



Twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Nairobi, 16–20 February 2009

Report of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment and United Nations Environment Programme high-level gender forum

Introduction

1. The Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) high-level gender forum was held at UNEP headquarters, Nairobi, on 15 February 2009.

I. Opening session

2. The Forum was opened at 9.30 a.m. by Ms. Jesca Eriyo, Minister of State for Environment of Uganda. In her opening remarks, Ms. Eriyo said that the Forum had been organized in recognition of the need to ensure the responsiveness of UNEP and its partners to gender equality in environmental management. It was an opportunity for women leaders to discuss emerging gender issues and make specific recommendations for inclusion in the president's summary of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

3. Ms. Eriyo invited Ms. Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, to chair the opening session.

4. Welcoming the panel of ministers and experts and the delegates, Ms. Cropper said that the aim of the Forum was to consider how the promotion of gender equality could contribute to environmental sustainability within the two themes of the Council/Forum, namely globalization and the environment and international environmental governance and United Nations reform.

5. Ms. Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and co-founder of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, described in her opening remarks the extensive and influential work of IUCN on gender issues, including setting up gender units in many environment ministries and developing widely used materials on gender. She emphasized the significant part played by women in environmental conservation. Social and gender equality were essential conditions for conservation, and in that context it was important to recognize the ways in which different social groups used different resources. She also highlighted the opportunities for promoting gender equality that could be triggered by conservation; the importance of women's knowledge and skills for conservation and the need to involve local communities; gender equality as an issue of human rights and social justice; and the impact of climate change and natural disasters that affected women in particular. She expressed the hope that the Forum would produce not just recommendations, but also specific actions.

6. Ms. Lebohang Nts'inyi, Minister for Tourism, Environment and Culture, Lesotho, delivered a statement on behalf of Ms. Rejoice Thizwilondi Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism of South Africa and co-chair of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment. She drew attention to the lack of knowledge of the link between poverty and the environment and to the paucity of data on the reverse link, from environment to poverty. It was further

noted that no records existed to show the extent to which the stock of natural resources, such as forests, grazing lands and groundwater available to rural households, affected income from agriculture and other productive activities. She spoke of the need to increase information and the use of information technology; the uneven distribution between countries of the benefits of such resources; and the training needs for rural women to be able to adapt to new technologies.

7. In her keynote address, Ms. Beth Mugo, Minister for Public Health and Sanitation of Kenya, emphasized the importance of the environment for the sustainability of all life and the need to consider bear that in mind when pursuing economic development. Women bore the brunt of environmental degradation and climate change as a result of their status in society and traditional rules of land ownership; in their daily struggle for survival they were exposed to insecurity and rape and lacked opportunities for education and gainful employment; poor harvests resulting from climate change were giving rise to malnutrition in women and children. She said that, in spite of the untapped potential of women, their influence on policymaking continued to be minimal. It was important that women and children were actively involved in the environment debate, informing policy and designing and implementing programmes. She cited the tree planting project of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya as a dignified way for women's groups to earn money and conserve forests and the environment.

8. Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, emphasized in his introductory statement that gender equity had to be an integral part of UNEP governance and a more central part of the organization's work. He welcomed the current high-level forum as evidence that the debate was being taken into economies and societies at large. Gender was becoming the driving force in the way in which environmental management and policy were addressed. He looked forward to clear messages emerging from the Forum for the Council/Forum meeting. In particular, he highlighted the issue of mercury levels that were affecting women worldwide. He also drew attention to the impact of the global economic crisis, recession and loss of employment in gender terms, and said that the Governing Council meeting would be examining how green economy ideas and options should be targeted to tackle gender specific issues. A gender-specific analysis of green economy measures had already been commissioned by UNEP and was indicative of progress being made in that area.

9. Mr. Stanislas Kamanzi, Minister of Natural Resources of Rwanda, delivered a message from the President of Rwanda, Mr. Paul Kagame, who was unable to attend the meeting, in which he shared examples of the experience of Rwanda in making environmental management more gender-responsive. It was essential to remove factors that had traditionally blocked the role of women in political governance and hence environmental management, thereby failing to use half of human talent and potential. Noting that a substantial number of women formed part of the Rwandan Government, he cited some of the institutions founded to promote gender equality, such as the Ministry for Gender and National Gender Council together with such important initiatives as compulsory free primary education; reforms of land and inheritance legislation. Much remained to be done but the challenges were not insurmountable given the political will. He expressed the hope that the Forum would consider how to proceed by setting practical, achievable goals and timelines.

