



Commission for Gender Equality  
A society free from gender oppression and inequality



**South African National Climate Change Response Green Paper 2010  
Gender Review and Submission**

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**In Partnership with**

**COMMISSION FOR GENDER EQUALITY (CGE)  
and**

**GENDER & ENERGY NETWORK OF SOUTH AFRICA (GENSA)**

## **1. Introduction**

Although climate change impacts will affect all countries, its impacts will be differently distributed among different regions, generations, age and income groups, occupations and genders. The poor, the majority of whom are women, will be disproportionately affected. Over the past decade, the relationship between climate change and poverty in countries where people's livelihoods depend on natural resources and environmental services has increasingly become a developmental issue. This relationship between climate change and people's livelihoods is seen to have strong linkages to poverty. To this nexus is an added strong gender component, which if ignored could lead to inappropriate policy measures and increased poverty especially amongst disadvantaged poor population.

The Green Paper presents a promising start to the long term process of dealing with climate change. It is an initial step in a long term process. *The document represents Government's vision for an effective climate change response, but a policy on climate change is not sufficient without a focus on gender.* The Green Paper adopts a gender blind approach to the issue of climate change response. **Gender-blindness is defined as the refusal or inability to see human beings as gendered, which leads to an oversight in planning and policy-making, since it ignores the reality of half of the human race.** Gender-blind planning tends to assume that all people are equal and that the planning process itself is free of conflict. Seeing society through a gender-lens reveals that this is not the case, and that planning processes are conflictual in nature and therefore conflict resolution mechanisms need to be incorporated. Policy determines access to resources and the Green Paper does not adequately address this.

## **2. Climate Change and Gender**

Vulnerability to climate change is not only related to environmental forces, but to social conditions, too. The need for a specific focus on gender as opposed to the generic lumping of women with all vulnerable groups, as is done in the Green Paper, are many. Due to the existing gender inequalities, the different roles in society and in the division of labour, women and men are not equally exposed to climate change impacts and do not have the same adaptive capacities.

Climate change is exacerbating the problems and inequities that women already face. It is with this knowledge in mind that we propose a gendered analysis to the challenge of climate change. By adopting a gendered approach to climate change the research methodologies, participation processes and the behavioural change requirements discussed in NCCRGP can only be improved.

### **2.1. Climate Change, Gender and Research**

Research is greatly involved in the proposed strategic actions adopted by government to either adapt to or mitigate climate change. Care should be taken that the research methodology which underpins the proposed intervention process is not driven solely by a scientific approach that purports to be neutral and technical. Traditional research methodologies which treat people as objects, rather than subjects with agency and knowledge- as opposed to mere providers of information - can lead to policies and interventions that are not successful. The research methodology used has consequences for the proposed strategic action outcomes.

For instance, if climate change modelling does not take into consideration the power relations inherent in gender, race and class inequalities, then we will not get results that say anything about these hierarchies. Yet to attempt to change human behaviour without a thorough understanding of human realities is not going to lead to a constructive outcome. It is crucial that the research that is being undertaken be based on the principle of gender equality, capable to address the needs and interests of all the people affected by climate change, and at the same time guarantee a just, efficient and sustainable outcome of the NCCRGP.

### **2.2 Climate Change, Gender and Behavioural Change**

The Adaptation Scenarios discussed in the Green Paper need to re-frame the problem as being about human behavioural change. This accomplishes two things. First, it places gender at the centre of our analysis, since gender is a fundamental organizing principle of human behaviour. Second, it allows us to work to our strengths. In a sense, human behavioural change is what the entire South African transformation process has been about since 1994. The HIV/AIDS epidemic required as its solution human behavioural change. After many years of trying and failing, we have finally achieved a 35 % drop in new infections. One of the major factors in achieving this outcome was that the HIV/AIDS sector finally began to seriously consider gender as a central organizing

principle of human behaviour. Government needs to set in place the organizational infrastructure to bring knowledge of, and power over, climate change to as many impoverished communities as it can. Climate change is due to the actions of people, and the agency of people has been largely invisible in the policy process. Transformation is largely about behavioural change and therefore any climate change policy must begin and end with people. Vulnerable groups, including women must be seen as part of the solution and not part of the problem.

