

“Climate Financing and Gender Equality: Inclusive Approaches to Climate and Disaster Resilience”

By

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Honorable Ministers with responsibility for Gender,
Permanent Secretaries
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Permanent Secretaries,
Heads of National Gender Machineries
Colleagues Heads of Regional Institutions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and warm greetings to all of you from the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, know as the 5Cs! The 5Cs is an intergovernmental CARICOM institution that has a mandate from the Heads of Government to coordinate the Caribbean’s response to climate change. The 5Cs delivers on this mandate through the provision of four inter-related services to our Member States; these include:

1. Collection and provision of critical climate change related **data and Information to inform evidence-based decision making**,
2. **Providing Capacity building and training** to help users make climate resilient decisions and take appropriate actions in response to variable and changing climate;
3. **Coordinating CARICOM’s position and provide technical support to Member States to effectively participate in the international Climate Change Negotiations;**
4. **Providing Project development and Management support to mobilize climate finance for to build climate resilience across the Region.** Since 2005, the Centre has mobilized and leveraged over USD \$260 million to improve the Region’s resiliency to climate change. As an Accredited Entity to the Green Climate Fund and established partnerships with other donors such EU, USAID, and other bilateral partners, the 5Cs is a critical channel for climate finance and project implementation in the Region. I suspect, it is in this capacity, that the CARICOM Secretariat asked the 5Cs to deliver remarks this very important topic of **Climate Financing and Gender Equality: Inclusive Approaches to Climate and Disaster Resilience** on the occasion of this CARICOM-UN Preparatory meeting to CSW-66.

I thank the Secretariat for the opportunity and trust that remarks would be useful helping to inform strategies and approaches that would increase the flow of climate finance to build gendered resilience and promote gender equality across Member States.

At the onset, let me state the obvious: climate change had, has and will continue to have a disproportionate impact of women and girls and other vulnerable groups within our society.

Climate Change is a risk multiplier; its effects are often gradual, cumulative and are manifested, with the exception of hydrometeorological extreme events such as floods and hurricanes, over years or decades. These slow onset events like droughts or sea level rise and the impact they have on gender equality don't often get the same attention as the extreme climate-related events. It does without saying that the building of climate resilience requires dual focus on both extreme and slow-onset events that unfortunately only increase in frequency and intensity as global temperatures continue to increase. Climate change, then, will continue to expose the many vulnerabilities that exist within our societies, none perhaps more pronounced than the disproportionate impacts on women and girls and, as such, will exacerbate existing gender inequities, and climate change vulnerability and inequality.

We have always known that climate change has disproportionately large impact on women and vulnerable groups. This is NOT new. And while globally, we have seen an increase in climate finance with a gender component from around USD 7.3B in 2014 to some USD 18B in 2018-2019 from bilateral donors, multilateral development banks, and multilateral climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund, Climate Investment Fund and Adaptation Fund, for example, there is very little transparency about the quality, the specific focus and the impacts of climate finance that had a gender component. Of the global amounts, however, only USD 2.4B is channeled through NGOs and even less, 0.2% or \$43 million goes to women led and women's rights organizations. Among projects that contain gender considerations, gender equality is uneven across climate-related sectors. For example, gender equality appears to be better integrated in projects related to agriculture and water but poorly addressed in economic infrastructure projects and energy projects.

Oxfam, in 2020, found that (i) only 1/3 of the climate finance projects/programs funded by ODA were designed to respond to gender-differentiated needs, (ii) only 1.5% of climate-related ODA identified gender equality as a primary objective and, (iii) that 2/3 of the projects/programs either did not screen for or didn't see gender equality as a significant or principal objective of climate interventions. In cases, where there were gender components, there was no accounting/reporting of how much of the climate finance was spent at the local level. As such, it is clear that the flow of climate finance to climate vulnerable countries, like those in the Caribbean, has rarely focused on the gendered vulnerabilities of climate change as a significant or principal component in an effort to reduce gender vulnerabilities and promote gender equality. Clearly, this must change.

Globally and regionally, there are also serious challenges that remain regarding the transparency and accountability of climate finance that promote gender equality due to the fact that relatively few climate finance projects/programs contain or capture sex-disaggregated and clear gender-responsive indicators. While the transparency and accountability mechanisms are improving internationally because of advocacy and requirements of donors, significant improvements are needed at the national level as government rarely report on sex disaggregated in projects funded from domestic resources. This too much change if we are to gain a better understanding the flow of climate finance for gender equality.

Recognizing that the global climate finance architecture for both adaptation and mitigation activities is incommensurate with the gendered vulnerability to climate change that exist in the region and that the level of climate finance is insufficient to achieve the gender equality outcomes envisioned by the Paris Agreement and SDGs and other strategies, an inclusive and systematic approach must be undertaken at the global, national and local levels.

