CAMEROON, GHANA & UGANDA'S GENDER & REDD+ ROADMAPS

A NATIONAL, POLICY-LEVEL INITIATIVE

GENDER & REDD+ CASE STUDY SERIES

Gender & REDD+ Roadmaps Mission:

To enhance gender mainstreaming and gender and climate change considerations into effective national REDD+ processes by ensuring women's participation in the process.

INTRODUCTION:

Forests, which comprise a total of four billion hectares of land cover worldwide, are one of nature's greatest assets—while, at the same time, effective and sustainable forest managements poses one of the global community's biggest challenges. Forests have the ability to absorb carbon dioxide (CO_2), a potent greenhouse gas and primary component of anthropogenic emissions, and act as carbon sinks. However, when forests are destroyed, they release CO_2 into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Forest loss produces 12-15% of total annual greenhouse gas emissions, which is why it is essential that forest management be integrated into effective climate change solutions.

REDD+, which stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation plus conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, is a framework that seeks to provide financial incentives for developing countries that are making those reductions and conserving forests. The ultimate aim of REDD+ is to foster sustainable forest management, which is not only a smart economic decision, but a smart decision for the environment and the people who depend on it.

Women from forest-dependent communities—communities that are often among the poorest—play an integral role in the management of forests, yet are frequently sidelined in decision-making processes and leadership roles. This exclusion is detrimental, as gender equality is essential for undertaking sustainable forest governance and achieving the goals of REDD+. In order for REDD+ to become a successful mechanism to combat climate change, and in order for it to provide concrete environmental solutions, gender-responsive standards and safeguards that incorporate gender equality and women's rights must be at the core of REDD+ policies and programmes.

Integrating gender considerations into REDD+ policy, planning, and implementation is a key issue for numerous countries. Leveraging learning and knowledge sharing for gender and REDD+ is essential in moving toward harmonized policy reform across relevant sectors, including natural resource management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, land use and tenure reform, and benefit sharing. This case study identifies and consolidates existing tools and best practices for greater access and applicability in mainstreaming gender considerations into REDD+.

"The involvement of women in REDD+ and climate change issues is not just an attempt to get women informed, but a means of ensuring their contribution is producing change."

AKO CHARLOTTE EYONG,
IUCN Cameroon REDD+ Officer

WHY GENDER MATTERS IN REDD+

Every day in their roles as farmers, foresters, fishers, caretakers, and household providers, women use and manage natural resources. Women have unique experiences and knowledge with respect to their environments and offer important perspectives in natural resource governance. Specifically, women and men from rural communities often have differentiated knowledge of forest resources and diverse roles in its management. Given their responsibility for meeting food, water and energy needs for the household, women's work and time burdens are increased by the depletion of forest resources. Not only does women's equitable participation and representation in REDD+ uphold commitments to women's empowerment and gender equality, it also makes for better development, more effective and efficient climate change solutions, and stronger sustainability and livelihood outcomes.

ROADMAPS BACKGROUND:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Cancun Agreements in 2010 and Durban Outcomes in 2011 called for REDD+ national strategies and systems for providing information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected to integrate 'gender considerations'. In 2011, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and in collaboration with the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), facilitated participatory, multi-stakeholder workshops in Cameroon, Ghana, and Uganda to create Gender and REDD+ Roadmaps. The Roadmaps—the first of their kind—were produced during the first phase of the project for each country process and identified context-specific gender and REDD+ concerns, stakeholders, and concrete actions to integrate and enhance gender in REDD+ processes and initiatives.

Currently, each Roadmap, as well as each country's national REDD+ process, is in a different stage of implementation. Creation and facilitation of a Gender and REDD+ Task Force (GTF), or working group, is the most recent step to propel project outcomes forward and move closer to the project's ultimate goal: **to enhance gender mainstreaming and gender and climate change considerations into effective national REDD+ processes by ensuring women's participation in the process.**

COUNTRY APPROACHES:

In each of the three countries, different strategies and methodologies have been used to mainstream gender into the national REDD+ strategy.

