

Gender and Climate Change Submission of the United States

The United States welcomes the opportunity to present proposals on options and ways to enhance the goal of gender balance, in line with paragraph 11 of decision 23/CP.18 (“Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol”). Women play a critical role in climate change solutions and addressing gender issues is crucial to the objective of the UNFCCC and to combating climate change globally. The United States is pleased to be a leader in integrating gender issues and promoting women’s empowerment in this regard.

Decision 23/CP.18 addresses several facets of gender issues as they relate to the UNFCCC, namely:

1. Gender balance and related capacity building in the UNFCCC specifically; and
2. The importance of gender-sensitive climate change policies.

This submission proposes a workshop structure that we think will allow for the most fruitful discussions and outlines a few examples of the U.S. experience with gender-sensitive climate policy and programs. We also propose several concrete ways in which we might advance the dual aspects of decision 23/CP.18.

Workshop Structure

Per decision 23/CP.18, the workshop in Warsaw will focus on three elements: Gender balance in the UNFCCC, capacity-building for women in the UNFCCC, and gender-sensitive climate policies. Overall, given the cross-cutting nature of the issue of gender, we believe it is necessary to structure this workshop in a different way than many other UNFCCC workshops have been structured. Although they are highly complementary in their aims and outcomes, we propose to structure the workshop to focus on the issues independently. We think it would make sense to consider the first two elements together in one half of the workshop session, and then consider the last aspect as a standalone piece in the other half.

Specifically, for the second session on gender-sensitive climate policies, we recommend an interactive session, focused around the presentation of a “case study” or two on gender and climate change policy and/or programs that would allow for a focused discussion and a more hands-on approach. The Secretariat would select the case studies to be presented, after which workshop participants would be split into small groups and asked to respond to the presentations. This would allow for workshop participants to engage in a more hands-on and directly relevant way than just a question and answer session and would ideally spark new thinking and action on these issues.

U.S. action to promote women’s leadership in combating climate change and experience with integrating gender considerations in climate change programs

For the last several years, the United States has made a concerted effort to support the critical role of women around the world in combating climate change. Below we briefly highlight a few programs that we think are instructive of the breadth of our work and experience:

- **USAID Gender Integration:** USAID climate change programming aims to empower women as decision makers in their communities, build the leadership skills of women engaged in climate change professions, and foster an enabling environment through policy and institution reform. The USAID Climate Change and Development Strategy (2012) is guided by a principle of gender-sensitive approaches across all of our work. This integrates gender concerns across sectors and projects in a way that is flexible enough to account for the particular circumstances of projects.
- **Gender and Climate Action Plans:** Building on ongoing work on gender and climate change, USAID will be supporting select countries to create national-level gender and climate change action plans or build capacity to address gender issues in climate change programming.
- **LEAF Gender Dimensions:** USAID's Regional Development Mission in Asia's (RDMA) project Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF) is advanced in these integration efforts. LEAF uses gender mainstreaming as a key approach to integrate gender throughout its programming while also building women's capacity for leadership in REDD+. LEAF and its partner organizations discuss the importance of genuine female participation; equitable distribution of resources, benefits and opportunities between women and men in the organization; and the importance of increased awareness of the human rights of women by those engaging in climate change mitigation activities. LEAF encourages all partner organizations to consider gender equality in their activities and builds their capacity to do so.
- **Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves:** The U.S. Government is a Founding Partner and strong supporter of the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, which includes combating climate change and empowering women as central components of its mission. The Alliance recognizes that women have crucial roles to play across the clean cooking value chain, as well as recognizing the specific benefits to women presented by action on clean cooking, including economic and health aspects. It is undertaking a series of related efforts including: (1) a major research effort to understand the gender impacts when households adopt clean cooking solutions and the impact that women entrepreneurs can have on adoption rates when selling, distributing, producing, and marketing improved cooking solutions; (2) developing tools and building partner capacity to effectively empower women throughout the clean cooking value chain, most recently through its soon to be released report, *Scaling Clean Cooking Solutions through Women's Empowerment: A Resource Guide for Practitioners*; and (3) funding strategic pilots to test innovative approaches for economically empowering women entrepreneurs and for developing consumer finance mechanisms.
- **wPOWER:** The State Department Offices of the Special Envoy for Climate Change and Global Women's Issues formed an exciting public-private partnership called wPOWER (Partnership on Women's Entrepreneurship in Renewables) to unlock women's potential to increase clean energy access and combat climate change. This effort, announced by former Secretary of State Clinton, currently aims to empower more than 7,000 women clean energy entrepreneurs across India, Nigeria and East Africa to launch small businesses around clean energy technologies

including solar lamps and clean cookstoves. It includes collaboration with USAID, the MacArthur Foundation, the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies, CARE International, Solar Sister, the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, and Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP).

- **Women Climate Leaders Program:** To promote women’s leadership on climate issues and build networks of women leaders, the State Department has held a “Women Climate Leaders” Program for the past two years. The program brings policy makers, scientists, and advocates from around the world to the U.S for a study tour focused on issues such as climate change policies, women’s empowerment, clean technology and disaster risk management. The 2013 program focused on women in a particularly vulnerable region of the world -- the Pacific Islands-- bringing twelve Pacific women climate leaders together to share their experiences, challenges and best practices with each other and with senior officials at U.S. Federal agencies.

Suggested Concrete Follow-Up Action

The ongoing work of monitoring progress towards gender balance in the UNFCCC through the Secretariat reporting designated in decision 23/CP.18 is the key to progress on this issue. However, there are also other potential avenues for appropriate action and engagement by the UNFCCC to advance this work. Below, we propose consideration of one such action:

- **Creation of an informal “women’s caucus” in the UNFCCC:** in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)—an organization that has significant experience addressing gender balance issues-- female delegates informally gathered for coffee to discuss issues of concern, which helped to catalyze action to address issues of gender representation and equality in a way that was separate from intergovernmental negotiations. Parties to the UNFCCC might explore whether a similar space should be created in the UNFCCC. This group would be open to all who are interested in the discussion. Such an endeavor could also serve as a space for addressing capacity-building issues for women in the UNFCCC; it would allow delegates to ask questions and learn from each other in an open and inclusive way. The Secretariat could help to facilitate the initial gathering locations and times to ensure that a space is available and that the invitation and information reaches the widest possible group. Given the strong role that civil society groups have had in the discussions on gender in the UNFCCC, their input in such an informal process would be valuable, and they would also be invited to attend.

We look forward to continuing these important discussions in Warsaw and beyond.