelligence.com/Biopolitics_of_water.pdf), p.9

### **To what degree does the fund currently take gender into consideration?**

Of the Adaptation Fund board's 16 members, two are women, and of the 16 alternate members of the board, four are women. This inclusion, however, does not guarantee that gender considerations will influence Adaptation Fund board decision-making. Before the policies, procedures and criteria established by the Adaptation Fund board become entrenched, a comprehensive gender audit needs to be undertaken.

As the International Climate Change community is considering per capita-based emission allocations and standards across countries to achieve equity and fair representation between Annex I and Annex II countries, per capita-based gender allocations could also be considered and applied as the basis for determining the composition of a gender-equitable Adaptation Fund board. Beyond the mere factual, giving women equal representation at the board level of such a premier global climate change financing instrument would send positive reform signals to other financing instruments and set in motion the long overdue overhaul of their respective governance and decision-making structures. It would also revitalize gender mainstreaming<sup>3</sup> and gender-equity efforts in the larger climate change community.

### **Does the fund have any specific references to gender in its operational structure or distributional guidelines?**

The most tangible reference the fund makes to gender consideration is, at best, implicit. Therefore, it will be necessary to expansively interpret the term 'vulnerable communities' from the start, and to mainstream gender-impact measures throughout the selection, disbursement, reporting and evaluation processes.

Climate change through, for instance, increases in temperature affects both women and men, but it affects them in different ways. Women, for instance, are most affected by water stress — more than half of the 1.2 billion people who do not have access to water worldwide are women and girls, and it makes them particularly vulnerable to increased scarcity of water resources. In most developing countries, women are responsible for water management at the domestic and community level, while men — especially in rural areas — do not play the role of getting or carrying water. Their relation with water has more to do with agricultural work and with the storage of water. This gender-determined inequality has implications for women's daily life from a rights-based perspective, since the carrying of water not only causes them physical harm but also makes it impossible for them to make time for education, income generation, politics and recreation<sup>4</sup>.

Giving these vulnerable communities more visibility by specifically according them priority access to funding is not only an expression of gender equity but, more importantly, a matter of fairness and

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<sup>3</sup> Gender mainstreaming is defined by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as: "...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political and economic spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality".

<sup>4</sup> GEF, Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF. October 2008, pp. 7 – 9; Nidhi Tandon, "Biopolitics of water, p. 10, in : [http://www.networkedintelligence.com/Biopolitics\\_of\\_water.pdf](http://www.networkedintelligence.com/Biopolitics_of_water.pdf),

respect for human rights. And while, in principle, this fund is more accessible than most, deliberate and strategic measures need to be taken in order to ensure that NIEs engaged at the national level also respect and represent the particular needs and interests of women. These measures have to be supported by civil society organizations, lobbying national governments and Adaptation Fund board members, as well as the Adaptation Fund's various committees. If these key steps are not taken, it is quite likely that women risk being left out of the fund's reach entirely.

### **Entry points for making the fund more equitable**

#### **In what ways could the fund become more gender-equitable?**

In the absence of specific gender references in the current Adaptation Fund's policy or strategy, it is necessary to adopt gender-focused programmes and projects through the fund's management structure. Future Adaptation Fund board proceedings should be encouraged to incorporate explicit gender references across the entire spectrum of the fund's operation.

National machineries responsible for women's issues — such as women's ministries — need to be made aware of the Adaptation Fund and the potential for engaging more closely with NIEs to directly access the funds. The Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting scheduled for June 2010 is one such arena where presentations on the scope of the fund can be made directly to ministers.

Gender consultants' rosters should be made available to the Adaptation Fund board to serve as a resource for gender auditing, research, evaluation and policy formulation. Best practices from a range of materials on gender and sustainable livelihoods need to be made available to the Adaptation Fund board, drawing on existing and recent work (e.g., the World Bank's Gender and Agriculture sourcebook).

Adaptation Fund board directors' and NIEs' and MIEs' Terms of Reference/TOR should specify a commitment to gender training at least twice in the course of their term on the board. Training could focus specifically on climate vulnerability and capacity analysis and gender-impact assessments.

