
Gender and environment statistics:

Unlocking information for action and measuring the SDGs

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Foreword



Just as women and men have different access to education, economic opportunities and free time in many parts of the world, they also relate to the environment differently. In particular, there is a strong gender dimension in how people access land and natural resources, engage in environmental management and encounter vulnerability to environmental challenges.

The report shows exactly how environmental issues can impact women more severely. For example, pregnant and lactating women face greater threats from the pollution of air and water. They are also more at risk from the vector and water-borne diseases that are expected to increase in a changing climate.

Understanding such links between the environment and gender, and the inequalities inherent therein,

is an essential first step to allowing all genders to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development. But there are currently major gaps in this area. The United Nations Statistical Commission has adopted a Minimum Set of Gender Indicators. However, these indicators focus on social issues, economic empowerment and political engagement. They leave the environment out of the picture.

This report seeks to provide a framework to measure the nexus between gender and the environment. It proposes 18 gender-environment indicators for inclusion in the wider set of gender indicators, across the focal areas of right to land, natural resources and biodiversity; access to food, energy, water and sanitation; climate change, sustainable production and consumption, and health; and women in environmental decision making at all levels.

The report also proposes specific ways that the links between gender and environment could be considered in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Through understanding the differences between women and men, we can design better policy interventions to address their particular challenges, and harness their particular strengths. I hope that this report, which can be used and refined by all concerned parties, will provide a starting point for a more gender-equitable relationship with our environment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Msuya', with a horizontal line underneath.

Joyce Msuya,
Acting Executive Director, UN Environment

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