### **3. Climate Change, Gender and Legislature**

The South African Government is obliged by both international and national law to adopt a gendered approach to the issue of climate change per the following Legislative guidelines.

#### **International Legislation.**

- CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) Article 14 (h)
- BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION. Article 16
- UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Goal 3
- AFRICAN UNION PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA. Article 9.c
- SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) PROTOCOL ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT. Article 13.D

#### **National legislation**

- 1996 CONSTITUTION. section 24:3, Section 33: 1-2
- National Energy Regulator Act 40 of 2004 Section 10.3
- The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act. PAJA, section 3.1, section 6.2.e.ii

These agreements are the legislative tools that prescribe for an active engagement of women in matters, including climate change work.

## **4. SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE GREEN PAPER**

### **4.1 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE OBJECTIVE**

The Green Paper proposes to adapt to climate change through “...interventions that build and sustain South Africa’s social, economic and environmental resilience...” It has been discussed above in this paper that any interventions that are not gender specific run the risk of not meeting the needs of women. The objectives would be strengthened by an inclusion of a commitment to focus on gender, as part of government’s objective of building and sustaining economic and social capacity. The inclusion of the most vulnerable group aims to ensure that adaptation strategies do not maintain the existing inequity, but rather try to change the current conditions. The goal of decreasing emissions should not be done at the expense of the poor, and women, but should have the dual purpose of empowering women as per the Millennium Development Goals.

### **4.2 PRINCIPLES**

#### **4.2.1 PEOPLE- CENTRED APPROACH**

The policy paper should not only recognise “the requirement of social equity and economic sustainability...”, but also specify that programs and interventions that arise from policy should be gender sensitive. A consideration of gender should be encouraged by the White Paper otherwise there is no guarantee that subsequent interventions will focus on the issue of empowering women. This would constitute a lost opportunity to empower women while dealing with climate change and at the same time to alleviate the other social ills that have been identified, such as poverty.

#### **4.2.2 INFORMED PARTICIPATION**

The participation of women has to be expressly stated in the policy principles. Without a gendered approach to participation, interventions are at risk of overlooking important facts such; as that the power ratio and the gendered roles of women can act as a barrier to the effective participation of those most vulnerable to climate change. Without the full and equal participation of women in planning and decision-making, the quality of adaptive measures will be limited, and their successful implementation will remain uncertain. Successful adaptation will have to be context-specific, and participatory. All members of affected

communities must be part of a climate change planning and governance processes. Often, such participation needs more investment than ensuring that all stakeholders are present. When traditional barriers prevent women from speaking up, specific women's platforms can be advisable. Therefore we recommend that the Green Paper set out clearly how it is going to ensure that a proper engagement, which takes heed of multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage, is carried out.

### **4.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE STRATEGY**

While women predominate in the lowest-paid sections of the labour market, they continue to be under-represented at the top. Thus we cannot begin to discuss job creation, poverty and inequality without specifically addressing gender. A gendered analysis of the strategy of "*the prioritisation of mitigation interventions that have potential positive job creation, poverty alleviation and/ or general economic benefits*" introduces questions such as:

- How far will we have reduced poverty and inequality?
- What proportion of jobs created will go to women?

The new technologies and new ways of adapting to climate change, as discussed in sections: 5.1.1; 5.2.1, 5.1.7, 5.4.4, 5.4.8, 5.4.12, can be a vehicle for meeting the dual goals of poverty alleviation and empowerment of women.

### **4.4 POLICY APPROACHES AND ACTIONS**

#### **4.4.1 Key Adaptation Sector – Water**

In many rural areas women and the poor who lack access to managed services means that people rely on unmanaged local resources such as springs and rivers. These local resources are vulnerable to pollution and drought. Unpredictable and poor quality water provision results in poor health, morbidity and mortality and maintains poverty traps in poor communities. The increase in diseases such as cholera and dysentery is likely to increase the burden of care on women.

*“Continue to develop and maintain good management systems and institutions from village through to national level.”* Experience has shown that the participation of women in water management committees has been uneven and contradictory. The extent to which women are taken seriously in water management processes, and whether any gender equality has been achieved, varies widely. The document should be strengthened by a literature review on the subject and more practical measures to genuinely strengthen public participation and gender equality in water distribution and decision-making. Companies supplying water to communities should be easily accessible to the communities so as to improve service delivery and communication between the community and the company.

