

RESEARCH PAPER

TOWARDS A GENDER-  
RESPONSIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



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# I. INTRODUCTION

This research paper ‘Towards a gender-responsive implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity’ was initially prepared by UN-Women, with inputs from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bioversity International, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for the capacity-building workshop on gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the CBD. The workshop was co-organized by UN-Women and the CBD Secretariat, and was held on 1 July 2018 in Montreal, Canada.

The workshop was organized at a critical juncture, when Parties to the CBD were at the initial stages of discussions on the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The CBD process has consistently integrated gender considerations, as reflected in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020,<sup>1</sup> the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action,<sup>2</sup> and other decisions, guiding documents and instruments. Furthermore, Parties have emphasized the importance of exploring synergies in the implementation of all three Rio Conventions, namely the CBD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The research paper was updated after the workshop. It first sets the context by presenting the gender dimensions of biodiversity conservation and the global norms on gender equality and natural resource management. It then outlines the key mandates for the integration of a gender perspective in biodiversity conservation and identifies the main entry points for strengthening gender considerations in decisions of the Parties to the CBD and in the implementation of the Convention, as well as in the future work of Parties and other stakeholders. Gender-responsive practices contributing to biodiversity conservation at the local and country level are then presented to highlight promising examples and lessons. The paper concludes with recommendations for action directed at specific stakeholders.

1 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2010. *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2. [\[Link\]](#)

2 CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2014. *Mainstreaming Gender Considerations*. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XII/7. [\[Link\]](#)

## II. GENDER DIMENSIONS OF BIODIVERSITY

Biological diversity, or biodiversity, is the term given to the variety of life on earth and the natural patterns it forms.<sup>3</sup> Biodiversity sustains lives, but it is in danger; 28 per cent of species evaluated by IUCN in 2018 are either critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable.<sup>4</sup> The fragmentation, degradation, and outright loss of forests, wetlands, coral reefs, and other ecosystems pose the gravest threat to biological diversity. Forests are home to much of the known terrestrial biodiversity; however, global forest loss in 2017 alone amounted to 29 million hectares.<sup>5</sup> Biodiversity degradation reduces the productivity of ecosystems, and by extension, the goods and services they can provide. Ecosystems are being fragmented or eliminated, and many species are in decline or already extinct. These trends have serious implications for the well-being of human beings who are dependent on their environment for basic needs, including for food crops, medicines and other biological resources.

In many societies, and in particular in rural areas, women and men interact with their natural environment on a daily basis for their sustenance and livelihoods. Women and men depend on and

contribute to the management and conservation of biological resources. Yet, pervasive gender inequalities limit women's opportunities, rights and benefits linked to biodiversity, which in turn

### BOX 1. THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUALITY

The CBD, in its preamble, recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirms the need for full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation.”<sup>a</sup>

Consideration of the gender dimensions of biodiversity involves understanding women's and men's use of biological resources; identifying the institutions—both formal (e.g., policies, laws etc.) and informal (e.g., customs, values, norms etc.) – that influence women's and men's use, management and conservation of biodiversity; and examining how different biodiversity-related outcomes (e.g., loss, degradation, sustainable management etc.) impact women and men differently.

Gender-responsive sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity therefore requires that laws

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