At the global level, donors have an indispensable role to play in ensuring that the climate finance they provide address the gendered vulnerabilities to climate change not as an ‘add on’ but as a key outcome of the investment. Despite the marked progress in incorporating gender in global climate finance over the years due to persistent advocacy and the recognition of the growing benefits in terms of effectiveness and sustained impacts of projects that integrate gender, significant variation exists among donors. Donors must insist that projects and programmes have clear gender indicators and sex-disaggregated data and gender outcomes as criteria to qualify for funding. While some climate funds, like the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, have made significant strides in incorporating gender considerations as a key element in their investment portfolio, more needs to be done. Donors must insist that gender outcomes be integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring of climate projects and programmes to reduce gendered vulnerabilities on the ground. Women’s differentiated needs, knowledge, experiences and priorities must be key components to inform the climate investment. There is still a dire need to significantly scale up investments in resilience-building activities in non-traditional sectors such as transport, energy and built infrastructure that embraces gender and promote gender equality. Gender equality and women’s empowerment outcomes should become a key component for all climate finance instruments irrespective of the source or type. At the same time, donors must be deliberate and create simplified and targeted funding windows that will provide predictable finance to locally-led actions on gender and climate change through greater partnership with NGOs and women-led organizations as well provide financing to women entrepreneurship initiatives.

Importantly, also, donors must provide climate finance to amplify the voices and increase the effective participation of women, particularly those from the frontlines of climate change, in national, regional and international climate negotiations rather than just in “side side-events.” While women participation in the negotiations have increased, significant progress is required including in ensuring that women participation in the leadership of climate finance institutions and decision-making bodies is significantly ramped up.

At the national level, governments must continue to mainstream gender into development policy, budgets and planning. This must be a consultative and inclusive process that involve women, civil society, public and private sectors. CARICOM governments, for example, must ensure that the Nationally Determined Contributions being prepared for submission to UNFCCC and that will form the basis of climate investment envelope and Build Back Better plans do more than just reference gender; gender must be fully integrated within the region’s NDC and they must contain specific activities that will reduce the disproportionate impact of climate on the most vulnerable.

The same must be true of the National Adaptation Plans and Disaster Resilience Strategies; these strategies should address the financing of key *ex ante* and *ex post* activities that will address the gendered vulnerabilities and impacts from climate change to allow women to be better prepared for and recover from climate-related hazards. Governments must ensure that climate finance from loans, grants and social safety nets are empowering women at the local level by supporting women-owned micro and small and medium sized enterprises in the green and blue economy to promote gender equality from climate finance while at the same time building climate resilience.

Delivery partners, like the 5Cs and Caribbean Development Bank, who help governments to mobilize climate finance must also go beyond having a gender policy to ensuring that they work closely with governments and gender machineries to ensure that gender outcomes are fully integrated into proposals being submitted to donors. Not only will these efforts lead to greater efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability but they will also lead to the building of greater climate resilience among all beneficiaries. I am pleased to say that the 5Cs in its new strategic plan entitled “Building Resilience. Securing our Future” ensured that gender outputs and outcomes will be fully integrated into the projects portfolio that will be submitted to donors as well as within its own operations. The performance management framework has clearly articulated sex-disaggregated and gender indicators to evaluate our progress. Furthermore, the Plan contains specific activities to engage with and build capacity of vulnerable groups and increase awareness of climate change impacts in an effort to mobilize climate finance to build climate resilience among vulnerable groups across the Region.

Finally, at the local level, we must continue the work to capture the knowledge, attitude and practices of women and vulnerable groups within our societies to better understand the scale of the vulnerabilities. While many similarities exist, there are important differences that must be incorporated. Climate awareness strategies and interventions should then be tailored to address the gaps identified in the KAP or community- level disaster resilience plans. The process must be inclusive and consultative but tailored to better understanding the disproportionate gendered impact of climate change. The KAPS can inform the design and development of disaster resilience plans and strategies as well as the design of funding proposals that will provide targeted support to build resilience and promote gender equality. Packaging these specific needs in a coherent and systematic way can serve as an effective mechanism to unlock climate finance, from both domestic and international sources. It is only by engaging and empowering people at the local level can we collectively build the climate resilience of all of our citizens. Partnerships and inclusion at the local level will remain indispensable to the building of climate resilience. It is difficult to build climate resilience from the top-down. Thus, it is incumbent on donors and governments to partner with civil society partners, like the Red Cross, women organizations, and other NGOs with significant experience in working with communities and who are often more aware of the gendered vulnerabilities and risks posed by climate change to ensure that climate finance reach the local level and address gender inequalities and vulnerabilities.

Finally, it is important to understand that that while we want to channel climate finance to reduce gendered vulnerabilities across the region to build equality, we must also understand that a one-size-fits-all approach does not necessarily work in the Caribbean. We must tailor and customize interventions to maximize impact on the ground across the region. We must however, continue on an aggressive path to changing the existing paradigm. Beyond understanding the root causes of the circumstances facing women and girls in the climate change space, we need to aggressively pursue innovative and effective solutions to the many issues, in a timely manner, giving priority to the treatments and to derive mechanisms to fully integrate these solutions into the development paradigm of our countries, for the betterment of the region as a whole. The 5Cs look forward to working with our member states, CARICOM Secretariat, UN Women, donors, women organizations, at all levels, to mobilize climate finance that will promote gender equality and build resilience.

I wish you a productive and engaging meeting and thank you for the opportunity to share a few thoughts on how we can improve the flow climate financing to promote gender equality and build climate resilience for our people. I thank you.