Cameroon – Cameroon's Gender and REDD+ Roadmap strategy included the creation of a GTF; the development of a national strategy for the involvement of women in the REDD+ process; and the development of an action plan for mainstreaming gender into it. The GTF was established as part of the working groups within the National REDD+ and Climate Change Civil Society Platform to collaborate at all levels of government. Since its development, the Roadmap has paved the way for the elaboration of a national strategy for the involvement of women in the REDD+ initiatives and policies.

Ghana – In Ghana, the gender advocacy approach has generally tried to dispel the notion that gender is only about women and forests are only relevant to men. In view of the socio-cultural context and how gender roles are perceived, bringing men on board to buy into and support gender actions is extremely important, as this will significantly increase success and effectiveness of interventions. Engagement with key government agencies, particularly the Forestry Commission, has been a critical element of Ghana's Gender and REDD+ Roadmap strategy.

Uganda – In Uganda, identifying key government and non-government institutions and engaging stakeholders in participatory processes has been a significant element of its Gender and REDD+ Roadmap strategy and central to integrating gender as a safeguard in the National REDD+ Strategy. The Roadmap process was meant to enhance the understanding of gender considerations in REDD+ and prepared for a gender-responsive National REDD+ Strategy, as well as recognizing gender stereotypes and norms in Uganda's forestry sector and in natural resource governance more broadly.

CHALLENGES:

In each of the three countries where the Gender and REDD+ Roadmaps are being implemented, advancements have been made towards mainstreaming gender into REDD+ policy and planning, yet all of the countries also struggle for adequate resources needed for long-term sustainability and impact. Broadly, the main challenges remaining include:

- Limited dedicated funds to comprehensively implement Roadmap strategies and Action Plans
- Weak institutional structures that do not always ensure gender equality and equity within policy, or have the capacity to enforce mandates on gender
- Lack of understanding of the value of gender equality and women's empowerment for ensuring or enhancing the achievements of REDD+ initiatives
- Misconceptions about gender advocacy (e.g., that it may undermine men's positions or power,) and inadequate knowledge and capacity, preventing women from participating meaningfully in decision making at all levels and ensuring that their interests are taken into account
- Sluggish progress of REDD+ strategy development, which reciprocally continues to slow the mainstreaming of gender considerations

CONCLUSION:

The three Gender and REDD+ Roadmaps in Cameroon, Ghana, and Uganda were pilot efforts to support the governments through strategies to identify and mainstream key gender issues in REDD+. The Roadmaps processes—which have achieved varying results so far in each country—has consisted of technical support to policymakers and programme implementers: first, women's networks were mobilized, constructively engaging in REDD+ issue discussions and identifying actions needed; and then, secondly, joint capacity building workshops with civil society, women's organizations, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders to create the roadmaps, fostering an understanding that REDD+ and gender equality are intricately linked. In each country, IUCN's technical support has assisted these efforts in forging ahead and achieving the next necessary steps for gender equality in REDD+. Today, the Roadmaps are setting the stage for other countries to follow suit in taking steps to ensure that both women and men are equally recognized as important forest stakeholders and guaranteed the opportunity to learn about and participate in REDD+ policy, planning, and implementation.

CAMEROON

CURRENT STATUS OF REDD+ IN CAMEROON:

Cameroon has been engaged in REDD+ since 2005 and a number of REDD+ pilot initiatives are currently in operation, ranging from Payments for Ecosystem Services, to forest communities, to biodiversity conservation at the regional level through landscape management. At the national level, main activities have included a range of capacity-building and technical activities, such as the development of an MRV action plan, from which strategic activities have sprung from, including the design of a national forest carbon monitoring system. Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) preparation has involved broad stakeholder consultation with national experts and stakeholder workshops. A key step in appropriation of the REDD+ process in Cameroon by all stakeholders was the creation of the national civil society for REDD+ and Climate Change.

Cameroon is an active member of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and the COMIFAC's Working Group on Climate Change. Cameroon is a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Country participant since 2010, and in 2011 Cameroon became a United Nations REDD Programme (UN-REDD) Partner. In 2013, the country's R-PP was approved by the FPCF and will be used to develop Cameroon's national REDD+ strategy. Cameroon's R-PP proposes to develop legislation on a range of topics, including stakeholder engagement, carbon rights, and distribution of benefits from REDD+ programs.

