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BRIEF: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Updated and New Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)



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I. Introduction

Gender in the Paris Agreement

The preamble to the Paris Agreement (Agreement) acknowledges that climate change is a common concern of humankind and that “Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights,” including “gender equality” and the “empowerment of women”.¹ In short, this preambular language places the consideration of both gender equality and the empowerment of women squarely in the frame of all climate action, whether it be action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), adapt to impending climate change impacts or address resulting loss and damage where adaptation is not enough.

Further to the critical context setting by the Agreement’s preamble, its operative provisions reinforce the mandate for Parties to consider gender when taking climate action. In Article 7 of the agreement, which establishes the global goal on adaptation, Parties acknowledge that adaptation action should be gender responsive.² Similarly, in Article 11, which states the aim of Parties to enhance the capacity of developing country Parties to take effective climate change action, Parties agree that capacity-building activities should be gender responsive.³

Critical support for the recognition of gender as a core element of all climate action taken by Parties under the Paris Agreement comes through decision 1/CP.21, where Parties to the Convention⁴ adopted the Paris Agreement. Decision 1/CP.21 includes a preambular paragraph that is identical to that of the Paris Agreement described above. Effectively, the inclusion of this preambular paragraph in a Convention decision universally extends the need to consider gender equality and the empowerment of women to all climate action taken on Earth.⁵ The latest gender-related decision under the Convention, which adopts the enhanced five-year Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan, recalls decision 1/CP.21, and includes in its preamble the full text of the Paris Agreement’s preambular paragraph 11.⁶

The role of NDCs in the Paris Agreement's 'ratchet mechanism'

The Paris Agreement combines a bottom-up and top-down approach. This combination forms what is known as the Agreement’s ‘ratchet mechanism’.⁷ The submission of NDCs underpins the bottom-up aspect of the Paris Agreement, flowing from individual Parties up to the international climate change forum. Parties must communicate their contribution to meeting the Paris Agreement’s long-term temperature goal⁸ through these NDCs every five years, either in the form of updates of existing NDCs or as new NDCs.⁹ Successive NDCs are meant to represent progression and reflect a Party’s highest

¹ Paris Agreement, preambular para 11.

² Ibid, Article 7, para 5.

³ Ibid, Article 11, para 2.

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or UNFCCC.

⁵ All United Nations (UN) member states, plus Palestine, the Cook Islands, Niue and the EU are Parties to the UNFCCC, under which all Parties have committed to take action to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

⁶ UNFCCC, decision 3/CP.25, Enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan.

⁷ See Carbon Brief, Explainer: the ‘ratchet mechanism’ within the Paris climate deal (3 Dec 2015), available at <https://www.carbonbrief.org/explainer-the-ratchet-mechanism-within-the-paris-climate-deal>.

⁸ Paris Agreement, Article 2.

⁹ See *ibid*, Article 4, para 8. Updates are relevant to NDCs with a 10-year timeframe, whereas the submission of new NDCs are relevant to NDCs with a five-year timeframe. The discussion of a common timeframe for NDCs is ongoing.

possible ambition toward meeting the long-term temperature goal.¹⁰ NDCs are, therefore, a primary source of information on Parties' proposed climate action; and since the Paris Agreement's preamble clearly acknowledges that any climate action taken by a Party should respect, promote and consider gender equality and the empowerment of women, all NDCs should include gender considerations.

This bottom-up approach links to the top-down aspect of the 'ratchet mechanism', which includes a uniform biennial reporting process, review of and feedback on biennial reports submitted,¹¹ a facilitation and compliance mechanism¹² and, finally, a five-yearly global stocktake to assess collective progress toward achievement of the purpose of the Paris Agreement and its long-term goals.¹³ The reporting, review and assessment process that comprises the top-down aspect of the Paris Agreement's ratchet mechanism will allow Parties and other relevant organisations to measure how well the consideration of gender equality and women's empowerment is being integrated into action to address climate change at all levels.

II. Gender aspects of capacity-building initiatives to support submission of new / updated NDCs

Finance, technology transfer and capacity-building must be provided to developing country Parties for the development and implementation of their NDCs.¹⁴ Following is a selection of capacity-building initiatives that are actively supporting the preparation of new / updated NDCs in developing countries, specifically highlighting their approaches to integrating gender:

NDC Partnership

The NDC Partnership¹⁵ (Partnership) works directly with national governments, international institutions, civil society, researchers, and the private sector to fast-track climate and development action. The Partnership aims to increase alignment, coordination, and access to resources to link needs to solutions through:

- Country engagement;
- Knowledge and information sharing; and
- Access to finance.

