

# Gender and Climate Change Adaptation in the NDCs

This policy paper gives a brief overview on how Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) included gender-sensitive aspects into the climate change adaptation content within their national contributions (NDCs)<sup>1</sup>. The analysis was realized by means of the Tool for Assessing Adaptation in the Nationally Determined Contributions (TAAN), developed by GIZ.



## Key findings

- Considerably more countries that present an adaptation component refer to gender considerations in their NDC updates, compared to their initial NDCs.
- Gender considerations are mostly mentioned on a planning level, fewer NDCs are reporting back on gender-responsive implementation, for example in the NDC revision process.
- References to national strategies and policies on gender prevail, as well as the explicit need for capacity building and women's empowerment due to their "increased vulnerability".
- The number of NDCs referring to gender-disaggregated impacts of climate change and/or gender-responsive budgeting in link with their adaptation priorities has increased with the NDC revision process, although still at a rather low level.

## Gender and Climate Change Adaptation

**The climate crisis, like so many important issues, cannot be tackled without taking into account gender-specific needs, concerns and capacities.** Women\*, in all their diversity<sup>2</sup>, are disproportionately affected by climate change. In many regional and social contexts, women are still disadvantaged by the gendered distribution of rights, resources and property, access to education and employment.

Nevertheless, it is often them who are directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods: particularly in developing countries, more women than men are employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries<sup>3</sup> and women often spend more time on activities such as food processing and food preparation for the household, water and fuel collection as well as other unpaid household duties and care work.<sup>4</sup> **The climate crisis is affecting the access to and distribution of these natural resources, thus increasing the vulnerability of people and social groups depending on them.**

However, the widespread narrative of women as a vulnerable and affected group does not do justice to the complexity of their social realities. Women's first-hand experiences due to their social roles as providers, educators, energy and transport users and land managers etc. make them important agents of change, especially with regard to climate change adaptation. Therefore, emphasis must be laid on the **need for structural changes to tackle the existing gender gaps in decision making and participation and to amplify women's voices in the response to the climate crisis.**

### Various capacity-building initiatives and tools actively incorporate gender aspects to support Parties in pursuing gender-responsive climate action.



The **NDC Partnership**, of which GIZ is an institutional member, is committed to implementing its Gender Strategy by supporting countries (upon their request) with technical assistance to anchor gender equality more firmly into their climate plans, budgets and actions. Support includes integrating gender analysis and policy frameworks into NDCs, increasing cooperation with relevant ministries/gender experts or fostering the equal participation of women and men in the NDC process.



The **NAP Global Network** has designed a **toolkit** to support countries in pursuing a gender-responsive NAP process. Parties increasingly refer to or use their National Adaptation Plan (NAP) or their Adaptation Communication as NDC adaptation component.



**AdComm-DAT**, a tool designed by the Climate Policy Support Programme of GIZ, supports countries in the formulation and submission of Adaptation Communications and encourages the integration of gender aspects.

1 NDCs registered as of October 2021

2 Reference to the construct of gender. This refers to all persons who identify as women\*

3 FAO. 2021. World Food and Agriculture – Statistical Yearbook 2021. Rome.

4 United Nations Statistics Division Time use data portal ([unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/timeuse](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/timeuse))

## TAAN History and Methodology

TAAN was started to be developed in 2015 by the Climate Policy Support Programme of the GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In 2017, a first online version of the tool was integrated on the GIZ platform “Adaptation Community”. In 2020, with COP26 approaching and thus the expectation of many new and updated NDCs, the methodology of the tool has been updated to provide an overview on the enhancement of climate adaptation contents. To this end, all submissions in the TAAN have been reassessed to include new indicators and to be able to measure enhanced adaptation action.

Apart from a few categories on vulnerabilities, SDGs, costs and support requests, the adaptation content of a submission is only assessed in case the NDC contains a specific part/chapter dedicated to adaptation (“adaptation component”). The analyses were implemented manually by means of 280 qualitative and quantitative categories. Direct quotes from the submissions are used for the qualitative categories, providing thus a good insight and overview on the presentation of adaptation measures and ambitions in a country’s submission.<sup>5</sup>

As of **15 October 2021**, 528 submissions were included in the TAAN, covering the INDCs<sup>6</sup>, 1. NDCs and NDC Updates that have been officially submitted to the UNFCCC and included in the NDC registry to this date. **The following analysis is based on the data entered in the TAAN at this reference date.**

## Gender and Adaptation in NDCs

Tackling gender inequality can play a key role in how countries adapt to the growing risks posed by climate change<sup>7</sup>. Evidence shows that adaptation initiatives that address gender are more effective<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, **it is crucial that the above-mentioned gender-specific differences are being taken into account in the planning, design and implementation of adaptation measures**, a fact that is also being recognized in international climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC<sup>9</sup>, the Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan.

