

SUBMISSION

In relation to the progress in implementing the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action

Ref.: SCBD/MCO/AF/NP/TM/87003

Convention on Biological Diversity
Cristiana Paşca Palmer, PhD
Executive Secretary
413 Rue Saint-Jacques Ouest, Suite 800 Montreal, Quebec
Canada H2Y 1N9

12 February 2018

Dear Ms. Cristiana Paşca Palmer,

This is a submission by the Global Forest Coalition (GFC), together comprising Indigenous Peoples' organisations, community-based organisations, and NGOs, working on issues related to forests, biodiversity conservation and gender.

This submission includes the following sections:

- Contributions of the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI)
- Contributions of the Women2030 programme
- Recommendations for more effective implementation of the CBD's 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action

Thank you for this opportunity to provide inputs on these important matters related to the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action, to be considered by the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simone Lovera', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Simone Lovera

1. The Global Forest Coalition (GFC) would like to submit information on the efforts made by the organisation in implementing the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action. In its efforts, GFC promotes a community-driven, rights-based approach that aims to strengthen the endogenous development, self-determination, and policy influence of rightsholders like Indigenous peoples and local communities and women who are on the frontlines of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
2. To promote implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and gender integration in national biodiversity strategies and actions, Parties should adopt and institutionalise an approach that meaningfully engages rightsholders and respects their Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), from planning to implementation and monitoring. This involves institutionalising participatory rightsholder engagement processes and gender-responsive tools such as gender analysis in biodiversity policy planning and monitoring.

Contributions of the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI)

3. GFC as part of its Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI) aims to contribute to the implementation of the CBD Aichi Targets by providing policy advice on effective and appropriate forms of support for community conservation and restoration initiatives by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Coordinated by GFC, the CCRI has been supporting more than 70 communities in 22 countries to assess their own conservation efforts and to identify forms of support needed to sustain and strengthen them.

Gender analysis in community assessments

4. A gender analysis has been conducted in the community assessments highlighting the different roles, rights, responsibilities and needs of women and men in conserving and sustainably using biodiversity, contributing to the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action (7.1 and 7.2).
5. Examining gender considerations in the CCRI help reveal existing gender inequalities, opportunities and contributions of women and men in relation to biodiversity conservation at the community level, and pave the path for initiating gender mainstreaming.
6. Through the gender analysis in the CCRI, women in the assessment communities have started to engage in collectively identifying external and internal threats to their local biodiversity, reflecting on the consequences and making recommendations for addressing those threats.
7. The process of gender analysis and the resulting information brings women's priorities and gender-differentiated impacts of biodiversity loss and conservation to the fore, creating new spaces for such discussion. This paves the path for such priorities and impacts to be integrated in local biodiversity policy-making and budgeting and can provide good examples for (national) up-scaling.
8. Parties should develop and implement gender analyses at the local, sub-national and national levels, in order to include women's priorities and potential impacts around biodiversity in their national strategies and policies.

Key findings and recommendations from gender analysis in the CCRI

9. Parties should take note of the following key findings and recommendations from the gender analyses in the CCRI, to promote effective gender integration in national biodiversity policy planning:
10. Respecting and recognising the community tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities is integral to the survival of communities and their environments, benefitting men and women.
11. Despite playing a major role in biodiversity conservation and forest management, such as through inter-generational transmission of traditional knowledge, energy generation, collection of food and medicine, and sustainable livelihoods, women are found to be excluded from participation in local and national executive committees, managerial positions, decision-making bodies, and from controlling land and resources. In some communities, there is limited participation by women in community processes and activities in general. This can be attributed to patriarchal and discriminatory attitudes and national policy (e.g. patrimonial land inheritance). Limited awareness on women's legal rights and policy provisions around biodiversity conservation, use and management at the local and national level also play a role.
12. Benefits of biodiversity resources are not always equally distributed between wealthy and poor community members and between men and women; women are often not participating in benefit sharing, with limited access to forests for collecting fuel wood and non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Women need their rights and security ensured while accessing forests.
13. Women are facing limited access to, and scarcity of, NTFPs in forests, which affects them and the wellbeing of their families; women themselves are developing new ways of addressing this, such as to inter plant NTFPs with food crop farms.
14. Women and men from communities need national governments to recognise their practices as contributing to biodiversity conservation and to support them through recognition of their roles in policy and through financial means. National funds and schemes are better channelled through village governing councils made up of all the adult members of the village rather than "heads of households".
15. The CCRI outcomes emphasised the need to strengthen the role of women in conservation through creating women's advocacy networks for biodiversity conservation at the local and county levels, linked to national level advocacy networks. The CCRI outcomes also demonstrated women's growing interest in taking part as legitimate stakeholders in local and national biodiversity policy planning and decision-making, and the need for national and global support for initiatives like this.
16. Revival of traditional customary uses and practices on community land is very important, including reviving and strengthening traditional livelihood opportunities as this provides additional economic opportunities in the local community for women. Women emphasised the need for long-term sustainable livelihood activities to respond to pressing needs of families.