10. Ms. Alice Kaudia, Environment Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya, delivered a statement on behalf of Mr. Ramadhan Kajembe, Assistant Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources. Human activities were having a growing impact on the environment and it was essential for human development to manage resources in a sustainable manner. Environmental degradation was exacerbated by climate change, which was making it increasingly difficult to follow traditional growing and harvesting methods, in which women made up over 70 per cent of the workforce. Integrated gender perspectives had to be included in development goals and barriers to gender equality removed. In that context, she noted that Kenya had a national gender policy and legal reforms were being undertaken with the participation of women. The knowledge of women on resource management should be fully employed in evaluating development policies.

11. Summing up the presentations, Ms. Eriyo highlighted some of the key messages therefrom: the importance of gender perspectives in the use and conservation of natural resources; the vulnerability of women and children to the effects of climate change, natural disasters, conflicts, degradation of land and forests, exposure to chemicals and the current financial crisis; lack of information and poorly presented data; unfair division of labour and work systems; land rights reform and availability of financing for women's economic activities. Promises were made by the global community but not

delivered: political will was essential and women in particular had to take the lead in ensuring that gender issues were included in all areas.

II. Plenary session and presentations by panellists

12. Ms. Janet Kabeberi-Macharia, Senior Gender Adviser, UNEP, chaired the plenary session. Presentations were made by a panel of experts: Ms. Sheila Oparaocha, Programme Manager and Coordinator for the ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy; Ms. Saskia Ivens, consultant with the Gender and Water Alliance; Mr. Marc Wegerif, Oxfam International Regional Economic Justice Campaign coordinator in the Horn of Africa and East and Central Africa; Ms. Sheila Logan, Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics; Ms. Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Associate Professor of Law at the School of Law, University of Nairobi. The presentations would be made available through the UNEP website once edited.

13. In her presentation, Ms. Oparaocha focused on the energy needs of women in developing countries, especially in rural areas, and how energy had an impact on the environment and its sustainability. She looked at the example of a multifunctional platform project in Mali and its contribution to attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

14. Ms. Ivens, in her presentation on gender perspectives in integrated water resources management, gave an overview of the gender dimensions in the water sector with particular focus on the interlinkages between gender relations, integrated water resources and environmental change. She noted that recognition of the differences between men and women in access to water and involvement in decision-making was essential for sustainable water and environmental management.

15. Mr. Wegerif focused on food security and the impact of food prices on women, drawing on research and examples from field experience. He argued that understanding of the food crisis had to be based on the recognition of unequal gender relations, which dramatically increased the impact of the crisis on women, and that should also shape responses to the food crisis if they were to be effective.

16. In her presentation, Ms. Logan demonstrated the importance of gender issues in chemicals management with particular focus on mercury. Chemicals had brought many improvements in modern life but not without costs to the environment and health; many remained in use in spite of awareness of their risks, highlighted in the case of mercury some 60 years ago. She indicated the importance of involving many sectors of society in tackling the issues and of raising awareness at the local and community levels.

17. Ms. Patricia Kameri-Mbote, in her presentation on gender and international environmental governance, highlighted the need to take action on international environmental governance at the national and local levels, and to tackle the marginalization of women from the means of production. That required governance frameworks to be inclusive and gender to be among the factors considered in those frameworks.

18. The ensuing discussion focused on the perceived needs that must be met to ensure a better mainstreaming of gender in environmental policies and actions, with the aim of putting forward recommendations for inclusion in the Governing Council president's summary.

19. The Chair said that a common theme of the presentations had been the urgent need for more gender-impact analysis, gender representative decision-making and disaggregated data. The lack of research studies on gender and environmental management was highlighted, as was the need to examine the effects of current global developments such as the food, energy and financial crises on the securing of women's rights.

20. Several participants agreed on the need for gender-impact assessments. One of them expressed the view, however, that provisions for gender enhancement and participation should be an integral requirement of all project proposals from the outset. Commenting that they were the leaders of the future and that adolescent girls especially often felt marginalized, a representative of young people said that young people also needed to be involved integrally in projects.

21. Referring to the processes established to mainstream gender in UNEP, one participant proposed that gender and environment should be mainstreamed in flagship programme countries under the “one United Nations” initiative.

22. Referring to the negotiations on the follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, one participant suggested that the impact on women of the ideas being discussed should be accorded greater priority and drew attention to a paper that had been prepared on cooperation with the involvement of the Women’s Caucus,. That was welcomed by a representative of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, who called for an examination of where resources could be mobilized and, in that context, for the implementation of requests from the Parties in the fields of knowledge transfer and risk-reduction activities.