The NDC Partnership has a Gender Strategy¹⁶ which outlines a process to support countries to mainstream gender equality into climate action with the aim of laying a foundation for the development and implementation of gender responsive NDCs. The Gender Strategy operates through the NDC Partnership's Country Engagement process with support from its Knowledge and Learning workstream – tasked with mapping technical capacity-building resources and programmes and knowledge tools, as well as with supporting uptake across member countries and facilitating access to information on successes, effective practices, and lessons learned.

¹⁰ Ibid, para 3. It should be noted that many Parties have included other aspects of the Paris Agreement's goals in their NDCs, including their contribution to adaptation and finance needs, which provides a broader spectrum of climate action, ergo, the consideration of gender equality and women's empowerment.

¹¹ Ibid, Article 13.

¹² Ibid, Article 15.

¹³ Ibid, Article 14.

¹⁴ See *ibid*, Article 4, para 5.

¹⁵ See <https://ndcpartnership.org/>.

¹⁶ NDC Partnership, Gender Strategy (September 2019), available at <https://ndcpartnership.org/sites/default/files/NDC%20Partnership%20Gender%20Strategy%202019.pdf>.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): NDC support programme

The UNDP works with countries to scale up action on climate change, specifically to help countries use their NDCs as a tool for transitioning to climate-resilient, zero-carbon pathways. The NDC support programme¹⁷ aims to help countries formulate systemic, integrated approaches embedded in policy frameworks, inclusive leadership, reporting systems and blended climate finance to implement NDC objectives. The programme currently serves 36 countries directly and shares expertise more broadly through existing partnership networks.

The UNDP's NDC support programme is currently helping 10 countries pilot the integration of gender-responsive measures into NDC planning and implementation.¹⁸ Three core areas are targeted:

- Institutional frameworks and coordination mechanisms;
- NDC planning for implementation; and
- Enhanced climate instruments.

The ultimate aim of the integration process is to help countries translate their gender equality ambitions into concrete action and policy, ensure that progress already made in support of development goals can be protected and that future efforts will not be undermined.

NDC Platform

The World Bank Group has developed a set of tools that include a detailed adaptation / mitigation database, a content visualization tool, and summary country briefs.¹⁹ The data analysis has been conducted to respond to information needs for the identification of opportunities or gaps in existing sources to support the implementation of planned policies and actions. The database is searchable and gender is a sub-category under the social development sector. It is not clear from the Platform's website how often the database is updated.

Climate and development knowledge network (CDKN)

CDKN has prepared a Quick-Start Guide²⁰ to support developing countries in implementing their NDCs. It is accompanied by a reference manual which provides more detail on the activities that countries can include in their implementation plans. The Guide and reference manual are aimed at national and sub-national policymakers as well as development partners and practitioners supporting the implementation of NDCs. The guidance was initiated at the request of a number of developing countries keen to move from planning to implementation.

The Guide recognises the strong links between NDC implementation and the SDGs and other international frameworks and agreements, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. It draws particular attention to the crossover with wider development planning as an opportunity to integrate a gender sensitive approach into NDC implementation. Throughout, the Guide

¹⁷ UNDP, NDC support programme, available at <https://www.ndcs.undp.org/content/ndc-support-programme/en/home.html>.

¹⁸ Bhutan, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Lebanon, Philippines, Uganda, Zambia. See UNDP, Gender responsive NDC planning and implementation, available at <https://www.ndcs.undp.org/content/ndc-support-programme/en/home/our-work/focal/cross-cutting-gender.html>.

¹⁹ World Bank, NDC Platform, available at <http://spappssecect.worldbank.org/sites/indc/Pages/INDCHomeMore.aspx>.

²⁰ CDKN, Planning for NDC implementation: Quick start guide and reference manual (2016), available at <https://www.cdkn.org/ndc-guide/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Quick-Start-Guide-final-pdf.pdf>.

and the accompanying reference manual highlight opportunities for mainstreaming gender approaches into climate policy.