*“Accelerate the development and/or capacity of effective and accountable catchment management agencies that will: promote equitable and sustainable use of available water resources at local and regional level; strengthen water resources regulation at local and regional level; monitor developments and emerging stresses, and propose effective ways of addressing them.”* Measures should be put in place to ensure that the proper participation of women with their contributions and their ideas are part of the decision-making processes with regard to management and monitoring. Traditional ways of irrigating plants as opposed to using chemically treated water should be encouraged and supported by government.

*“Invest in monitoring capabilities across a range of disciplines in order to spot trends and understand them as well as track the efficacy of adaptive strategies.”* Possible adaptation strategies such as research and development; system maintenance (irrigation canal leakage); groundwater (artificial recharge) and storage and reticulation (small reservoirs) will particularly impact on poor rural communities and as such women. Gender specialists must be included in the disciplines or teams. The active participation of women as discussed in section 4.2.2 must be insured.

Government must put in place strong legislative tools that penalise companies that pollute water resources, and introduce strong legislation against acid mine drainage. Communities must be made aware of the household rainwater harvesting scheme and educated on the cleanliness and safety of harvested rainwater.

#### **4.4.2 Key Adaptation Sector - Agriculture**

The small-scale and homestead farming sector constitute a high proportion of the farming population, mainly subsistence, and rely largely on traditional agriculture methods. In general, due to climate change, women's work burden for family care, such as collecting water and fire wood, is increasing. Climate variability, flooding and droughts have detrimental effects on crops and thus food security. In their social role as providers of food and family cooks, women are ones who will feel the pressure most.

"Evidence thus far shows that people already under nutritional stress are reacting to the global food shortage in the first instance by increasing the proportion of their income spent on food, and when this is no longer an option, by cutting back on food. The short term effects are tragic, implying an increase in starvation and malnutrition. People who are already malnourished will have no reserves left to survive the flood and drought induced famines which are likely to become more common. When people cut back on other expenditures in order to buy food this is likely to affect secondary markets and worsen the current world-wide recession. Some of those expenditures will be health and education. Malnourished mothers who have cut back on health care are likely to give birth to weaker children, and the lifelong negative effects of pre- and postnatal malnourishment on the human brain are well-documented."<sup>1</sup>

*"Invest and improve on its research capabilities in relation to investigating and implementing water and nutrient conservation technologies, developing climate resistant crop varieties (crop diversification)..."* The paper further goes on to read that *"...Participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged groups must be ensured."* It has been discussed in section 4.2.2 how a call for the participation of women is not sufficient. Measure should be put in place to ensure that the participation of women in the research process is effective.

*"Investigate short, medium and long term adaptation scenarios for the agriculture sector. Strategies and policies supporting this sector could usefully be informed by such considerations."* Investigation into adaptation scenarios should take into account issues like participation, section 4.2.2 and research, section 3. To reiterate, transformation is largely about behavioural change and therefore any climate change policy must begin and end with people. Vulnerable groups such as women must be seen as part of the solution and not part of the problem. A focus on agricultural programs and information which can be initiated at regional levels for local conditions will provide opportunities for the participation and empowerment of women. Government programs such as The Working For Energy Program discussed in section 5.4.8 of the NCCRGP should have a strong gender focus.

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<sup>1</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Soaring Food Prices and the Rural Poor, 26 April, 2008, pp. 4 of 7. Available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/KKAA-7E47E5?OpenDocument> . Last Accessed 07/07/2008

Countries with high inequalities in access to land tend to have a characteristic pattern of simultaneous over- and underuse of land. Women need to be provided with land, and the skills on how to utilise the land, and the resources to be able to grow food on the land as an adaptation measure to possible food crisis. Traditional ways of farming and organic farming must be given the same support and consideration that is given to commercial farming.

