

Two Birds, One Stone: Policy Coherence for Feminist Climate Compatible Development

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Issue

Canada seeks to leverage the rules-based international order to address climate change as well as reduce poverty and advance gender equality; however, more coherent strategies are needed to simultaneously achieve Canada's international development and climate policy goals.

Background

Interlinkages of Climate Impacts, Poverty and Gender

Climate change impacts are projected to erode food security and reduce access to the natural resources on which poor people depend for livelihoods (Nunan 2017). These outcomes will slow down economic growth and make poverty reduction more difficult. In many developing country contexts, women and girls are predominately responsible for food production and household water and energy supply. These socially prescribed gender roles mean women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change that makes these tasks more difficult and time consuming. Women's dependence on natural resources and unequal access to productive assets are challenges that are compounded by limited mobility and decision-making power (UN Women 2016).

Climate compatible development (CCD) adopts mitigation and adaptation strategies that simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build resilience and promote development (Climate & Development

Knowledge Network 2010). CCD solutions are designed to safeguard development from climate impacts by supporting low carbon and climate resilient development. For example, programs that enable women to seek entrepreneurship opportunities in the renewable energy sector simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help communities adapt to a changing climate, and promote development by providing necessary infrastructure while improving the capacity of women to respond to the impacts of climate change.

CCD solutions are especially relevant to addressing the environmental impacts of agricultural practices, deforestation and the use of non-renewable energy sources. Additionally, there is a direct connection between CCD strategies and poverty reduction. When employed in the agricultural sector, CCD solutions can work toward eradicating hunger. When employed in the clean energy sector, CCD solutions can provide economic opportunities that support skilled training and contribute to reducing poverty. As climate change aggravates poverty — especially for women who depend on natural resources as livelihoods — CCD strategies have become increasingly necessary to achieve international development goals.

Guidance From the International Order for Addressing Climate and Gender Equality

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) has expressed its commitment to protecting and reforming the rules-based international order (RBIO) as one of four priorities in 2019-2020. In addition to providing economic benefits,

defending the RBIO enables Canada to advance its interests related to poverty reduction, gender equality and climate change in international forums. Two key United Nations international agreements designed to strengthen national climate policies and commitments to sustainable development are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, centered on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both agreements recognize that climate change and gender equality must be addressed simultaneously. For example, parties to the UNFCCC have recognized the importance of involving women in the development and implementation of gender-responsive national climate policies by including overarching text in the Paris Agreement. The agreement states that parties should promote gender equality and the empowerment of women when acting to address climate change (UNFCCC 2015). Moreover, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development regards the SDGs as integrated and indivisible. Scientific research has shown that climate action (SDG 13) and gender equality (SDG 5) are inextricably linked, namely through population pressure (Schweizer 2019). SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals points to the importance of global cooperation for achieving a universal rules-based system.

Canada's Framework for Assessing Gender Equality Results

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) supports the idea that CCD solutions can be delivered in a manner that empowers women and girls. Prioritizing Canada's FIAP has served to effectively target gender equality goals in GAC projects, but the extent to which the FIAP has contributed to additional goals, such as reducing poverty and addressing climate change, is less clear. To target and mainstream gender equality practices and outcomes in line with the FIAP, GAC relies on a framework for assessing gender equality results. However, the tool does not assess CCD results or poverty reduction outcomes. Greater integration and stronger policy coherence are needed to ensure that Canada's interventions have the greatest possible impact on the overlapping dimensions of development described above.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has recognized the value of policy coherence that fosters synergies across economic, social and environmental policy areas (OECD 2017). The UNFCCC also affirms that responses to climate change should be coordinated with social and economic development in an integrated manner (UNFCCC 1992). A policy coherence approach to international development suggests that GAC's project portfolio should not be thematic blind. Being more deliberate about project selection can enhance policy coherence to help deliver integrated policies that ensure progress achieved on one goal, such as gender equality (SDG 5), contributes to progress on other goals, such as climate action (SDG 13) and poverty reduction (SDG 1). CCD lends itself naturally to policy coherence because CCD solutions pursue development goals such as poverty reduction and accessible and clean energy (SDG 7) in concert with SDG 13. Because GAC has multiple goals in the areas of development policy and climate action, the interlinkages between climate impacts, poverty and gender (such as those described above) indicate that GAC will experience sub-optimal results if its project portfolio remains sector and thematic blind.

