



All countries are calling for climate change and sustainable development.

Photo: Saeanna Chingamuka

GENDER, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

There is no doubt that climate change is happening and that it poses serious global challenges. This is because climate change is an environmental, social, economic, energy, food, political, ethical and moral challenge. It is a crisis perpetuated and fuelled by the endless pursuit of growth and prosperity. Ultimately, the world faces not just a climate crisis, but also a crisis of sustainability. The key contributor to global warming is human-induced climate change because of unsustainable economic growth, consumption and production patterns that are exploitative, especially by the global North and the elites in developing countries.

While climate change affects everyone, it does not affect everyone equally. The poor and vulnerable in Africa and other developing countries that have the least responsibility for climate change suffer the most as they experience violence, exclusion and loss of sovereignty over natural resources. Women make up 70% of the world's poor and this places them on the frontline of coping with climate impacts.

This policy brief concerns climate change in a global and regional context especially as it pertains to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development and the campaign for an Addendum on Gender and Climate Change. In line with the dictum "think global, act local," the brief also targets the local authorities that Gender Links (GL) works with through the Centres of Excellence for Gender and Local Government. GL is also mainstreaming climate change in its work with the Gender and Media Centres of Excellence around Southern Africa.

Key terms and definitions

Climate change refers to "a change of climate attributed directly or indirectly to human activities that alter the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods." This phenomenon is in part the result of increased levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere, exacerbated by human industrial development over the past two centuries.¹

QUICK FACTS

- 70% of the world's poor are women; climate change affects these women disproportionately.
- 85% of the people who die in climate-induced natural disasters are women.
- 75% of environmental refugees are women.
- Women's voices and interests need to be amplified in the policy-making around climate not least because they are the most vulnerable to climate change due to their different social role and status.
- Women are also more likely to be the unseen victims of resource wars and violence as a result of climate change.
- Women are the majority of victims in floods and tsunamis because they lack mobility as they stay to protect children.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) working group predicts that Africa's warming trend will be 1.5 times more than the global trend and that Southern Africa will be about 3-4 degrees warmer by the close of the century.
- The IPCC reported in 2007 that by 2020, between 75 and 250 million Africans will likely be experiencing increased water stress with serious implications for agriculture.
- Women must be prioritised in any actions and programmes to address climate change.

¹ UNFCCC 2009 cited in Heinroch Boll Stiftung.

Sustainable development is "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."²

Greenhouse gases exist in the earth's atmosphere and are responsible for absorbing and emitting energy into the earth. The primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are water vapour, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone. Human activity contributes to the creation and emission of carbon dioxide on a very high scale. The burning and use of fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas is leads to the production and creation of carbon dioxide.

Global warming is the term commonly used to refer to the changes and alterations in climate and weather patterns. It is often used interchangeably with the term climate change and generally refers to the rise in average temperature of the earth's atmosphere and oceans.

Global context

Since its arrival on the global international political agenda, climate change has been a divisive and controversial topic, pitting North against South and left against right. While some countries and international bodies were quick to recognise the threat posed by the heating of the earth and changing weather patterns, others have denied the existence of climate change and fought to maintain the status quo.

Environmental activist and eco feminist Vandana Shiva argues that: "When we think of war in our times, our minds turn to Iraq and Afghanistan. But the bigger war is the war against the planet. This war has its roots in an economy that fails to respect ecological and ethical limits." Almost as if speaking from the same script, a former weapons inspector in Iraq interviewed by the *New York Times* in 2003 commented: "I am more worried about global warming than I am of any major military conflict."

The most universally recognised treaty on climate change is the 1992 United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Kyoto Protocol was a 1997 update of the original treaty aimed at tackling global warming. It officially entered into force in 2005 and has been signed or ratified by 191 states. Under the Kyoto Protocol the worst indus-

trialised global emitters commit themselves to reduce four greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and sulphur hexafluoride.

In November and December 2011 world leaders gathered in Durban, South Africa for the 17th Conference of Parties (COP17) to continue climate change negotiations. This meeting resulted in the launching of the Green Climate Fund and adopted a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. This covers only a relatively small fraction of current global emissions, with Canada formally stepping back from the Protocol. The US never stepped in. Russia, Japan and Australia rejected the second commitment period. COP 17 tasked an Ad Hoc Working Group on the "Durban Platform for Enhanced Action" with adopting a legal agreement by 2015 at the latest.