17. Women are also demanding further capacity building on sustainable biodiversity use, for example through agroecology training especially for women farmers.

18. Women's participation in community conservation efforts increased in the communities where the CCRI was conducted. However, facilitating effective participation of women is still a challenge, and it was often required to have separate meetings with men and women, and then joint meetings to enable women's active participation and voices to be heard.

19. Community members and leaders have increased understanding of the benefits of considering gender differentiated roles and impacts and women's aspirations in local biodiversity planning and decision-making.

Contributions of the Women2030 programme

20. GFC through its Women2030 project, funded by the Development Cooperation arm of the European Commission (DG DEVCO), focuses on building capacity of organisations on gender-responsive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and women's empowerment, with a particular focus on SDG 15 and community conservation.

21. GFC has implemented activities to raise the status and importance of women's rights and gender mainstreaming in biodiversity conservation at the local level. GFC has also collected recommendations from Indigenous and rural women from the grassroots to feed into recommendations in the CBD at the global level.

22. These actions have proven to be successful in raising awareness and mobilising communities towards implementation of the CBD. Parties ought to undertake similar capacity building and consultation initiatives locally and sub-nationally when developing national policy strategies and actions. This allows for engagement and understanding rightsholders' priorities at the frontlines of biodiversity loss, particularly Indigenous Peoples and women.

23. Through this project GFC has provided capacity building and awareness of CBD policy and the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action to GFC members and Indigenous, environmental and women's groups globally. Consultations and capacity building initiatives on the rights, roles and needs of women in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development were also organised. In total, these groups reached a total of **1,936 community members**, including **1,199 women** and **737 men** in **56 local communities in 14 countries** (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, DRC, Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Chile, Paraguay, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) through various actions, including:

- Trainings for national organisations, local women's groups and women-led forest-user groups on gender equality, women's rights, gender analysis, community-based forest enterprises and policy provisions around access to biodiversity and forests.
- Sub-granting to implement community initiatives addressing biodiversity conservation, women's sustainable livelihoods and awareness raising on legal rights.
- Advocacy activities for conservation and management of forests and claiming habitat rights by the communities and women themselves.

- Creating informal women's groups on farming, tree-planting initiatives, and small-scale sustainable women-led enterprises.

Case study: Following capacity building on gender equity and social inclusion, the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), a formal network of 13,000 Forest User Groups (FUGs), developed a strategic plan to revise their bylaws and forest management plans towards the integration of gender equity and social inclusion in community forestry; a strong example of gender mainstreaming at the national civil society level.

Recommendations for more effective implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action

24. GFC calls for the following actions to ensure more progress on the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action, which were proposed by the CBD Women's Caucus in its submission on Preparations for the post-2020 Strategic Plan (Ref.:SCBD/OES/PPP/DC/CE/86582).

- We call for a participatory process involving women, including Indigenous women, grassroots women's groups, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, to update the post-2020 Gender Plan of Action in line with the new strategic plan.
- The process to prepare an updated post-2020 Gender Plan of Action must include a secretariat led mid-term evaluation and analysis of the interim outcomes of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action.
- An independent evaluation that measures Parties efforts in implementing the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action is also needed. Through this we can identify specific gaps, lessons learned, and recommendations going forward.
- The 'gender task force', which was called for in the current 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and COP12 Decision XII/7, should play a key role in ensuring the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action. It should be a resourced and an active body that is inclusive of external representatives including those from rightsholder groups. Therefore, women, including Indigenous women and grassroots women's groups should be engaged as key gender experts in the gender task force.
- Ensuring women, particularly Indigenous women and grassroots women's groups, have their spaces and seats at the table in all processes at all levels of the CBD, including through the major groups and stakeholder groups structure such as the CBD Women's Caucus, Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network (IWBN) including its regional caucus from Latin America and the Caribbean (RMIB-LAC), and the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB).

- Engaging women, particularly Indigenous women and grassroots women's groups as experts in global consultations, regional and national workshops and expert meetings, in an inclusive and equitable manner, and ensuring there is translation for effective engagement.
- Mobilising funding/resources to ensure that Indigenous women and representatives from grassroots women's groups (diverse in age and gender) can be financed to participate in both global and regional meetings. For example, we encourage Parties to contribute generously to the CBD Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to enable their participation CBD processes, including CBD regional workshops, expert group meetings and inter-sessional meetings at COPs.