World Resources Institute (WRI)

WRI and UNDP prepared a report in September 2019²¹ with the aim of helping government officials identify options for enhancing NDCs in line with the Paris Agreement. The report offers guidance on establishing a process for NDC enhancement, enhancing mitigation and adaptation components of NDCs, and communicating NDCs transparently. Additionally, it reflects on aligning NDCs with the SDGs, and on the role of finance in NDC enhancement.

In setting out steps for the enhancement process, the report suggests countries consider including gender-responsive adaptation action as an element where NDCs include adaptation-related aspects. It also highlights gender equality as a relevant intersection in achieving a country's development goals through NDCs. As part of establishing a process for enhancing NDCs, the report advocates for the inclusion of all relevant ministries, including those responsible for gender. The report also provides case studies related to the inclusion of gender-related considerations in NDCs, including from Ecuador and Lebanon.

III. Summary of WEDO's current analyses

Since 2016, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) has been involved in analysing NDCs (including "intended NDCs" – INDCs) for their inclusion of gender-related matters. A brief summary of WEDO's relevant analysis follows.

INDC analysis (September 2016)

The 2016 analysis²² had the objective of evaluating the extent to which INDCs²³ address women's human rights and the linkages between climate change and gender more broadly. The analysis takes a multi-step approach to evaluating the extent to which governments addressed the linkages between gender and climate change in their INDCs, noting:

- The existence of any reference to gender or women in policy;
 - The nature of the reference, which includes:
 - The context for the reference, e.g. commitments to mitigation, adaptation, capacity-building, implementation or whether the gender reference is cross-cutting. Where a government has committed to gender mainstreaming or taking gender into account across one or more components of the INDC, this is noted as gender sensitive;
 - The way in which women are positioned in the INDC. This includes positioning women as a group that is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; as beneficiaries of projects or policies; as agents of change; or as stakeholders, i.e. as having a stake in climate change-related decision-making;
 - The existence of gender-responsive budgeting in the INDC;
 - The existence of a participatory planning process for the INDC; and
- The existence of a mechanism or process for monitoring or implementing the INDC.

²¹ WRI and UNDP, *Enhancing NDCs: A guide to strengthening national climate plans by 2020* (September 2109), available at https://files.wri.org/s3fs-public/enhancing-ndcs_0.pdf.

²² WEDO, *Research paper – Gender and climate change: Analysis of intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs)* (September 2016), available at https://wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/WEDO_GenderINDCAnalysis-1.pdf.

²³ It is important to note that where a Party communicated an INDC prior to joining the Paris Agreement, the INDC would be considered the Party's first NDC upon ratification of the Agreement. Therefore, this analysis of INDCs by in large reflects the gender considerations in current NDCs.

In total, 64 of the 190 INDCs analysed include a reference to women or gender, but the overall conclusion of the analysis was that the INDCs submitted up to 2016 fall far short of the necessary commitments.

Analysis of instruments, plans and actions supporting integration of gender equality principles and practices

WEDO’s “Spotlight on Gender in NDCs”²⁴ analyses the instruments, plans and actions supporting the integration of gender equality principles and practices in Party NDCs. By identifying the extent to which countries have engaged on the integration and implementation of gender into national climate and sustainable development processes and instruments, it supplements the findings of this briefing paper, which looks more specifically at the incorporation of gender in new and updated NDCs.

IV. Analysis of updated and new NDCs

Of the 18²⁵ submissions of updated or new NDCs, only four (Grenada, Nepal, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Suriname) are new NDCs. For the most part, the updates are relatively brief, focusing in the main on broad policy objectives and updating sectoral mitigation targets. While each of the updates is different, their general ‘stripped back’ nature has simplified the method for this analysis, the entry point being a word search of relevant terms, i.e. gender, empowerment, equality, responsive, vulnerability, and women. Where none of these terms is present in the new or updated NDCs, the assumption is that WEDO’s previous analyses of (I)NDCs remain viable and that this analysis should be treated as complementary to them.

Updated NDCs

The analysis of the updated NDCs on the basis of a key word search is found below in Table 1. (For both Tables 1 and 2, countries in teal/blue contain references to gender, grey do not.):

Table 1

Country	Provisions based on key words search
Andorra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable groups are included in Andorra’s sustainable development strategy.
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chile’s NDC incorporates a gender approach in all policies, programmes, climate change plans and actions; • As part of the capacity-building strategy, Chile outlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The design and implementation of the NDC must consider a fair allocation of charges, costs and benefits, with a focus on gender and special emphasis on sectors, communities and ecosystems vulnerable to climate change; ○ During the implementation phase of the NDC, existing studies and analysis on climate vulnerability and risk in Chile will be updated and expanded to address relevant threats, considering gender in

²⁴ WEDO, Spotlight on gender in NDCs: An analysis of Parties’ instruments, plans and actions supporting integration of gender equality principles and practices (October 2020), available at https://wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Spotlight-Gender-in-NDCS.pdf?blm_aid=41126.

