

SUBMISSION

In relation to the notification requesting information on progress in implementing the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and efforts related to gender mainstreaming to inform the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Notification Ref.: SCBD/MCO/AF/NP/TM/87003

Convention on Biological Diversity
Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer
Executive Secretary
413 Rue Saint-Jacques Ouest, Suite 800
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H2Y 1N9

12 February 2018

Dear Dr. Paşca Palmer,

This is a submission by the ICCA Consortium, an international association dedicated to promoting appropriate recognition of and support to ICCAs (territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities) in the regional, national and global arenas. The ICCA Consortium is comprised of Members (indigenous peoples' and community-based organisations, as well as civil society organisations working closely with indigenous peoples and local communities) and Honorary members (individuals with relevant concerns and expertise relating to ICCAs).

This submission includes the following points:

- Overarching comments;
- Gender roles in biological and cultural diversity;
- Suggestions to strengthen implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action; and
- ICCA Consortium and its Members' activities related to gender.

We also support the submission of the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative and Global Forest Coalition (a Member of the ICCA Consortium), which will be submitted separately.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide inputs on these important matters, and please do not hesitate to contact us for any clarifications. We look forward to further contributing to preparations for the meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies in July 2018.



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Overarching comments:

1. The ICCA Consortium acknowledges **existing** and encourages **continued efforts** of the CBD Secretariat and Parties to mainstream gender considerations in the work of the Convention, including achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
2. Individuals and groups who face gender inequalities often face a range of other civil, political, economic, social and/or cultural inequalities as well, for example, relating to ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, ability, marital status and age. The interconnected nature of these overlapping and interdependent systems of inequality, discrimination and disadvantage is also known as '**intersectionality**'. Efforts to mainstream gender and address gender inequalities in the work of the Convention thus should also consider these other interconnected forms of inequality.
3. Specifically on women's rights, the ICCA Consortium is also aware of the debate around **women's rights and cultural relativism**, including critiques that international law (particularly human rights law) imposes Western law on other societies and legal systems, including Indigenous customary laws. In efforts to mainstream gender in the work of the Convention, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential tensions or conflicts as well as potential synergies between, on the one hand, Indigenous peoples' and communities' customary laws, knowledge and practices and, on the other hand, international law and standards on women's rights and gender equality.

Gender roles in biological and cultural diversity:

4. Genders and gender roles are themselves a **source of diversity** within Indigenous peoples and local communities, given the unique knowledge, practices and relationships of women, men and other genders with the biological diversity within their territories and areas. Such diverse roles in the stewardship, governance and management of biodiversity should be recognised and celebrated as a source of pride within these communities.
5. Action 1.7 of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action is to "*identify the importance of traditional knowledge and customary practice held by men and women in the protection of biodiversity and make use of them in supporting implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans*" (NBSAPs). It is important to not only 'identify' and 'make use of' such knowledge and practices, but also to recognise them as part of the diverse worldviews, cultures and languages that underpin and enrich much of the world's biodiversity. It is thus important to also consider the roles of these **broader cultural dimensions** in NBSAPs and other work of the Convention.
6. A crucial part of this diversity is the existence of **more than two genders**, particularly in many Indigenous cultures and spiritual traditions. However, the CBD's approach to gender currently only considers women and men and definitions of what is 'feminine' and 'masculine'.¹ In our view, this is a limited understanding of gender; non-binary genders and non-gender-conforming identities should also be explicitly included and considered in efforts to implement the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and the CBD more broadly.

Suggestions to strengthen implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action:

7. Dr. Paşca Palmer, we welcome and applaud your announcement – made during the opening of the 10th meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions – that you would be working with the UN Environment Programme on a new UN policy on **environmental defenders**. Within this and related actions to support and protect environmental (and human rights)

¹ See: <https://www.cbd.int/gender/biodiversity/default.shtml>.

defenders, we urge the CBD Secretariat and Parties to address the specific and additional threats and dangers faced by women and non-gender-conforming environmental (and human rights) defenders. As underscored by the [Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition](#), women face increased vulnerabilities and distinct human rights violations in their work. These specific considerations should be addressed as part of mainstreaming gender in the UN policy on environmental defenders and related work of the CBD Secretariat and Parties.