While the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, unlike other Rio Conventions, make no reference to gender or women, the Paris Agreement preamble calls for human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment to be considered in all climate change activities. More specifically, Article 7 of the Paris Agreement adds a gender dimension to the Global Goal on Adaptation, acknowledging “that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach”.<sup>10</sup>

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) present a key opportunity to meet these requirements. NDCs are at the heart of the implementation process of the Paris Agreement, capturing the Parties’ plans and commitments to reduce GHG emission reduction targets, enhance adaptation action and make financial flows consistent with

a pathway towards low emissions and climate-resilient development. To allow Parties to enhance their ambitions according to changing contexts and capacities, the mechanism moreover operates on a five-year cycle to update NDCs, either by handing in new NDCs or updating existing ones. Accordingly, Parties should work continuously on the contributions they intend to achieve, **creating an important window for advancing progress on gender-responsive climate action within their pledges.**

## TAAN – Assessing Adaptation in the NDCs

The **Tool for Assessing Adaptation in the NDCs (TAAN)**<sup>11</sup> is an interactive knowledge platform that aims to provide an overview of the adaptation content of countries’ NDCs. TAAN presents adaptation objectives, priorities and key sectors as well as countries’ adaptation measures as indicated in their NDCs.

The TAAN covers various topics, such as sustainable development, monitoring and evaluation or participatory processes, as well as four specific sectors agriculture, water, health and biodiversity/ecosystems. Seven categories capture the presentation of gender-related issues in an NDC adaptation component, allowing TAAN users to assess whether and how gender aspects in general are being considered, how women are being referred to and, more specifically, if any reference to gender-disaggregated impacts of climate change and/or gender-responsive budgeting is made.

<sup>5</sup> TAAN is based on a manual analysis. In comparison to other digital methods, such as keyword search, it leaves a natural margin of errors that can occur during the data collection process. On the other hand, this enables contributors to choose representative quotes according to their ability to represent contents of the NDC in an accurate way and based on a better understanding of the structure of the NDC.

<sup>6</sup> The INDCs are not explicitly analysed in this paper, given that most of them have been converted into NDCs upon Paris Agreement ratification and thus mainly present the same content than the 1. NDC

<sup>7</sup> [Tackling gender inequality is ‘crucial’ for climate adaptation - Carbon Brief](#)

<sup>8</sup> Daze & Dekens, 2017; Global Gender and Climate Alliance, 2016

<sup>9</sup> Burns & Daniel. 2020. Pocket Guide to Gender Equality under the UNFCCC

<sup>10</sup> Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Dec. 12, 2015

<sup>11</sup> Accessible online: [taan-adaptationdata.org](http://taan-adaptationdata.org)



### Gender in NDC adaptation components

In the subsequent analysis, the “initial” or “**first round of NDCs**” includes those 1. NDCs that have been converted from INDCs into NDCs upon the Paris Agreement ratification (1. NDC (Conversion upon PA ratification) as well as 1. NDCs that have been newly submitted and differ from the INDC (1. NDC (New Submission)). The “new” or “**second round of NDCs**” refers to NDC Updates (1. NDC (Update/Revision)) as well as new submissions (2. NDC (New Submission))<sup>12</sup>. Following the methodology of TAAN (see info box above), over 70 % of these 334 submissions registered by 15 October 2021 include an adaptation component and thus allow to have a closer look into the way gender and climate change (adaptation) are being linked in the NDCs.

#### 1. General considerations

In the first round, **65 NDCs out of 139 NDCs with an adaptation component in the TAAN referred to gender and adaptation or as a cross-cutting issue**. In the subsequent round, considering new as well as updated NDCs, **this number has increased to 79 out of 97 submissions and is expected to increase even further** as NDC update are still being developed and submitted on the road to COP27.

