



TOWARDS SB8(J)01 : POLICY BRIEF GENDER AT THE CORE: OPERATIONALISING THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON ARTICLE 8(J)

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Summary

The Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) provides a permanent platform for the full and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities (IPLCs) in biodiversity governance, including the implementation of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF).

The New Programme of Work on Article 8(j) is to be guided by principles of meaningful, inclusive, and gender-responsive participation of IPLCs at every stage, aligned with the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030), and built on partnerships grounded in ethics, equity, and mutual respect.

The *modus operandi* for its implementation must:

- Follow inclusiveness for women and girls, transparency, representativeness and equity.
- Fill the data gap on indigenous and local women's knowledge, innovations and practices
- Support the full and effective participation of indigenous and local women in all aspects of decision-making

What is the issue?

At COP 16, Parties to the CBD took a historic decision to establish a Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and other provisions related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), recognising their unique role, knowledge, and practices in implementing the Convention and the Kunming-Montreal

Global Biodiversity Framework. A new Programme of Work on Article 8(j) was also adopted, to be guided by principles of meaningful, inclusive, and gender-responsive participation of IPLCs at every stage, aligned with the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030), and built on partnerships grounded in ethics, equity, and

and mutual respect.

The Conference of the Parties has requested the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention Related to IPLCs, to further elaborate and finalise its modus operandi.

The Subsidiary Body must address gaps, including insufficient gender-balanced representation, limited inclusion of women's expertise, and uneven participation across socio-cultural regions. Without explicit gender-responsive measures, decision-making risks overlooking the knowledge, priorities, and leadership of Indigenous women and girls. Additionally, lack of coordination with other CBD subsidiary bodies can lead to duplication, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for synergy. Thus there is a need to embed gender across representation, participation, decision-making, reporting, and accountability mechanisms of the Subsidiary Body.

Why is it important?

A gender-responsive modus operandi is essential because it strengthens equity and fairness by ensuring that women's voices from Indigenous and local communities are fully integrated into biodiversity governance rather than sidelined. It recognises and values women's differentiated knowledge systems, including their expertise in restoration, food systems, and community well-being, which are crucial for sustaining biodiversity. By embedding gender considerations, the Subsidiary Body also contributes directly to the implementation of the KM-GBF, particularly Target 22 on gender equality and the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030). In addition, a gender-responsive approach enhances accountability by ensuring that decisions, reports, and recommendations reflect the

lived realities of all members of Indigenous Peoples' and local Communities. Ultimately, this approach ensures more inclusive, effective, and just biodiversity outcomes.

What should be done?

Guarantee Full, Meaningful, and Gender-Responsive Participation

The Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) must ensure the full, equitable, meaningful, and informed participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), with a particular emphasis on Indigenous women and girls. This aligns with the KM-GBF's Target 23, which mandates Parties to "ensure gender equality in the implementation of the framework through a gender-responsive approach where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention" . The Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) further supports this by focusing on



"empowering and supporting the meaningful, informed and effective engagement of women and girls from indigenous peoples and local communities". To ensure genuine equity, the Subsidiary Body's membership must guarantee gender balance across all structures, including the Bureau, expert groups, and working committees. Representation cannot be tokenistic but must reflect the lived realities and expertise of Indigenous women and gender-diverse persons from different regions. Indigenous women's organisations must also be recognised as legitimate rights-holders and knowledge-holders. Such recognition strengthens legitimacy, ensures diverse perspectives, and anchors the Subsidiary Body's work in real community priorities. By embedding gender balance into its structure, the Subsidiary Body can set a global precedent for inclusive biodiversity governance. It is therefore essential that the CBD Secretariat ensures that the Bureau and Co-Chair and friends of the Bureau as well as open-ended working groups nominations have women holding 'gender expertise' from and on Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This will ensure that Objective 2.2 indicative action 2.2.2 of the Gender Plan of Action is taken into consideration¹.

Beyond representation, active participation must be safeguarded through gender-responsive procedures. Indigenous women often face systemic barriers such as language exclusion, caregiving responsibilities, or unsafe environments that hinder meaningful participation in global forums. Providing simultaneous translation in local languages, offering childcare support, and ensuring culturally safe spaces are practical steps to address these challenges. Gender-responsive facilitation

methods, such as moderated speaking opportunities and dedicated sessions for women's perspectives, can ensure equal opportunities to influence decisions.

Streamline Operations While Upholding Inclusivity

The Subsidiary Body should adopt cost-efficient operational models that maintain gender balance and inclusivity. This includes utilising digital platforms for remote participation and providing targeted financial and logistical support to ensure equitable representation of women and marginalised groups within IPLCs.

Recognise and Uphold gender balance

While the Subsidiary Body's operations are Party-led, Parties must actively promote gender balance in nominations and leadership. This involves ensuring that the selection of representatives from the seven socio-cultural regions includes Indigenous women and girls, supported by mentorship and preparatory sessions to enhance their effectiveness in decision-making processes.

Implement Transparent Selection Criteria for IPLC Representatives

The Subsidiary Body should establish clear and transparent criteria for selecting representatives from the seven socio-cultural regions, ensuring gender balance and equitable representation of Indigenous women and girls. This includes providing support for capacity-building and preparatory consultations to enable effective participation.

Coordinate with Other Subsidiary Bodies to Enhance Synergies with other international Agreements

To minimise duplication and additional

¹Ensure gender expertise included in all advisory and expert bodies under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

burdens, the Subsidiary Body should coordinate closely with other CBD subsidiary bodies, sharing gender-disaggregated data, lessons learned, and co-developing joint outputs where relevant. This coordination ensures that gender considerations are mainstreamed across all targets of the KM-GBF.

Detailed mechanisms and processes within the Subsidiary Body should be in synergy with Indigenous peoples multilateral and transboundary environmental agreements, and also in consideration of UNDRIP, ADRIP, UNDROP, ICESCR, ICCPR, ILO 169, ILO 190 and the CEDAW General recommendation No.39 (2022), on the rights of Indigenous women and Girls.

Ensuring adequate, timely and transparent financial support

Dedicated resources are essential to ensure that Indigenous women can participate fully and meaningfully in biodiversity governance. Establishing a funding mechanism specifically for Indigenous women's and youth participation would help overcome financial barriers that often limit attendance and engagement. In addition, capacity-building efforts should target Parties, Secretariat staff, and IPLCs to enhance their understanding of gender-responsive approaches and strengthen institutional commitment. Peer-learning exchanges among Indigenous women leaders across regions should also be supported, fostering solidarity, mutual learning, and stronger advocacy. By prioritising resources for women's leadership development, the Subsidiary Body invests in long-term equity and resilience in biodiversity governance. This approach not only strengthens gender equality but also builds the capacity of



communities to drive transformative change.

References

- Submissions on views and information in preparation for the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: <https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2025-061>
- 12th meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional WG on Article 8(j): CBD Women's Caucus Briefer: <https://women4biodiversity.org/article-8j-cbd-womens-caucus-briefer/>

About this brief

This publication by Women4Biodiversity has been collated from its submission to the CBD Secretariat in response to its [notification](#) soliciting views on the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j), to be held in Panama in October 2025. It is part of a series of briefs aimed at informing and supporting negotiations at SBSTTA 27 and SB 8(j), with a focus on gender-responsive approaches, Indigenous and local community participation, and rights-based biodiversity governance.

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