23. The Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, pointed out that the role of women in waste management had not been mentioned during the presentations. She said that the health of women and children was seriously and adversely affected by working on waste sites, especially in poor countries with ill-managed waste associated with chemical residues.

24. She also raised the issue that the women under consideration by the meeting were absent, mainly because they lacked the means to attend and also had not had the benefit of education. She expressed the view that that could pose a serious danger of a disconnection between women and policymaking and that it was important to ensure the involvement of grass-roots women and not be wholly operative on the policy level. She stated that the Network could play a significant role in ensuring that the messages trickled down to the community level and offered to contribute to formulating recommendations to that effect. It was generally felt that the Network could play an enhanced and more pro-active role.

25. There was widespread support for the involvement of grass-roots women as they were seen to have expertise and to provide leadership. Stating that the idea that women played a key role in environmental matters was no longer a contentious concept, but recalling that women should not be considered to be a single homogeneous group, one participant suggested that there was a need to document more extensively women’s experiences and draw them into decision-making. Another participant agreed that awareness should be raised on the role of women in the environment and said that she would welcome the dissemination of information as regards experience in Uganda.

26. In the context of awareness-raising, one participant from a country with an economy in transition drew attention to statements made on concerns about human rights and health issues associated with the legacy of nuclear waste from the Soviet era, especially in the light of the renewed interest in nuclear power.

27. One participant referred to initiatives that her group was taking, for example the programme on women and access and the project on women’s empowerment in relation to the Millennium Development Goals that would involve a new internet-based portal. Others were invited to cooperate in the initiatives.

28. One participant said that, in Africa in particular, gender remained an extremely sensitive issue, meaning that it was extremely important for gender and the environment to be introduced together and not discussed separately, particularly in discussions on climate change and disaster strategy. . She expressed the idea that having women as focal points for engagement was an extremely important issue for female parliamentarians in Africa. Many participants endorsed those comments.

29. Commenting on the vulnerability of water resources to the effects of climate change, a panel member suggested that women would find that the increased time spent fetching water would constrain their participation in environmental activities and thus recommended the provision of resources to establish affirmative policies, to tackle women’s activities at the practical level and for governance and training issues. Supporting that comment, another participant spoke of the need for strategies at all levels, even in the allocation of resources and for establishing the prerequisites for women’s empowerment.

30. A panel member expounded on the need to see how Clean Development Mechanism financing could target projects on the ground, saying that Africa lacked the capacity to apply for such funding. She also agreed on the need to focus on the incorporation of gender into projects, but said that audits in some countries had highlighted the lack of capacity to deal with gender and inabilities in ministries to work with one another on the issue.

31. On the issue of sensitivity, a panel member commented on the need to learn from experiences in Rwanda and emphasized the need for institutional strengthening and enhancing commitments to gender policies to break down resistance. She commented on the importance of gender audits and said that the necessary resources were often available but that care should be taken that those were allocated to women and gender concerns.

32. The panel agreed with participants on the need to talk to one other, to involve young people, to gather data from grass-roots women and to include them, to decide on strategic engagements to bring women to the heart of the environment agenda, on the importance of inter-linkages with the chemicals agenda and including women in the recommendations.

33. Some concern was expressed about securing real benefits for women from current carbon trading, given that the worst polluters were seen to be the major beneficiaries, and on the dangers of becoming lost in rhetoric when in governance tangible steps could be taken.

34. In conclusion, the Chair drew attention to new alternative technologies, such as solar power, and the limited potential of women to acquire them or even to save energy and minimize the health risks associated with traditional energy sources. She listed the issues of immediate concern as sustainable water sources, food security, attention to the girl child and pollutants. She said that those issues needed to be tackled through more research, data collection and the development of analytical tools, new legislation, financial support and disaster reduction strategies.

III. Parallel session on the theme: “Moving towards a green economy”

35. The session was chaired by Mr. Ganesh Shah, Minister of Environment and Science Technology of Nepal. In his opening remarks, Mr. Shah noted that, while there were major developments in science, those were accompanied by increased environmental degradation. With the promotion of a green economy, however, there were great opportunities for green jobs, particularly for women, the poor and the unemployed.