Diving into the content of the quotes captured in the TAAN, one can see that NDCs tend to give an overview on gender as a cross-cutting issue rather than focusing on the thematic area of adaptation (or mitigation). Hereby, references to national strategies and policies on gender prevail, as well as the explicit need for capacity building and women’s empowerment due to their “increased vulnerability”.

Figure 1 shows more specifically, how **the consideration of women as a vulnerable group persists** (54 submissions). Considerably less NDCs refer to women as agents of change (36) or beneficiaries of climate change (adaptation) action and measures (37).

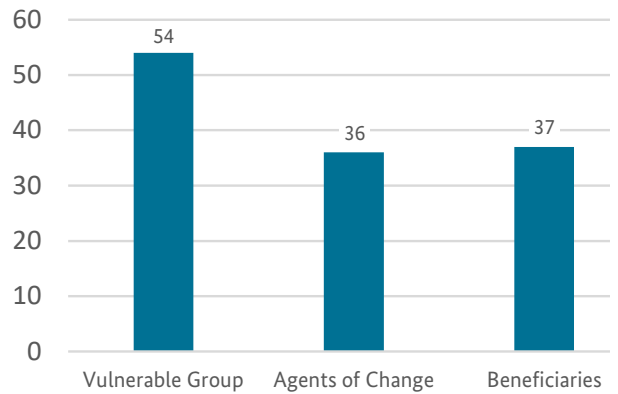


Figure 1: Representation of the role of women as mentioned in the NDCs (Source: TAAN, October 2021)

Moreover, **gender considerations are mostly mentioned on a planning level**, thereby explaining why it is important to mainstream gender into climate-related processes and strategies, **rather than reporting back on gender-responsive implementation**, for example in the NDC revision process. Nigeria’s NDC update (2021) demonstrates how such a gender-responsive process could look like: *“In preparing the 2021 NDC update, a detailed gender analysis was conducted to determine gender differences in contributions to national development, division of labour, employment, access to resources, and participation in decision-making in the seven priority sectors of the NDC. The analysis revealed a general lack of access to and control of resources by women compared to men in all seven priority sectors.”*

Further good practice-examples are provided by the Vanuatu NDC Update (2021), where a *“gender expert [...] was engaged in NDC enhancement and reviewed the enhanced NDC options to review the gender-responsive considerations”* or the Belize NDC Update (2021), elaborating on how *“the actions and targets included in [the] updated NDC have undergone a gender and vulnerable group scoring analysis.”*

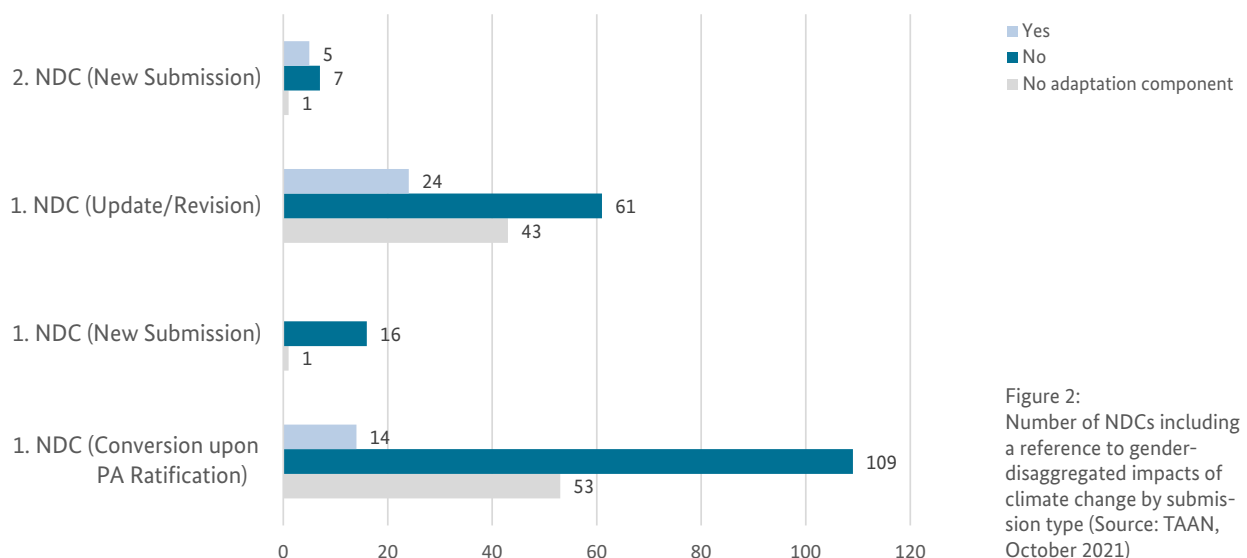


Figure 2: Number of NDCs including a reference to gender-disaggregated impacts of climate change by submission type (Source: TAAN, October 2021)

<sup>12</sup> The subdivision into these categories is consistent with the UNFCCC NDC registry approach.