Gender Links and its partner in Kenya, the African Women and Child Feature Service (AWCFS) produced ten daily online newsletters on Gender and Climate Change with the support of Diakonia. These are listed, and can be accessed, at the links below:



Date	Issue	Link
28 November	Issue 1	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-28-november-2011-2011-11-28
29 November	Issue 2	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-29-november-2011-2011-11-29
30 November	Issue 3	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-30-november-2011-2011-11-30
1 December	Issue 4	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-1-december-2011-2011-12-01
2 December	Issue 5	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-2-december-2011-2011-12-02
5 December	Issue 6	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-5-december-2011-2011-12-05
6 December	Issue 7	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-6-december-2011-2011-12-06
7 December	Issue 8	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-7-december-2011-2011-12-07
8 December	Issue 9	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-8-december-2011-2011-12-08
9 December	Issue 10	http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/daily-links-9-december-2011-2011-12-09



COP17 marchers in Durban, South Africa.

Photo: Trevor Davies

² World Commission on Environment and Development.

³ Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The climate change programme. Website, accessed 8 May 2010, www.met.gov.na/dea/env_issues/climate/conclusion.htm.

In June 2012, world leaders and climate change activists will converge in Brazil for the Rio+ 20 conference to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The conference's two main themes are a green economy in the context of sustainable development as well as poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Climate change and Southern Africa

Already, Southern Africa has been experiencing a warming trend over the past few decades. It is now widely accepted that the sub-region's climate will be hotter and drier in the future than it is now. Droughts are expected to increase in frequency and intensity, with especially devastating consequences for the rural poor. Sectors most likely to be affected are water, agriculture, forestry, bio diversity and ecosystems, human health, urban environment and rural livelihoods.

Some emerging issues:

- **Namibia** is concerned with increased water stress and extreme weather events. "Food security, health and other development goals could be turned upside down. The projected rise in sea levels due to global warming could submerge coastal islands and affect the entire marine industry and the coastal economy."³
- **Zambia** is experiencing increasing droughts and floods, and other knock-on effects: "social, economic and environmental problems, such as increased poverty and deforestation due to charcoal burning."⁴
- **Mozambique** is already one of the Southern African countries most affected by natural disasters, and this is

likely to be increased by climate change: In the event of poor global mitigation results - the "too little, too late" scenario - temperatures in Mozambique could rise by as much as 2°C to 2.5°C by 2050. Rainfall variability would increase, the start of the rainy season would likely shift, flood risk would be higher, and the centre of the country would suffer more intense cyclones and droughts."⁵

- The semi-arid areas of **Tanzania** have seen declining crop yields, poor livestock production, and increasing domestic animal diseases. Many communities have abandoned the production of traditional crops. But farmers in areas of high rainfall are also in difficulty.
- Climate impacts on **South Africa** remain poorly understood, but climate zones are already shifting. Broadly speaking, western South Africa is drying; eastern South Africa is becoming wetter. Droughts, floods and heat waves are increasing, average temperatures are up by 0.5°C since 1960 (1 -2°C in Western Cape, where rainfall is declining, threatening agriculture and tourism); 50% of the Cape fynbos floral kingdom may be destroyed in the next few decades, threatening tourism and biodiversity.
- Maize production in **Southern Africa** may decline by up to 30% in the next 20 years; wheat production by up to 20%.⁶

Climate change and gender

It is important to understand the human face of climate change not least because climate change has particular gender characteristics. Women suffer more from the impacts of climate change because of their different social roles and status. A growing body of literature on the gendered impact of these changes is summarized in the table below:

AREA	GENDER DIMENSION
Food security	Productivity in Southern Africa is expected to drop by 20-50% in extreme El Nino years. Women are the main producers of staple crops, accounting for up to 90% of the rural poor's intake.
Water	Climate change is likely to exacerbate water shortages. Women are largely responsible for water management in communities and in the home. Shortages will result in greater time spent fetching water, exacerbate disease, and divert women from other economic pursuits.
Division of labour	Crop and livestock production changes could affect the gendered division of labour and have negative effects on incomes of women and men.
School drop out	Increased household chores may lead to larger numbers of girls dropping out of school.
Land	Women's already tenuous rights to land could be eroded further.
Transport	Men generally have a much higher carbon footprint than women as women use more public transport and walk on foot.
Health	Women are the most affected by ill health in communities as they bear the brunt of caring for the sick. Climate variability can fuel nutrition-related diseases and epidemics like malaria; increase the spread of vector and water borne diseases; reduce drinking water availability as well as increase cases of heat stress and respiratory illness.
Stress	Stress levels and related diseases may increase for both women and men. Because of expectations around providing for the family, men experience and express stress in different, often more devastating ways than women.
Migration	Resource shortages may increase male migration and increase the burden of work and family care on women.
Gender violence	Adolescent girls report high levels of sexual harassment and abuse in the aftermath of disasters associated with families living together in open spaces, lack of privacy for dressing and bathing etc. Scarce resources exacerbate conflict and there is often a gender dimension to this.
Mortality	A study of disasters in 141 countries has shown that women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men. ⁷
Decision-making	Most key decision-making institutions relating to climate change have a male dominated hierarchy.

