



Charter of the Women's and Gender Constituency

February 2016

Article 1. Goal

The goal of the Women's and Gender Constituency (WGC) is to formalize the voice of the women's and gender civil society organizations present and regularly active in UNFCCC processes, and to develop, streamline and advocate common positions. The Constituency aims to bring together as many NGO observers accredited to the UNFCCC as possible to work democratically towards achieving its goals. Individuals and organizations who are not accredited to the UNFCCC are encouraged to work through those accredited members and participate in the WGC-hosted advocacy groups.

The Constituency draws upon global commitments to gender equality and women's rights, especially as they relate to climate change, and toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and related commitments and Rio-Conventions. The Constituency works to ensure that human rights and gender equality are firmly anchored in all climate actions under the UNFCCC and to challenge the extractive, exploitative and patriarchal economic model which has resulted in the climate crisis.

Article 2. Principles

The principles of the Women and Gender Constituency are based on:

- Democratic and participatory governance
- Respectful and supportive participation
- Wide and inclusive membership of accredited CSO observers, encouraging regional balance
- Transparent procedures and clear, timely and flexible communication
- Participation processes that allow for effective participation of members from all regions and backgrounds
- Building on history (collectively and individually)
- Mentoring (of younger generations and other newcomers)
- A goal-oriented approach
- Provide a platform for women's leadership with broad and participatory access.

Article 3. Objectives

The main objectives of the Women and Gender Constituency include:

- Ensuring the representation of women's voices, experiences, needs and capacities in the UNFCCC process and to provide gender perspectives in all related discussions
- Developing and advocating for common positions based on climate justice principles and work together towards achieving shared goals
- Contributing women and gender-sensitive perspectives and a wider critical analysis of current developments within and around the official negotiations to help foster communication between women and gender organizations and groups, and national- or international fora
- Facilitating and engaging in the daily women and gender caucus during the negotiations
- Liaising with other caucuses and constituencies, especially to identify and build upon common ground
- Collaborating on funding opportunities in a transparent manner and according to agreed guidelines, in order to support the collective work and diverse representation of the Constituency in the UNFCCC process and allow for enhanced capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Article 4. Framework

The coordination and work of the Women and Gender Constituency will be made within the framework and guidance of the following key considerations as outlined in the WGC 2015 position paper:

- A just and gender-responsive climate framework can take different forms, but fundamentally it must: respect and promote human rights and gender equality; ensure sustainable development and environmental integrity; require fair, equitable, ambitious and binding mitigation commitments in line with the principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR); call for urgent and prioritized adaptation action and resources that respond to the most vulnerable countries, communities and populations; demand a sustainable energy paradigm that prioritizes safe, decentralized renewable energy systems that benefit people and communities; ensure adequate, new, additional and predictable climate finance for developing countries; provide resources to reconcile loss and damage already incurred from climate inaction; and, ensure full, inclusive and gender-equitable public participation in decision-making, with increased mandatory ex-ante and periodic human rights and gender equality impact assessments. It must ensure that gender equality, equal access to decision making, and benefit sharing are integrated into all its provisions, including

through gender-responsive means of implementation. Sex and gender disaggregated data and analysis of the underlying causes of any gender disparities must be mainstreamed in all information, communication and reporting systems.

Article 5. Membership

To become a member of the constituency, the organization must be recognized as an observer to the UNFCCC process. Information for organizations wishing to apply to observe the UNFCCC process can be found on the UNFCCC website.

Upon application, organizations will be asked to align themselves with a Constituency. Members wishing to be part of the WGC should tick the box 'Women and Gender'. To further be engaged in collaborative advocacy, members are required to respect the objectives and guiding principles reflected in this Charter in order to participate in the work and governance of the WGC.

Article 6. Governance structure

The WGC will develop a flexible governance structure which can be adapted to best meet the demands of its membership and ensure proper international and regional coordination and guidance. The governance structure is to be transparent and accountable to the members of the WGC.

It will compose of:

- Two co-focal points, representing Global North and Global South respectively. To be nominated and elected by popular vote within the WGC for a one-year time frame. Re-election is possible.
- A facilitating committee (FC), made up of the two co-focal points and a maximum of four other members from different organizations reflecting North/South balance. Active constituency members can nominate themselves for election to the FC, which will be formed yearly and will serve to support and facilitate the work of the Constituency and focal points.

This governance structure aims to guarantee an effective and inclusive working mode of the constituency. It does not mean that other WGC members cannot take on responsibilities and defined roles, such as coordination of working groups, etc. The governance body of the WGC will encourage the active involvement of all WGC members.

Article 7. Further clarification of roles and responsibilities

The activities of the WGC, the co-focal points and the facilitating committee will be conducted according to the following guidelines regarding specific functions and responsibilities:

- Role of co-focal points:
 - Providing a conduit for the exchange of official information between their constituents and the UNFCCC Secretariat;
 - Coordination of observer interaction at sessions, including providing names for the speakers list and representation at official functions;
 - Assisting the UNFCCC Secretariat in realizing representative observer participation at workshops and other limited-access meetings;
 - Representative functions in UNFCCC capacity;
 - Information sharing;
 - Relationship building with the Secretariat and other UNFCCC Constituencies.

- Role of Facilitating Committee:
 - Sharing responsibility and workload in WGC by assisting co-focal points;
 - Nominating a representative to act as focal point in event of absence;
 - Assisting with inward and outward communication (organizing calls and meetings, managing mailing lists and assisting with advocacy group membership, coordination of website and social media);
 - Facilitating the process of drafting key messages / advocacy documents of the WGC, including the follow up on agreed positions (impacts, outcomes, updates, etc);
 - Supporting the coordination of advocacy and strategy spaces, including short term thematic groups, within WGC (caucus meetings, strategy sessions);
 - Drafting of initial funding plans for review by WGC;
 - Providing input on yearly WGC evaluation and report to Secretariat.

Article 8. Communication and decision-making

The WGC will communicate via a mailing list created and maintained by the Co-Focal Points. It is recommended that the number of members from each organization represented on this list is limited to 2-3 people (exceptions can be made on request), however, voting procedures will follow the principle of one vote per organization.

When feedback or decisions are required from WGC members, the relevant information will be shared within a reasonable timeframe and if no objections are raised by the set date, consensus will be assumed. Ad-hoc decision making processes may be adopted under circumstances such as a COP, where shorter turnaround time may be necessary, with consultation and agreement from members,

Decisions will therefore be adopted according to consensus of members actively engaged in Constituency work, and according to the principles outlined above. If conflicts occur, the co-focal points and/or the facilitating committee will be asked to mediate. The facilitating committee merely serves to assist and direct the work of the WGC and has no decision-making capacity of its own accord.

Guidelines on information sharing for the different mailing lists (WGC, advocacy, caucus) will be provided.