An example of strong policy coherence, which GAC should replicate in other projects, is its project with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to safeguard forests in Honduras under the leadership of women and Indigenous youth. This project is exemplary because it simultaneously empowers women in line with Canada's FIAP, promotes conservation, reduces greenhouse gas emissions by enhancing forests as natural carbon sinks, and facilitates poverty reduction through economic growth (FAO 2018). GAC can strengthen the impact of its project portfolio by better leveraging the co-benefits between gender equality and climate action to target those projects most capable of simultaneously empowering women and girls, addressing climate change and reducing poverty.

GAC pursues multiple projects that address gender equality and climate impacts, but the crossover between these target areas among current projects could be strengthened. GAC's online Project Browser categorizes

projects based on the degree to which they support key sectors related to environmental sustainability and gender equality (Government of Canada 2019). However, few of these projects intentionally target both gender and the environment, despite interlinkages between these sectors. For example, of the 35 projects categorized under the women's rights and equality sector, only one also lists environmental protection as a sector of focus. Of the 16 projects categorized under the biosphere protection sector, none list women's rights and equality as a sector of focus. Although many of these projects list gender equality as a significant objective, the interlinkages between gender and climate described above indicate that greater integration of these sectors of focus among current projects would strengthen GAC's project portfolio.

Organizing GAC projects into sector silos undermines policy coherence by labelling projects that address overlapping dimensions of sustainable development as strictly sector-specific. Recognizing opportunities for stronger coordination of projects across overlapping sectors would enable GAC to more easily assess the strength of its project portfolio in terms of its impact on overlapping dimensions of development, and provide developing nations with examples of effective CCD to encourage the adoption of similar policies. The FIAP supports both development and foreign policy objectives by promoting feminist values, and as such, the FIAP represents an opportunity for greater integration of Canada's foreign policy and development goals. In addition to moving the ball forward on multiple SDGs, integrating Canada's foreign policy and development objectives serves the ancillary purpose of supporting greater coherence among departments at GAC.

Communicating Canada's Commitment to Gender Equality

The Trudeau government has clearly expressed its commitment to advancing gender equality by prioritizing the FIAP. However, the extent to which the FIAP has addressed climate change as well as reduced poverty is less clear to external observers. Raising the profile of the FIAP in key international forums would raise external awareness of the policy, enhance Canada's soft-power influence and potentially contribute to achieving GAC's vision of implementing the FIAP on an international level. Leveraging opportunities for communication during international conferences, for instance, serves as a means by which Canada can exercise leadership on gender

equality and policy coherence in a highly visible way. The UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) 25 is an example of an international forum where GAC should promote the FIAP through awareness-raising opportunities such as the pre-COP 25 pavilion or COP 25 side events.

COP 25 Platform

The COP is a high-profile event attended by civil society organizations and media reporters. It invites countries that have ratified the UNFCCC to come together to discuss the ways in which the challenges posed by climate change can be proactively addressed. As a signatory to the UNFCCC, Canada can use this platform to communicate the ways in which CCD strategies and the FIAP can simultaneously address climate, international development and gender equality challenges.

Pre-COP 25 and COP 25 Side Events

Prior to COP 25, Canada can showcase its efforts to incorporate the FIAP and CCD strategies into its project portfolio during a pre-conference pavilion. In addition to leveraging its platform during COP 25, Canada can host a COP 25 side event to showcase projects that demonstrate the effectiveness of the FIAP and CCD strategies for achieving the SDGs.

Recommendations

Canada has an opportunity to support developing nations in building resilience and reducing the impacts of climate change on poverty by designing development policies that are gender-responsive and climate-informed. GAC should:

- 1. Continue to target and mainstream gender equality using GAC's framework for assessing gender equality results.**
- 2. Pursue policy coherence to better leverage the co-benefits of gender equality and climate compatible development.**
- 3. Design an assessment tool such as the existing framework for assessing gender equality results to monitor results for climate compatible development, enabling GAC to target those projects most capable of simultaneously addressing climate change, empowering women and girls, and reducing poverty.**

4. **Raise the profile of Canada's FIAP in key international forums — namely, at the UNFCCC COP 25, and through awareness-raising opportunities such as the pre-COP 25 pavilion or COP 25 side events.**

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Acknowledgments

The authors would like to extend their sincerest thanks and appreciation to Vanessa Schweizer for her guidance and mentorship throughout the development of this policy brief. A special thanks to Roy Norton for his valuable feedback, and to Olaf Weber for consultations during the early stages of this research.

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