

LAND, ENVIRONMENT

e) Environment

Gender Division of Labour

Both women and men are consumers, exploiters and managers of natural resources. Degradation of forests, watersheds, foreshores and agricultural land have a severe effect on women as they have a high degree of dependency on the natural environment to perform their daily household maintenance tasks. Women are usually the ones engaged in household subsistence activities, the collection of water, fodder, herbs for medicinal purposes and wood for fuel, construction, tools, baskets and other materials. Women are also generally involved in the management, maintenance and conservation of these resources for collective and community consumption, and often have a detailed knowledge of their local environment. Women who provide for subsistence needs have considerable expertise and knowledge of the state of the environment, and sustainable resource management strategies (Hunt 1997: 26, 71).

Access and Control of Resources and Benefits

Women's access to, and use of, natural resources is likely to differ from that of men's, as a result of the gender division of labour. The impact of natural resource development projects and environmental degradation on women and men will also differ. Women often have customary access to agricultural land for food and cash crop production, and to forests for foraging and fuel collection. However, women rarely have legal tenure. Any changes in land use patterns can seriously undermine women's customary and statutory rights as well as their access to resources necessary for household subsistence (Hunt 1997: 70). When declining soil fertility or cash crop production results in the clearing of new land, women's access to fertile land or forest resources may be constrained. Access to fuel sources and other important materials may become more difficult, resulting in a greater workload for women. Limited access to land, forest and water resources can leave women with little choice but to engage in harmful environmental practices. As environmental degradation increases, more labour is needed for basic subsistence production, fuel and water collection tasks. This has a detrimental effect on both girls' educational and women's economic opportunities. The poorest people are

generally most seriously affected by environmental degradation, and the majority of the poorest people are women and their children. The impact of conservation projects on men and women may also differ. For example, forest conservation plans may conflict with women's need for fuel collection or income-generation, unless women are directly involved in project planning and management.

Women and their families in urban environments also face significant environmental and resource depletion problems, particularly if they live in squatter settlements where land may be unfit for housing, or prone to flooding or industrial pollution. Lack of adequate water, sewage and garbage services affect the health of whole families, and make it very difficult to perform daily household maintenance tasks (Davidson 1993: 8-9).

Factors and Trends

Securing women's customary or new rights to land and resources, and allowing women to make decisions for the management of community resources bears strongly on cultural, religious, political, economic and social factors. Attitudes towards land tenure for women can also restrict women's opportunities to make decisions about the use of land and resources. Degradation of the environment can adversely affect women's socio-economic status by limiting their capacity to carry out traditional household subsistence roles, consequently straining household relations and the well-being of the whole family.

Demographic factors need to be taken into account in natural resource development and conservation programmes. While both women and men may migrate seasonally or permanently, in some regions women are the most stable members of the community, responsible for sustainable natural resource management while men pursue work in distant locations.

Generally, there has been little recognition of women's knowledge and roles in environmental management, and under-representation at the government level. Despite international acknowledgment of the need to involve both women and men in environmental management, women remain largely absent at all levels of

policy formulation and decision-making in natural resource and environmental management, conservation and rehabilitation programmes. Women are rarely trained as professional natural resource managers. However, there has been a

rapid increase in the number and visibility of women's NGOs working on these issues, and women have often taken a lead in promoting sound environmental practices (Platform For Action 1995: para 250).

