



TOWARDS SBSTTA27: POLICY BRIEF ENHANCED POLICY COHERENCE FOR A JOINT WORK PROGRAMME OF THE RIO CONVENTIONS EMPHASISING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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MEENAL TATPATI, RESEARCH AND POLICY ASSOCIATE

Summary

Policy across the Rio Conventions should focus on gender integration inland tenure security, sectoral transitions, and accessible finance.

It needs to emphasise and address the importance of women's participation, secure land rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and integrated approaches to biodiversity, climate, and land management.

What is the issue?

The 16th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16), in its decision 16/22 on biodiversity and climate change, requested Parties, observers and other stakeholders to submit their views on options for enhanced policy coherence, including a potential joint work programme of the Rio Conventions. Gender inequalities persist across environmental governance, and despite the development of Gender Action Plans (GAPs) by all three conventions, women, particularly

Indigenous, rural, and young women, remain under-represented in decision-making, and their knowledge and contributions are often undervalued. At the same time, insecure or unrecognised land rights for women undermine biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation, and land restoration efforts. Further, transitions in land use, energy, infrastructure, and industrial sectors to prevent land degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss can have unintended negative impacts on biodiversity and human rights if not

assessed and implemented with a human rights-based approach. Innovative approaches, such as carbon credits and nature-based solutions, require careful monitoring to prevent harm to IPLCs.

Why is it important?

Gender-responsive policies enhance decision-making by recognising women's knowledge and leadership, leading to more equitable and effective outcomes in biodiversity, climate, and land governance. Secure land tenure as well as secure rights towards access and decision-making regarding natural resources, is equally critical since it supports ecosystem sustainability, empowers local communities, and helps prevent conflict. As countries undergo sectoral transitions to address the triple challenges of land degradation, climate-change and biodiversity loss, it is vital to ensure these shifts do not come at the expense of biodiversity or human rights, while aligning with long-term sustainability goals. Finally, ensuring adequate finance and capacity-building to Indigenous People and local communities, women and youth, engaged in ecological restoration and climate mitigation and adaptation is essential for meaningful participation and the successful implementation of these inclusive, rights-based approaches. Achieving this policy coherence across the Rio Conventions will enable integrated, efficient responses to this interconnected challenge.

What should be done?

Effective gender integration

To ensure effective gender integration, the Rio Conventions should establish joint mechanisms to oversee the implementation of their Gender Action Plans (GAPs),

fostering alignment and coherence across the processes of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Regional coordination meetings for Gender Focal Points of all three conventions should be convened to share best practices, address challenges, and strengthen synergies in policy and program implementation. Adequate funding and resources must be allocated to enable women, particularly Indigenous, rural, and young women, to participate meaningfully in environmental governance, decision-making, and biodiversity and land management initiatives. Capacity-building programs should be developed to enhance women's technical skills, leadership, and access to climate, biodiversity, and land restoration projects, ensuring their knowledge and contributions are recognised and valued.



Address Land Tenure Security

Securing land tenure is essential for biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and climate mitigation. The conventions should adopt a joint protocol or decision on land tenure, based on UNCCD Decision 26/COP 14, to harmonise tenure recognition and protection for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities, and other vulnerable groups. Mechanisms should be established to monitor and report on progress in securing land rights, ensuring transparency and accountability. Technical guidance should be provided to implement FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), within the conventions' frameworks. Special attention must be given to women's land rights, ensuring that Indigenous, rural, and young women have equitable access to land, housing, and natural resources.

Ensuring Just Sectoral transitions

In the context of sectoral transitions, Parties should assess the potential impacts of economic, land-use, energy, infrastructure, and industrial transitions on biodiversity, ecosystems, and human rights. A systematic compilation and review of information on carbon credits, biodiversity offsets, and other nature-based solutions should be undertaken to evaluate risks and opportunities, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Guidelines should be developed to prevent unintended negative impacts on ecosystems and vulnerable populations during sectoral and economic transformations.

Adequate and effective finance

Adequate finance and resource mobilisation are critical to implementing these measures. Targeted funding must support the implementation of Gender Action Plans, land

tenure security, and gender-responsive, community-led initiatives. Funding mechanisms should be flexible, transparent, and accessible, enabling Indigenous Peoples' and local communities, women, and youth to implement locally appropriate solutions. Non-market-based approaches that recognise Indigenous and community stewardship of ecosystems should be promoted alongside conventional financing to ensure equitable support.

Joint platforms for building synergies

Rio Conventions should strengthen policy coherence through integrated strategies that address climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation simultaneously. Joint platforms for dialogue and decision-making should be established to facilitate cross-convention coordination. Unified monitoring and reporting systems are needed to allow countries to track progress holistically, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure that interventions are socially inclusive, gender-responsive, and environmentally effective.

References

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For more information please contact:

Meenal Tatpati
Research and Policy Associate
Women4Biodiversity
meenal.tatpati@women4biodiversity.org

Women4Biodiversity
227/31, Baan Wang Tan
Chiang Mai, 50230
Thailand
info@women4biodiversity.org
www.women4biodiversity.org



www.women4biodiversity.org
communications@women4biodiversity.org