²⁵ Andorra, Chile, Cuba, Grenada, Jamaica, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Singapore, Suriname, Thailand, Viet Nam, Zambia (as at 8 December 2020). These are recorded in the UNFCCC’s interim NDC registry, available at <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/Pages/Home.aspx>.

	<p>the approach. Those studies will serve as key inputs for the design of adaptation measures;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By 2025, assessments of climate change risk to vulnerable groups nation-wide will be carried out, with a special focus on indigenous peoples, poverty and gender; ○ Forests are intimately linked to the cross-cutting elements of the NDC in terms of adaptation: i) Water security; ii) Disaster Risk Reduction; iii) Inclusion of vulnerable groups, with a special focus on gender; and iv) Nature-based solutions.
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gender-related key words were mentioned in Cuba’s NDC, but country-wide vulnerabilities are referred to.
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Besides climate action (SDG 13), Jamaica reports making particularly substantial progress on health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), and gender equality (SDG 5); • Jamaica’s updated NDC reflects its commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. It will be subject to all relevant laws, guidelines, policies and programmes which are designed to increase inclusiveness and fairness, including the Code of Consultations and the National Policy for Gender Equity.
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gender-related key words were mentioned in Japan’s NDC.
Mongolia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mongolia states it is ensuring equality for vulnerable groups and increased employment by providing knowledge and education.
New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand’s update is a two-page document that points to the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 as the leading piece of legislation guiding NZ’s action on climate change going forward. A brief survey of this legislation shows that taking particular account of vulnerable groups is provided for in its sections on national climate risk assessments and national adaptation plans.
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Norway’s NDC, the section on planning processes refers to the 2018 Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. The Act’s purpose is to promote gender equality and provide protection against discrimination on the basis of gender, pregnancy, leave in connection with birth or adoption and care responsibilities. Women and men are to be given equal opportunities in education and work, and in their cultural and professional development.
Republic of Moldova (Moldova)	<p>Moldova’s NDC integrates gender in several ways, primarily in the adaptation section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moldova’s medium- and long-term adaptation goal is to reach sustainable social and economic development that is resilient to the impacts of climate change by establishing a strong enabling environment for coherent and effective adaptive action, integrating climate risk into investment decision-making and business planning, while remaining socially inclusive and sensitive to the gender impacts of climate change; • The National Strategy on Ensuring Equality between Women and Men (2017-2021) in Moldova and the Action Plan for its implementation aim to reduce gender gaps due to social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities exacerbated by climate change; • Gender policy is supported by a 2006 law that ensures equal opportunities between women and men, which stipulates that in

	<p>Moldova women and men enjoy equal rights and freedoms and are guaranteed equal opportunities for their exercise;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender is set out as a separate adaptation priority category with its own set of key activities; • There is an analysis of the gender impact of previous investments by sector and gender aspects of the implementation of past adaptation actions is assessed; • Included in the main systemic impediments for increased political commitment to addressing climate change adaptation is insufficient statistical data on health and wellbeing through a gender lens.
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rwanda intends to influence effective mainstreaming of climate adaptation in sector priorities, clear adaptation metrics, including indicators and targets, to guide the collection of gender disaggregated data; • Gender mainstreaming is positioned as central to Rwanda’s sustainable development process; • Gender mainstreaming is stated as a priority at all levels of policy and implementation and the NDC will ensure gender disaggregated data is captured; • Vulnerability assessments of local communities based on important economic sectors are an important aspect of the implementation of the NDC.
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only mention of gender-related key words in Singapore’s NDC is associated with standard ‘gender-responsive’ headings around planning processes.
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gender-related key words were found, but there is a strong focus on the implementation of Thailand’s national adaptation plan, participatory approaches and the integration of climate change into the national development strategy.
Viet Nam	<p>Viet Nam addresses gender in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation: Climate change, increased natural disasters and climate extremes produce different impacts on women and men. While men are exposed to more risks due to their involvement in search and rescue operations, women are generally more vulnerable to health and socio-economic problems; • Climate-induced risks: The poor, ethnic minority groups, people whose livelihoods depend on the climate, the elderly, women, children, and people with chronic illnesses have the highest level of vulnerability. Women, especially ethnic minority women, are highly vulnerable due to limited access to education and fewer opportunities to participate in non-farm employment; • Public health: Increased temperatures, hot and prolonged heat waves, air pollution, as well as other climate extremes negatively affect human health, leading to increased vulnerability especially among the elderly, women, children and people with existing conditions; • Loss and damage: Since the end of 2014, increased temperatures due to the impact of El Niño have caused drought and saline intrusion, seriously damaging production activities and people’s lives, including those of women.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘update’ from Zambia is merely a communication that it will be providing an updated NDC at a later date.