Implementing a gender and development policy

Key aspects of a policy as it relates to environmental planning and management can be:

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| Goal: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to promote equal opportunities for women and men as participants and beneficiaries of development |
| Objectives: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to improve women's access to economic resources (including access to land, forests, marine and other natural resources) to promote women's participation and leadership in decision making at all levels |

Guiding Questions for the Identification and Preparation of Policies and Activities

- These questions are to be used as a guide only. It is not expected that every question will be relevant to all activities.*
- The questions are designed to assist activity managers with their assessment and appraisal of development activities.*
- The questions are also designed to assist contractors to incorporate gender perspectives into activity preparation and design.*

Key Areas of Concern	Guiding Questions
<i>Project Objectives and Target Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do project objectives explicitly refer to men and women? Does the project acknowledge and build upon women's and men's knowledge and skills in resource management? Does the project acknowledge that women and men may have different needs and priorities for environmental management, resource use and conservation? Have target groups and others directly or indirectly affected by the project identified their own environmental needs, concerns and priorities?
<i>The Gender Division of Labour</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has sex disaggregated data been collected for each phase of the production cycle? (<i>e.g., the role of women in use and management of resources</i>) Who is responsible for gathering forest products and water and for commercial and subsistence fishing? How dependent are women and men on the resources which have been targeted by the project for conservation or sustainable management? (<i>e.g. for energy, food, fodder, housing, water, medicinal purposes</i>) Will women's traditional knowledge and practices be integrated into environmental management practices initiated by the project?

<p><i>Access and Control of Resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has sex disaggregated data been collected about who has access to key natural resources targeted by the project? (<i>e.g., who has land use rights and tenure</i>) • Will women and men have adequate and equal access to information about proposed land use changes, resettlement options and compensation? • Will women or men have reduced access to resources to carry out their work roles and responsibilities? • Do women and men have different perceptions about natural resource uses and how they should be conserved and managed?
<p><i>Access and Control of the Benefits and Project Impacts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be adverse effects on women's or men's capacity to continue to provide for basic daily needs or to earn income from natural resources? • Will the introduction of new environmental practices displace women or men from their current positions in the sector? • Will projects such as land reform undermine women's access to land for food or cash crops? • Has the impact of new technology been discussed with women? (<i>e.g., designs for improved stoves</i>) • Will women's or men's workload increase as a result of project involvement? • Will groups of either women or men be disadvantaged? • If so, are the reasons for this clear and acceptable, and what remedial measures can be taken? • Will men and women have equal access to benefits? (<i>e.g., do women and men have equal access to all tree species in community forestry projects, or are women proscribed from gaining income from more lucrative products such as timber trees</i>)
<p><i>Social, Cultural, Religious, Economic and, Demographic Factors and Trends</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are women legally and/or traditionally recognised as managers of natural resources? • Have demographic trends such as female and male seasonal or permanent migration been considered in project planning? • Are there women's groups or other NGOs active in environmental education or conservation in the target area?
<p><i>Participation and Consultation Strategies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the constraints to women's and men's participation in project activities in each of the above areas been identified? • Have strategies been identified to overcome these constraints? • Will women and men have equal access to project planning and decision making? • Will any separate activities be needed for women to ensure that they participate, and that they are not disadvantaged by the project? • Are women trained and supported to engage in research and documentation on environmental issues, and to set priorities for environmental research? • Are project communication channels equally accessible to both women and men?

<p><i>Women's Social Status and Role as Decision Makers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will women be consulted and involved in decision making about changes to natural resource use and management? • Will legal reforms advance women's status? (<i>e.g., land reform</i>) • What opportunities are there for the project to support women as resource managers, and to take collective action to solve environmental problems? • What practical needs and strategic interests of women are addressed in the project?
<p><i>Counterpart Agency Capacity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Government or counterpart agency have a national policy or other statements promoting the importance of girls and women in natural resource management and environmental conservation? • Has a sex disaggregated employment profile of the counterpart agency been undertaken? • Has an affirmative action plan been developed to support and resource female staff? • How does the project plan to increase counterpart capacity for gender-sensitive environmental planning and implementation?
<p><i>Project Monitoring</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have targets been set for men's and women's participation and benefits? • Have gender-sensitive indicators been identified? • Will all data collected be disaggregated by sex? • Will there be on-going consultation with community groups, including women's groups, directly or indirectly affected by the project?
<p><i>Project Resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are project resources adequate to ensure that both men and women participate in and benefit from the project? • Is gender expertise available throughout the project?