



Federal Ministry  
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# Gender and Urban Climate Policy

Gender-Sensitive Policies Make a Difference

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**gender cc**  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACCCRN	Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
CBA	Community-Based Adaptation
CCCI	UN-Habitat Cities and Climate Change Initiative
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

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## INTRODUCTION

Cities are increasingly recognised as essential actors of climate change policy. Over the past 20 years, local governments around the world have developed a range of climate change policies. In low- and middle-income countries, most cities have prioritised adaptation to the noticeable impacts of climate change. In recent years, some cities have also started to include mitigation actions by cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Today, numerous projects and programmes are underway to support these cities in their endeavours to tackle the impacts of climate change. In particular, international agencies and city networks offer methodologies to assist city governments with systematic action plans.

In light of prevailing power relations and differences in access to and control over resources, such as land, credit and capital, women and men often have different vulnerabilities and capacities to respond to climate change. These gender differentials as well as the diverse impacts of policies on women and men are especially important at local levels. While in international climate policy, it is widely acknowledged that gender dimensions need to be addressed, most local governments do not pay attention to the diverse impacts of climate policies on women and men (see for instance: Alber, 2010; GenderCC, 2009; UNFCCC, 2012).

This handbook is an effort to close this gap. It indicates ways for local governments to integrate the gender dimensions of climate change into the various stages of policy-making. The focus is on low- and middle-income countries. The handbook is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a starting point which introduces gender concepts and gender dimensions of climate change as well as resources, tools and ideas for action to climate policy decision-makers, consultants and practitioners in local governments. Moreover, it shall assist women's groups and other civil society and community-based organisations to get involved in local climate policy and to advocate for a gender-sensitive approach.

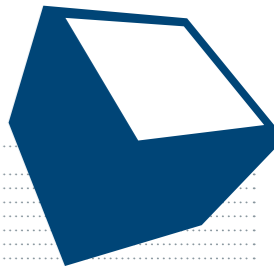
### *Specific climate change challenges faced by cities*

Climate change leads to shifts in mean as well as absolute values of temperature and precipitation, to sea level rise and changes in weather extremes, such as heavy rainfalls, more frequent storms, cyclones, heat waves and droughts. 65 percent of all cities over 1 million inhabitants are located on the coast and are thus prone to flooding and salinization of freshwater resources (UNEP & UN-Habitat, 2005). Parts of these cities may be permanently under water in the future. In some countries, such as Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines, large shares of the urban population are living in coastal areas threatened by storm surges.

A specific challenge for cities is the combination of more frequent climate-related hazards and increasing population in affected areas. Climate change can lead to disastrous impacts on settlements and infrastructure, claiming lives and leading to losses of assets, negative health impacts, salinisation of water sources, water shortages, higher food prices, food insecurity, and disruption to livelihoods and city economies.

Many cities in developing countries are furthermore characterised by large numbers of the population living in poverty and by an enormous social divide. Poverty and marginalisation severely constrain the options for coping with extreme weather events and disasters. Cities are embedded in national policy frameworks and often have limited or inadequate powers to tackle these climate challenges. Moreover, their specific roles and competences in multi-level policy systems are often not sufficiently clear. A lack of financial means, capacities and staff shortages adds further obstacles to implementing urban climate policies.

The number of weather-related disasters, such as storms, floods, heat waves and droughts, has increased from about 300 per year in the 1980s to more than 600 per year in recent years at a global scale (Munich Re, 2013).



### Five good reasons why cities should be active in climate change policy

In the international United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, climate change policy is negotiated by national governments. Local governments are nevertheless vital actors which must respond to the yet unresolved challenges of climate change for the following reasons:

- **First**, the impacts of climate change, such as more frequent extreme weather events, are felt immediately at local level, affecting communities, local infrastructure and sometimes entire urban systems. Coping with disaster situations is thus of utmost importance for local governments, and they are well advised to pro-actively and strategically build resilience and adapt to climate variability.
- **Second**, the majority of greenhouse gases are emitted in cities. According to estimations provided by UN-Habitat, between 60 and 70 per cent of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions are released in cities and further growth is predicted due to ongoing urbanization trends (2011b). Thus, cities can make major contributions to limiting or cutting greenhouse gas emissions. In some sectors, such as urban development and spatial planning, cities have a unique role in shaping settlements for low-carbon housing and mobility.
- **Third**, local governments can serve as models for the private sector and provide positive examples of how to combat climate change and improve resilience, for instance by cutting emissions in their own facilities. Particularly if other policy levels and actors fail to deliver on agreements and determined actions, local commitment and action is crucial.
- **Fourth**, at local level, climate policy can take advantage of synergies from the combination of mitigation and adaptation, for example, increased use of decentralised renewable energies helps to cut emissions and to limit harmful impacts, such as oil spills during disasters.
- **Fifth**, local governments are in a good position to integrate social issues with climate action, especially regarding poverty alleviation and gender equality. Moreover, local governments can work closely with citizens and involve them in their efforts to address climate change.