Although fisheries are not mentioned in the NCCRGP, it is important to emphasize that this crucial sector of our economy cannot be ignored, especially as it provides food for the poor and a means of livelihood for our coastal communities. In workshoping the fisherwomen of the western Cape, they specifically called for a revision of the catching season to accommodate the effect of warmer water on the the development of crayfish. For instance, the season on the northern Cape should remain the same, but staggered in the southern end to begin and end a few weeks later. Overall, accurate information about extreme weather conditions – on which people’s lives depend - and scientific study of the changes in fish species distribution as the ocean water warms up, is lagging far behind the real life observations of these women. This problem should be addressed vigorously.

#### **4.4.3 Key Adaptation Sector - Human Health**

“Without adequate adaptation strategies, secondary and tertiary effects of climate change impacts will manifest as worsening food security, exacerbation of existing disease burdens, increased vector borne and emergent diseases, human displacement, suffering and even conflict.” Lack of food security impacts on women as providers of food, increase in the disease burdens increases the burden of care on women.

*“Ensure that sound nutritional policies, health care infrastructure and education lie at the heart of all the health adaptation strategies by acknowledging that if a population’s nutritional status is robust, individuals will have greater resilience.”* Nutritional policies should address the issue of self-reliance and food security for subsistence farmers. Nutritional policies and health care education should promote food and herb gardens as a source of nutritional food; and the

participation of traditional practitioners who can advise on harvesting trees and plants used for medicinal purposes should be enforced.

*“Develop a health data capturing system that records data both at spatial and temporal scales and that ensures that information collected can be imported into multiple-risk systems such as the South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas electronic spatial database system.”* Data should be sex-desegregated.

We cannot address climate change effectively until we have achieved a paradigm shift in our approach to planned parenthood. This is not just an individual decision but also a social responsibility – unlimited population growth on a finite planet is unsustainable and a key driver in increasing carbon emissions. Therefore it is important that investment in reproductive health services should be expanded to ensure that the whole country is fully covered. Women should have a real and implementable right to not have children they do not choose to have. In particular social investment in researching the causes of teen age pregnancy is needed, since teen age pregnancy is a strong indicator both for high rates of reproduction and reduced life chances for mother and child. It also raises questions of how empowered young women are to ‘choose’ pregnancy and whether or not this factor contributes to further vulnerability. Vigorous measures to sharply reduce the incidence of teen age pregnancy are a critical part of both mitigation measures and reducing gender inequalities.

#### **4.4.4 Key Mitigation Sector – Energy**

Poverty can be measured in terms of access to energy. Having too little energy and using inefficient sources of energy contributes to women remaining poor and unable to enter the mainstream economy. Approximately 41% of the households in SA are female-headed households which are extremely poor and affected by energy poverty and often rely heavily on biomass. Women and children, particularly girl children, continue to bear the burden of collecting firewood, cooking with dirty fuels and living with poor quality lighting. The poor including women, often pay more for their energy through paraffin, candles or batteries, or through the use of their time fetching wood. The focus of NCCRGP in the energy sector is on mitigation of GHG. The NCCRGP thus overlooks the disconnectedness of the poor to energy supply. Energy resources are likely to

be more rapidly depleted in severe weather conditions, supply chains interrupted by droughts and floods.

*“Establish a business environment that facilitates the development of a local renewable energy technology manufacturing, implementation and export industry and that maximises its job creation potential. This is located within the context of the New Growth Path and the country’s Industrial Policy Action Plan and in particular the national goal of job and employment creation.”*

The New Growth Path and the Industrial Policy Action Plan do not discuss or mention gender equality. Job and employment creation should specify what percentage of jobs go to women, while economic planning should contain specific measures around the award of tenders to women-owned SMME’s and the timeous payment of same.

*“Scale-up and accelerate the implementation of the “Working for Energy” programme which seeks to develop human capacity and labour intensive opportunities through renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies as well as energy management type projects which will provide poverty alleviation opportunities for SMMEs, local cooperatives and sustainable local economic development”* Gender empowerment should be mentioned here and especially specific targets of what percentage of the labour intensive jobs will go to women.

#### **4.4.5 Key Mitigation Sector – Transport**

Transport is a key sector in the production of emissions but women are less responsible for these emissions than men. Women are experienced in sharing transport be it - public transport, lift clubs, and not as many own their own cars or have licences. The work life of a woman may differ from that of men as gender roles can dictate the inclusion of tasks such as picking up children from school, or grocery shopping. Government must invest heavily in a proper safe, affordable public transport system that is cognisant of the different mobility needs of women.

