



World Meteorological Organization
Organisation météorologique mondiale

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Weather • Climate • Water
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Written Contribution to the General Discussion on Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, Geneva, 29 February 2016

WMO Comments for Consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) wishes to thank the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for the opportunity to present its views at the General Discussion on Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate as well as contribute to the formulation of specific measures for implementation by the States parties to the Convention.

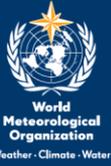
We wish to bring to the attention of the Committee and the participants in the general discussion the Statement of the Conference on the Gender Dimensions on Weather and Climate Services (Geneva, 5-7 November 2014) and the Sector-Specific Recommendations presented in its Annex.

Under the slogan “Universal Access – Empowering Women,” the Conference raised awareness and showcased good practices on how to equally empower women and men to build safer, stronger and more resilient societies through the provision and use of gender-sensitive weather and climate services.

Numerous sectors of society are weather- and climate-sensitive, including disaster risk reduction, public health, water resources management and agriculture and food security. In such sectors, managers and communities require reliable weather and climate information in a user-friendly format to know how to manage today and plan for tomorrow.

To be effective, weather and climate information must meet the needs of all: women as well as men. In numerous communities, because of social roles and constraints and physical differences, women and men play different roles. They can thus be affected differently by weather and climate and they may access, understand and use weather and climate information differently. In response, weather and climate information and products need to be designed and communicated in gender-sensitive ways. Women also have an important role to play in the weather, water and climate sciences and hold profound knowledge of the ecological environment.

WMO wishes to emphasize the importance of gender-sensitive weather, hydrological and climate information and services in building resilience to the impacts of hazardous weather and climate variability and change. We would also like to stress the fundamental role of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in ensuring that women and men can make equally informed decisions with respect to all weather- and climate-sensitive sectors. We would further like to highlight the knowledge, strategies, solutions and visions that women and girls have in shaping safer communities and nations as well as the need for increased investment in education and career development for women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). This would ensure equal opportunities for women to participate in governance and decision-making as related to disaster risk reduction, climate and other related matters.



THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



Statement

We, participants of the Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services;

Convene in Geneva, Switzerland, upon the invitation of the World Meteorological Organization and its partners,¹ on the basis of our respective mandates and responsibilities as stakeholders, to address the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment in a wide range of fields, including hydro-meteorology, climate change, disaster risk reduction, public health, water resources management, and agriculture and food security; among others;

Seek to contribute to the larger goals of equal and inalienable human rights, peace and security, effective climate action, managing disaster risk and increasing resilience, sustainable agriculture and food security, equitable access to health care and improved well-being, poverty eradication and increased and shared prosperity, environmental justice, and gender equality and women's empowerment, thereby making a difference in the lives of women and men, girls and boys;

Recall the findings and recommendations from the first (1997) WMO Meeting on the Participation of Women in Meteorology and Hydrology in Bangkok, and the Second (2003) WMO Conference on Women in Meteorology and Hydrology in Geneva;

Note the commitment set out in the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* to empower all women in order to achieve equality between women and men as a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for peace and people-centered sustainable development;

Are aware of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* for a gender-sensitive climate policy, the advancement of gender equality and to improve the participation of women in negotiations and in technical bodies that are established to discuss climate action;

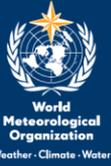
Note the commitment set out in the *Hyogo Framework for Action* to integrate a gender perspective into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes;

Further note the commitment to take up the UN Secretary General's Zero Hunger Challenge which seeks to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition worldwide;

Aim to contribute to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework, the United Nations 2015 climate change agreement and other future climate action, and the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

¹ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank.





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



Confirm that weather and climate services provide very important support to climate-sensitive social and economic sectors, in particular public health, agriculture and food security, water security, transport, energy, disaster risk reduction, natural resource management and environmental protection, among others;

Take into account the Global Framework for Climate Services, whose vision is to enable better management of the risks of climate variability and change and adaptation to climate change, through the development and incorporation of science-based climate information and prediction into planning, policy and practice on the global, regional and national scale;

Acknowledge the conclusion from the Gender and Climate Forum of the World Climate Conference-3 (WCC-3) that the *effects* of weather and climate are not gender-neutral, and **recognize** that *information* about weather and climate also is accessed and used differently according to social factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, culture, income, access to telecommunication services, disability and location;

Note that because women, including indigenous women, have valuable knowledge on weather and climate and are a powerful resource for increasing national and community resilience, their empowerment and balanced representation in production and decision-making processes can improve the effectiveness of weather and climate services;

Concerned that women in developing countries are particularly in need of capacity development for accessing and using weather and climate services; and that indigenous peoples and indigenous women in particular often face multiple and disproportionate vulnerabilities to climate change and limited access to climate and weather services; as well as that women and men of every social background should have equal access to and control over available weather and climate information services;

Seek to advance analysis of the gender dimension of weather and climate services in order to enable provision of tailored products that will facilitate effective investment decisions, risk analyses, planning efforts, and programme, project and policy development, and thereby help reduce poverty and foster sustainable development in all aspects of society;

Do hereby propose specific recommendations to facilitate the incorporation of gender and weather and climate services into the work of United Nations agencies, civil society, regional, national and local authorities, including for disaster management, and the private sector, and aim for further development of these recommendations in our ongoing activities.

