

UNEP Gender Plan of Action

Recommendations for the 24th GC/GMEF and Summary of the Gender Plan of Action
2 February 2007

RECOMMENDED OUTCOMES of the 24th session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum related to UNEP's Gender Plan of Action and GC Decision 23/11:

1. Recognizes the significant efforts carried out by UNEP Executive Director and UNEP staff to support gender mainstreaming within UNEP and implement Resolution 23/11 and the Global Gender Plan of Action.
2. Calls on the Executive Director to commit adequate resources to fully implement the Global, Regional, and Divisional Gender Plans of Action.
3. Requests the Executive Director to continue implementing the measures of GC Decision 23/11 related to equal participation in decision-making, gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programs, assessment of effects on women of environmental policies, and implementation.
4. Requests the Executive Director to provide a progress report during the 25th session of the Governing Council in relation to the fulfilment of the Global Gender Plan of Action, as well as the Regional and Divisional Gender Plans of Action.
5. Requests the Executive Director to commit adequate resources to the existing gender-environment project proposals on conflict, CEDAW, knowledge generation, and youth mentorship.
6. Requests the Executive Director to ensure that UNEP works with the Secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biodiversity, to develop a strategy for mainstreaming gender in their work.
7. Calls on the Executive Director to ensure that gender mainstreaming is a core component of UNEP-UNDP current initiatives on poverty and environment and climate change, as well as initiatives on environmental disasters, post-conflict-management, and environment and health.
8. Urges Governments to take steps toward the mainstreaming of gender in their environmental work, as requested in GC Resolution 23/11.
9. Requests governments to adopt the gender recommendations in the Global Civil Society Statement to the 24th session of the GC/GMEF (see annex).

Summary of the UNEP Gender Plan of Action

UNEP's Gender Plan of Action (PoA), which emerged from the Governing Council's decision (23/11) to renew gender mainstreaming efforts within UNEP, was developed in partnership with IUCN (World Conservation Union) and WEDO (Women's Environment and Development Organization) and was approved at a senior management workshop at UNEP in June 2006. Implementation of the PoA throughout the UNEP system is well underway, including regional and divisional workshops with UNEP directors and staff, training of gender focal points, development of UNEP's Gender Policy, and recruitment of a Senior Gender Advisor. The current prerequisite for fully realizing the PoA is for governments to support its implementation with adequate resources.

The importance of gender mainstreaming in environmental and poverty eradication policies is recognized in a wide range of global agreements¹ and organizational UN mandates². According to the 2005 UNDP Human Development Report, gender continues to be "one of the strongest markers for disadvantage" and reducing inequality would be instrumental in progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality between women and men has a cumulative effect of improved environmental management and protection and poverty alleviation for communities. Women play a leading role in caring for their families and communities, in sharing their intellectual and social capital, and in protecting and managing natural resources. However, the environmental sector is among those in which gender mainstreaming has taken place in a fragmented, superficial and inconsistent manner.

The objectives of the Global Gender PoA are to ensure an active and balanced participation by both women and men throughout UNEP's policies and work; promote equality of opportunity and treatment between women and men in the environmental sector at national, regional, and global levels; increase the quality and efficiency of UNEP's work in environmental conservation and promotion of sustainable development; and prevent negative impacts of environmental policies and interventions on gender equality. The development of the PoA was based on an analysis of UNEP's present performance in the area of gender-environment, including interviews with UNEP senior staff and an analysis of 40 internal documents, as well as a review of similar plans among comparable international institutions.

The PoA employs a popular methodology based on the recognition that sustained incorporation of gender issues in any institution requires the co-existence of progress in four separate spheres – the

¹ Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992); Johannesburg Plan of Action (2002); Paragraph K of the Beijing Platform for Action (4th World Conference on Women 1995); the World Conference on Human Rights (1993); the International Conference on Population and Development (1994); the World Summit for Social Development (1995); the Millennium Declaration (2000); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); Convention on Biodiversity (1992); Convention to Combat Desertification (1994).

² Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/1999/19; TORs for departmental focal points for women in the UN secretariat (2004); ECOSOC substantive sessions (2004 and 2005); Outcome of the 2005 World Summit (A/RES/60/1), paragraphs 58, 59, & 116); ECOSOC Resolution 2005/31; Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000); Security Council Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2005/52).