8. We welcome the CBD's efforts to integrate gender considerations in **NBSAPs**² and urge Parties and the Secretariat to continue such efforts, including in the next round of NBSAPs that will be developed in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
9. Similarly, we urge the CBD Parties and Secretariat to integrate gender considerations into the forthcoming **sixth national reports**, which are due in December 2018. Decision XIII/27 – which includes guidelines and a template for the sixth national reports – does not contain any specific mention of gender or women. Thus it can be expected that without focused attention and support, the sixth national reports will be largely gender-blind.
10. On a related note, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 only contains one mention of women (and nothing on gender more broadly) in Aichi Target 14.³ When combined with the abovementioned lack of guidance for the sixth national reports, it is likely that gender will be largely missing from the forthcoming fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook and the final **assessment of progress towards the Strategic Plan**. We urge the Secretariat to provide more substantive guidance and support to Parties in the preparation of the sixth national reports and fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook.
11. Gender should also feature strongly and more explicitly in the process to develop the **post-2020 global biodiversity framework**.
12. Financial support to date to support women's issues on the ground in the context of biodiversity has been insufficient. In the final years of implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, **dedicated resources** should be allocated to (*inter alia*) capacity building, education and communication support, and technology transfer for women. This could be done through the Global Environment Facility and UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme, as well as through CBD Parties' allocations for development aid and small-scale community enterprises.
13. Related to the above points, the Gender Plan of Action commits to "*Mak[ing] gender and biodiversity a strategic priority of the Convention*" and "*Link[ing] the Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biodiversity with related activities under the United Nations system*". We suggest that a key step towards both is to make more explicit links to the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and other SDG targets related to gender and women.
14. Linkages between the Gender Plan of Action and the SDGs should also include specific focus on **secure land rights and tenure** for women (as per SDG Targets 1.4, 2.3 and 5.a), as well as the **indicators for Aichi Target 18** on trends in land use change and land tenure in the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples and local communities (see Decision XIII/28, Annex). Secure land rights and tenure are crucial for gender equality and livelihoods.
15. In Proposed Objective 6 of the Gender Plan of Action ("*Gain the full and effective participation of both men and women in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020*"), we encourage CBD Parties and the Secretariat to ensure that **inclusive**

² See: <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/pilot-project-integ-gender-nbsaps.pdf>.

³ Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

participation of women – as well as non-binary genders and non-gender-conforming individuals – does not impose a further burden on such individuals due to their gender-specific roles in relation to biodiversity. For example, women often have primary responsibility for daily and time-intensive tasks such as gathering water and preparing food. Participation in the work of the CBD should be sensitive to these gender roles and responsibilities as well.

ICCA Consortium and its Members' activities related to gender:

16. The ICCA Consortium is in the process of drafting an **internal gender policy** to ensure that our work is guided by the pursuit of equality and equity for all genders. We understand that cultures are living phenomena and change over time, but believe that this change should be decided and guided by the Indigenous peoples and communities concerned.
17. Several organisations working on promoting recognition of and support for ICCAs are also focusing on gender issues, thereby contributing to the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action. The ICCA Consortium and its Members are willing to collaborate with Parties in achieving **Action 3.2** of the Gender Plan of Action (namely: *"Draft and disseminate case studies highlighting the unique knowledge of biodiversity held by women"*). Brief examples are shared below as an indication of the types of issues that could be highlighted in such case studies.
 - a. In **Costa Rica**, [CoopeSoliDar R.L.](#) (a founder of which is a member of the ICCA Consortium's Council with special responsibility for ICCAs and gender issues) is promoting the role of women in small scale-fisheries as part of the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.⁴ More information about this work can be viewed in this short video (05:05, Spanish with English subtitles): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7CJAU0zIMw>.
 - b. ICCA Consortium Member [Kawawana](#) is an ICCA grouping of eight villages in Casamance, **Senegal**, populated primarily by the Djola people. There, the voices of women are respected on an equal level as the voices of men in any general decision-making. An individual's standing depends not on gender but on the community's confidence and trust in that person. Concomitantly, each gender has its own specific traditional practices, including in relation to the environment, natural resources, entrance into certain areas, and some particular rituals. For example, postmenopausal women are the only ones who install fetishes (charms/totems) to delineate taboo zones, in which fishing and even entrance is forbidden; this also contributes to conservation and protection of biodiversity. These cultural specificities related to gender are still practiced and highly respected despite decades if not centuries of interaction with mainstream religions such as Christianity or Islam, as well as other cultures.
 - c. As shared by ICCA Consortium Member [KUA](#), in traditional society in **Hawai'i**, the greatest power went to the person with the most *mana* (spiritual and other power). This could be women or men. The *Konohiki* (traditional resource managers) for various *ahupua'a* (the predominant geographic land management land designation) could also be women or men. The *Konohiki* bridged government and community to help them work together. Powerful figures in Hawaiian history include Queens Lili'uokalani and Ka'ahumanu, both celebrated for their leadership and strength. In contemporary times, KUA's work includes supporting young leaders in Indigenous Hawaiian communities, many of whom are women. Their own leadership and governance structures have a strong presence of women as well, with more than half of their elders' network council, E Alu Pū, and the entirety of their board currently comprised of women.
18. In addition, the ICCA Consortium is preparing a series of short case studies and overall analysis on **ICCAs and the SDGs**. This includes a case study on Indigenous pastoralists and SDG 5 (gender equality), but they wish to remain anonymous at this time due to pressing security concerns.

⁴ Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4356e.pdf>.