We, the participants of the Conference, **hereby call upon** all partners at international, regional, national and community levels to take the necessary steps to:

1. **Improve the understanding of the gender-specific impacts of weather and climate and of the gender dimensions of weather and climate services** on disaster risk reduction, water resources management, public health, and agriculture and food security through increased research, outreach and training; including through systematic collection and use of **sex- and age-disaggregated data** and through carrying out **gender analyses**, as well as by developing and using gender-sensitive indicators to monitor access to and use of services;





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



2. **Pursue strategies and structures to increase the involvement of women** as well as men in the development and communication of gender-sensitive weather, hydrological and climate services, including promotion of women's knowledge and skills;
3. **Produce and communicate gender-sensitive weather and climate services**, ensuring the active involvement of service providers and relevant authorities, as well as female and male stakeholders from climate-sensitive sectors, at a scale, in a format and using language which is comprehensible and effective for female and male users, particularly in early warning systems, and, working closely with weather- and climate-sensitive sectors, providing weather and climate services targeted to women, as necessary;
4. **Strengthen the capacity of women as well as men in climate-sensitive sectors**, as service providers, as relevant authorities and as end-users, to contribute to the effective production, access and use of weather and climate services through **technical and communications education, training and professional development**, including gender training;
5. **Increase investment in gender-based weather and climate services** to reduce gender gaps within this area, providing better gender-sensitive services and supporting greater voice and agency for women in these services;
6. **Expand women's participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)**, particularly in meteorology and hydrology, through the development and implementation of gender equality strategies in educational institutions as well as the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in national meteorological and hydrological services, the World Meteorological Organization, and other partners and stakeholders; and
7. **Increase collaboration and integration** of programmes and initiatives between the World Meteorological Organization, key United Nations organizations, regional, national (with a key role for National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs)) and local actors, to enable the systematic integration of gender-sensitive weather and climate information into the activities, networks, programmes and plans of stakeholders, local and national governments and regional commissions, as well as within international organizations and conferences;

We agreed on specific recommendations in the areas of disaster risk reduction, public health, water resources management, agriculture and food security, and women and careers in weather, water and climate; attached in the Annex;

We, the participants of the Conference, thereby:

Commit ourselves to implement these recommendations within our institutions and networks;

Invite FAO, IUCN, UN Women, UNESCO, UNISDR, WHO and WMO, with partners, as well as other UN agencies and programmes, to take action to pursue these recommendations; actions that should include the development of specific targets as well as policy, operational





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



guidance and monitoring and evaluation, as necessary, so that progress on these recommendations can be made and measured;

Invite the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction to draw the Statement of the Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services to the attention of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in particular during the Ministerial Roundtable on Mobilizing Women's Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction;

Invite the Executive Director of UN Women to draw the Statement of the Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services to the attention of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women;

Invite the UNFCCC Executive Secretary to draw the Statement of the Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services to the attention of the COP-20 in Lima, Peru; and

Invite the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization to provide the report and the Statement of the Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services to the attention of WMO constituent bodies, the Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services and the Seventeenth World Meteorological Congress as well as to relevant UN and other organizations.





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



Annex

Sector-specific recommendations from the Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services, 5–7 November 2014

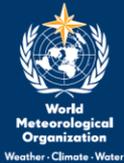
I. Disaster risk reduction

- a. Invest in NMHSs (providers) to deliver improved gender-sensitive services and scale-up good practices.
- b. Establish affirmative action measures to attract and retain female staff in geosciences (curricula, targets, etc.).
- c. Enhance capacity of service-delivery sectors to use tailored weather and climate information for informed decision-making at all levels (from policymakers to community members).
- d. Strengthen partnerships through stakeholder platforms with gender machineries and women's organizations on DRR at all levels (awareness, use of champions, post-2015 climate change, and DRR and SDG frameworks, among others).
- e. Document and disseminate case studies on indigenous knowledge used by women to cope with disasters.
- f. Promote the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data on DRR to inform the design of targeted interventions.

II. Public health

- a. Promote and encourage cross-disciplinary research linking climate change, health and gender in order to develop sufficient information to inform policy effectively.
 - i. Policy development needs to be evidence-driven.
 - ii. Little research available that links climate change, health and gender considerations with policy development.
 - iii. Community-level, sex-disaggregated data often not available.
- b. Engage with research into social and behavioural sciences to help improve information and communication mechanisms, leading ultimately to improved decision-making.
 - i. Understand how weather and climate information is used.
 - ii. Better appreciation of how people assess risk.
 - iii. Leads to impact-based forecasts and warnings, communicating specific behaviours designed to protect personal and family health.
 - iv. A complex issue: gender and diversity are just pieces of this larger puzzle.





