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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fourth session
Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019**

**Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment
Assembly on 15 March 2019**

**4/17. Promoting gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of
women and girls in environmental governance**

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Reaffirming the principles of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women,² which contribute to the international legal and political framework for realizing gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls,

Affirming the importance of States respecting, protecting and fulfilling their human rights obligations, including women's rights, when implementing environmental legislation and policies, including in the context of strengthening national, regional and international policymaking in the sphere of climate change and environmental matters, and in promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes,

Noting that United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 37/8 noted that more than 100 States had recognized some form of a right to a healthy environment in, inter alia, international agreements, their constitutions, legislation or policies,

Acknowledging that the States parties to all three Rio Conventions – the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa – and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat have all recognized the importance of

¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

² Reproduced in E/2016/27; also available at <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/60/csw60%20agreed%20conclusions%20conclusions%20en.pdf?la=en&vs=4409>.

addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women in their implementation programmes and have consequently developed individual gender action plans to support States parties,³

Acknowledging also that major environmental funds, including the Global Environment Facility, the Climate Investment Funds, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, have approved gender policies or frameworks,

Recognizing that, conversely, the impact of climate change, pollution, the unsustainable management and use of natural resources, the unsound management of chemicals and waste, the resulting loss of biodiversity, and the decline in services provided by ecosystems may interfere with the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and that environmental damage can have negative implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of all human rights, especially for those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations, including women and girls,

Considering that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by the impact of climate change and other environmental issues, including, inter alia, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, desertification, pollution and natural disasters, owing to existing gender inequality; and recognizing the active and meaningful role of women as key agents of change in developing innovative solutions to climate change and promoting sustainable and inclusive consumption and production,

Recognizing that the role of women as agents of change could receive greater emphasis, as advocated in the United Nations Environment Programme's Global Gender and Environment Outlook, supported by the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, which highlights essential gender-and-environment approaches and a transformative agenda that recognizes gender equality as a driver of change, leading to environmental policies that are more "people-smart",

Acknowledging that identifying and addressing the needs of both women and men, and promoting women as decision makers, is critical to ensuring the sustainability of environmental policy, planning and programming,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 72/247 of 24 December 2017, on the twentieth anniversary and promotion of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,

Noting the role of the For All Coalition, an alliance of Member States, in collectively and simultaneously advancing human rights, gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment across the various multilateral environmental agreements,

Underlining that the United Nations Environment Programme should, within its organizational mandate, work towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in its planning instruments, investment frameworks and sector-wide programmes, in particular by revising and updating its Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014–2017, to articulate its commitment to the achievement of meaningful gender equality results in its internal operations and all its programming, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the gender-specific targets of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Acknowledging that women's knowledge and collective action have huge potential to improve resource productivity, enhance ecosystem conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, and create more sustainable, low-carbon food, energy, water and health systems,

1. *Invites* Member States to:

(a) Provide the United Nations Environment Assembly, in accordance with their capabilities, with information on their progress at the local and national levels in mainstreaming gender in environmental policies and programmes, highlighting challenges and opportunities, to inform the revision of the Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014–2017;

³ Convention on Biological Diversity, 2015–2020 Gender Action Plan, available at <https://www.cbd.int/gender/action-plan/>; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Gender Action Plan, 2017, available as a draft at https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_nov_2017/application/pdf/cp23_auv_gender.pdf; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, draft advocacy policy frameworks: gender, drought, and sand and dust storms, available at http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2017-08/ICCD_COP%2813%29_19-1711042E.pdf; Convention on Wetlands of International Importance resolution XIII.18 on gender and wetlands, available at https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/xiii.18_gender_e.pdf.

- (b) Consider joining the For All Coalition in order to strengthen and raise the visibility of gender equality and human rights messages and garner broader support for gender-responsive and human rights commitments and action across the various multilateral environmental agreements;
- (c) Prioritize the implementation of gender policies and action plans developed under the multilateral environmental agreements to which they are a party;
- (d) Establish social and gender criteria in project implementation and financing mechanisms for environment-related projects and programmes at the national level;
- (e) Continue and enhance international cooperation and assistance, in particular in financing, voluntary transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms and capacity-building; promote gender-responsive, non-discriminatory environmental policies and measures for all women and girls; and help to ensure women's enjoyment of their rights and their access to food and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, health-care services, education and training, adequate housing and decent work, clean energy, and science and technology;
- (f) Strengthen and implement policies aimed at increasing the participation and leadership of women in environmental decision-making and measures at the local, national, regional and international levels and request, when appropriate, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other United Nations agencies to support, upon request, national programmes and projects in that regard;
- (g) Recognize the importance of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the role that women play as managers of natural resources and agents of change in safeguarding the environment;
- (h) Support training and capacity-building efforts for women and men with regard to mainstreaming gender and enhancing the active and meaningful participation of all women in global processes, as a contribution to achieving the goal of gender balance;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to:

- (a) Facilitate the collection of data, disaggregated by, inter alia, sex, age and disability, and of lessons learned from Member States and other stakeholders, including through consultations and calls for submissions, on the progress made in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in local, national and global environmental policies, programmes and initiatives;
- (b) Report to the Environment Assembly at its fifth session on the implementation of the United Nations Environment Programme's Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014–2017, including in the Environment Programme's planning instruments, investment frameworks and networks and sector-wide programmes, based on information gathered from Member States and other stakeholders, and taking into consideration the Policy's synergies and interlinkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the multilateral environmental agreements, gender action plans and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns,⁴ and on the way forward;
- (c) Enhance collaboration with UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and civil-society organizations, to mainstream perspectives on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into developing innovative solutions to environmental challenges and accelerating the shift towards sustainable consumption and production;
- (d) Continue to support initiatives to encourage and support the participation of women delegates and their leadership in the Environment Assembly and in related intergovernmental meetings, including through awareness-raising, training and capacity-building efforts in cooperation with UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme and other stakeholders, inter alia, in conjunction with sessions of the subsidiary bodies of relevant intergovernmental bodies and processes;
- (e) Ensure that the United Nations Environment Programme's Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment and Gender Implementation Plan are incorporated into all Environment Programme programmes funded by the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility.

⁴ A/CONF.216/5, annex.