Ministerial High Level Panel

From left: Honourable Dr Hussun Banu Ghazanfar, Minister, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Afghanistan (with her interpreter at far left); Honourable Saleem Khan, Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare and Population, Pakistan; Honourable Lyonpo Dr Pema Gyamtsho, Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan; Honourable Heikki Holmas, Minister of International Development, Norway; Honourable Lyonpo Thakur S. Powdyel, Minister of Education, Bhutan; Dr David Molden, Director General, ICIMOD, Chair and Discussant

Gender gains in mountain contexts in the 10 years since the first meeting in Bhutan

“In Afghanistan, putting gender equality at the centre of the development agenda since 2001 has had tangible results: Women account for 22% of government employees, 38% of students, 29% of faculty, 27% of the Lower House of Parliament, and 40% of voters in last Presidential election. Ten years ago all were close to zero.”

Removing mental barriers

“Our panel of four men and one woman says that men are more to be listened to. In Norway, women had been responsible for health and education but never defence, never finance. The message was ‘women can’t handle money’ – until we got our first woman Minister of Finance. Real people wielding real power is a tremendously strong image for young girls.”

Has there been backsliding?

The panelists don’t think so. Today, the UNFCCC is the only major document that doesn’t include gender issues. Dr Jain said, “The Internet has transformed us; we have so much more information. Instead of focusing on women’s burden, in victim mode, let’s argue how women’s great knowledge can generate ideas for policy and environmental sustainability.” Mountains, on the other hand, still suffer from marginalization.

How to make good policy reach the ground

• Take into account local traditions and culture and build policy from the grassroots.
• Target policies at religious leaders, local leaders, and teachers. If you have gender-sensitive youth, you will have gender-sensitive adults.

Debate: Effectiveness of quotas for achieving gender equality

The usefulness of quotas depends on the context. Norway has quotas to ensure 40% women in public life. Research shows that men tend to pick men, so the quota ensures that women are picked. Bhutan focuses instead on creating enabling conditions for women’s independence. For Pakistan, the quota is important because there are not always equal opportunities or facilities (e.g., schools) to make women competitive with men. In Afghanistan, “gender quotas do not seem to create backlash among citizens; citizens use information about women leaders’ performance to update their beliefs about women.”

The Road from Rio+20 High Level Panel

From left: Dr Ruth Meinzen-Dick, IFPRI, USA; Meena Khanal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Nepal; Dr RS Tolia, Doon University, India; Dr Devaki Jain, Founder of DAWN, India; Honourable Lyonpo Dr Pema Gyamtsho, Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan, Chair and Discussant

How to forge a new agenda?

“We are not only dropping the goal of gender mainstreaming but also the goal of ‘women’s equality’. Do we want to eat a poisoned piece of the cake? We don’t want to eat up resources. In lieu of gender equality, we propose gender analysis of all macroeconomic policies. The gender lens gives so much knowledge about where the errors are. This empowers women and transforms what’s on the plate.”

The women’s movement has demonstrated how women’s contribution is essential to agricultural production, but hasn’t had the same focus on environment.

“Women’s empowerment means power sharing. Power is a beautiful thing that no one wants to share.”
Why gender mainstreaming hasn’t worked

Many managers see gender as only a donor requirement. For policy makers, it is another thing that needs to be taken into account, with little reward. And for many donors, it is yesterday’s issue. Some problems include:

- monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and how change is evaluated;
- the tendency to use old models that predate social media and ignore its potential to bring rapid change;
- a eurocentric view of how men and women should behave.

GIZ’s gender strategy today developed because of a very strong woman minister who was a role model and mentor. Today all GIZ programmes go through a gender analysis and are graded accordingly. Managers are also assessed on their contribution.

“Gender mainstreaming is just a slogan. In Nepal, we have had women parliamentarians, but they mainly have an ornamental role. Despite all the talk of gender equity, we still have no woman minister in the Nepal Government.”

Key messages

- A gender lens is extremely important because it shows not only differences among men and women, but also other power relationships in the society at large.
- Climate change has differential impacts on men and women, especially in the mountain context. Women and men need different resources in order to adapt to these changes.
- We must not keep projecting women as vulnerable, but must look at their potentialities and how they have been coping. Women can also be game changers in mitigation, as they are involved in activities that can reduce emissions, for example controlling energy use in the household.
- In both adaptation and mitigation, property rights and collective action are very important.

Mountain women have some advantages over women in the plains – more social mobility, less patriarchy, more engagement in outside activities – but they also face mountain-specific challenges to adaptation such as limited exposure to markets, men’s out-migration, limited access to infrastructure, and greater dependence on natural resources.

Inauguration of Photo Exhibition on women’s vegetable cultivation in Bhutan

We’ve come some way from the ‘add gender and stir’ approach. It is necessary to focus on change agents within organizations, and to give them space within organizations.” There will be resistance, but that is part of the transformation.”

Plenary 1: Gender transformative change

From left: Sabine Guertner, Gender Programme Director, GIZ; Eva Rathgeber, Chairperson, Gender and Water Alliance; Jeannette Gurung, Executive Director, WOCAN; Anuradha Koirala, Chairperson, Maiti Nepal; Devaki Jain, Founder of DAWN, India, Chair and discussant

Plenary 2: Climate Change Adaptation and Gender

From left: Dr Govind Kelkar, ICRW, India; Dr Andrea Nightingale, University of Edinburgh, Scotland; Elbegzaya Batjargal, Mountain Partnership, Central Asia Hub; Dr Jyoti Parikh, IRADe, India; Dr Ruth Meinzen-Dick, IFPRI, USA; Dr Arzu Rana Deuba Rana, IUCN, Nepal, Chair and Discussant

Key messages

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In Central Asia, where 90% of the territory is mountainous, we still do not know to what extent mountain women are affected. Gender disaggregated data and good research are required to support effective policy making.

If we do not see gender being integrated in NAPAs and LAPAs, it is because UNFCCC fails to address gender issues. IPCC, which advises many climate change negotiations, cannot include generic statements and there are few scientific data related to gendered impacts of climate change.