

# Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Mainstreaming Dialogue

Co-hosted by SANBI and DFFE  
with support from the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

## Concept document

**Theme:** Women adapting to climate change  
**Date:** 8 and 9 March 2023  
**Venue:** Milkplum Café, Pretoria National Botanical Garden

### 1. Background

Climate change is no longer a future risk. Climate change is a lived reality for many communities globally, regionally, nationally and locally. Over the last few years, South Africans have been affected by multi-year drought, floods, extreme heat and an unprecedented number of wildfires – many of which have been attributed to climate change. This has negatively impacted South Africa's natural resources, biodiversity, water and coastal resources, in turn affecting the lives and livelihoods that are dependent on these resources, as well as infrastructure, energy, health and well-being. This has also exacerbated South Africa's development challenges and impacted on the country's resilience and ability to absorb and bounce back from these hazards. Well managed biodiversity and associated ecological infrastructure can play an important role in protecting people from the damaging impacts of climate change.

The consequences of these changes in climate are not felt by everyone equally. Globally, the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss have had greater impacts on specific groups of people, including women, children, disadvantaged communities, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Women continue to be disenfranchised and face exacerbated inequalities which increases their vulnerability to climate change, which in turn reinforces inequality. This picture is reflected in South Africa as well.

In South Africa, equality is written into the Bill of Rights of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Section 9.3 specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender<sup>1</sup>. The achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment is also supported by a framework

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<sup>1</sup> 'the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth'

of policies and mechanisms that include a national gender policy framework and a Ministry for Women in the Presidency.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) through its Chief Directorate of International Climate Change Reporting and Relations, is South Africa's climate change gender focal point to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This Directorate is responsible for ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions. The Department has undertaken a suite of activities in support of this programme of work.

The South Africa National Biodiversity Institute's (SANBI) Division of Adaptation Policy and Resourcing leads SANBI's work on the use of Ecosystem-based Approaches in South Africa's response to climate change and securing international climate finance for the implementation of these approaches through different projects and programmes.

Together the DFFE and SANBI are committed to achieving gender equality and contributing to the development of various gender mainstreaming plans and activities, whilst taking care of the environment.

To draw attention to the ways in which gender and climate change intersect, and towards catalysing a co-ordinated programme of work in this area, SANBI and DFFE, in partnership with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, are co-hosting a National Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Mainstreaming Dialogue. This is set to take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 in Pretoria, Gauteng and will coincide with International Women's Day.

## 2. Purpose of the Dialogue

The purpose of the Dialogue is to create a vibrant space for a discussion on the gender and climate change nexus, and specifically its impacts on women. We recognise that different actors have different levels of engagement with these issues: some are well versed and already focusing on changing practices to be more gender-sensitive; whilst for others this is a new issue where there is a need to raise awareness. We want to create a platform for engagement, learning and capacity building of stakeholders that reflects these different starting points. The Dialogue will provide an opportunity for stakeholders who are active in the climate change and gender space to build on their practice through the sharing of knowledge, lessons and experiences in international, regional, national and local spaces, towards informing current and future project development, implementation and evaluation processes.

Gender mainstreaming and climate change adaptation are multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder processes, both requiring critical mass towards achieving a common purpose. Working in partnership is key as more can be achieved together than individually. Thus, another outcome of this event is to strengthen partnerships and networks for gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation.

### **Objectives of the Dialogue:**

1. To build our collective capacity on gender mainstreaming and climate change adaptation and how they intersect, recognising different starting points.
2. To build awareness around climate change and gender impacts.
3. To showcase projects and programmes currently mainstreaming gender into climate change adaptation.
4. To highlight gender mainstreaming best practice and approaches in project development, implementation and evaluation.
5. To strengthen partnerships and networks working towards mainstreaming gender in climate change adaptation.

6. To make relevant connections with our country programme of work around gender and climate change.
7. To encourage all stakeholders in the climate change field to consider gender integration into their workstreams and programmes, since gender equality is a cross-cutting issue as stipulated in the Preamble of the Paris Agreement.

### 3. Questions to be engaged with during the Dialogue

The following are some questions we would like to engage with during the event:

1. In what ways does gender intersect with climate change in South Africa?
2. How can we strengthen existing partnerships in South Africa and the region, and/or build new ones to strengthen women's resilience in the face of climate change?
3. What are the gaps and/or challenges for women in managing risks associated with climate change? How can these be addressed?
4. How can gender responsiveness in climate change adaptation programmes and projects be improved?
5. How can climate finance be a tool to effectively address gender inequality?

### 4. Expected participants

The Dialogue aims to cater for +/- 50 – 60 people in-person and another 100 participating in the Dialogue via livestream. Recognising the different starting points and levels of engagement, the dialogue has been structured to give an overview of issues, followed by discussions on practice. The first day of the Dialogue will focus on building participants' collective knowledge on climate change adaptation and gender mainstreaming, through sharing of best practice projects and programmes and the challenges that arise at the nexus of climate change and gender. While the second session on the first day will focus on building our practice through the sharing of best practice examples, sharing of experiences and lessons learnt. On the second day, discussions around the enabling governance and policy environment for the mainstreaming of gender into climate change will be the key focus.

In order to achieve the intended outcomes, participants are envisaged to be those who:

- Are actively involved in and/or are interested in the mainstreaming of gender into the climate change adaptation space;
- Have a mandate around gender and/or climate change; and
- Are engaged in research, policy development and/ or implementation in this area of work.

Representatives of national, provincial and local government; international and regional organisations; the private sector; civil society; communities; and academia are all invited to participate.