New NDCs

The new NDCs submitted by Grenada, Nepal, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Suriname include provisions on gender-related matters, a full analysis of which is beyond the scope of this briefing paper. Table 2 ‘signposts’ where gender, gender-equality and women’s empowerment can be found in these new NDCs. Given the consistent integration of gender in each of these new NDCs, a more in-depth review of them is recommended.

Table 2

Country	Provisions based on key words search
Grenada	<p>The inclusion of gender considerations represents an expansion in scope relative to Grenada’s first NDC. These considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grenada’s NDC is linked to the country’s national policy framework, including its Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan; • Grenada has anchored inclusivity as a cornerstone of its development process. The development and implementation of the 2013-2017 Structural Adjustment Process included stakeholders from the major societal groupings – private sector, NGO’s, trade unions, gender and youth, academia and faith based organizations; • Grenada is committed to taking a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to low-carbon development and climate resilience, which encompasses education, health, food security, water and sanitation, housing and social protection and to ensure a resilient, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and peaceful society.
Nepal	<p>Nepal’s NDC considers gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) as a cross-cutting, primarily as relates to adaptation-related thematic areas. Key GESI commitments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2021, a GESI and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and Climate Resilient Planning and Budgeting Guidelines will be formulated; • By 2025, a strategy and action plan on gender-responsive climate-smart technologies and practices will be prepared and implemented; • By 2030, develop an Action Plan for integrating GESI in achieving NDC targets; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop specific programs with dedicated resources (human and financial) to ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women, children, youth, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized groups in climate change-related policy development; and during the planning, monitoring and implementation processes at local, provincial and national levels; ○ Promote the leadership, participation and negotiation capacity of women, Indigenous Peoples and youth in climate change fora; ○ Ensure gender-disaggregated data when reporting on progress and achievements. • By 2030, all 753 local governments will prepare and implement climate-resilient and gender-responsive adaptation plans. The plans will address climate change and disaster vulnerability and risks and prioritize adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management measures focusing on women, differently-abled, children, senior citizens, youth, Indigenous Peoples, economically deprived

	<p>communities and people residing in climate-vulnerable geographical areas.</p>
<p>Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)</p>	<p>Key recommendations in RMI's NDC include commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gender-responsive and human rights-based approach in all NDC-related planning, programming and implementation; • Mainstreaming gender and human rights, including in relation to developing, adopting, reviewing and implementing laws, policies and projects related to climate change, and commissioning further analysis with a view to putting in place a strategy to improve related data collection, monitoring and evaluation; • There is a section dedicated to gender and human rights, which includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RMI adopted its National Gender Mainstreaming Policy in 2015. The Policy guides the development of laws, policies, procedures and practices to address the needs, priorities and aspirations of all women and men and to eliminate all forms of discrimination and inequality; ○ The priority areas of the policy are: strengthening capacity across government to integrate gender equality into government services and programs; family well-being and eliminating gender-based violence and protecting and caring for survivors; and improving women's economic empowerment and participation in decision-making; ○ The policy also identifies vulnerable groups of women including those living in the outer islands (rural areas) and those with disabilities. Going forward, key recommendations arising from the Gender Action Plan (GAP) should be incorporated, as appropriate, into existing and future RMI policies to implement its 2050 Strategy. Human rights obligations should be similarly mainstreamed and safeguarded; ○ Reliable data in relation to gender issues is a major deficiency. A strategy needs to be put in place to address this, including identifying data needs; ○ Sex disaggregated data needs to be collected to improve the monitoring of the impact and effectiveness of climate change initiatives and policies.
<p>Suriname</p>	<p>Suriname includes gender-related concerns in its NDC, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of gender impact as a criterion for assessing NDC policies and measures; • Mention that Suriname's national adaptation plan (NAP) includes the strategic priority of respecting Surinamese society and culture and reducing gender and social inequities.

