



# Our Climate is Changing: WOMEN at the Centre of Human Security



Genanet/WOMNET  
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- Introduction to WEDO/HSN study (2008)
- Framework on Gender, Climate Change (CC) and Human Security
- Conclusions from the study
- Implications for our policies and actions.



## **WEDO/HSN study: Gender, Climate Change and Human Security – lessons from Bangladesh, Ghana and Senegal (2008).**

- Focus: Nexus gender-climate change-human security.
- Analysis of actual situation and theoretical and policy frameworks.
- Special attention: climate change impacts and adaptation strategies.
- Insights in the relationships and interfaces, realities of life and policy implications.

# Methodology used

*Commissioned by the Greece Government for the Human Security Network*  
*Executed by a team of people working for/with WEDO.*

- (a) Literature search (e.g. disaster-gender literature).
- (b) Execution three case studies: **Senegal** (ENDA), **Ghana** (Abantu for Development), **Bangladesh** (ActionAid).
- (c) Analysis of information and data.
- (d) Drawing conclusions and recommendations from these.



# Climate Change and Human Security

“ There is every reason to believe that as the 21<sup>st</sup> C. unfolds, the security story will be bound together by climate change....” John Ashton, Jan.2007

IPCC (2007): esp. poor communities vulnerable.

Vulnerability: ...” *the characteristics of a person or group and their situation influencing their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a hazard.*”

→ Vulnerability approach needed → gender as determinant.

Margaret Beckett, UN Security Council, April 2007:

“ Climate Change can bring us together, if we have the wisdom to prevent it from driving us apart.”



# Gender and (natural) disasters

Study London School of Economics a.o.(2007),  
141 natural disasters (1981-2002):

- (a) Natural disasters lower life expectancy of women more than that of men
- (b) The stronger the disaster, the greater the effect
- (c) The higher women's socio-economic status, the weaker the effect.

Women often more vulnerable through:

- socially constructed roles, incl. reproductive roles
- poverty
- less access to resources, e.g. land
- work in informal sector, e.g. agriculture
- less mobile
- lack of information/capabilities.

- After disasters: violence against women increases.



# Climate change impacts on women's security

Climate change: not different from other slow and rapid disasters.

Loss of livelihoods and basic resources:  
Women slip deeper into poverty, workload increases, health impacted.

Because of responsibilities and tasks:  
more vulnerable.

Conflict: amplifies existing inequalities.  
CC: amplifies conflicts.

CC: not only women's vulnerabilities, but also their capacities and capabilities challenged.



# Women's coping strategies – strengthening security



In many communities women important **agents of change**:

- Contributors to livelihood adaptations, e.g. moving to safer places, saving their assets, dietary adaptation, energy saving, adapting agriculture, earning (other) income, ecological restoration, alternative health care.
- Mobilizing the community in disaster preparedness, adaptation and mitigation.

CC: opportunity to challenge and change their gendered status in society.

Voicing their priorities → policy lessons.



# Policy-framework

- \* Human Rights/Human Security
- \* Women's Rights: CEDAW
- \* Sustainable Development:  
Agenda 21, JPOI, conventions, CSD
- \* MDGs, PRSPs
  
- \* United Framework Convention  
on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- \* Kyoto Protocol and beyond
- \* Mechanisms: CDM, Adaptation Funds
- \* National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) -  
quickscan



# Analytical framework

## Human Security, Climate Change and Gender

Human security =  
security of survival, security of livelihood,  
and dignity.

CC → impacts on (wo)men's security;  
often increases gender inequalities

Women → affected + main actors in  
coping, adapting and countervailing

(Potential) Policy Responses.



| Human Security            | Security aspect        | Climate change | Gender aspects | Adaptive strategies women | (Policy) Opportunities/responses |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Sec. of Survival</b>   | Mortality/<br>injury   | ++++++         | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Health                 | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
| <b>Sec. of Livelihood</b> | Food security          | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Water security         | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Energy security        | ++++           | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Environmental security | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Shelter security       | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Economic security      | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
| <b>Dignity</b>            | Basic human rights     | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Capacity               | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |
|                           | Participation          | +++++          | +++++          | +++++                     | +++++                            |

# Conclusions study

- CC = emerging HS issue; vulnerability approach is needed.
- CC is not gender neutral.
- Gender important determinant in CC (mitigation and) adaptation.
- Women face specific risks and vulnerabilities.



- Gender differences – not just in terms of differential vulnerability, but also as differential **capacity**.
- Women play key roles in protecting, managing and recovering their household and assets during/after (CC) disaster.
- Policy environment: has yet to fully recognize gender-specific characteristics of vulnerability and adaptive capacity.



- Greater inclusion of women and inclusion of gender-specific approaches may reverse CC impacts (v.v.).
- Wide range of (policy/action) opportunities for adaptive measures that address women's priorities in times of CC.
- Mitigation of CC remains of crucial importance!



# What can we do?



- Recognize and further research gender dimension of CC.
- Global and national CC policies and budgets should include a gender perspective and benefit women: advocate.
- Ensure women's rights and justice in CC mitigation and adaptation: build in guarantees in policies and processes.



- Adaptation/mitigation funds should prioritize women's needs – including their (clean) energy needs - and should promote women's rights.
- Sustainable production and consumption in (Western) Europe = ensuring all dimensions of human security (survival, livelihood, dignity) of women and men worldwide.

- Women's empowerment in all sectors crucial; organization, participation and control over resources and (CC) decision-making at all levels.
- Include and involve **men** in these efforts.



- Cooperate with existing organisations and networks: gendercc- women for climate justice network, genanet, Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO), Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), Network of Women Ministers of Environment, IUCN, gender-disaster network; as well as national partners.



# CLOSING REMARK

The global dimension of climate change has a human face, and requires climate justice from women and men worldwide for women and men worldwide.

*THANK YOU*

!

[www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org)

[www.wecf.eu](http://www.wecf.eu)

