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# MAKING CLIMATE FINANCE WORK FOR WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

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*This brief aims to provide recommendations to policy makers in South Africa to help women benefit from and access climate finance to adapt to climate change and take an active part in the transition to a low carbon economy. You will find out: the context of climate finance in South Africa; why climate finance is important for women; women's perspectives on their challenges to access finance; and recommendations to make climate finance work for women.*

## Context of climate finance in South Africa

South Africa has received US\$536million from 22 dedicated global funds in Sub-Saharan Africa for climate finance.<sup>1</sup> However, almost all the country's financing goes to mitigation at US\$524million. Of the global share of funding for adaptation Sub-Saharan Africa receives 42%, of which South Africa only receives US\$6.78m globally.<sup>2</sup> It is widely acknowledged that adaptation is a critical need yet money for adaptation is sorely lacking and existing adaptation financing instruments are chronically underfunded.

This imbalance between adaptation and mitigation funding should, at least, be corrected at a national level by prioritising adaptation efforts in line with national climate and development goals. To some extent, the following measures being adopted will go to that end and to hopefully provide a truly transformational benefit from climate finance:

- The national **Green Fund (GF)** has been created in South Africa with an initial amount of R800m over three years. The intention is for the GF to provide a long-term funding framework for climate finance, to be established by end of 2014. It will provide grants, loans, and technical support for green projects. Local and provincial government, the private sector, NGOs, research institutions and development agencies will benefit from the Fund, although only R200 million is dedicated for NGOs. It is being led by the Department of Environment Affairs (DEA). The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) will administer the fund.
- Government, as part of the National Climate Change Response Policy is developing an "**interim climate finance co-ordination mechanism**"<sup>3</sup> to secure necessary funds for mitigation and adaptation priority programmes, which will also monitor and coordinate existing climate finance flows. National Treasury will identify who will manage this mechanism.
- The South African National Biodiversity Initiative (SANBI) is a **National Implementing Entity** for the Adaptation Fund. The Adaptation Fund sits under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol (KP) and was established to finance concrete adaptation programmes in developing countries who have signed up to the KP.<sup>4</sup>

Thus far, there are no mentions of gender considerations in either the Green Fund but opportunity exists to ensure they are central to the coordination mechanism and the National Implementing Entity's approach. Consultation with women and affected communities on these processes is vital.

## Learning from the Philippines

The Philippines government recently established a **People's Survival Fund** as the country's first legislated direct access-driven climate finance mechanism dedicated to funding adaptation programmes of local governments and communities.

### Important features of the Fund include:

Oversight of the PSF through a Fund Board chaired by the Department of Finance Minister and includes representation from academics, private sector and civil society who have voting powers.

The secretariat is the Climate Change Commission, and members from other departments including the Philippine Commission on Women. It is a replenishable fund with a floor but not a ceiling that is set.

The People's Survival Fund law stipulates that the Climate Change Commission becomes the national information hub of climate finance in order to reduce chaos caused by the plethora of funding in the country.<sup>5</sup>

## Why is climate finance important for women?

Women living on farms and in cities across South Africa are starting to notice a change in temperatures, rainfall patterns, crop harvest, and water availability. In the North-West and Limpopo provinces farming activities already take place on the edge of survival. Even small changes to rainfall patterns, droughts and floods make it more difficult to grow food. Women living in informal 'shack' settlements in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces experience frequent extreme events, for example the annual flooding in the Cape Flats where people often lose their homes and belongings.<sup>6</sup>

Women are also likely to find it more difficult to respond to climate change impacts because of existing inequalities: often men make decisions in the household, and women do not have access to resources to help address the impacts themselves.<sup>7</sup> Women are more likely to farm organically, which is good for climate change because they use less fertilizers. However, they are limited because they have largely not benefited from land reform which could give them more access to land on which they can invest in sustainable farming practices.<sup>8</sup>

But women are not only more vulnerable to climate change, they are also often the first and best line of defence in their communities. Women have knowledge and expertise in coping strategies and can be climate heroes.<sup>9</sup>

***“Women in my community make bags for children out of cereal boxes. We cover them nicely and write: “Beware of climate change.” “We also plant fresh vegetables for the children so that they can eat healthy food.” - Masubilane from Masibane***

## What are women saying about finance?

GenderCC Southern Africa has been working with women from poor communities across South Africa to understand climate change and actions to address it. Through this work women themselves have highlighted access to climate finance as a key concern and through workshops culminating in the first in a series of multi-stakeholder dialogues supported by Oxfam in November 2012, women living in poverty have identified a number of challenges to accessing or benefiting from other types of finance:

- The process to apply for funds is often complex and requires skills such as business plan writing.
- There is no meaningful support reaching women at community level to access finance so they are often missed out. They are often not aware when workshops are held on the issue.
- When calls for funding are announced, they are usually in English which is not their first language. Application forms, guidelines and other documentation are usually in English, excluding many women from being able to apply.
- Funding calls, announcements and documentation are often placed online but most do not have access to the internet.