36. He introduced the panel of experts, who gave presentations on the theme of the green economy: Ms. Adebisi Adebayo, consultant with UNEP; Ms. Gerd Johnson-Latham, deputy director in the Department for Development Policies of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden; Ms. Narmin Othman, Minister of Environment of Iraq; Ms. Ligia Castro de Doens, Minister of Environment of Panama; Ms. Lebohang Nts’inyi, Minister for Tourism and Environment of Lesotho; Ms. Sascha Gabizon, Women in Europe for a Common Future.

37. In her presentation on entry points for gender in the Green Economy Initiative, Ms. Adebayo reviewed the effects of the global economic crisis on vulnerable marginalized groups and ways in which the UNEP green economy initiative and global green new deal aimed to assist economic recovery on the basis of environmental sustainability, equality, social justice and self-reliance.

38. Ms. Johnson-Latham, in her presentation entitled “Integrating gender in sustainable consumption”, focused on the consumption patterns and lifestyles that were a major cause of the current economic and environmental crises, and how those differed between men and women. She examined the social and gender dimensions of the changes needed to achieve sustainable social and environmental development and the importance of the empowerment of women in that process.

39. Ms. Othman, Ms. Castro de Doens and Ms. Nts’inyi gave presentations illustrating successful environmental and income-generating projects in their respective countries – Iraq, Panama and Lesotho – mostly targeting women in local communities and demonstrating how women could be integrated into the green economy. In her presentation, Ms. Gabizon gave similar examples of experiences in environmental health, waste and sanitation in rural areas of Eastern Europe.

40. In the ensuing discussion, participants raised a number of concerns. One questioned how the new green economy package would be integrated into existing frameworks. A number mentioned the need for coherent policies involving different areas of government, including finance and energy ministries. A representative of the International Labour Organization noted that, in addition to having a positive impact on job creation, the green economy could also negatively affect employment. Another participant noted the need to consider projects with the potential for energy trading and benefiting from carbon markets. A representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme said that it was important to balance the employment needs of urban and rural women and to consider variations in regional issues. She also said that in cities consideration should be given to aspects of housing that contributed to greenhouse gases.

41. The panellists welcomed the additional comments from the participants and suggested that they should be included in the president's summary of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. A number of valuable points had been made both in the presentations and by the participants, highlighting the role of women in projects in conflict situations where they could bring their understanding of life and sustainability to bear; the importance of women coming together to improve their future and learn from examples in other regions; the need for women to use the opportunities of green technology to learn new trades and skills; the need to strengthen family units as well as the role of women and to listen to the views of local communities.

A. Parallel session on the theme “Role of governance in responding to challenges and capturing opportunities”

42. Introducing the theme of the meeting, the role of governance in responding to challenges and capturing opportunities, the Chair, Ms. Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands, touched upon the current crises in food, climate change and finance. Focusing on the food crisis, she said that food security was one of the greatest current challenges. She said that sustainable agriculture was a cornerstone of sustainable development and the driving force of overall development, especially in developing countries, and yet it was often not placed highly on national agendas. She spoke of the need for a green revolution, particularly in Africa, and of the need for investment in rural areas.

43. She questioned whether current governance arrangements represented gender perspectives and spoke of the changes needed to ensure adequate representation of interests and advance development goals, calling upon participants to develop recommendations.

44. Highlighting the key role of women in agriculture, she outlined the challenges that they faced, such as the lack of access to land and security of tenure, before calling for renewed focus on the needs of women and for the empowerment of local communities by the development and implementation of new policies at every level.

45. Ms. Maria Ivanova, College of William and Mary and Yale University, gave a slide presentation on uncovering the international environmental governance structure that examined environmental problems, the institutions established to deal with them and the ways in which those could be improved.

46. Examining the topic of gender and international environmental governance, Ms. Batilda Burian, Minister of Environment of the United Republic of Tanzania, stressed the cross-cutting nature of environment and gender and the need to mainstream both in policy and to follow a gender-sensitive approach to reforms in governance. Outlining the conference decisions and agreements that reflected gender perspectives, she said that coverage was piecemeal and that many challenges remained in areas such as awareness-raising, research, policy development and the institutionalizing of gender at the national level. She then outlined the needs for conceptualization, the strengthening of all pillars of sustainable development, increasing cooperation on gender between the various ministries responding to the implementation of the multilateral agreements with gender components and countering male hegemony in political leadership. In that latter context she called for affirmative action and the establishment at the national level of a gender ministry and a desk dealing with gender affairs in every other ministry. She also urged the development of a comprehensive action plan to help gender mainstreaming, for data and research, capacity-building in education, the more active participation of

civil society, enhancing young women's involvement, strengthening cooperation networks and the leveraging of funds.