⁴ Zambia 'hard hit' by climate change", 21 May 2007, [www.inthenews.co.uk/news/uk/zambia-hard-hit-by-climate-change-\\$1087447.htm](http://www.inthenews.co.uk/news/uk/zambia-hard-hit-by-climate-change-$1087447.htm).

⁵ Report on the INGC Climate Change Report by Mozambique's National Disaster Management Institute (INGC). IRIN, "Mozambique: Climate change adaptation can't wait", 28 May 2009, www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=84604.

⁶ Copenhagen Synthesis Report: Global Risks, Challenges & Decisions", outcome of conference in Copenhagen, 10-12 March 2009, p. 23.

⁷ www.climatecongress.ku.dk/pdf/synthesisreport.

⁷ Neumayer and Pluempfer, 2007.

In 2009 the Heinrich Boll Stiftung commissioned research on Gender and Climate in Southern Africa. The research included country studies in Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. Key findings of the research include:

Botswana: Malaria, HIV and AIDS and cholera are the existing health challenges faced in Botswana. These affect men, women and children, especially children and those that have a compromised immune system such as HIV positive people. However, with reduced livelihood options, climate induced poverty and lifestyle changes, women get poorer and they cope through prostitution to sustain families. This leads to increase in HIV and AIDS cases and other related sexually transmitted diseases. It is also expected that with increased temperatures due to climate change, the prevalence of Malaria carrying mosquitoes will likely increase, not only affecting the most vulnerable group being women and children, but also increasing the burden of women caring for the sick.

Mozambique: Successive droughts over the last two years have increased men's migration to South Africa and other places in search for jobs. This imposes pressure on women who have to find alternative income-generating activities. These jobs provide an additional income for the family, but the consequence is that they have less time to dedicate to the household reproductive activities.

Peace begins @ home



Gender and climate justice by 2015!

South Africa: During women's focus group discussions and individual interviews, all women participating in the study reported that, because it is their role and responsibility to ensure household food security, they work harder to find the means and resources to sustain food supply in the household (during periods of harsh climate that affects food security) while making sure that all other needs are being met. Women noted that therefore they have to be innovative to diversify their livelihoods as it is the only way they can continue to provide food for their families. This includes participation in various income activities. The women added that, as a result of the extra workload, they tend to work longer hours than

the men. Men reportedly have more leisure time than women.

Many examples point to the key role women have to play in climate change solutions. For example, Kenya's Greenbelt Movement, founded by Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, has planted 20 million trees in East Africa. In line with the inter-sector provisions of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, climate change presents a number of opportunities for enhancing gender equality including:

- Promoting cleaner burning fuel for household use that will reduce air pollution and cut annual cooking costs for women by 25%.
- Ensuring women and men's equal participation in decision-making around climate change.
- Strengthening gender mainstreaming at all levels, especially local government, to ensure that women and men's specific needs are addressed.

Climate change and the SADC Protocol

SADC Heads of State signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development in August 2008. The Protocol is a regional instrument that advances gender equality and women's rights. Although the Protocol does not mention climate change specifically, it has progressive provisions that can be used to advance a climate justice agenda. For example Articles 12-13 concern governance, in particular representation and participation. These articles provide for the equal representation of women in all spheres of decision-making. Current approaches to climate change may worsen existent gender gaps, for example in terms of technical assistance and transfer of technology.

Articles 15-19 concern productive resources and economic development. For instance, one of the critical targets here besides ensuring the equal participation of women and men in decision-making is the need to adopt policy measures that ease the burden of the multiple roles played by women. In the context of climate change this means that gender equality and women's empowerment should drive climate change financing. There must also be easy access and control of resources not least because women's access and control of resources is the basis upon which



Zimbabwe border town Bietbridge takes a lead on climate change and sustainable development.
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna



Colleen Lowe Morna, CEO Gender Links, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, South African Minister of Home Affairs, Scholastica Kimaryo and Emma Kaliya, at the launch of the regional 2011 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer. *Photo: Gender Links*

they can rebuild lives shattered by climate change and climate variability.

The preamble of the Protocol refers to ensuring: “the elimination of all gender inequalities in the region and the promotion of the full and equal enjoyment of rights”. These same set of demands can be fought for within the climate change debate and negotiations. At any rate, in Article 3, the Protocol makes reference to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This means that CEDAW is regarded as important to the Gender Protocol. CEDAW is about the development of women and the affirmation of their rights. The Convention enjoins States to take appropriate measures to ensure the full development of women. This applies even in the field of climate change.