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



- c. Devise communication strategies that recognize potential gender-specific barriers to accessing weather and climate information, both technological and cultural.
 - i. Access to communications technologies is often influenced by gender, among other considerations.
 - ii. Focus on communication pathways that are used by, and familiar to, women.
- d. Promote awareness that moving to a low-carbon economy and society will have the effect of improving public health, especially for women and children.
 - i. Strong linkage between climate change and increased hazards such as vectorborne diseases.
 - ii. Indoor and outdoor air pollution.
 - iii. Unsustainable transport systems.
 - iv. Poor nutrition.
- e. Encourage NMHSs to engage with the health community to bring together health, weather and climate experts for joint training, operational partnerships and other initiatives.
 - i. Training health professionals in the use of climate data.
 - ii. Training climate experts in the needs of health communities.
 - iii. Co-locating climate observing stations with health sentinel sites.
 - iv. Engaging female health actors.
 - v. Working through the health system will automatically bring a gender-focus to information transfer.
 - vi. Engage with animal health experts also where relevant.
- f. Encourage NMHSs to develop education and outreach programmes with a particular emphasis on science education for girls and women.
 - i. Improve the understanding of science in the community.
 - ii. Develop programmes with schools – especially girls' schools.
 - iii. Ensure training programmes reach into the rural communities and are not just urban-based.

III. Water resources management

- a. Target interventions at all levels, from children to youth to adults (in all capacities).
- b. Empower those at high levels to gain influence through greater gender awareness.
- c. Compile gender-disaggregated indicators, as is being done by the UN-Water World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP).





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



- d. Target those at greatest risk – the poor and disadvantaged – and understand their perspectives and needs.
- e. Develop partnerships and improve coordination among different stakeholders and different (especially already existing) projects.
- f. Disseminate information through the most appropriate means of communication (personal meetings, television, radio, infographics), keeping the message brief and simple.
- g. Ensure that information is made to measure (in local languages) – and that it is needed and received.
- h. Include indigenous knowledge together with scientific understanding – build trust.
- i. Provide schools with hands-on access to water and weather facilities, (a weather station, for example), visits and career talks.
- j. Emphasize the societal value of scientific careers.
- k. Create and maintain networks of young women in water professions.
- l. Enable positive discrimination in hiring and promoting equally qualified candidates – although this is just a start.
- m. Offer paid family leave for both mothers and fathers.
- n. Scan all policies and programmes through a gender lens.

IV. **Agriculture and food security**

- a. Recognize the specific activities performed by women in agriculture in every region.
- b. Listen to farmers, localize the information and leverage with existing networks (Listen, Localize and Leverage).
- c. Promote research that is directed at implementation (action research).
- d. Consider the special needs of end users when communicating weather and climate information and ensure that all farmers have access to the right kind of information.
- e. Deliver simple products and information all farmers (men, women, the most vulnerable) need for decision-making that blends information from sources such as crop models, water and health issues.





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5–7 NOVEMBER 2014



- f. Ensure that feedback from users is obtained about climate and weather information quality or characteristics, especially with regard to climate-change adaptation.
- g. Develop and implement specific plans to fill the gaps on education, access to technologies and decision-making schemes for women in rural contexts.
- h. Make better use of networks such as cooperatives, agricultural-extension services, communities, and champion/leading farmers to disseminate weather and climate information.
- i. Improve the quantity and quality of NMHS services and information targeting farmers and other food-producing communities.
- j. Integrate gender considerations in the plans of weather and climate services and make gender considerations a priority at a high level.

V. Women and careers in weather, water and climate

- a. Integrate national and international endeavours in promoting and supporting women in science at all levels of their careers.
- b. Enhance and extend gender-mainstreaming actions and targets in WMO, its constituent bodies and Members, and the other organizations responsible for planning and running this conference.
- c. Walk-the-walk as well as talk-the-talk.
- d. Increase visibility and attractiveness of careers in weather, water and climate science for women and men. Emphasize diversity of careers in meteorology, hydrology and climate science and the need to improve salaries and conditions in many countries.
- e. Enhance gender awareness in teacher's education, particularly for science teachers.
- f. Build gender sensitivity into weather and climate services. Sensitivity must start now; we cannot wait until more women enter the science world.
- g. Enhance and extend existing mentoring, internship and fellowship schemes for women at national and international levels.
- h. Develop and deliver context-centred training programmes to support gender-sensitive services, thus meeting the needs of women in different roles (users to developers) and in different regions, cultures and socioeconomic situations.
- i. Seek and promote role models to improve the visibility and attractiveness of careers in weather, water and climate science.





THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES CONFERENCE

UNIVERSAL ACCESS | EMPOWERING WOMEN

GENEVA, 5-7 NOVEMBER 2014



- j. Publish and promote the Conference proceedings and use the material when reviewing existing publications and perhaps there could be a WMO Bulletin focused on gender issues.

