
COP 26-Side Event

Strengthening Gender and Youth Engagement in Climate Action: A Focus on NDC Implementation

Wednesday 10th November 2021; 12:30 - 14:00

Commonwealth Pavilion

1. Background and Rationale

Global efforts to address climate change increasingly recognise that addressing gender and social inequality will be integral to effectively addressing climate change. At the same time, there is recognition that worldwide, gender responsive climate policy still needs to be strengthened in all activities concerning adaptation, mitigation, and related means of implementation (finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building), as well as decision making on the implementation of climate policy. In the Commonwealth, against this broader picture, Women's Affairs Ministers identified four priority areas for gender equality in 2016, renewed in 2019: women's economic empowerment, women in leadership, ending violence against women and girls as well as gender and climate change.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a strong track record in assisting and supporting member states in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change. In addition to influencing international policies, mechanisms and rules to be more responsive to the development needs of countries that are especially vulnerable to climate change, the Commonwealth Climate Change Programme places a great emphasis on facilitating the capacity development of member countries to access climate finance - providing assistance to enable member countries to enhance and implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as part of the Paris Agreement.

The integration of gender and youth considerations into climate change initiatives is fundamental for building resilience in an equitable manner, as these groups are often at a greater disadvantage from the impacts of climate change. At all levels women and young people are underrepresented in decision making, which further entrenches the marginalisation of their concerns. The Paris Agreement, through its emphasis on inclusion and gender responsiveness, affirms the need for proactive strategies to address this imbalance.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's approach on mainstreaming gender into climate change action, through its Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), includes supporting member countries in the development of funding proposals which integrate youth analysis and gender action plans, aimed at delivering gender-responsive actions in their

implementation. The CCFAH also provides technical assistance to support the accreditation process of eligible national entities to international climate financing institutions.

Young people (under 30 years) constitute more than 60 percent of the Commonwealth population and must be seen as key stakeholders in the development process. The Commonwealth's mandate on youth empowerment places emphasis on meaningful access to development and policy processes, as a critical way of ensuring that young people's unique perspectives and ideas are heard and included in decision making. The Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN) was established in 2009, as a platform for enhancing the capacity of young people to effectively advocate and facilitate action aimed at addressing Climate Change and other environmental issues. CYCN plays a critical role in advocating within governments, international agencies and global discourses such as Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), ensuring that the voices of youth are heard and considered in the development of climate policies.

It is important to note that, after a slow start, women and youth are featuring more prominently in NDC submissions. With more countries expected to submit new or revised NDCs ahead of the twenty sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC taking place in November 2021, the time is right to push this further - encouraging the meaningful participation of women and young people in climate policymaking and implementation.

During COP26, the Commonwealth Secretariat is seeking to host a side event on, 'Strengthening Gender and Youth Engagement in Climate Action: A Focus on NDC Implementation'. This event will seek to discuss the current role women and young people play in the drafting and revision processes of NDCs as well as the scope for increased involvement in the implementation of NDCs. The outcomes of this discussion between young people and gender practitioners will seek to contribute to the framework for establishing a clear and robust roadmap for the mainstreaming of gender and young people in the NDC revision and implementation processes across member countries.

2. Objectives

The main objectives for the event are as follows:

- To share experiences on women and youth involvement in the NDC implementation process and discuss the scope for expansion of such engagement as part of the revised NDCs and their implementation;
- To highlight the challenges that hinder youth and gender mainstreaming in NDC implementation, and to identify possible ways forward;
- To explore and affirm the potential benefits of increasing youth and gender components for achieving climate action and building climate resilience;
- To highlight the role of the Commonwealth as a convening body for ensuring greater inclusion of women and young people in NDC implementation;

- To raise awareness of the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation in relation to climate change, youth and gender, with specific reference to NDC implementation in Member States;
- To consolidate recommendations and launch advocacy for policy actions by Member States post COP26.

3. Expected Outcomes

As a result of the event, participants will have:

- A better understanding of the rationale behind securing more involvement of women and young people in the effective revision and implementation of country NDCs.
- Received information and advice that will help them identify practical ways to increase the mainstreaming of both youth and gender in NDC processes.
- Established and / or strengthened contacts and partnerships, within and across regions, thereby enhancing advocacy efforts and resource mobilisation for meaningful women and youth participation in the NDC process.
- Received first-hand information on the experiences and valuable lessons learned from the roll-out of the, 'Gender and Climate Analysis Guidance Tool for Civil Society Organisations' and the outcomes and best practice recommendations from the 'Commonwealth NDCs Gender Analysis'.

It is hoped that the event will result in a clear call to action for enhanced national and global commitments for the inclusion of youth in all phases of countries climate change strategies, as well as the development of more gender responsive NDCs

4. Draft Agenda and Speakers

| Timing | Item |
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| | Opening and Context Setting |
| 12:30 - 12:45 | Welcome and Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth • Ms. Åsa Regnér, Deputy Executive Director for Policy, Programme, Civil Society and Intergovernmental Support, UN women |
| 12:45 - 12:55 | Commonwealth NDCs Gender Analysis: An Overview of Findings and Recommended Best Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Uzoamaka Nwamarah, Adviser, Climate Change, the Commonwealth Secretariat • Ms. Jennifer Namgyal, Adviser, Gender, the Commonwealth Secretariat |
| 12:55 - 13:05 | Highlights of the Commonwealth Gender and Climate Analysis Guidance Tool for Civil Society Organisations - Development and Utilisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Leith Dunn, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Gender and Development Studies Mona Unit, the University of the West Indies |

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| 13:05 - 13:15 | Addressing Youth Capacity Challenges and Designing Youth Inclusive Processes for Accelerating NDC Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Robert Bradley, Director, Knowledge and Learning, NDC Partnership Support Unit |
| | Panel Discussion |
| 13:15 - 13:40 | The Importance and Benefits of a Gender Perspective to Climate Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Houria Djoudi, Senior Scientist at the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) • Ms. Catherine Allinson, Director, Future Earth Ltd Experiences in Scaling up Women and Youth led Climate Change Initiatives to Support Achievement of NDC Targets <p>Developing a Gender Responsive NDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Halima Bawa-Bwari-Bwai, Acting Director, Department of Climate Change and UNFCCC Gender National Focal Point, Nigeria <p>Enhancing Youth Capacity to Access Climate Finance for NDC Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Ruth Phillips-Itty, Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser for Saint Lucia • Ms. Leneka Rhoden, Coordinator of the Commonwealth Youth Climate Network (CYCN) |
| 13:40 - 13:55 | Participant Engagement and Moderated Q & A Session |
| 13:55 - 14:00 | Closing Remarks and Way Forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, the Commonwealth Secretariat |
| Event Moderator: Mr. Jevanic Henry , Assistant Research Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat | |