

Gender and the Environment in Development Cooperation

An Assessment of Agenda 21 and the Platform for Action

Irene Guijt

April 1997



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Department for Policy and Legal
Services and Department for Natural
Resources and the Environment

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Department for Policy and Legal Services
and Department for Natural Resources and
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Preface

The Swedish parliament established “*the sustainable use of natural resources and care for the environment*” as the fifth goal of Swedish development cooperation in 1987 . In addition Sweden ascribed to the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 adopted at UNCED in 1992. This means that attention to environment should be integrated into all Sida policies and programmes.

In May 1996 the Swedish parliament added a sixth goal for Swedish development cooperation - “*the promotion of equality between women and men in partner countries*”. Attention to equality should be mainstreamed into all policy development and dialogue and support to projects and programmes.

Sida highlights the importance of identifying and building on the interlinkages between the overall goals of development cooperation. The need to look more closely at the interlinkages between the promotion of equality between women and men and efforts to promote environmentally sustainable development has been given increasing attention. One concrete example of efforts to promote greater understanding of these interlinkages is a seminar on gender in relation to forestry and land management which resulted in a publication “*Gender, environment and development. Some interlinkages*”. Another is a seminar on gender and water resources management organized by Sida for the OECD/DAC Expert Group on Women and Development. This seminar resulted in the development of a framework for mainstreaming equality perspectives in water resources management.

There is still, however, a clear need for further development of understanding of the interface between gender equality and environment. Such improved understanding is necessary to be able to develop policy directives, practical operational guidelines and best practices.

This report has been prepared to provide further insight and guidance. It analyses the two important international strategy documents - *Agenda 21* (Rio, 1992) from an equality perspective and *Platform for Action* (Beijing, 1995) from an environment perspective. It highlights interlinkages, illustrates both potentials and constraints and identifies implications for development cooperation.

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Executive Summary

Since 1992, when the United Nations Conference on Development and Environment (UNCED) took place, the world has participated in a series of global conferences, including the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. This paper is a review of two such conferences, UNCED itself which focused on environmental issues, and the Beijing process which looked at the global situation of women.

The first section summarises the Rio and Beijing processes and documents in relation to gender and environment. This is followed by a detailed comparison of the two documents, based on a two part analytical framework: key conceptual elements of gender and environment, and key institutional considerations. The paper ends with implications for development cooperation agencies.

The analytical framework draws on recent research that highlights that development interventions will only be effective if based on an understanding of: (1) the location- and time-specific gendered nature of environmental use and management, and (2) the importance of ensuring an environmentally-aware gender perspective. Yet theory without translation into practice will not make a difference. Levy's web of institutionalisation helps unravel the complexity of institutionalising a conceptual understanding of gendered environmental action.

From the analysis, it is clear that there is an urgent need to consolidate and integrate the gains made in Rio and Beijing in relation to our understanding of and action related to gender and the environment. Neither document represents a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the key issues, nor is there a consistent approach for institutionalising a gendered environmental awareness. Translation, implementation and monitoring seem to be the areas of greatest urgency: *translating* general principles into concrete suggestions for laws, programmes, and services that reflect an awareness of gendered environmental issues; *implementing* the suggested activities, and above all, *monitoring* progress in achieving the principles via the activities.

Implications for development agencies are summarised in a table which combines the conceptual and operational elements of the analytical framework used here. It suggests many areas of possible action for development cooperation agencies. These need to be prioritised and transformed into concrete activities, following a review of existing policies, programmes, and partnerships.

Abbreviations

A21	Agenda 21
CBO	community-based organization
CEDAW	Convention/Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
NGO	non-governmental organization
PFA	Platform for Action
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WEDO	Women and Environment Development Organisation

1. Introduction

“Imperfect though it may be, the Beijing Platform for Action is the strongest statement of consensus on women's equality, empowerment and justice ever produced by governments. The Beijing Platform is a consolidation of the previous UN conference agreements in the unique context of seeing it through women's eyes.” (Bela Abzug)¹

Since 1992, when the United Nations Conference on Development and Environment (UNCED) took place, the world has participated in a series of global conferences, including the Beijing Conference referred to above (see Box 1). Each conference has focused on a critical issue facing humankind, and has attempted to reach a common global understanding on the related human values, needs, priorities for action, and modes of implementation. Seeing the links, overlaps, and contradictions between these global events is not easy. Much of the substantive debate and negotiation happens behind closed doors, with the language of the official documents reflecting only the basic consensus². Add to this the impossible task of having an overview of all the issues, and the result is documents that present interesting opportunities for advocacy but lack consistency, comprehensiveness, and concreteness.

This paper is a review of two such conferences, UNCED itself which focused on environmental issues, and the Beijing process which looked at the global situation of women. The main official documents that came out of these conferences are known as Agenda 21 (and the summary version of principles known as "Rio Declaration") and the Platform for Action (plus the "Beijing Declaration"), respectively. By comparing the documents, this report aims to discuss how development cooperation can build on the intentions and pledges made at the two conferences to further the formulation and implementation of a gender-responsive and environmentally-aware development policy³.

The analysis is presented in three sections. The first section summarises the Rio and Beijing processes and documents in relation to gender and environment. This is followed by a detailed comparison of the two documents, based on a two part analytical framework: key conceptual elements of gender and environment, and key institutional considerations (see Box 2). The paper ends with implications for development cooperation agencies.

Box 1. Main UN Conferences 1992-1996

1992	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
1993	World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna
1994	International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo
1995	World Conference on Social Development in Copenhagen
1995	Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing
1996	Habitat II in Istanbul
1996	World Food Summit in Rome

Box 2. Analytical Elements for Assessing Agenda 21 and the Platform for Action

Key Conceptual Themes	Key Operational Elements ¹
• linking environmental threats with poverty, survival, and gendered impacts • valuing local environmental knowledge • avoiding simplifying images and stifling ideologies • recognising environmental management constraints caused by structural gender differences • balancing resource entitlements and resource-based responsibilities • opening gendered political space and environmental decision-making • seeing environmental symptoms in the wider political economy • understanding ecological and degradation processes • dealing with change and uncertainty	• building on women's and men's versions of their own realities • creating pressure from political constituencies • presence in representative political structures • clear political commitment • supportive policy • explicit allocation of resources • mainstream location of responsibility • consistent procedures • focused human resource development • clear and integrated methodology • collaborative delivery of programmes and projects • supportive research • contribution to theory-building

¹ Based on Levy, 1996

2. From Rio....to Beijing

Comparing the two documents, and associated publications about the process and follow-up, is complex due to their many differences. Agenda 21 (A21) is an 800 page document, covering 40 chapters on specific resources, social groups (one of which is women), and key themes. Environment is central throughout the document. The Platform for Action (PFA) is 133 pages,

containing 12 critical areas of concern, of which one is the environment. Women are central throughout the document. Although the documents have a similar basic UN logic, their structure differs (see Boxes 3 and 4). Comparing the documents requires a careful look at how Agenda 21 deals with women and gender, and how the Platform for Action deals with environmental concerns.

2.1. Starting in Rio

UNCED represented a global stock take of environmental concerns, twenty years after the Stockholm conference in 1972 had first signalled the urgency of tackling development and environmental issues in an integrated manner. Agenda 21 was drafted over a two year period prior to UNCED, involving all nation states in four Preparatory Committee meetings, and the input of the five UN Regional Commissions, UN and other inter-governmental bodies, NGOs and international conferences. In neither its style nor its intention is Agenda 21 meant to be binding: it simply makes recommendations (see Box 3). It was adopted by consensus, with the intention that proposed activities would be further defined and implemented at the national level and by multilateral bodies.

The UNCED discussions were dominated by debates about environmental problems and solutions for various ecosystems, key stakeholders, and how to implement suggested solutions. While the debates were contentious, notably between OECD and non-OECD countries blaming each other for causing environmental destruction, Agenda 21 itself remains devoid of references to the power struggles inherent in some of the recommendations, including those relating to gender. It includes statements on **"enabling the poor to achieve sustainable livelihoods"** but does not discuss how the rich would contribute to this; a section on biodiversity but not one on intellectual property rights; a section on women but none on men, etc.

Women's groups were extremely active, to great effect, in the build-up to the conference to ensure that women's issues, and if possible a gender perspective, were incorporated in discussions and in the final text. From only a handful of references to women in the first draft⁴, they achieved recognition in a key principle⁵, an entire chapter on women and sustainable development (Chapter 24), and even the word gender in several places. Agenda 21 contains hundreds of references to women and makes a concrete allocation of resources. While "women" are regularly referred to as a vulnerable group⁶, they are also portrayed as capable and constructive.

Box 3. The Structure of Agenda 21

40 chapters, divided into 4 sections:

- social and economic dimensions (Section I - 7 chapters);
- conservation and management of specific natural resources and special ecosystems (Section II - 14 chapters);
- strengthening the role of major groups (Section III - 10 chapters, including one about women);
- means of implementation (Section IV - 8 chapters).

