

# THE MISSING LINK: Bringing Gender Equality to Adaptation Financing

## Part I: A Look at the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)

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Supporting the adaptation needs of developing countries is not just a matter of necessity, but also of global fairness and respect for human rights, including women's rights.

### Introduction

Climate change has already severe impacts especially in the poorest countries and for the most vulnerable people and groups, among them disproportionately many women. Adapting to these impacts will be very costly—new studies have estimated costs in the order of tens of billions of US dollars a year—but unavoidable. Supporting the adaptation needs of developing countries with sufficient funds is not just a matter of necessity, but also of global fairness and respect for human rights, including women's rights. Currently none of the multilateral adaptation finance mechanisms systematically considers gender equality in its operations or project funding.

This short brief provides an analysis of the status of gender considerations at the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), an adaptation financing instrument under the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It gives some recommendations for incorporating gender equality in SCCF funded projects in order to improve their adaptation outcomes. A second separate brief looks at how gender-aware funding decisions and projects at the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) are.

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Several new multilateral climate funds for adaptation have been set up in the past two years to assist developing countries with efforts to foster climate-resilient development and ecosystem resilience. A lot of attention has been focused on the new Adaptation Fund (AF) under the UNFCCC and the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) with a Pilot Program on Climate Resilience (PPCR) at the World Bank; both funds are expected to generate hundreds of millions of US dollars in a relatively short period.

However, these new instruments have distracted attention—and funding—from the two oldest existing adaptation funds, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). While their future role and weight in a new climate finance architecture is uncertain, they are expected to remain in operation for the foreseeable future. Thus, their history of interaction with developing countries up to now—including on gender issues—can provide some important lessons for deciding on the best way to fund gender-equitable climate resilience in developing countries in the future.

## Origins, Mandate and Scope of the SCCF

The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) was established by a decision of the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP 7) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2001 at the same time as the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). In contrast to the LDCF which focuses on urgent and immediate adaptation needs and reactive projects of the poorest 49 countries only, the SCCF is tasked to provide finance and project support to all Non-Annex 1 Parties of the Climate Convention upon request for long-term adaptation measures. The most vulnerable countries and Small Island Developing States are to be given special consideration. The Fund's goal is to increase the resilience of national development sectors to the impact of climate change. SCCF grants are supposed to leverage significant additional resources from bilateral and other multilateral sources, including the recipient countries themselves. SCCF activities focus on "additional costs" imposed by climate change on the development or "business-as-usual" baseline.

Despite the breadth of the SCCF mandate and ambition, actual funding amounts are small. SCCF money is disbursed as grants, but fully counted toward Official Development Assistance (ODA) figures. This contradicts the UNFCCC call to Annex 1 (donor) countries to provide new and additional resources for adaptation.

### BOX 1: SCCF GOVERNANCE

Several agencies and bodies are involved with the governance of the SCCF. The fund is managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a financing mechanism of the Climate Convention with the World Bank acting as trustee. As administrator of the SCCF, the GEF has to respond to guidance of the Parties to the UNFCCC. Spending decisions under the SCCF are made by the GEF Council (since August 2006 meeting twice a year as LDCF/SCCF Council) and the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at each step of the GEF Project Cycle. It includes submission of a project identification form (PIF), sometimes followed by a project preparation grant (PPG), then a full-sized (FSP) or medium-sized (MSP) project proposal. The GEF Council is the governing body of the GEF and has 32 members (14 from donor, 18 from recipient constituencies).

All Non-Annex 1 Parties to the UNFCCC are eligible for SCCF funding, but have no direct access to these monies. Instead they must contact one of 10 multilateral implementing and executing agencies of the GEF with proposals for SCCF projects.\*

\* The GEF has 3 implementing agencies, namely the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank. Additionally, seven executing agencies, namely the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), contribute to the implementation of GEF projects.

As of September 30, 2009, some 13 contributing Annex 1 countries<sup>1</sup> have pledged USD 123 million in voluntary contributions to the SCCF, but have paid only USD 104.1 million. Interest in the SCCF exceeds available resources by far, with almost all of the received funds (USD 102.9 million) already committed.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the GEF, advocating for a regular replenishment of USD 500 million over four years for the SCCF, pegs the actual need and absorptive capacity of the fund closer to USD 150 million a year.<sup>3</sup> Currently, 22 SCCF adaptation projects totaling USD 91.7 million are approved. Those projects generated co-financing through existing development finance sources and channels of close to USD 594 million.<sup>4</sup>

Like the LDCF, the SCCF has come under criticism by developing countries and independent experts alike. The complex and lengthy GEF project cycle (sometimes taking several years, see Box 1), clearly insufficient and highly unpredictable funding amounts, the delayed fulfillment of donor pledges and high transaction costs and fees are some of the main complaints voiced with the SCCF. Developing countries chafe especially against the complexities of distinguishing “additional costs” of climate change impacts from baseline development needs, which most eligible countries cannot effort to meet on their own, but which are not funded as part of the SCCF.<sup>5</sup> Thus, measures such as improvement of public health and education systems, infrastructure for rural development or water sanitation projects are not eligible, although clearly relevant to long-term adaptation needs and with special importance for gender equality.

### Gender Relevance of SCCF Funding Priorities

The adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather variability with increased natural disasters and droughts, are already felt acutely in many parts of the developing world and nowhere more so than in the poorest countries, as these countries lack the resources and capacities to address urgent adaptation challenges head-on. They threaten to negate or even reverse many development gains of the last two decades.

In turn, the poorest and most disenfranchised population groups in developing countries are the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. As the majority of the world’s poor and as primary caretakers for families, women are affected differently, and often disproportionately worse than men by climate change. Their traditional roles in the provision of food, water, care and health services make them frequently heavily dependent on the use and management of natural resources for their livelihood. At the same time, women have often untapped knowledge of coping strategies already utilized at the grassroots level. Many of these employ cost-effective low-technology strategies which could be beneficial for adaptation project design and implementation.

The SCCF under the GEF includes four avenues of financing: (a) adaptation, which is the top priority; (b) technology transfer; (c) energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management; and (d) economic diversification. Of these four avenues, the SCCF work programs operates currently only in the first two windows, with an adaptation program and a significantly smaller program on technology transfer. The bulk of SCCF funding is committed for activities under the adaptation program, which are based primarily on national communications or, in the case of LDCs, National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). Currently, the SCCF funds only four technology transfer projects with a combined commitment of USD 14.9 million, but 22 adaptation program activities with a total of USD 91.2 million.<sup>6</sup>

The priority areas identified by UNFCCC COP decision 5/CP.9<sup>7</sup> for adaptation activities funded under the SCCF—water resources management, land management, agriculture, health, infrastructure development, fragile ecosystems and integrated coastal zone management—are highly relevant for gendered considerations of and gender-differentiated responses to climate change impacts. Particularly with respect to water resources management, land management, agriculture/food security and health, a relation to the livelihoods of poor men and women is evident. For example, women in developing countries are typically responsible for securing potable water for their families and are thus important contributors to the management of freshwater resources. As the majority of subsistence farmers in rain-fed agriculture in poor countries, they anchor many countries’ food security efforts. Women often provide uncompensated environmental stewardship services in managing land and protecting fragile ecosystems, including in mountainous and coastal zones. And with infectious diseases spreading due to global warming and state-provided health services often absent or insufficient, women serve as the primary and often only health care providers for their families and communities.

Thus, adaptation projects under the SCCF in these areas should take the differentiated impacts on and contributions of men and women into account in project development and implementation. Existing tools such as gender indicators, social and gender analysis, gender-differentiated data-sets were available, gender responsive project financing as well as gender monitoring and gender auditing, which have been used successfully in development contexts, could be adjusted to adaptation needs and should be utilized for SCCF projects.

Likewise, in the areas of capacity building efforts for preventive measures, planning, preparedness and management of disasters relating to climate change, where the SCCF is active, its support should include women as a separate target group.

### Status Report on Women and the SCCF

According to UNFCCC guidance, SCCF activities are supposed to contribute to mainstreaming climate change considerations into sustainable development, taking into account existing development commitments of the global community such as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (which reference gender equality dominantly). They are supposed to be country-driven, cost-effective measures that strive to be coherent with national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, many of which recognize the importance of gender equality. Though there is limited adaptation-specific research, evidence from development contexts<sup>8</sup> on the correlation of women's empowerment and improved development outcomes suggests that incorporating gender considerations into SCCF projects should increase their cost-effectiveness and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change. The UNFCCC Secretariat and the Convention's expert advisory groups, the GEF and its implementing agencies should focus on reducing this knowledge and data gap.

#### BOX 2: GENDER-AWARENESS MAKES A DIFFERENCE—THE KACCAL PROJECT UNDER THE SCCF

The Kenya Adaptation to Climate Change in Arid Lands (KACCAL) project focuses on implementing key adaptation measures on the local, sub-national and national level to reduce vulnerability to climate change (higher temperature and increased frequency and scope of droughts and floods) in the arid and semi arid lands of Kenya. An ongoing four-year project begun in 2007, it received a SCCF grant of USD 6.5 million and almost USD 45 million in co-financing from the World Bank and UNDP.

The initial project proposal included a thorough social and gender analysis of the role women play in agriculture, resource management and conflict resolution in the areas covered, as well as the specific vulnerabilities of men and women related to their economic status and gendered role in the communities affected. In response to this problem analysis, the project stated its intent to “give the gender issue a special focus through support to efforts that will enable both men and women to be well represented in decision making at all areas pertaining to the project.” Using a gender mainstreaming approach, the project aims also to address issues of gendered access and control over natural resources and proposes to focus on the generation of gender-disaggregated data to guide implementation of interventions.

Chief among the activities designed under the project are capacity building measures in local communities and the development of community action plans which are to “show gender concerns in design, implementation strategies, and most importantly the relationship between proposed activities and empowerment of both men and women.”<sup>1</sup>

The project profited from the fact that the World Bank as a project implementation partner had just completed a detailed Country Gender Assessment (CGA) for Kenya, thereby utilizing one of the World Bank diagnostic tools to address gender-equality in development.

While it is too early to know if the gender-mainstreaming of this project was ultimately successful, it should be carefully evaluated and gender-audited after completion to provide lessons—good and bad—for other SCCF projects.

SOURCE: KACCAL, Project document for WP (revised), p.29; can be downloaded from: <http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetailsSQL.cfm?projID=3249>

A review of several SCCF project documents reveals that gender issues and women's role as participants, beneficiaries and actors in the proposed adaptation projects are quite unevenly, if at all, addressed. A thorough comparison of available SCCF project documents is difficult as projects are in various stages of often multi-year preparation and implementation phases. And no monitoring or evaluation reports of completed SCCF projects are publicly available.

Several project proposals address the need to involve women and women's groups in stakeholder and consultation processes related to the projects (for example, in the case of a rural development project in China or an agriculture and food security project in Mozambique). Other SCCF approved projects—although their focus has clear gender relevance—don't mention gender considerations or women at all (among them a global project to pilot climate change adaptation to protect human health or a project in Ecuador to adapt to climate change through effective water governance).

The project proposal for the *Kenya Adaptation to Climate Change in Arid Lands (KACCAL)*<sup>9</sup> projects stands as an example that focuses on gender equity and awareness of women's specific roles, challenges and contributions throughout the project (see Box 2).

Currently, the GEF and GEF agencies not use gender equality as required indicator, as a decision criterion or as guiding principle for acceptance and approval of SCCF projects. A social and gender analysis is likewise not required for the initial project identification form (PIF) which starts the GEF project cycle. The various UNFCCC guidance documents on SCCF focus and activities, which have continuously expanded the mandate of the SCCF, have also been silent on gender.<sup>10</sup> This is unfortunate, but not surprising given the lack of references to gender in both the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

While almost all of the ten GEF agencies have explicit gender policies or gender plans of action on the book, at the GEF, a consideration of gender is still at an embryonic stage (see Box 3).<sup>11</sup> Thus, GEF staff reviewing and preparing SCCF project documents for final GEF approval are neither trained nor required to consider and support gender-differentiated adaptation approaches and outcomes as part of the SCCF work program. They are therefore also less likely or inclined to demand the involvement of gender experts and a comprehensive gender and social analysis from one of the GEF agencies involved in a specific project.<sup>12</sup>

### BOX 3: THE GEF AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The GEF does not have a specific gender policy or strategy except for a Public Involvement Policy which includes gender provisions. This is despite the fact that almost all of the GEF Agencies, as well as the Conventions for which the GEF acts as financial mechanisms—with the notable exception of the UNFCCC—have a gender equality mandate. Currently, the GEF relies on its ten implementing agencies to mainstream gender into the its portfolio, leading to uneven results. A 2008 internal analysis of GEF projects across all of its six focal areas, the first ever GEF report on the status of its gender mainstreaming efforts, found that for climate change, only 11 percent of the examined GEF projects made an attempt to incorporate gender considerations (other focal areas, for example biodiversity, fared much better).

Some initial steps were taken to overcome these shortcomings. A gender focal point from within the Secretariat's circle of environmental experts was recently appointed. And there are suggestions that the GEF might be working towards adapting a gender strategy or guidance in the near future.

Source: GEF (2008). Mainstreaming at the GEF. October

The national communications and NAPAs, which form the background for the country-driven proposals for SCCF funded projects, have likewise a mixed record on gender awareness. UNFCCC COP Decision 28/CP.7 identifies gender equality as a guiding principle for NAPAs, and the NAPA guidelines do explicitly refer to women as key stakeholders in NAPA consultations and decision-making. However, a review of 43 NAPAs submitted with the UNFCCC Secretariat finds gender considerations to be only sporadically and not systematically addressed.<sup>13</sup> For non-LDC countries, national communications form the basis for an SCCF

project proposal. While UNFCCC guidelines for national communications exist, no mention of gender is made.<sup>14</sup>

## Providing the Missing Gender Link at the SCCF—Some Important Steps Forward

Several steps should be taken to improve the consideration of gender equality in the preparation and implementation of SCCF funded adaptation projects:

- **Prepare and institute a strong gender-mainstreaming policy and/or a Gender Plan of Action at the GEF:** A formalized gender policy at the GEF would give GEF staff clear directives, incentives and specific mandates to systematically incorporate social and gender analysis in its approval processes.
- **Develop a coordinated joint gender approach to adaptation among GEF and its partner agencies:** The GEF should coordinate and consult with its partner agencies to develop a common understanding and practice on how to incorporate gender awareness in SCCF funded adaptation projects and how to monitor them for concrete gender outcomes. For example, they should develop minimum gender standards or a gender safeguard policy, applicable to all SCCF funded projects.
- **Use gender indicators to track progress toward gender equality in SCCF project implementation:** Developing countries should work with GEF implementing agencies in order to mainstream gender into projects that are being prepared for implementation approval by the SCCF. Countries should develop gender-sensitive indicators for projects to allow the tracking of progress, or include measurable and verifiable quantitative and qualitative targets that address gender considerations and women's needs and capabilities
- **Generate and disseminate knowledge products on gender and adaptation:** The Climate Change and SCCF teams in the GEF Secretariat should generate and disseminate knowledge products that identify how SCCF adaptation projects can address gender equality issues and support women as agents of adaptation. They should compile existing research, identify research gaps relevant to their work, and request and fund additional research. Joint workshops involving relevant staff of all GEF agencies should be held regularly focusing on the correlation between gender equality and improved adaptation outcomes. By utilizing periodic gender audits for implementation projects, the GEF experts should showcase “best practises” and formulate recommendations on SCCF project implementation to be shared with donor and recipient countries and implementing agencies.
- **Refine and strengthen existing NAPAs and national communications:** SCCF recipient countries should include gender considerations in all stages of NAPA and national communications preparation and updating, as well as in the design of adaptation projects. They should ensure and foster women's direct involvement in all stages of policy and project planning and implementation.
- **Use existing gender tools early and systematically:** Adaptation projects under the SCCF should take the differentiated impacts on and contributions of men and women into account in project development and implementation by utilizing tools such as gender indicators, social and gender analysis, gender-differentiated data-sets, gender monitoring and gender auditing. Experience with the use of these tools does exist and has been documented in the development context (f.ex. gender-responsive budgeting) and should be adjusted for the needs of adaptation projects.
- **Include gender equality in all SCCF funding decisions:** SCCF donor as well as recipient countries should ask the GEF and the LDCF/SCCF council to include gender equality in all their funding decisions. Donor countries should provide tied or earmarked additional resources for gender equality projects under the fund; they should also significantly increase the amount and reliability of their financial contributions to multilateral adaptation funding mechanisms, including to the SCCF.
- **Allow funding access for non-governmental and community-based organizations:** The LDCF/SCCF Council should consider new approaches to financing projects under the SCCF, including opening a window to support the

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www.climatefundsupdate.org

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implementation of climate change adaptation projects by non-governmental and community-based organizations, thereby giving special consideration to women's and gender groups. For such a funding window, the project approval process should be significantly shortened and the project documentation requirements reduced. Project preparation funding should provide sufficient resources for community consultations and targeted outreach to marginalized groups, especially women.

- **Adapt gender equality language for the Convention and make gender equality a guiding principle for national actions on climate change:** The UNFCCC COP should adapt gender equality language for the Convention and request its Secretariat to initiate a work program on gender and climate change, particularly on adaptation, financing and technology transfer. The COP should also request that expert groups involved in preparing NAPA guidelines and national communications incorporate gender considerations and women's roles in adaptation, and develop training workshops and capacity-building activities related to the guidelines.
- **Focus research and lobby efforts on adaptation on the benefits of gender equality for building climate resilience:** Civil society organizations and gender advocates in multilateral and government institutions and agencies can contribute to fill the perception and knowledge gap on utility of considering gender in adaptation projects by conducting relevant research, especially by documenting best practices of successful gender-aware projects in community settings. They can also help by attending stakeholder consultation meetings, and by lobbying their national governments to ensure that gender equality is an important criterion of project selection and approval.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Those are: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> GEF (2009a). Status Report on the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund (Prepared by the World Bank as Trustee); GEF/LDCF.SCCF.7/Inf.2, October 14, 2009; document for the LCD/SCCF Council Meeting, November 12, 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> GEF (2009b). Draft Adaptation to the Climate Change Programming Strategy; GEF/LDCF?SCCF.6/Inf.4, June 2, 2009; document prepared for the LCD/SCCF Council Meeting, June 24, 2009, p.18-19.

<sup>4</sup> GEF (2009c). Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund (LCD/SCCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), GEF/LDCF.SCCF.7/Inf.3, October 15, 2009; document for LCD/SCCF Council Meeting, November 12, 2009 in Washington, DC.

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell, Anderson and Huq (2008). Supporting Adaptation to Climate Change: What role for Official Development Assistance?. Available online at: <http://www.eed.de/fix/files/doc/DSA%20conf%2008%20paper%20Ayers&Huq1.pdf>; see also the listing for the SCCF at [www.climatefundsupdate.org](http://www.climatefundsupdate.org).

<sup>6</sup> For a list of current GEF SCCF projects, see GEF's online project database at <http://gefonline.org/projectListSQL.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> UNFCCC (2003a). Decision 5/CP.9: Further guidance to an entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism of the Convention, for the operation of the Special Climate Change Fund. FCCC/CP/2003/6/Add.1; available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop9/06a01.pdf#page=11>

<sup>8</sup> For example, the World Bank's Gender Action Plan has made that correlation, defining "Gender Equality as Smart Economics"; see <http://go.worldbank.org/9P7W3KS0P0>.

<sup>9</sup> Project descriptions and document for KACCAL, including the final project document as submitted for the SCCF work program (WP) are available from the GEF project database at <http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetailsSQL.cfm?projID=3249>. Quotes from the final project document, p. 29f.

<sup>10</sup> For a list of relevant UNFCCC guidance notes and communications on the SCCF, see the UNFCCC SCCF Website at [http://unfccc.int/cooperation\\_and\\_support/financial\\_mechanism/special\\_climate\\_change\\_fund/items/3657.php](http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/special_climate_change_fund/items/3657.php)

<sup>11</sup> GEF (2008). Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF. October; available at <http://www.gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/mainstreaming-gender-at-the-GEF.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> GEF Evaluation Office (2009). OPS4 Technical Document #9: Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF. By Thelma Awori. September; available at: [http://www.gefeo.org/uploadedFiles/Evaluation\\_Office/OPS4/TC9\\_Gender%20Issues%20in%20the%20GEF-Thelma%20Awori.pdf](http://www.gefeo.org/uploadedFiles/Evaluation_Office/OPS4/TC9_Gender%20Issues%20in%20the%20GEF-Thelma%20Awori.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> GEF (2009d). Joint External Evaluation: Operation of the Least Developed Countries Fund for Adaptation to Climate Change. Prepared by DANIDA Evaluation Department and the GEF Evaluation Office. GEF/LDCF.SCCF.7/Inf.4; document for LCD/SCCF Council Meeting, November 12, 2009 in Washington, DC. Available at: [http://www.thegef.org/uploadedfiles/Documents/LDCFSCCF\\_Council\\_Documents/LDCFSCCF7\\_November\\_2009/GEF-LDCF7-Inf4-101309.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/uploadedfiles/Documents/LDCFSCCF_Council_Documents/LDCFSCCF7_November_2009/GEF-LDCF7-Inf4-101309.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> See UNFCCC (2003b). Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Eighth Session, held at New Delhi from 23 October to 1 November 2002. Addendum. FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.2, 28 March 2003; <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop8/07a02.pdf#page=2>; and the UNFCCC website on national communications at [http://unfccc.int/national\\_reports/non-annex\\_i\\_natcom/guidelines\\_and\\_user\\_manual/items/2607.php](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/guidelines_and_user_manual/items/2607.php)