

The Threats of Climate Change are not Gender-Neutral

The threat of climate change, manifested in the increase of extreme weather conditions such as, droughts, storms or floods, has been recognized as a global priority issue.



Climate change is a sustainable development challenge, with broad impacts not only on the environment but also on economic and social development. The effects of climate change will vary among regions, and between different generations, income groups and occupations as well as between women and men. Due, in part, to their lower adaptive capacities, developing countries and people living in poverty are likely to experience significant impacts.

Women form a disproportionately large share of the poor in countries all over the world. Women in rural areas in developing countries are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood, because of their responsibility to secure water, food and energy for cooking and heating. The effects of climate change, including drought, uncertain rainfall and deforestation, make it harder to secure these resources. By comparison with men in poor countries, women face historical disadvantages, which include limited access to decision-making and economic assets that compound the challenges of climate change. It is therefore imperative that a gender analysis be applied to all actions on climate change and that gender experts are consulted in climate change processes at all levels, so that women's and men's specific needs and priorities are identified and addressed.

Objectives.

Increase knowledge about the relation between gender, sustainable environmental strategies in the context of climate change, and the economy of time in cooperation. Comprehend the international mandates, conventions and legal frameworks and its implication for promoting gender in climate change debates. Awareness raising for the relevance of gender equality in issues for cooperation activities in areas of climate change and natural resource management, and identify possible areas of work at the level of policies as well as mitigation and adaptation initiatives both at the global and at national level. How men and women farmers are differently affected?

The effect of climate change on gender equality and women's empowerment could be profound, and could in many areas of the world diminish considerably the progress we have made so far in securing gender equality. Vulnerable areas and the poor will be particularly hit by climate change. Small and poor indigenous communities are faced with changes affecting their livelihood and social structure. Temperature changes in the oceans could affect the fish stocks many coastal communities depend on for their survival.



Adaption is the key

In the climate change debate, adaptation is increasingly being seen as a key policy priority. Adaptation at an accelerated and more targeted pace is seen as critical for the secure development of vulnerable populations, like the estimated 1.4 billion rural people who depend on small-scale farming in developing countries. These men and women will be differently vulnerable to climate change impacts due to pre-existing inequalities. For example, rural women tend to have less financial, physical and human resources than men, so they will have fewer options for responding to the effects of climate change. Also, poor women tend to rely more than men on natural resources, so when these are directly hit by climate change, women's livelihoods will also be affected. Adaptation strategies that do not take into account the differences between men's and women's vulnerabilities and resources are less likely to succeed.