In August 2009 the CEDAW Committee adopted a *Gender and Climate Change* statement⁸ which bemoaned the lack of a gender perspective in the UNFCCC and other initiatives on climate change. It called on all stakeholders to ensure that climate change and disaster reduction measures are gender sensitive.

The case for a climate change addendum to the SADC Protocol

Climate change negotiations and decisions lack a strong gender focus. A robust and responsible approach to climate change in the SADC region could benefit from utilising the framework offered by the CEDAW. The convention could be a powerful tool for climate justice because it brings together: “provisions requiring the elimination of all forms of discrimination, not just discrimination on the basis of sex, in the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and specific rights of particular concern to women and girls.”

In Southern Africa, momentum is mounting for an addendum to the SADC Protocol on gender and climate change. Mozambican members of the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance are advocating an addendum noting the matter is too important to be left to chance. Already, gender ministers in the region are taking a stand on climate change. This provides an important building block for further lobbying and advocacy on the issue.

At their meeting in Windhoek in October 2010, gender ministers noted the importance of integrating gender into climate policies as women and men contribute differently to the causes of climate change. The ministers have endorsed the campaign started by the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance for an Addendum to the SADC Gender Protocol on Climate Change.

There are precedents in SADC for addendums and amendments to Protocols. For example in 2000 Heads of State amended the SADC Protocol on Trade in several ways: to represent changes which had occurred in SADC trade relations. The SADC Gender Protocol Alliance co-ordinated by Gender Links has begun collecting signatures for a petition to lobby for an addendum to the Protocol on Gender and climate change. Thus far, 500 signatures have been collected through the SADC Gender Barometer reference group meetings and Local Government and Gender Justice Summits in 10 countries while an additional 100 citizens have signed the online petition. **TO SIGN THE ONLINE PETITION LOG ONTO:**

<http://forms.genderlinks.org.za/view.php?id=125>.

The petition will be used to lobby Heads of States during their annual meeting in Mozambique in August 2012. In the absence of provisions on gender and climate change in either the SADC Gender Protocol or any *other sub-regional instrument*, there is concern that interventions will be *ad hoc* and *piecemeal*. An addendum or amendment to the original document is one way this could be addressed in a coherent and systematic way.



Making sure all citizens have clean water in South Africa. *Photo by Trevor Davies*

⁸ http://www.gender-climate.org/pdfs/Statement_of_the_CEDAW_Committee_on_Gender_and_Climate_Change.pdf

Climate change and local government

Climate and gender justice begin at home and in our communities! GL had added a module on gender and climate change to its Centres of Excellence for Gender Mainstreaming in Local Government. Around Southern Africa, councils are gearing up to take on the challenge!

Case study

Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in the Eastern Cape province has identified the following priorities:

- Sustainable provision and use of resources (water and energy).
- Sustainable provision of services (water and sanitation).
- The promotion of sustainable socio-economic development.
- The promotion of safe and healthy environments.
- The encouragement of public involvement in local government matters.
- Budgeting for and implementing projects to address climate change.
- Coordinating and leading initiatives at local level.

Nelson Mandela Bay mitigation measures

- Energy efficiency strategies including;
 - Replacement of streetlights with energy efficient lamps.
 - Retrofitting of municipal buildings to make them more energy efficient.
- Municipal water and waste water pump stations and treatment works.
- Green transport.
- Provision busses and non-motorized transport like walk ways and cycle ways (to reduce carbon emissions).
- Green procurement & technologies.
- Renewable energy (solar water heating, wind farming, small hydro, embedded).



Taking gender and climate change to heart: Unity Jaji, Gender Focal Person, Gweru, Zimbabwe. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Next steps

- Adapting to and mitigating climate change is critical to women's and men's enjoyment of socio-economic rights. Civil society organisations should take advantage of the recently established Transitional Committee of the Green Climate Fund to lobby for policies that promote sustainable development and are grounded in gender equity.
- Women's effective participation must be assured at all levels of the climate policy and climate change financing architecture.
- Lobbying for an addendum to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that takes into account the gendered aspects of climate change and provides clear targets to tackle the problems associated with them.
- Set clear short and long term targets for carbon emission reductions that keep average global temperature increases well below 1.5 degrees centigrade, and support a shared vision that enables gender equality and avoids potentially adverse impacts to vulnerable groups, especially women.

Key dates

When	Where	What
4-6 June 2012	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
November 26-Dec 7 2012 2012	Qatar	Cop 18
August 2012	Mozambique	SADC Heads of State Summit

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