Policy, Organisational, Delivery, and Constituency spheres.³ The primary actions under the four spheres of the UNEP Global Gender Plan of Action include:

Policy Sphere

- Secure high-level commitments to gender equality and environment
- Elaborate a Gender Policy for UNEP
- Allocate sufficient resources
- Ensure that all new policies are gender-sensitive

Organizational Sphere

- Establish a Senior Gender Advisor position
- Form a group of gender focal points
- Operationalise the Gender Plan of Action
- Strengthen gender-specific capacities of all UNEP staff
- Ensure gender equality and equity within UNEP's internal human resources management
- Increase awareness of the responsibility of all staff for gender mainstreaming
- Ensure that reporting and evaluation includes a gender perspective

Delivery Sphere

- Collect and disseminate gender-environment methodologies
- Link gender, environment, and poverty reduction
- Knowledge generation on gender and environment and gender mainstreaming in environment
- Ensure that gender criteria are included, and gender sensitivity is incorporated, in the elaboration of projects and programmes
- Collaborate with scientific institutions to promote scientific exchange programmes on gender and environment

Constituency Sphere

- Cooperate with the Network of Women Minister of Environment and gender-environment organizations
- Provide technical assistance to the Ministries of Environment to develop gender policies and plans
- Development of a mentorship programme for young women
- Support the Secretariat of the MEAs and the CSD in relation to gender mainstreaming
- Strengthen alliances with UN "sister organizations"

Executive Director Achim Steiner and UNEP management expressed their full commitment to implementing the PoA, stating that gender mainstreaming at UNEP was required by numerous mandates and that undertaking this work was not optional. Building capacity and securing adequate resources are the highest priorities for ensuring implementation of the PoA..

³ Levy, Caren. The Process of Institutionalising Gender in Policy and Planning: The "Web of Institutionalisation. Development Planning Unit, University College London. Working Paper No. 74. United Kingdom. 1999.

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Gender Recommendations from Global Civil Society Statement to 24th session of the GC/GMEF (UNEP/GC/24/INF/10)

1. Recommendations to Governments

30. Ensure greater efforts to implement the gender plan of action at the country level, including by strengthening networks and partnerships with national non-governmental organization working on gender and environment and to ensure that gender equality is integrated into legislation in the environmental sector.

31. Develop differentiated approaches to gender-related environmental issues in developed countries, developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

32. Integrate a gender prospective into environmental education systems at all levels and encourage the involvement of young environmental leaders in gender equality issues. The United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development recognizes the need for gender integration in the achievement of its objectives, which are to improve the quality of education, reorient education to address local needs, create public awareness on sustainability issues and to build capacity in the area of sustainable development – including tutoring programmes, access to thematic information centres and technical assistance, particularly among young and indigenous women. Provide support to implement mentorship programmes for young women.

33. Ensure the increased involvement of women in all aspects of sustainable development and environmental decision-making, particularly in the context of water management. Adopt and implement the recommendations of women adopted at the twelfth and thirteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

2. Recommendations to UNEP

34. Mainstream the gender plan of action into UNEP activities, including at the regional and subregional levels. Request donors to commit adequate resources dedicated to the implementation of the gender plan of action, including sufficient funds in a non-discretionary, fixed line of the UNEP budget, so that implementation of the plan of action is not dependent on the existence of extra-budgetary resources. Consideration should be given to the creation of a gender and environment trust fund for civil society to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender and environment in the implementation of environmental programmes.

35. Involve civil society fully in the implementation of the plan of action, including the Network of Women Ministers of the Environment and civil society organizations working at the nexus of gender equality and the environment and United Nations “sister” entities with expertise on gender equality and human rights and alliances with women’s environmental citizens’ networks. UNEP should facilitate the establishment of women’s environment networks in regions where they do not yet exist (particularly Africa).

36. Implement the four main outcomes resulting from the UNEP WAVE conference of 2004, ensuring resources and broad support for regional WAVE conferences to be organized in cooperation with civil society partners.
37. Ensure that special attention is given to traditional knowledge and the wisdom of women from indigenous peoples and in rural communities on the contribution of such knowledge and wisdom to environmental conservation.
38. Play a leading role on the issue of protection of women in post-conflict situations in regard to access to land and resources.
39. Broaden gender perspectives in multilateral environmental agreements.
40. Analyse the process and outcomes of the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum from a gender perspective.