



CANADA-UNDP  
Climate Change Adaptation Facility



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



Canada



# FILLING BUCKETS, FUELLING CHANGE

Ensuring Gender-Responsive Climate Change Adaptation  
Learning from the Canada-UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility





## FOREWORD



*“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly last year, asserts that gender equality is not only a human right, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful and inclusive world ... Gender equality is not just a worthy goal in its own right, but also a driver of progress across all development goals.”*

*– Helen Clark, Statement on World International Women’s Day 2016,  
8 March 2016*



Mali; Photo: Imen Meliane

Without gender equality sustainable development is unattainable. The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is therefore at the heart of UNDP's approach to development. This is particularly important for achieving *resilient* development, since societies with underlying inequalities are more vulnerable to external stresses, including climate change. With the range of impacts posed by changing climatic conditions, specifically affecting natural resources on which many developing communities depend, any approach to addressing these impacts requires a consideration of the role, needs, knowledge and engagement of all actors, both women and men.

This is why *gender* in the context of climate change adaptation is not only about vulnerabilities. Typically, we dwell on the fact that women are more vulnerable to climate impacts than men.

This is often true, given the role women play in food and water provisioning, both severely affected by climate change, and in domestic duties, which face further pressure when men are forced to migrate from the home to find sustainable work. Women are also typically limited in their access to knowledge and resources, which are essential in coping or adapting to changing conditions, and in their decision-making power.

However, gender-responsive adaptation is about more than addressing vulnerability; it is about strengthening gender equality and empowerment. Given the role women play in society, they have unique knowledge, understanding and needs that can strengthen climate change adaptation action. Providing women and men the same opportunities to make decisions, inform adaptation processes, and engage in implementation, will inevitably strengthen adaptation.

Gender-responsive adaptation, therefore, is better adaptation.

This means ensuring: that the underlying gender dynamics of the society are understood and considered in the design of all projects; that women are specifically targeted for capacity development and empowerment during implementation; and that success and impact is measured based on results achieved for both men and women.

The Canada-UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility (CCAF) is one of UNDP's flagship adaptation projects in the area of gender. All six countries engaged in national adaptation projects under the CCAF, including Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Haiti, Mali, Niger and Sudan, make a concerted and explicit effort to take a gender-responsive approach to all adaptation activities. This is complemented by the Facility's global component, which provides technical support, encourages knowledge exchange, and undertakes in-depth analysis of the experiences these countries have had in gender-responsive approaches.

This publication is the result of the efforts taken by this CCAF global component. It aims to provide concrete examples and experiences from all six CCAF countries on the specific inputs, resources and partnerships needed to design and implement gender-responsive approaches. It hopes to develop a better understanding of how gender-responsive approaches can be cost-effective and lead to greater adaptation impact. I hope the content and evidence provided in this publication will inform and inspire future adaptation, to ensure that gender is not an add-on component, but remains an intrinsic and essential basis of all adaptation initiatives.

**Adriana Dinu**

Executive Coordinator

UNDP Global Environmental Finance Unit

Sustainable Development Cluster

Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

UNDP

*Gender-responsive adaptation is about more than addressing vulnerability; it is about strengthening gender equality and empowerment. Gender-responsive adaptation, therefore, is better adaptation.*





Women farmers in Mali; Photo: Imen Meliane

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**Carine Pionetti, author, and CCAF project team.**



## List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANAS	National Agency for Water and Sanitation (Cabo Verde)
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCAF	Canada-UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility
CNEDD	National Environmental Council for Sustainable Development (Niger)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FWUC	Farmer Water-User Committee (Cambodia)
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGCA	Global Gender and Climate Alliance
ICIEG	Cabo Verdean Institute for Equality and Gender Equity
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature

LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs (Cambodia)
MWRM	Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology
NAP	National Adaptation Plans
NAPA	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
PDA	Provincial Department of Agriculture (Cambodia)
PDWRM	Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology (Cambodia)
PSU	Project Supporting Unit
RGA	Rapid Gender Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VRA	Vulnerability Risk Assessment
WFP	World Food Programme
WUG	Water-User Group (Cambodia)





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Over the last two decades gender has been increasingly integrated into the design and implementation of gender-responsive adaptation initiatives at the project level. This experience has demonstrated that gender equality is a condition for successful adaptation to climate change. Yet gender-responsive adaptation remains the exception rather than the norm, and most actors still struggle with the question of how these approaches can be successfully designed, implemented and scaled up.*

*By shifting the focus from vulnerability to empowerment, adaptation responses have the potential to transform existing gender power imbalances and enhance both women's and men's adaptive capacities, while simultaneously strengthening gender equality and women's rights.*



Niger. Photo: Camille Maitre

This research study draws on findings from six countries engaged in adaptation efforts supported by the Canada – UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility (CCAF). In all six countries, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Haiti, Mali, Niger and Sudan, national projects aim to strengthen climate resilience, particularly in the areas of food security and water management. They also specifically demonstrate gender-responsive adaptation strategies, providing insights into the types of resources and partnerships needed at local and national levels for success.

A conceptual framework for understanding adaptation strategies in relation to the goals of gender equality and justice provides a frame to analyse and extract the insights emerging from the six CCAF countries. Specifically, six critical areas form the base of this framework and provide entry points for this research. These include: 1) gendered approaches to food security; 2) water access and governance; 3) time poverty and unpaid care work; 4) control over resources and revenues; 5) participation, decision-making and leadership; and 6) targeting of gender

*This research study demonstrates gender-responsive adaptation strategies, providing insights into the types of resources and partnerships needed at local and national levels for success.*



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**A significant implication of climate change and the resulting decline in agricultural production and food security** in many parts of the world is that **women are playing an increasingly important role in provisioning food for the family**, especially during periods of food shortage. This is mostly due to the absence of men who migrate seasonally or permanently in search of more reliable incomes. Across all six CCAF countries, context-specific approaches were designed to increase **food production and incomes** focusing on women as food producers. In Cambodia, the project supported women in developing home gardens as a source of enhanced nutrition and increased incomes which they can control. In Niger and Mali, where individual women face barriers in accessing land, a collective model of vegetable plots for groups of women and men was implemented which helped increase food production, generate new sources of income, and reinforce women's solidarity networks, critical to resource-poor families. Projects have also been successful in supporting women to generate income by **diversifying livelihoods**. In several countries, efforts have been made to transform **social norms in food production**. In Mali for example, women's associations are earning enough profit from selling their crops to acquire land collectively, over which they typically do not have rights thus creating opportunities for more gender-equitable land tenure in CCAF localities.

## Food and Nutritional Security