National REDD+ and Climate Change Civil Society Platform:

To ensure quality participation in the R-PP process, the NFP-REDD platform was established in 2011. The creation of this platform was strongly supported by IUCN Cameroon, as well as other development partners. Today, this decentralization national civil society platform is present in the ten regions of Cameroon, as well as in villages of some its geographic divisions. National coordination of the platform has been provided by three elected networks: REFACOF (African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests); RFC (Community Forestry Network); and MBOSCUDA (Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association).

The NFP-REDD platform was designed as an inclusive and consultative body whose mission summarily includes:

- Establishing a channel through which stakeholders (specifically civil society and local and indigenous communities) can access information and participate in the design and implementation of REDD+ and climate change-related activities
- Improving the quality of decision making by giving voice and capturing the experiences of civil society organizations, women, indigenous peoples, local communities dependent on the forest and other remote communities of forests and other ecosystems

ROADMAP OUTCOMES:

The Roadmap process in Cameroon produced a strategy that identified context-specific gender and REDD+ concerns, stakeholders, and concrete actions to integrate and enhance gender in REDD+ processes and projects. Additionally, it has contributed to remarkable progress in reforming national land tenure laws through the lens of gender and REDD+. Out of the actions identified in the Roadmap, the priorities were the creation of a GTF (implemented in 2015); the development of a national strategy for the involvement of women in the REDD+ process; and the development of an action plan for mainstreaming gender into the REDD+ process (strategy and action plan validated in 2014). Creation and facilitation of a GTF was identified as a critical step in propelling project outcomes forward.

In addition, the GTF was established as part of the working groups within the National REDD+ and Climate Change Civil Society Platform (NFP-REDD & CC). The task force collaborates at all levels with sectoral administrations, development partners, the private sector, regional and local authorities, as well as other local elected officials including indigenous peoples representatives on REDD+-related issues at the national level, traditional chiefdoms, and any other network or civil society organization that is interested in the topic. All activities of the GTF are coordinated, supervised and hosted by the NFP-REDD platform, with overall supervision and endorsement from the National REDD+ Coordination Unit.

Specific objectives of the task force include informing and influencing the national REDD+ strategy currently under development; monitoring and ensuring that gender aspects are taken into account in the REDD+ process in Cameroon; contributing to the inclusion of the gender dimension in the environmental and social safeguards (to be defined in the national REDD+ strategy); contributing to the consideration of gender in all activities related to the REDD+ process and climate change at local, municipal, regional and national levels; and sharing experiences. For the next three years (2015-2017), the working group's main activities will be implementing the Gender Action Plan developed from the Roadmap and its subsequent follow-on activities.

Thus far, the major activities carried out in the Roadmaps project have included capacity building for women on REDD+ and climate change, the development of the National Strategy for the Involvement of Women in the REDD+ process, incorporating a Gender Action Plan for REDD+ and a workshop for the establishment of the GTF. The launch of the GTF took place in March 2015, under the supervision of the Government of Cameroon through the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable development (MINEPDED). Participants included representatives of the MINEPDED, the NFP-REDD platform, representatives from the indigenous peoples group, research organizations, women networks and other development partners, as well as gender focal points from different ministries in Cameroon. The workshop involved capacity building sessions and an official establishment of the GTF, including six taskforce coordinators.

Gender issues are increasingly being considered in national processes in Cameroon—this has been supported with the creation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family. However, though we are heading in the right direction, much still has to be done to translate already existing ambitious gender strategies and action plans into concrete actions that will effectively mainstream gender into national processes, and IUCN looks forward to bringing its contribution within the domain of REDD+ and climate change through this support to the Gender Task Force.

AKO CHARLOTTE EYONG,
IUCN Cameroon REDD+ Officer

The following additional activities have been accomplished as a part of the second phase of the Roadmaps project in Cameroon:

- Identification of key stakeholders and participants to engage with the national GTF
  - Done through both formal and informal meetings, culminating in a broader group participating in the workshop and supporting the task force launch in March 2015
- Review of the Roadmap and identification of key current entry points for enhanced action on women's participation and gender
  - The revised final version of Cameroon's Roadmap, with updates from REFACOF and reviewed by IUCN, was produced in December 2014
  - Cameroon validated its strategy for the involvement of women in the REDD+ process in December 2014. This strategy was developed by IUCN to support the country in its elaboration process of the national REDD+ strategy. The process was supported by the "Towards Pro-Poor REDD+ in Cameroon Phase II" project and the "Support for multi-stakeholder participation in the REDD+ process in Cameroon, Gabon, and CAR" project
  - The validated strategy for the involvement of women in the REDD+ process in Cameroon presented a plan of action for REDD+ and Gender activities in Cameroon for 2013, 2014 and 2015. This action plan was updated during the Gender Task Force establishment meeting for 2015 and 2016.

"What I notice is that sometimes as a woman if you insist on an idea and you propose a lot of arguments and you convince the men around you, then they will say 'ah! what you are saying is pertinent and we have to look more closely at it.' It's not easy every day for women, but you have to remain strong, and you have to remain straight on your idea and defend your ideology, then you can achieve many things."

NGOH NJOUMÉ TÉCLAIRE,

Technician, Cameroon National REDD+ Coordination Unit

SNAPSHOT: NGOH NJOUMÉ TÉCLAIRE

Ms. Ngoh Njoumé Téclaire, known as "Teclaire" is a technician within the program and project unit of Cameroon's National REDD+ Coordination Unit. She holds a Masters degree in environmental science and is one of the few women in her sector within the Ministry of Environment. She is a strong advocate for mainstreaming gender considerations into REDD+, as she recognizes that those utilizing forests are women and men, "so it's very important in this REDD+ process to involve both women and men since they are the ones making an impression on forests," she says.

Teclaire is particularly proud of the NFP-REDD+ platform. She says, "in Cameroon, the civil society has done a lot of important work because of the platform for civil society at the national level, which has been brought down to the regional, community, local-levels. This is very, very important because when you involve the local community, you can get the real information coming from the ground—those that are living and experiencing problems and they can give you real information so that you can now think of good solutions to address the issues. For Cameroon, it's a special thing—real progress that can be shared with other countries to replicate."

Not only does Teclaire advocate for incorporating gender into REDD+ at a national policy-level, she also experiences the gender aspects of working for the National REDD+ Coordination Team first-hand. "From my own experience, it's not easy as a woman to have status in the administration," she says. "I'm very happy about what women can do. Women have a lot of potential that sometimes is not capitalized. If you are given the opportunity to present what you are able to do, you can never know what might happen. You have to give women opportunity."

Teclaire is inspirational to women both at the government and policy level, as well as those implementing every day activities related to REDD+ and more generally to natural resource management.

CONCLUSION & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS:

The Roadmaps project and associated GTF is primed to be an active and influential contributor to the national REDD+ readiness process in Cameroon. Recommendations from the workshop include mobilizing adequate resources to ensure capacity building of gender focal points within the Ministries and the GTF and identifying all funding mobilization opportunities for the implementation of the Action Plan at community, local, regional, and national levels. It is also imperative that the NFP-REDD platform structuring process continues at the municipal and community-level to support gender-responsive actions at all levels. Additional REDD+ projects developed by, or with, other sectoral ministries and opportunities for partnerships to enhance gender in REDD+ need to be identified and research results and government policies, including the Guidelines of the National Gender Policy, must be recognized in implementing activities under the Action Plan to ensure gender integration in the REDD+ strategy.

Post-establishment of the GTF, the following activities are in process:

- Support the GTF in the elaboration of its functioning documents and completion of its Terms of Reference
- Raise funds to sponsor the functioning of the task force and the implementation of prioritized activities from the Action Plan—the first step being to organize a meeting with partners to discuss the implementation of the 2015-2016 Action Plan
- Build capacity of GTF members on gender and REDD+; including advocacy, development, planning, budgeting and fundraising

Photo: Participants at gender workshop in Ghana

GHANA

CURRENT STATUS OF REDD+ IN GHANA:

Ghana has been engaged in REDD+ since 2008, and is currently in the 'readiness' phase. This preparation has included the development of a draft National REDD+ Strategy, in addition to developing policies and capacity building activities. Ghana is in the implementation phase of its R-PP as a Participant Country of the FCPF and it is a Pilot Country to the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) of the Climate Investment Funds. In 2011, Ghana joined as a Partner Country of the UN-REDD Programme, but has not received direct support for its national program yet. Seven projects and sites, including IUCN's project landscape at Wassa Amenfi, have been selected as national REDD+ demonstration pilots—a process which is being coordinated by the Climate Change Unit (CCU) of the Forestry Commission and the REDD+ Secretariat of the National REDD+ Technical Working Group (NRWG).