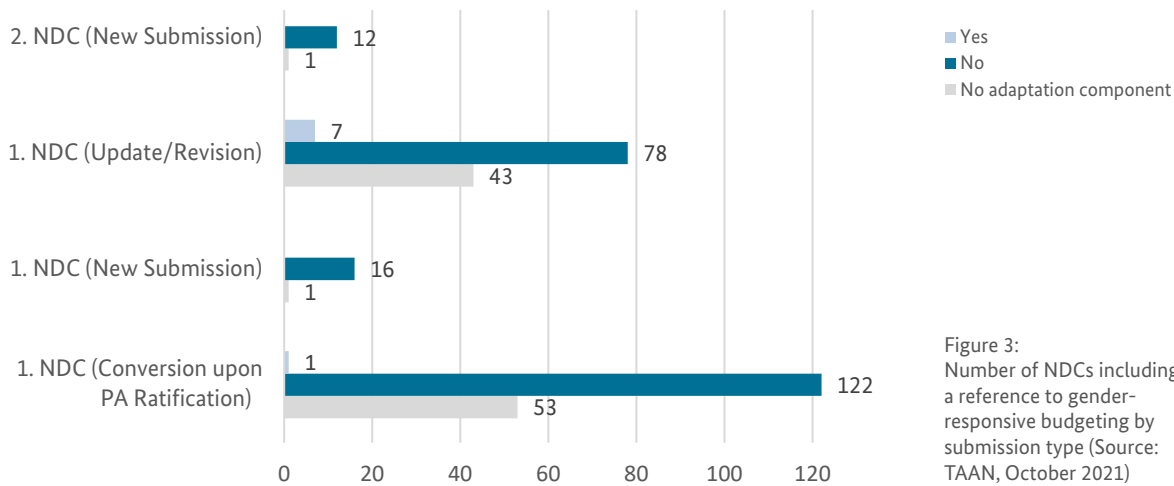


Figure 3:  
Number of NDCs including  
a reference to gender-  
responsive budgeting by  
submission type (Source:  
TAAN, October 2021)

**Concrete projects to strengthen the resilience of women are often linked to the agriculture sector** (see also Benin, Bhutan, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria or South Sudan). For example, Liberia plans to “roll out a “Women in Agriculture” program with 4 training sessions per year (with at least 45 women trained per year) to support implementation of climate-resilient agricultural and livestock practices and increase women’s access to agricultural inputs and labor-saving devices by 2025” (Liberia NDC Update, 2021). This provides a good example on how gender-specific indicators can be integrated in the NDCs or adaptation strategies and policies, a need that is also formulated in various NDCs (e.g. Malawi, Guinea-Bissau).

Apart from the fact that more NDC updates integrate gender-sensitive (adaptation) considerations, the way they are integrated in the new NDCs is also remarkable. The above-mentioned examples demonstrate that, **in their latest submissions, many Parties decided to treat this topic more in-depth and output-focused** or at least acknowledge the need for a general commitment to gender. This is in line with findings of previous research analyzing gender equality in NDCs.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Gender-disaggregated impacts of climate change

While only 14 of the initial NDCs with an adaptation component did refer to gender-disaggregated impacts of climate change, 29 countries have decided to include this kind of information in their NDC Update or in their 2. NDC (see Figure 2).

Some of the NDCs simply **acknowledge disproportionate adverse effects of climate change on gender** (such as Angola, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Kenya, Mexico or Uganda), whereas other NDCs also go into more details. For example, in Vietnam “several negative impacts of climate change on women’s health include increased prevalence of diseases and epidemics, especially among pregnant women, girls, women with chronic diseases and elderly women. Regarding the socio-economic aspect, as female farmers

usually have lower levels of education and less access to information and finance than men, their livelihoods depend mainly on natural resources and have high sensitivity but low adaptive capacity in the context of climate change.” (Vietnam, NDC Update 2020).