### Five good reasons why cities should pursue a gender-sensitive approach to urban climate policy

Climate change poses huge challenges to cities but also represents an opportunity to work towards more healthy, liveable, sustainable, equitable and inclusive cities for the following reasons:

- **First**, both women and men have the right to be involved in decision-making regarding climate policy, whether at city or neighbourhood levels. The equal participation of women and men enhances the legitimacy of urban climate policy and builds a sense of ownership.
- **Second**, climate policy is not only about technologies, it is also about people. People are subject to the impacts of climate change and their consumption and mobility is the underlying cause of greenhouse gas emissions. Hence, people are both the problem and the solution. This means that climate policy will only be effective if people, their gender roles and traditional tasks in society are taken into account. This makes urban climate policies and measures more acceptable, viable and efficient.
- **Third**, policies should respond to the needs and capacities of all citizens, women and men, and include poor and marginalised groups. Otherwise, a vast array of human resources, innovative potential and traditional and practical knowledge is left untapped.
- **Fourth**, a gender approach makes climate policy fairer and more equitable, taking into account that in most cases those who emit the least greenhouse gases are the most vulnerable and vice versa. If the gender dimensions of climate change are not addressed, the impacts of climate change will likely exacerbate existing inequalities and might have adverse impacts.
- **Fifth**, the full integration of social and gender issues into climate policy maximises the effect of available resources for everyone: women and men, girls and boys. This is particularly the case when efforts to improve resilience to climate change impacts have a comprehensive approach and target different kinds of vulnerabilities (Roehr et al., 2008).





# GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

I





## I. GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Social inequalities are particularly striking in urban areas, as different social groups live and work in close proximity and interaction with each other. There is a growing body of evidence that social and gender disparities are magnified by the effects of climate change. Cities have broad options to actively address both climate change and social inequalities. The implementation of gender-sensitive climate policies can maximise potential co-benefits and synergies. This handbook provides advice on how to successfully take into consideration these challenges and opportunities in the context of urban climate policy. The following section gives a short overview on gender concepts and gender inequalities as well as on the gender dimensions of climate change.

### I.I. GENDER CONCEPTS AND GENDER INEQUALITIES

The term **'gender'** is generally used to conceptualise the socially and culturally constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society attributes to men and women. While **'sex'** indicates the physical differences between women and men based on their sexual and reproductive functions, **'gender'** involves different identities and economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. These vary across different cultures and societies and change over time.

**Gender differentials** are interwoven with other differences such as race and ethnicity, class, disability, age and health status. Social categories are not independent from one another; they overlap and are mutually reinforcing. For each social group, gender constitutes an additional divide, resulting in further inequalities.

The root causes of gender inequalities are **unequal power relations** between men and women and societal patterns defining and reinforcing gender roles. This results in androcentric systems, meaning that the male perspective is predominant while women's identities, attitudes and behaviour are neglected or seen as deviations from the 'norm'. At societal level, this can lead to a number of substantial inequalities, for instance in terms of access to and control over resources, such as land,

credit and capital, mobility and information. **Gender mainstreaming** is a globally used approach for promoting gender equality within programmes and projects. It implicates ensuring that a gender-sensitive perspective is central to all activities: policy development, research, advocacy and dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. Gender mainstreaming is not an objective per se, but rather a tool to assess the different implications of planned legislation, policies and programmes for women and men. It ensures that all men and women benefit equally from the outcomes and that inequalities are not perpetuated, with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality.