Currently, the REDD+ process in Ghana is managed by the NRWG, which is a multi-stakeholder body chaired by the Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources. Representatives that are a part of the NRWG are from Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, the private sector, civil society groups, traditional authorities, development partners, research and academia, and local communities represented by a member of the National Forest Forum. The NRWG reports to a larger technical group, which coordinates all climate change, FIP, FCPF, issues and also reports to a cabinet-level inter-ministerial advisory body on policy directions.

Recognizing gender stereotypes and norms in Ghana's forestry sector and in natural resource management more broadly, the Forestry Commission partnered with IUCN to enhance the understanding of gender considerations in REDD+ and prepare for a gender-responsive National REDD+ Strategy. In 2015, Ghana took a bold step in its commitment to mainstream gender considerations into its REDD+ readiness and implementation process by establishing a national REDD+ sub-working group for gender (GSWG). The scope of work of the GSWG is mainly at the national-level, with representatives from different ministries, departments, and agencies, traditional authorities, local communities, academia, private sector and NGO/civil society organizations. While it is being coordinated by the national REDD+ Secretariat, the GSWG also liaises with decentralized government agencies and institutions, local communities, and civil society organizations to implement actions at the sub-national and project levels.

ROADMAP OUTCOMES:

In 2011, the Ghana National REDD+ Secretariat within the Forestry Commission united with IUCN to create a Gender and REDD+ Roadmap. The Roadmap process was meant to enhance the understanding of gender considerations in REDD+ and prepared for a gender-responsive National REDD+ Strategy, as well as recognizing gender stereotypes and norms in Ghana's forestry sector and in natural resource management more broadly. One of the major recommendations of Ghana's Roadmap was to establish and train a multi-stakeholder gender advocacy group—the 'Gender Task Force'—to spearhead the gender mainstreaming process and provide technical support in the review of REDD+ documents and processes to ensure gender sensitivity, as well as capacity building at the grassroots level.

An initial step in the Roadmaps process was developing terms of reference to guide the establishment of a gender advocacy group, which ultimately became the GSWG. Next steps involved identifying key stakeholder institutions from government, civil society, private sector, academia and the community level that needed to be represented on the GSWG due to their vital roles in issues related to natural resources, governance, gender, and climate change advocacy in general. The National REDD+ Secretariat then formally invited these identified institutions to nominate their own representatives to join the GSWG. They were particularly encouraged to nominate both men and women representatives in order to help ensure that the sub-working group was gender balanced. The Forestry Commission's Gender Desk Officer was designated as coordinator of the GSWG, a role that involves convening quarterly meetings of the GSWG, serving as the liaison between the National REDD+ Secretariat and GSWG, and providing progress updates to other related working groups on GSWG activities. The scope of the GSWG work is mainly at the national-level, as it is coordinated by the National REDD+ Secretariat, however it involves also liaising with decentralized institutions, such as the district offices of key government agencies, district assemblies, traditional communities, local communities and civil society organizations to implement actions at sub-national project levels.

The GSWG was convened and trained in March 2015 at a workshop on matters of gender, REDD+, and climate change. The members of the GSWG, which included representatives from different MDAs, traditional authorities, local communities, academia, private sector, NGO and civil society organizations, also developed an operational plan and budget for the implementation of the Roadmap. The GSWG members elected a Chairperson and a Secretary to support the management of the group and the training culminated with an official inauguration event to create public awareness about the existence of the GSWG and its mandate, as well as a draft Action Plan.

The following strategies have been employed as a part of the Roadmaps process in Ghana:

- Fostering a multi-stakeholder participatory process to build the capacity of women's organizations and decision makers on gender and REDD+ aspects—aiming to create a common approach through the Gender and REDD+ Roadmap
- Forming the GSWG to mainstream gender considerations into natural resources and environmental policies
- Appointing Gender Desk Officers that have capacity to increase involvement;
- Strengthening the capacity of women and women's groups through technical trainings
- Providing technical assistance for organizations to carry out trainings of stakeholders in workshops and subsequent workshops for policy makers based on results
- Ensuring active participation of women in REDD+ pilot activities
- Strengthening institutional capacity, including government agencies at both national and district levels, civil society groups and organizations, and traditional authorities
- Developing gender-sensitive benefit-sharing schemes

The following activities have been accomplished as a part of the second phase of the Roadmaps process in Ghana:

- GSWG established and trained to understand the linkages between climate change, REDD+, safeguards and gender issues, as well as the Ghana REDD+ process and progress thus far
- An Action Plan and budget developed for the operationalization of the Ghana Roadmap
- Local stakeholders in the Wassa Amenfi landscape trained to spearhead mainstreaming of gender considerations into the implementation of project activities, as well as use the capacity and skills they would acquire to influence general decision making at the district/local level
- Discussions initiated with in-country development partners towards the development of partnerships for the implementation of the REDD+ and Gender Action Plan

SNAPSHOT: PATIENCE OPOKU, GSWG CHAIR

In March 2015, the newly convened GSWG underwent a two-day training on REDD+ and its status in Ghana, the links between gender and REDD+ and the development of an operational plan for the Gender and REDD+ Roadmap. An official inauguration of the GSWG was coordinated by the Forestry Commission of Ghana with facilitation by the NRWG to create public awareness about the GSWG existence and mandate. The inauguration also recognized the newly chosen chair of the GSWG.

Patience Opoku, Director of Research, Statistics and Information Management for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP), will serve as the chair and representative of the GSWG with her main role focusing on coordinating collaboration with the NRWG and between the GSWG and other sub-working groups.

"In order to benefit from REDD+, both women and men have key roles to play—and particular attention must be paid to the women's roles, especially as there is a tendency to leave women out of decision making."
PATIENCE OPOKU,

Director of Research, Statistics and Information Management for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and Chair of the Ghana National REDD+ Sub-working Group for Gender.

CONCLUSION & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS:

The establishment of the GSWG not only provides the driving force for implementation of Ghana's Roadmap, but also gives a critical voice to ensuring gender considerations are integrated into all aspects of Ghana's REDD+ architecture through advocacy and technical support to the other REDD+ sub-working groups and the NRWG in the development and subsequent implementation of a National REDD+ Strategy.

Since the establishment of the GSWG, the team has reviewed and provided technical inputs into Ghana's draft national REDD+ strategy and Grievance Redress Mechanism Report as a means of ensuring that the national REDD+ framework and implementation process is inclusive, pro-poor and gender sensitive. The capacity and knowledge of the GSWG about REDD+ issues and process in Ghana has also been enhanced in the process and their mandate and role in the national REDD+ architecture of Ghana strengthened.

Moving forward, the GSWG will also engage with stakeholders at the local and landscape level to build the capacity of local gender advocacy groups as well as collate data/information that would inform national policy and advocacy. National and policy level institutions and stakeholders will also be targeted with actions to strengthen their capacity and role in ensuring safeguards and gender issues are mainstreamed into sector policies.

UGANDA

CURRENT STATUS OF REDD+ IN UGANDA:

In Uganda, REDD+ is part of the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) that aims for a unified and coordinated approach towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon development path for sustainable development. Uganda became a participant of FCPF in 2008 and received its first grant to prepare the R-PP in 2009, which was approved in 2012. The Readiness Preparation Grant Agreement was signed in July 2013. The R-PP process is being coordinated by the Ministry of Water and Environment through its Forest Sector Support Department. A National Steering Committee and a National Technical Committee serve as platforms for stakeholder engagement in the National REDD+ process.

Development of a National REDD+ Strategy is also underway in Uganda, as well as a national forestry monitoring system. The process is currently soliciting technical support for the elaboration of various components of the strategy, data collection for establishment of forest reference levels, and development of a forest monitoring system. The Uganda government views the National REDD+ Strategy as a long-term measure for tackling deforestation and forest degradation, while also meeting demands for energy and other forest products. The intended REDD+ Strategy is being developed with a view to enhancing positive impacts for REDD+ while reducing any negative social and environmental effects on forest-dependent communities. A National Forestry Inventory is already in place and implemented by the National Forestry Authority, with technical support provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

ROADMAP OUTCOMES:

The purpose of the Roadmaps project in Uganda has been to integrate pro-poor principles and rights-based approaches into the National REDD+ Strategy, and other frameworks for sustainable management of forest resources in the country. A strategy for Roadmap implementation has included identifying key government and non-government institutions and engaging stakeholders in participatory processes, as well as integrating gender as a safeguard in the National REDD+ Strategy.

The following activities have been accomplished as a part of the second phase of the Roadmaps project in Uganda:

- Identification of women's organizations, civil society and youth groups working on gender issues, and other related actors involved in the environment and forestry sector
- Identification of at least one representative per region from national-level women networks
- Contact established with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to identify representation within the task force
- Establish contact with Women Parliamentarian Association to identify representation in the task force
- Establish contact with the gender focal points of developments partners to identify representation in the task force
- Convene taskforce meeting to define the nature and scope of its activities, and agree on the roles and responsibilities of the members
- Organize a technical workshop for stakeholders to share experiences on gender mainstreaming in forest-related interventions and reactivate the momentum built in the previous trainings

Identifying representatives for participation in the workshop, as well as the GTF, was a vital element for jump-starting the Roadmap implementation. A working group was constituted in 2014 to resuscitate the process of operationalizing the Roadmap, and through these efforts a national multi-stakeholder consultative workshop was held. The workshop enhanced awareness on gender and REDD+ issues, expanded thee taskforce and led to the development of an Action Plan for operationalization of the Roadmap. Participants of the national multi-stakeholder consultative workshop included representatives from women NGOs, youth groups, and other related actors; new additional stakeholders, such as representatives of indigenous communities, cultural institutions, land boards, and religious institutions; and regional representatives from national-level women's networks. Identification was done in many different participatory ways, including consultative processes that identified and built on the 2011 assessment, as well as discussions held to identify key regional representatives and consultations with membership organizations. In addition, contact was re-established with organizations involved in the initial Roadmap planning to reactivate their participation, specifically women parliamentarian associations. Dialogue was also initiated with select development partners to identify gender focal points and support the implementation of the roadmap, and publicize it within their networks as a means of exploring funding opportunities.

An important activity in the Roadmap process was establishing contact with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to establish representation in the GTF. As a follow up to the initial contact in 2011 when the Ministry jointly organized the workshop that resulted in the Roadmap development, meetings with the Ministry were organized to bolster interest in actions to support Roadmap implementation. As a result, the Minister promised full engagement of her ministry in the process and designated the commissioner in charge of gender as the focal point from the Ministry for the GTF.

The GTF was initially expected to be spearheaded by the task force that was instituted in 2011. However, a need existed to reactivate the group and make it more effective, given the lapse in time. In order for this to occur, a number of meetings were held and new members were co-opted for the GTF. During these meetings, members expressed concern that a majority of them had not been actively engaged in the REDD+ national process in Uganda and needed to be updated about the process and status. They also raised concerns that REDD+ is perceived as an opportunity for developed countries to continue taking advantage of the developing countries. Ultimately, the confluence of these worries led to key action points towards demystifying REDD+ among all stakeholders and broadening the taskforce representation and composition. They included:

- The need to create a civil society-led taskforce which directly feeds into the national Safeguards and Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) taskforce, with specific members identified to sit on the committees
- Expansion of the representation of the indigenous people's organizations and local communities, as well as religious institutions on the executive committee
- The agreement to have the GTF as an open group for all members interested, with an executive committee which would formally represent the taskforce

As a result of these concerns, key action points, and the desire to kick off the re-established GTF, a two-day multi-stakeholder workshop convened in April 2015. It aimed to enhance awareness of gender and the REDD+ process in Uganda and increase knowledge of how to institutionalize and mainstream gender in the National REDD+ gender strategy. Participants included representatives from civil society organizations that advocate for the environment, women, and indigenous people's organizations from different parts of the country. Academia, government officials through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda Women Parliamentarians, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Water and Environment were also key participants.