In result, some NDCs conclude with the **need for “climate-empowering women”** (Cabo Verde, NDC Update, 2021) **and to acknowledge their role as agents of change:** “Women, girls and persons with disability also bear the brunt of risks and vulnerabilities brought on by droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events, which places them at the front lines of adaptation as important and necessary stakeholders in effective adaptation to climate change” (Sierra Leone, NDC Update 2021). Georgia further considers “to empower women as agents of change through their participation in decision-making processes related to energy efficiency measures and efficient use of water resources in households” and “to provide adaptation resources channeled towards women wherever their vulnerability level is high.” (Georgia, NDC Update 2021)

A second group of countries furthermore focuses on methods for tackling these gender-disaggregated considerations, mainly through **data collection** (such as Burkina Faso, Chile, Georgia, Honduras, Marshall Islands or Saint Lucia) **and/or monitoring and reporting** (Moldova, Rwanda). For example, the second NDC of the Marshall Islands elaborates on gender-differentiated data collection as a necessary “initial step [...] to identify gaps, needs and opportunities for women, men, youth and marginalized and vulnerable groups to address gender and social inequities, particularly in rural remote communities” (Marshall Islands, 2. NDC 2018). Accordingly, Bhutan conducted a study to capture gender-disaggregated impacts of climate change “to get an understanding of gender issues in the context of climate change and related policy responses in Bhutan [...] for priority sectors of Agriculture, Energy and Waste [...]. The findings and recommendations helped set a basis for understanding gender and climate linkages while enabling the incorporation of gender approaches.”

### 3. Gender-responsive budgeting

Similar to the topic of gender-disaggregated impacts of climate change, the number of NDCs referring to gender-responsive budgeting in link with their adaptation priorities has increased with the NDC revision process, although it still is at a very low level. Seven countries have adopted this perspective in their new NDCs, and only Jordan had already mentioned the need to “ensuring that financing mechanisms on mitigation and adaptation address the needs and conditions for implementation of poor women and men equally” in its INDC (see Figure 3).

The range of levels of gender-responsive budgeting that countries refer to in their NDCs is relatively broad. For example, some NDCs present **concrete numbers regarding the financing needs for gender aspects** (Burkina Faso, Mauritania), while others highlight the overall need to **integrate gender in NDC budgeting processes** (Mali) or in **national climate financing** (Moldova, Jordan). On an overarching level, Guinea emphasizes the need to provide “sufficient operational resources for the gender and equity units created in 2015 in all ministries”, as well as the national funds set up for gender promotion<sup>14</sup> (Guinea, NDC Update, 2021). Fiji and Cabo Verde moreover add the dimension of **capacity-building measures** that are necessary to “empowering vulnerable groups in climate action and on the effects of gender-sensitive climate policy planning, budgeting [and] implementing” (Cabo Verde, NDC Update, 2021).

### Conclusion

Considering that climate change impacts are not gender neutral, adaptation measures in the NDCs must be designed with these differences in mind, tracking the potential benefits as well as negative impacts of these measures on particular gender groups. To this end, acknowledging the role of women as agents of change, collecting gender-disaggregated data and designing gender-responsive (financing) instruments and strategies is key. This policy paper gave a brief overview on how Parties to the UNFCCC decided to include gender-sensitive aspects into their NDCs, with a focus on adaptation to climate change.

Although this analysis of the TAAN data has shown that the level of integration as well as the focus of NDCs regarding gender and adaptation varies greatly from one country to another, TAAN can be used to **understand these different ways of integration of gender considerations according to national contexts, capacities and needs**. Hereby, the tool can be a meaningful source of inspiration to Parties that are still at the beginning or in the midst of their NDC revision process. The brief moreover showed that there is still room for improvement on issues such as gender-responsive budgeting and emphasizes the importance of continuing to integrate gender in NDC revision processes on the road to COP27 and beyond.

14 Original text : « [...] la dotation en moyens de fonctionnement suffisants des services “Genre et Équité” créés en 2015 dans tous les ministères [et] l’intégration des enjeux d’adaptation et d’atténuation dans les moyens dédiés au Fonds national d’appui aux activités économiques des femmes (FONAEF) et au Fonds national pour la promotion du genre (FNPG) »

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The TAAN database is available upon request. Please visit [taan-adaptationdata.org](https://taan-adaptationdata.org) for more information.

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