



# The importance of the gender-environment nexus

Gender inequality, gender mainstreaming and  
key entry points in environmental sectors

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# Objectives of this presentation

- To provide background on the concepts of gender, gender inequality and gender mainstreaming
- To highlight gender entry points in key environmental and climate change-related sectors, particularly in relation to the priority areas of this project

# IUCN's Global Gender Office

- IGO with the longest record in the promotion of gender equality - 1984
- Global to local outreach
- Promotion of gender beyond mere recognition of inequalities and vulnerabilities
  - Gender-responsive actions
  - Gender equality as driver of transformation



The value of gender  
mainstreaming

Understanding gender (in)equality

# What is “gender”

The term ‘gender’ refers to:

- Socially ascribed roles, values, responsibilities and opportunities associated with women and men, and
- The power structures—both hidden and overt, customary and legally prescribed—that govern relationships between them

# Gender inequalities exist across regions and sectors

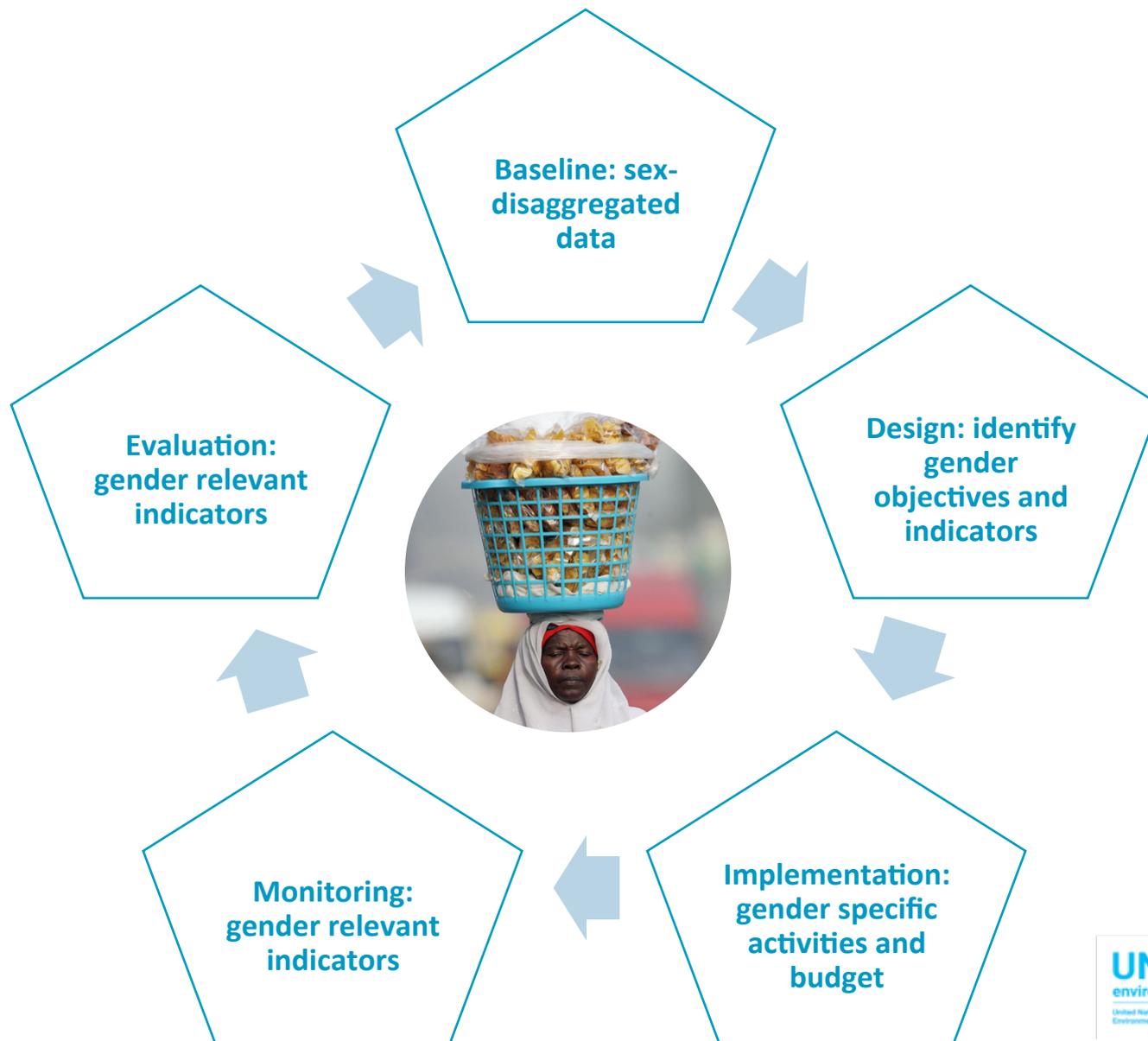
For example:

- Of more than 1 billion people living in the deepest levels of poverty, women are widely considered to be the majority (UNDP)
- In 2011, globally less than 20% of all landholders are women. The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) found that women had the same legal rights as men to own and access land in only 28 of the world's countries (FAO; OECD)
- At the current rate of progress it will take 75 years to make the principle of 'equal pay for equal work' a reality for women and men (ILO)
- As of January 2017, only 23.3% of all parliamentarians are women (IPU)

# Gender mainstreaming

- Gender mainstreaming is a globally agreed strategy to identify gender inequalities and advance actions toward gender equality
- Importantly, women and men are viewed and positioned as equal stakeholders, actors and beneficiaries, including for sustainable development.
- This serves the interests of both women and men in its long-term purpose of eradicating inequities, transforming discriminatory laws and practice, and achieving a higher level of well-being for all

# Gender mainstreaming in policy and project cycles



# Added value of gender mainstreaming

1. Increases efficiency and effectiveness
2. Ensures the incorporation of important knowledge, skills and experiences
3. Enhances sustainability
4. Improves credibility and accountability
5. Increases impact in livelihoods/ensure distribution of benefits
6. Guarantees compliance with human rights standards
7. Prevents increasing gender inequality



# Gender in environmental sectors

Particularly considering the key sectors in the priority areas

# Global Frameworks

- The three Rio Conventions have strong mandate (CBD-UNFCCC-UNCCD)
  - Paris Agreement includes gender equality as a guiding principle and specific mention to gender in adaptation, capacity building and technology
- For the first time, all major financing mechanisms have gender as a requirement for implementing agencies as well as projects/programs
- Gender obligations under the SDGs, and one goal on gender equality (Goal 5)



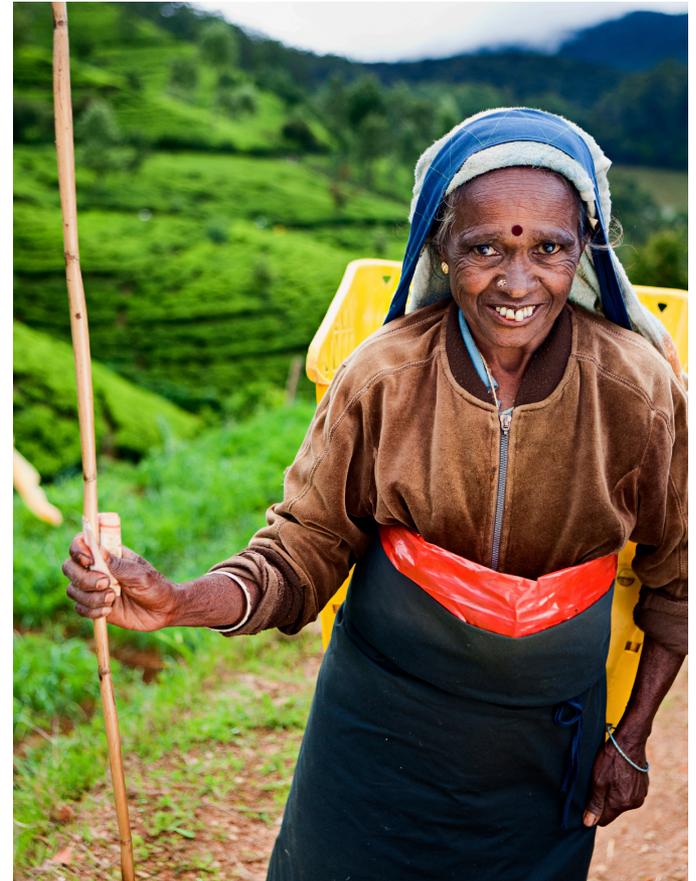
# Climate change

- Women and men are likely to experience climate change differently
- There are many ways in which women are more vulnerable to, or more deeply affected by, the impacts of climate change than men
- Gender-responsive climate change policies and action plans can prevent perpetuating existing inequalities and instead provide opportunities for enhanced gender equality and women's empowerment



# Agriculture, food security and land ownership

- Women are on the frontline in food production, which makes them exposed to climate change impacts —particularly risks of drought and/or flooding— affecting food and nutrition security and health
- Although women and men both contribute to and benefit from rural development, women still lack legal and property rights, as well as access to finance and modern business practices to enhance their farm management, inputs, and outcomes [World Bank (2011a); Haute, L. (2012)]



# Agriculture -continued

- Globally, women account for **43%** of the agriculture workforce, yet
  - **5%** have access to extension services
  - **2%** have access to land tenure
  - **1%** have access to credit
- According to FAO, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms **by 20 - 30%** -- this could raise total agricultural output in developing countries **by 2.5 - 4%**
  - Production gains of this magnitude could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by **12 - 17%**

# Health and well-being, as related to the impacts of climate change

- Differences occur in women's and men's vulnerabilities to climate change in both direct impacts on health (e.g., heat waves, droughts, storms and floods) and indirect impacts (e.g., water and food and nutrition insecurity) [WHO. (2012)]
- Women, and in particular pregnant and breast-feeding women, are often more susceptible and at a higher risk for water- and vector-borne diseases
- The health sector offers interesting opportunities to mitigate climate change and to enhance gender equality through recognizing women as agents of change



# Energy –increasing access and climate change mitigation opportunities

- Worldwide, 1.3 billion people are without access to electricity, and about 2.6 billion people depend on traditional solid fuels for cooking and heating, with women representing a vast majority of those living in energy poverty
- Women and men have different priorities and needs with respect to energy use and access, as well as different means for participation in decision-making processes and labor markets in the energy sector
- Women’s engagement in renewable energy technologies may be an important factor for success, increasing their participation in the labor force and supporting a development path that relies on more sustainable energy sources and consumption patterns

# Water and sanitation

- In less developed countries, 663 million people do not have access to improved drinking water, and 2.4 billion people lack access to improved sanitation facilities [Schuster-Wallace, C.J. & Sandford R. (2015)]
- In most parts of the world, domestic and public gendered roles dictate women and girls as responsible for collecting water for cooking, cleaning, health, hygiene, and—if they have access to land—growing food. This leads to women being disproportionately and adversely impacted by water accessibility and availability [Haule, L. (2012)]
- Globally, women and girls spend an estimated 150–200 million hours a day collecting water, yet they are frequently shut out of decisions relating to water [Duncan, K. (2007)]

## In summary

The Global Gender and Environment Outlook (GGEO) states:

*“Gender inequality is one of the most pervasive threats to sustainable development. It has negative impacts on access to, use of and control over a wide range of resources, and on the ability to meet human rights obligations with respect to enjoyment – by women and men – of a clean, safe, healthy and sustainable environment”*

Gender considerations are relevant across the various sectors of the environmental domain and it is important that these are taken into consideration when collecting information on environmental indicators

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