V. Conclusions and way forward

The ongoing debate on common timeframes for NDCs

As this analysis shows, the nature and scope of updated versus new NDC submissions are very different. Many of the updated NDCs, in particular those from developed country Parties, focus primarily on updating sectoral mitigation targets. The developing country record on NDC updates submitted to date is mixed. For example, Chile, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda and Viet Nam have paid attention to gender in their updates, but other developing country Parties appear to have focused far more on the economic implications of reducing GHGs in key sectors with general mention of country-wide vulnerabilities, with little or no consideration of gender more directly.

On the other hand, the four new NDCs submitted to date specifically integrate gender in proposed commitments to climate action. While the gender components of existing NDCs that have merely been updated will not disappear and through the ratchet mechanism will be reported on and reviewed,

the process of preparing a new NDC every five years may result in a country re-visiting every aspect of climate action it proposes to contribute toward the Paris Agreement goals, including how the issues of gender equality and women's empowerment will be considered.

This observation feeds into the debate around common time frames for NDCs.²⁶ Parties have yet to resolve the matter over common time frames for NDCs, i.e. should NDCs have a term of five or ten years. There are variety of views and proposals on this matter, which do not necessarily line up along the traditional developing / developed country divide; and the issue has become highly political.²⁷ It has been flagged as a key issue for resolution at COP 26 (Glasgow 2021), and while the implications of a decision on common time frames for NDCs go beyond gender-related concerns, this analysis highlights the potential gender-related aspects of the debate.

Consideration of gender equality and women's empowerment in the architecture of the Paris Agreement

As mentioned above, the NDC is the primary source of information for how countries intend to contribute to meeting the Paris Agreement's temperature goal; but in many cases, countries have opted to include additional information on matters such as their adaptation contribution and financing needs – associated with both mitigation and adaptation. With the exception of the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS),²⁸ from 2024 all Parties to the Paris Agreement will be required to report biennially on progress made in implementing their NDCs.²⁹ Parties to the Paris Agreement are still negotiating the technical parameters of the reporting process, but in any case, these "biennial transparency reports" (BTRs) will be subject to a technical expert review (TER).³⁰

²⁶ Paris Agreement, Article 4, para 10. This paragraph obliges Parties to the Paris Agreement to consider common timeframes for NDCs at its their first meeting.

²⁷ For a recent discussion of this matter, see ecbi, Webinar Report, "Senior climate negotiators agree: Agreement on common time frames should be a priority for COP 26 (July 2020), available at <https://oxfordclimatepolicy.org/sites/default/files/Second%20CTF%20Webinar.pdf>.

²⁸ UNFCCC, decision 1/CP.21, para 90.

²⁹ Paris Agreement, decision 18/CMA.1, para 3.

³⁰ UNFCCC, Understanding the Enhanced Transparency Framework: New Handbook Published (July 2020), available at <https://unfccc.int/news/understanding-the-enhanced-transparency-framework-new-handbook-published-0>.

To the extent that gender equality and women’s empowerment considerations are included in a Party’s NDC, progress in implementing provisions relevant to them also should be included in the BTRs and thus will be subject to the TER. Furthermore, beginning in 2023 and every five years thereafter, Parties to the Paris Agreement will assess collective progress towards achieving the long-term goals of the Agreement (called the global stocktake or GST). One of the agreed sources of information for this stocktaking process is the “overall effect of Parties’ NDCs and overall progress made” towards their implementation,³¹ which should include gender considerations.

Ensuring that gender equality and women’s empowerment are considered centrally in all NDCs (whether new or updated), that the implementation of this consideration is reported on in Parties’ BTRs (subject to the TER) and then duly picked up every five years in the GST, is the way in which the preambular mandate of the Paris Agreement: to consider gender equality and women’s empowerment as a component of all climate action, will be met.



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Visit *Gender Climate Tracker*, www.genderclimatetracker.org, for the latest information, data and resources to understand and track progress on integrating gender equality mandates into climate policy at global and national levels.

³¹ Paris Agreement, decision 19/CMA.1, para 36(b).