47. Ms. Thandi Shongwe, a senator in the Swazi parliament, described the situation in her country, citing the role that women parliamentarians could play and the increases in women's representation as a result of the quota system. She urged chairpersons to ensure that women parliamentarians enjoyed access to relevant information and analysis on the participation of women in environmental activities, which in itself entailed community and national level information-gathering. Commenting with concern on the poor contribution of women in committees, she cited their low self-esteem and lack of information and lobbying experience. She stressed the need to support women in committees and above all to involve women at the grass-roots level.

48. In conclusion, she said that efforts should be made to kick-start projects developed by women parliamentarians and to launch committees for them and for women at the grass-roots level, to increase educational activities on gender and the environment in schools and to secure funds for efforts to combat land degradation activities to assist women to secure essential environmental goods such as water and fuel wood.

49. Ms. Andjelka Mihajlov, President of Environmental Ambassadors, Serbia, gave a slide presentation on green votes and international environmental governance. She set out the links, gaps and potentials, drawing on the experience of her country and outlined the problems and approaches of countries with economies in transition.

50. In the final presentation, Ms. Jeanette Gurung of Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, spoke on the subject of engendering governance in forest management and suggested that there was no focus on gender in that sphere as the discipline was male-dominated and there was resistance to mainstreaming. She outlined the efforts made through the United Nations Forum on Forests to promote women and the constraints on women in the sector, such as lack of capacity and weak coordinating links. She called for cooperation with other sectors to improve the situation.

51. In the ensuing discussion, widespread support was voiced for the essential inclusion of women at the grass-roots level when considering relevant issues. There was also acceptance of the need to improve women's lives and focus on raising awareness of their multiple roles.

52. With regard to ministerial competence, one participant said that women in African ministries of environment were often far better qualified than men and that efforts should be made to ensure that women headed those ministries by making the environment a more specifically women's issue. Another participant wondered whether UNEP could assist national environmental authorities to include women.

53. Many of the participants who spoke stressed the need to cooperate with other organizations with mechanisms to coordinate gender in their activities and to draw on the experience of countries that could offer positive experiences. One participant expressed the view that UNEP had always lacked the means to examine new issues and that there was perhaps a need to return to the drawing board.

VI. Plenary closing session

A. Presentation of panel recommendations

54. Participants at the final session considered the recommendations emanating from the panel discussions and the break-out groups. The session was co-chaired by Ms. Nt'sinyi and Ms. Eriyo. Ms. Kabeberi-Macharia requested participants to consider the recommendations on a systematic basis. The full recommendations are set out in the annex to the present report.

55. In discussing the recommendations, participants agreed that every effort should be made to ensure that gender, including aspects relating to young people, was included in the decisions to be approved by the Council and in the president's summary of the session of the Council. They also stressed the importance of fully integrating gender concerns into the green economy.

56. Many participants recapitulated the concerns of the previous sessions, such as the needs for more and better data, gender impact assessments, risk assessments, analysis, a specific research base, capacity-building, strengthening women's networks, women's empowerment and the involvement of grass-roots leaders and groups. The need to ensure women's immediate requirements, such as food and water, was emphasized. One participant pointed out that gender was included in the climate change negotiations, but suggested that recommendations should also be directed at other forums.

57. The recommendations of the parallel sessions were also recapitulated, such as the suggestions for gender audits, for the establishment of a group of wise women to work until 2012, for an examination of the lifestyles of the rich and for a focus on ensuring that decent jobs were open to all, especially those in the greatest need. Recalling that the Convention on Biological Diversity had an action plan incorporating gender, one participant recommended that other organizations should develop similar plans of their own and should cooperate with one other.

58. Several participants speculated on the source of the resources to carry out the recommendations on climate change and suggested that all efforts should be pursued through the various conventions and programmes of the United Nations and the Global Environment Facility, among others, to tackle the issue. One participant suggested that financial rules for the Clean Development Mechanism should be simplified to make access for women easier. Participants also stressed the importance of developing partnerships and working together to advance the agenda.

59. Participants further emphasized the value of strengthening their participation and input into the environment and development debate.

B. Closure of the Forum

60. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 6.20 p.m.

Annex

Recommendations

A. Global Ministerial Environment Forum consultations: general statements to the Forum

1. In all United Nations development assistance frameworks (for “one United Nations” country programmes), gender and environment should be fully integrated into country-level programme development, implementation and analysis and evaluation.
2. Gender should not to be approached as a sectoral issue, but should be mainstreamed as an integral part of all sectors. In particular, gender and the environment should be mainstreamed into all the Millennium Development Goals.
3. Women are not only victims. They can play a significant role in devising implementable solutions and should therefore be allocated an equal place in decision-making processes.