*“Invest in the further development and deployment of cleaner technologies for the transport sector such as electric vehicles and hybrids.”*

- National and local government must extend the public rail system, and ensure that an affordable and efficient public transport system is in place through the country, but especially in our urban areas.

- The State must create a conducive regulatory environment for the production of organic biodiesel from indigenous plants as part of its job creation program.
- Government should set in place comprehensive support program for emerging biodiesel farmers and entrepreneurs –committing to spend as much on this program as was historically spent on the development of SASOL - and ensure that half of all land distributed, jobs created and companies set up go to women
- Government should legislatively compel government fleet – from local government to national – to run on either biogas or biodiesel
- The State should allow tax deductions for civil servants only on biodiesel or hybrid cars, i.e. no tax deductions on carbon emitting cars.
- The State should refrain from taxing biodiesel for the first five years of the industry’s develop
- Actively encourage the use of carpooling through the introduction of more car pool lanes.

## **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5.1 Government**

Although climate change provides a changing context and new challenges to the way, for example, government does its work, our common vision of a better future for all remains the same.

Government’s roles and responsibilities include ensuring the conditions to make this possible.

Channels of communication, accountability and transparency are not yet clear, and assigning responsibility and resources for implementing adaptation efforts remains a challenge.

Government has had difficulty policing or enforcing policy. Structures must be put into place to ensure performance, especially at the provincial and municipal levels. Overall responsibility for the NCCRP should lie with a specific desk in the President’s office, e.g. The National Planning Commission. The duties of this desk must be to oversee overall implementation of this policy.

Therefore this desk should also chair the Inter- Ministerial Committee on Climate Change. It is the duty of this desk to ensure that:

- each and every political and administrative unit in government, from national to provincial and local level, knows what its duties and responsibilities are in terms of the NCCRP
- each and every political and administrative unit has the capacity to implement what it is committed to
- CC budgeting is mainstreamed in every unit so that the national desk can at a glance tell exactly how much is being spent on CC adaptation and mitigation at any given time.
- a skills projection is carried out so that we know exactly what skills and in which quantity are needed to implement this NCCRP within 3, five and ten years' time, and to set in place training institutions and bursary schemes to ensure that all such skills needs are covered. Gender equity to be practised in the awards.
- It develops timetables and implementation plans for the NCCRP
- It ensures that it reports regularly to the Minister in the Presidency for M&E and to civil society and watchdog bodies
- It holds accountable any unit which fails to implement as planned

A Climate Change commission must be set up as “a means of monitoring and evaluating Government Policies, strategies and legislation to ensure alignment” specifically as a watchdog body for the implementation of this policy, with the same powers and duties as existing Chapter 9 institutions. In addition a Climate Change desk should be set up at existing human rights institutions.

## **5.2 Social Partners (Industry and Business; Organized Labour and Civil Society)**

*“Government therefore sees its climate change strategy as being one that is implemented in partnership with the South African people and in a way that seeks to empower people and give them understanding, choice and control over the climate related decisions that impact their daily lives and work.”* Partnership with the South African People should ensure that the participation of all people as discussed in sections 4.2.2 is effective.

*“Civil society, labour and the faith communities have an important role to play in continuing to raise public awareness and motivate individuals, institutions and authorities to take actions to reduce greenhouse gas*

*emissions and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change as well as to critically evaluate, comment on and respond to the initiatives of government and the private sector. Civil society organisations that work directly with community based organisations and particularly with the poor and with women are an important conduit for ensuring that climate information is timeously communicated and that the issues of vulnerable groupings that are related to climate change are fed back into the governmental and scientific and research sectors.”* Education programmes must be introduced into communities, which not only educate people on climate change, but also educate on actions that can be taken at community and individual level so as to adapt to and mitigate climate change. Collaborations with civil society organisations such as GenderCCSA that educate communities on adaptation strategies should be strengthened. Education strategies must include demonstrations at local level so that communities and individuals are not overwhelmed and paralysed by fear. Care should be taken that rubber-stamping is not a part of this process.