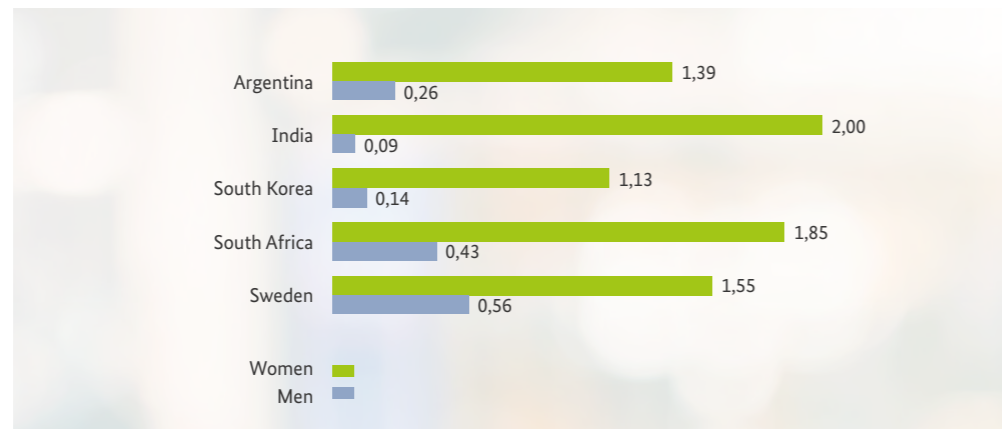
In the following part, insights are given into gender inequalities in the field of labour, income, decision-making as well as law. This context is of utmost importance for climate policy as it underscores the importance of interventions during and after disasters, such as droughts, floods and storms, which take into consideration the different conditions, needs and capacities of women and girls as well as men and boys.

#### 👉 Gender division of labour

All over the world, women are more likely to be given the primary responsibility for family care, including the provision of food and caring for the children, elderly and sick family members. In a situation determined by lack of food security and insufficient access to energy, mobility and water services, these tasks can be extremely challenging and time-consuming. Therefore, in addition to material resources, time is also a scarce resource for many women. In many societies the contribution of this kind of labour to the economy and social well-being is under-recognised and less valued than 'productive' labour, and often almost completely neglected in economic statistics. The gender division of labour persists even in countries with a high degree of gender equality and a high share of women in the formal labour market.



**Figure 1:**  
 Ratio between unpaid care work and paid labour for men and women in exemplary countries

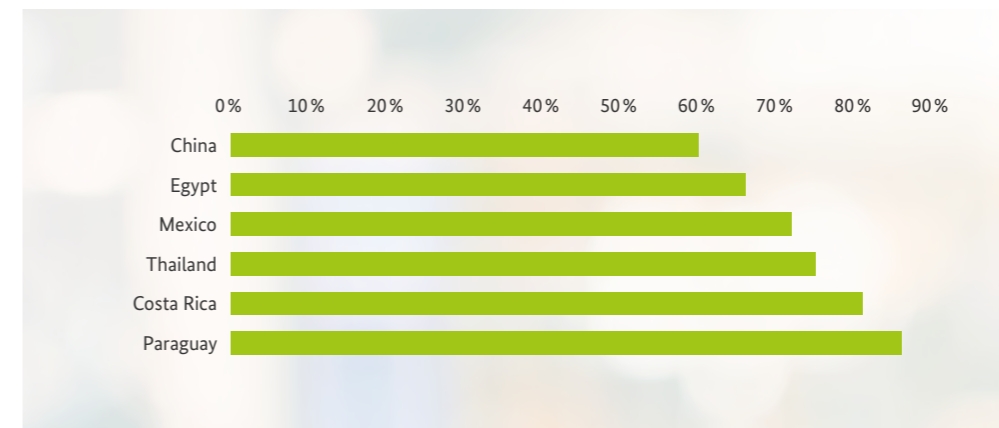


Women dedicate more time to household chores and caring for the children, the elderly and the sick. Depending on the specific circumstances, the difference can add up to ten hours of the daily workload. This is supported by evidence from time use data, which are available for many countries. On average, men spend only a fraction of their time on unpaid care work compared to paid labour, while for women the opposite is true. Even if women have full-time jobs, they do the bulk of care work in the family and community (Budlender and UNRISD, 2008; Statistics Sweden, 2008; Razavi, Staab & UNRISD, 2008).

**Gender pay gap: Gender differentials in income**

In all countries, whether developing or developed, a gender pay gap continues to exist. During the last decades, this pay gap has decreased in many countries but not disappeared. A part of this gap is 'unexplained'; in other words it results from gender-based discrimination as women are often paid less for the same work. Women are often involved in informal employment and experience unemployment more frequently and for a longer period of time than men. Moreover, a disproportionate share of unpaid labour often falls on women, whether it is 'reproductive' or 'productive' work. As women spend considerably more time on unpaid work than men and tend to work in lower-paid jobs, they often accumulate less wealth than men.

**Figure 2:**  
 Female/male ratio of average earnings per month in manufacturing (per cent)



At least 60 per cent of women workers in developing countries are in informal employment. Informal employment is generally a larger source of income for women than for men. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, 84 per cent of women in non-agricultural sectors are informally employed, compared to 63 per cent of men (WIEGO and Realizing Rights, 2009).

Of the world's estimated 100 million home-based workers, the majority are women. For instance, in South Asia 80 per cent of home-based workers are women (WIEGO, 2007).



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