1. Theme 1: Globalization and the environment: global crises, national chaos?

(a) Energy security

4. Women’s needs and concerns should be included in international discussions on energy use, access and climate change.
5. Gender impact analysis on resource use and, in particular, on energy should take place.

(b) Water security

6. Women need to be recognized as managers and decision makers on water management.
7. There should be a deeper understanding of gender-related use and management of water and underlying cultural, economic or legal instruments.

(c) Food security

8. National policies should promote equitable access to land for female farmers and promote participatory land policies that empower local communities.
9. Enhancing the representation and involvement of women in decision-making processes in the areas of agriculture and rural development is necessary, but in all issues sustainable development is crucial.
10. Women should be important stakeholders if programmes on agricultural productivity are to succeed.

(d) Green economy

11. A green revolution for agriculture and environment management can only succeed by means of a focus on the needs of women, especially female farmers.
12. Decent jobs should be for all and not just those in the industrial sector.
13. The green economy initiative should integrate gender concerns and in particular specific needs and concerns of women in ensuing programmes and activities.

(e) Climate change

14. Governments should support to the efforts being undertaken by the Global Gender and Climate Alliance in pushing for a gender-responsive process and outcomes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

15. The Convention should take into consideration the recommendations made by the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment at its meeting in Poznan, Poland, calling for gender to be integrated into the climate change negotiations.

16. There may be a need to develop Clean Development Mechanism projects that are women-friendly and these should be simplified.

17. A clear policy on how to access existing financing mechanisms for Clean Development Mechanism projects involving women's projects should be developed.

(f) Disaster risk management

18. The gender-differentiated impact of disasters should be tackled in all environmental assessments, particularly those undertaken by UNEP.

19. Gender should be integrated into all policies on disaster reduction and management.

2. Theme II: International environmental governance and United Nations reform: international; environmental governance: help or hindrance?

(a) Decision-making

20. Women and gender experts should be included and involved in all levels of decision-making.

21. International decisions and policies should flow down to the national and local levels and involve gender experts and women in their implementation.

22. The role poor women play at the local level in the sustainable management of the environment, including in disaster resilience, is no longer contested, meaning that it is prudent to invest in innovation and scale up women's work for longer impact.

23. Grass-roots women should be at the centre of policy development and programming and present at all decision-making levels.

(b) Support for the development of a women's parliamentary network

24. In collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and regional, subregional and national parliamentary networks, a network of women parliamentarians on gender and environment should be established. In this regard, UNEP should initiate the process through these networks to cascade international decisions to the national and local levels and at the same time highlight the link between gender and environmental management. The parliamentary network can be used to lobby for gender and environment concerns to be integrated into national budgets.

25. UNEP should develop a capacity-building programme for women parliamentarians and women in local government on gender and environment. Women parliamentarians need tangible information and data on the relation between women and the environment and the correct skills to assist in lobbying for budgets.

26. Green votes and greening political parties are effective instruments and women parliamentary networks can be effective in this regard.

27. There is need for a gender-sensitive approach in national and international policies.

B. General recommendations: Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for Environment

28. Grass-roots women need to be a part of the proposed informal network of women in the environment as leaders and as day-to-day experts on environmental conservation.

29. The Network should work closely with the Global Gender and Climate Alliance on pushing forward the roadmap to the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to take place in Copenhagen, in ensuring that gender concerns are integrated into climate change negotiations and outcomes.

1. Capacity-building

30. The participation of poor women in environmental management, monitoring and evaluation of progress on related commitment and emerging changes at the global, regional, national and local level should be supported and women's capacity built.

31. There should be capacity-building on gender mainstreaming for relevant ministries, environment agencies and non-governmental organizations.

2. Role of UNEP

32. UNEP should take the lead in the United Nations and provide resources to commission gender audits of key UNEP programmes to see how men and women benefit.

33. UNEP could set up a group of wise women, with the task of presenting a programme for fully-fledged gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment to be presented and given resources for studies and consultations, among other things.

34. UNEP should continue to build partnerships and forge cooperation between all agencies and countries.

3. Follow-up

35. The recommendations of the high-level gender forum should be taken forth to the international colloquium on women's leadership, peace and security to be held in Liberia on 7 and 8 March 2009.