The Adaptation Fund board needs to adopt a regularized and standardized approach to gender audits of the process of criteria profiling, project selection, gender impacts and indicators and project monitoring and lessons learned. There are many models used by bilateral and multilateral aid agencies that can be adapted for the fund, but these will need to be customized and contextualised to fit the specific area needs.

#### **What types of projects could this fund focus on that would ensure a positive impact on women?**

Small-scale, community-based projects in the areas of natural resource management, particularly water, energy and land tenure; and small-scale local food farming for sustenance and health should be given priority funding consideration. Community-based engagement lends itself well to the inclusion of women's voices, who, if given the opportunity to articulate their needs, will often be the ones to suggest the workable solutions that need financial underwriting.

Progressive quotas should be put in place to promote women-friendly projects. Lessons learned from political processes and development experiences in this field provide sufficient evidence that substantive engagement by women in the conception, design and implementation of programmes and

projects make them more effective and sustainable. However, to enable genuine involvement in decision-making at all levels, it is imperative to invest more systematically in women's capacity to participate meaningfully in policy-making processes through supporting advocacy and leadership training to build skills and confidence. Broader participation by women would enable a wider cross-section of stakeholders to be involved, and would, at the same time, ensure continuity of the process, and, ultimately, improved efficiency in the implementation of climate-change adaptation strategies and projects.

In addition, information and communications technology capacity training for women should be considered integral to any funding consideration and award, so that women can access information and application processes directly with both national and multilateral implementing and executing agencies. In an age where warning systems, weather forecast systems, land mapping, and even simple application or certification processes are more and more IT-based, there is ample evidence from the ground that women are not only keen to access information strategically, but are key producers and distributors of this information in community settings.

### **Suggestions for moving forward**

A single non-paper (an off-the-record or unofficial presentation of policy) introduced during the final pre-Copenhagen negotiating round in Barcelona by the Ad hoc Barcelona Working Group on Adaptation<sup>5</sup> explicitly refers to gender as an issue in considering adaptation measures. This non-paper affirms, regarding the enhancement "of adaptation action at national level, all Parties, in line with a country-driven approach and taking into account local and national adaptation plans, **as well as gender** and ecosystem considerations, [shall] [should] [may] implement specific programmes, projects, activities, strategies and measures..." This should launch further discussion at a higher level on behalf of a more gender-equitable application of the Adaptation Fund.

Build on the momentum being created by UNFCCC member countries considering per capita-based emission allocations and standards across countries to achieve equity and fair representation between Annex I and Annex II countries, and lobby for the composition of the Convention's Adaptation Fund board and its policies and programmes to also be determined by a per capita-based gender allocation.

Build on the Adaptation Fund board's discussions about institutional observers representation — the right to be present at board meetings should be tabled by the concerned stakeholders in the course of the upcoming institutional review of the Adaptation Fund and Adaptation Fund board of the CMP in 2010 in Mexico. Equitable gender representation on both the board and management, as well as in project design, budget allocations, and implementation, should be considered an imperative.

Organizations with observer status should routinely organize in close cooperation with the Adaptation Fund board, its committees, the secretariat, the trustee and NIEs and MIEs a one-day pre-board series of technical briefings on all matters impacting the design and implementation of gender concerns and considerations.

The board is expected to develop a results framework to support projects and programmes. The gender component should be made integral to this framework, and to the strategic priorities, policies, and

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<sup>5</sup> UNFCCC - AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON LONG-TERM COOPERATIVE ACTION UNDER THE CONVENTION, Resumed seventh session Barcelona, 2.6 November 2009, Page 1 of 31, as well as Annex I, Non-paper No. 53 06/11/2009 - Non-paper by the co-chairs.

guidelines of the Adaptation Fund. It must ensure systemic incorporation of gender targets, priorities and components throughout. Substantive inputs from outside experts should be made available in the form of papers, workshops and board and committee presentations. A strategic point of entry would be the *Strategic Priorities, Policies, and Guidelines of the Adaptation Fund* documents, which are periodically reviewed and rewritten by the Adaptation Fund board.

*(Edited by Deanna Wong)*