Ultimately, the establishment of the GTF has provided opportunities for its members to participate in national planning of REDD+ activities with the national coordination team. Additionally, as a part of Cameroon's Roadmap implementation, its strategy for women's involvement in the REDD+ process, which was created to support the country in its elaboration process of the national REDD+ strategy, has been reviewed and validated.

"If we are insensitive to gender-related elements then we will not have the total buy-in from the different sections of our society. It is the gender roles that uniquely bring out the efforts and support [REDD+] planning."

MR. XAVIER NYINDO MUGUMYA,
National REDD+ Focal Point, Uganda National Forestry Authority

Photo: Maggie Roth, Participants at gender workshop in Cameroon

SNAPSHOT: IUCN MT. ELGON PRO-POOR REDD+ PILOT PROJECT

The Mt. Elgon National Park is a vulnerable mountain ecosystem, one of the most important water systems and biodiversity areas for Uganda, and also extremely vulnerable to flooding and landslides. With a human population of about two million and an ever-increasing annual population growth rate, Mt. Elgon's natural resources and ecosystem are under increasing pressure from human activity. Almost 80% of the resource-poor residents depend directly on land through subsistence agriculture or the direct extraction of natural resources. IUCN is piloting a "Towards Pro-poor REDD+" project in this region to address some of these threats. In its first year, this REDD+ pilot project has had multiple phases—the first directly targeted the community that is using the forests in the protected area, aiming to reduce encroachment and deforestation. Now the project has progressed to focus on the community's farmlands and provide alternatives for firewood, which the forest was being harvested for. From the onset, the project has specifically targeted women and incorporated them into decision-making roles and planning with the management committees agreeing to be made up of at least 40% women.

"During time we have been working with these communities, we have found it is beneficial to work with more women than men. One of the reasons is that women are more patient than men and the interventions we talk about take a long time. At the onset you see many men interested and coming, but as the project turns into actual work, you see the men slowly beginning to stop coming," **says Richard Gafabusa, IUCN Project Officer for the Mt. Elgon region.** *"You see the women actively listening and participating—they are consistent. They will actively take on these interventions, while men will take seedlings and plant them but it ends there—women continue to nurture and protect after the seeds are planted—we see more progress with women, but of course we need both women and men."*

CONCLUSION & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS:

In Uganda, the Roadmaps process, the GTF, and the National SESA and Safeguards Taskforce directly inform the on-going National REDD+ Process, so close collaboration with the relevant government agencies is paramount. The project team must be consistently updated on all the processes and be able to identify clear entry points so that gender issues are mainstreamed in all of the relevant stages of the REDD+ process. In the future, there will be deliberate effort to continuously meet with the relevant government agencies and formalize initiated arrangements.

Uganda's Roadmap has presented an opportunity for awareness-raising among stakeholders, and it has had even more impact at the national level in regards to the on-going national REDD+ process, which is leading the development of the National REDD+ Strategy. This has been evidenced by government representatives' active participation and attendance in the GTF and related consultative workshops, specifically those who were previously not involved in the gender REDD+ process and requested closer collaboration to demystify REDD+ and gender concepts. The proposed participatory reconstitution of the GTF has also been met by positive response from all stakeholders. Inclusion of more youth, as well as religious and cultural group representatives has been suggested as a next step moving forward.

Post-establishment of the GTF, the following activities remain:

- Identification of entry points for all relevant committees of the national REDD+ process so that the representation of the GTF is ensured
- Participation in the review of the themes and work of the related committees—including the National REDD+ Strategy, MRVs, Safeguards, SESA, Participatory structures, Conflict and Grievances

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More information about GECCO can be found on the IUCN Global Gender Office's website at http://genderandenvironment.org/; more information about gender and REDD+ can be found on the REDD Desk at http://theredddesk.org/; and more information about USAID's climate change work can be found at www.usaid.gov/climate.