- When funds are delivered, women do not get ongoing support and advice to ensure they are able to manage the funds and the project effectively, leading to funding being lost or not given again.
- Funding calls are often administered in cities which women who live out of town don't have the financial means to get to.
- Many parts of local government and the public do not understand climate change, so when women look for support, they are often faced with resistance or disinterest.

**Nomsa Selebano from the Women's Energy and Climate Change Forum explains that a key barrier to access is that the processes are unclear and inconsistent:**

*"It is my third year trying to get funds. I went to Pretoria to apply for funding. They say they have money but when I go they say they already gave it away and I must now come next year.*

*But last year R28 million wasn't utilised in the Department of Agriculture (so how can they say all the funds are used? Then the following year they say I need a strategic partner. Then they say I need a business plan."*

**Doreen Khumalo from Thalgo Agricultural Cooperative explains that a key challenge is accessing finance for their project:**

*"Afco wants to give us their building to do rooftop gardening but we are struggling to get finance for shield nets and compost."*

## Recommendations to make climate finance work for women

- 1. Ensure that women are engaged in climate policy making and planning in order to address their needs**
  - ✓ Enable women to be involved in the implementation of the National Climate Change Response Policy particularly the development of the adaptation plan.
  - ✓ Enable women to participate in local level planning such as community planning for adaptation or mitigation projects.
- 2. Enable easy and, free access to information so that women are able to participate meaningfully in processes and to access climate finance**
  - ✓ Simplify forms and processes.
  - ✓ Make information available in three to four different South African languages.
  - ✓ Advertise information and calls for proposals in community-friendly media such as local press or community radio.
- 3. Promote a gender balance in decision making forums so that women's voices are represented**
  - ✓ Include, at a minimum, an equal number of men and women on steering committees and governing boards of Funds such as the Board of the National Green Fund and Steering Committee of the National Implementing Entity.
- 4. Enable capacity building of women to improve their access to climate finance**
  - ✓ Provide opportunities for community level information sharing and support to access funds.
  - ✓ Provide training of practical skills such as how to write proposals.
  - ✓ Provide local and provincial government capacity building given most climate policy implementation will take place at this level.
  - ✓ Build capacity across government departments- to understand climate change and the impacts on women.

## 5. Work with communities to better understand their needs from and use of climate finance

- ✓ Work with community representatives to do a needs analysis rather than sending in consultants who do not understand particular contexts women live in.
- ✓ Provide on-going monitoring and mentoring to ensure that funds are used successfully and provides sustainability.

## 6. Create a mechanism for coordination of climate finance that considers women's needs and voices

- ✓ The mechanism should be transparent and have accessible information on what funds are coming into the country, who/how they can be accessed, and how/what decisions are made.
- ✓ The mechanism should have a gender policy with gender advisors and coordinator (learn from Global Fund and other funds that have employed such).
- ✓ The mechanism has a responsibility to employ gender budgeting and monitoring.  
The mechanism should involve women from vulnerable communities in decision making on how to govern and disburse the funds.
- ✓ The mechanism must support greater access.
- ✓ NGOs can play that role to facilitate engagement to achieve access between vulnerable groups and government.

## 7. Create funds for local communities to facilitate quick, easy access to funding for vulnerable groups

- ✓ Establish a small grant facility, for example, as part of larger funds.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Climate Funds update. . Online: <http://www.climatefundsupdate.org/themes/mitigation>. Accessed on 20 September 2012

Note: The money amount refers to disbursed funding via 22 dedicated climate financing instruments monitored by CFU in a time-frame from 2003 (when the LDCF and the SCCF started funding) until today.

<sup>2</sup> Climate Funds Update. Online: <http://www.climatefundsupdate.org/themes/adaptation>. Accessed on 20 September 2012

<sup>3</sup> Hemraj, S. 2012. Implementation of the national climate change response white paper: Climate finance and tracking funding flows. Presentation to the Institute for Security Studies, 16 August 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Climate Funds Update. Online: <http://www.climatefundsupdate.org/listing/adaptation-fund>. Accessed on: 16 November 2012

<sup>5</sup> Email communication from Red Constantino, 24 August 2012. More information from - <http://www.ejeepney.org>.

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> Barugura, A. 2010. *Gender and climate change- South Africa case study*, Heinrich Boell Stiftung Southern Africa Pg 1 and Schalatek, L. 2012 *Climate financing for gender equality and women's empowerment: Challenges and opportunities*. Presentation for Review Panel, New York, 1 March 2012. Heinrich Boell Stiftung North America

<sup>8</sup> Sosibo, K. 2011. Women at the mercy of climate change. Mail & Guardian, 9 September 2011. Online: <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-09-09-women-at-the-mercy-of-climate-change/>

<sup>9</sup> ibid

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