Mainstreaming gender in climate change

Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation Viewed Through Gender Lenses

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WHAT HAS GENDER GOT TO DO WITH IT?
Gender: the big absentee

- Absence from decision-making
- Institutional absence
- Representational absence
- Semantic absence
- Financial absence
- Information-related absence
- Gender = low priority
Ironic of the Climate Debate

- Sustainable development as a finality but unsustainable practices
- Survival of the fittest
- Poverty reduction become relegated to secondary status
- Environmental management becomes more of a paper victory
- Climate change = about human security yet driven by market interest
The More or Less Equation

- Are women poorer than men?
- Are they more vulnerable than men?
- Do they have more control over resources?
- Have they more capacity to adapt to environmental degradation and the climate related impacts?
- Do they have a role to play?
- Can their knowledge be utilised?
Environmental resource management is gendered.

Both women and men use the forest as a main source of livelihood.

Women also use plants and forest products for medicinal purposes.

Involvement in reforestation projects.

Agricultural and market gardening activities accentuate the strong link between women and the environment = natural environmental managers.
Vulnerability Issues

- Land degradation has huge environmental/food security implications
- Dependency on biomass energy = increase greater drudgery with depletion of forests
- Climate Change will worsen climatic conditions = knock on effect on agriculture
- CC would result in the loss of biodiversity i.e. fish species
- Sahelian countries prone to drought and desertification will be hugely affected
- Women make up three quarters of the agricultural work force
- Consequently loss of revenue and livelihoods
Vulnerability

- Harsh environmental conditions will also cause population displacement.
- Consequently more burden on women due to gendered division of labour.
- Climatic conditions would affect water availability and women and children would resort to water supplies from dirty ponds.
- Health risks are accentuated with increased temperatures.
Adaptation Strategies

Agriculture & Food Security
Subsistence agriculture, Market Gardening, Household Activities
- Improve crop species
- Use of perennial crops to prevent soil erosion
- Improve agricultural practices (irrigation systems, water management)
Adaptation Strategies

Water Resource Management (Productive and Domestic Use)
- Improved water resource management by a more efficient use of existing supplies
- New reservoirs and pipelines to boost supplies
- Reduce water pollution
Adaptation

Forest Resource Management (commercial/livelihoods purposes, household fuel, medicinal Purposes)
- rational use of forest reserves
- Clear enforcement regulations to protect local communities against illegal felling of trees
- Reforestation programmes
- Substitution fuels to curb the increase use of biomass
- More energy efficient technologies
Adaptation Strategies

Fisheries (commercial purposes, food processing, smoke fish
- regulation of fish exploitation
- Better and sustainable practices within the industry
- Preservation and processing of fish products
Mitigation

Clean Development could accelerate sustainability by promoting cleaner fuels

CDM projects could support existing energy projects (improved stoves, waste to energy project)

CDM to support energy infrastructures
Mitigation

But would lack of capacity affect women’s abilities to take advantage of economic spin-offs from the CDM?

Possibility of CDM opportunities going to entrepreneurs best able to take advantage of such potential
Equity Dimension

- Climate Change has huge equity implications

- Climate change should help bridge the gap between rich and poor not make it wider

- Unequal power relations between women and men has huge income generating implication

- Women bear the brunt of environmental degradation, macro-economic policies, poor technologies, lack of credit and information
Institutional Support

- CDM - should integrate gender in future projects
- More incentives to encourage private sector involvement
- GEF – can support the development of new energy technologies and thus improve energy efficiency
Institutional Support

- Build capacity in education, training and technology

- National governments – ensure that new activities build on existing initiatives taken (desertification, energy projects)

- National governments should include gender concerns in environmental management in key programmes (PRSP)

- International agencies could encourage more research on the linkages between gender and the 3 Conventions
Women are central pillars of the sustainable development debate and as such should together with men participate in building a sustainable future.