Programme area(s) are identified at the beginning of each chapter, and includes per area:

Basis for Action

Objectives

Activities, for example:

- a. empowering communities
- b. management related activities
- c. data, information and evaluation
- d. international and regional cooperation and coordination

Means of implementation

- a. Financing and cost evaluation
- b. Scientific and technological means
- c. Human resource development
- d. Capacity-building (relates to national institutions)

Chapter 24 is a pivotal chapter. It consists of eight objectives for national Governments, including implementing the Forward-looking Strategies⁷, increasing women in decision-making positions, educational reform, monitoring of impacts, family planning, and anti-violence legislation. Chapter 24 also includes a strong statement about gender: **"Bodies of the United Nations system, governments and non-governmental organizations involved in the follow-up to the Conference and the implementation of Agenda 21 should ensure that gender considerations are fully integrated into all the policies, programmes and activities."** (24.11). For the rest, however, Agenda 21 does not deal with gender in any depth. The word makes a token appearance in a handful of texts, particularly linked to the collection of gender-sensitive data.

Despite many references to women, chapters are inconsistent. Typically a chapter will have between 0 to 10 references to women (excepting Chapter 24) and are most commonly in one of the activities as a target group for training, for example. In many cases, women are part of a list of "special interest groups", alongside youth and indigenous people. Observers have noted wryly that discussing more than half the world's population as "a special interest group" seems to be rather an understatement. Women's traditional roles and domains are emphasised by including them in chapters on demography and land resources, but not mentioning them in the more technical chapters dealing with desertification or biotechnology, or those dealing with macro-institutional issues, such as 'International Legal Instruments and Mechanisms'⁸.

One of the most important outcomes was the involvement of women in the UNCED process itself. Forcing themselves onto the agenda, organising regional and global preparatory conferences in the early 1990s, and lobbying for space in the text strongly stimulated global awareness of women and environment awareness. What are accepted views now were unknown before. Other significant UNCED achievements were:

- specific resource allocation for the special interests of women;

- thematic integration throughout the document, although inconsistent, eg in chapters on biodiversity and water but not those on desertification, capacity-building, or NGOs, etc;
- considerable detail in terms of the environmental issues, and recognising the impact on and needs of key stakeholder groups in society;⁹
- clear (albeit non-controversial) recognition of the links between socio-economic problems and environmental concerns;
- deep commitment to community participation, with many assertions as to the importance of "full participation" (although this is never defined, thus making it a fairly unworkable notion)¹⁰.

However, the UNCED document and process still represented several shortcomings for an integrated gendered environmental perspective. References to women are inconsistent and women are discussed as a homogenous group. While the inclusion of the phrase "gender balance" in several places is an achievement, the Women's Action Agenda 21 proposal for a specific balance rule (no fewer than 40% nor more than 60% of either sex) was not accepted. And men are not discussed in relation to the environment nor in relation to women.

2.2. ... And On to Beijing¹¹

The Fourth World Conference on Women took place three years after UNCED in September 1995. Its main objectives were to review progress made since 1985, in the advancement of women since the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, and to determine priorities to implement the strategies better. Two consensus documents were adopted by the 189 governments and observers to the UN: the Declaration¹² and Platform for Action (see Box 4). About half of the 90 participating governments made commitments in plenary speeches in Beijing, most of which were related to health, education, and women's participation in formal political structures.

Box 4. The Structure of the Platform for Action

Mission Statement Global Framework Critical Areas of Concern Strategic Objectives and Actions are grouped under 12 critical areas of concern (including one about the environment) Each critical area of concern identifies: • basic concerns • strategic objectives (number varies between 2 and 6 per critical area) • actions to be taken: by governments, NGOs, banks, bilateral and private funding agencies, international multilateral and bilateral development cooperation organizations, etc Institutional Arrangements Financial Arrangements

Several advances were considered to have been made in Beijing in comparison to the Forward-

looking Strategies (note: not UNCED):

- full acceptance of the need for equality in decision-making at all levels, as being essential to the empowerment of women;
- acknowledgment of the diversity among women of all ages;
- focus on indigenous women's participation and the girl child, as two hitherto forgotten groups;
- use of the word "gender" in terms of "gender-sensitive policies", "gender-disaggregated data", and "gender-balanced decision making institutions";
- need to address women through economic policies: alleviate negative impacts of structural adjustment policies; assessing economic policies in terms of gender impact, resolving multilateral debt burdens of poor countries
- full participation of women in the economy as decision-makers, producers, self-employed and entrepreneurs, including increasing credit for women and counting women's unpaid work.

The role played by women at UNCED was not filled by the environmental lobby in Beijing, but rather by human rights, health and economic policy group. The UNIFEM speech during Beijing did not mention environment once. The UNEP speech was downbeat about the achievements. "Women's rights are human rights!" was the refrain at Beijing, which followed hot on the heels of the Copenhagen conference on poverty and social development. Women were considerably more vocal at UNCED than environmental groups were in Beijing. And women are more prominent in Agenda 21 than environment is in the PFA. The PFA contains a weak discussion on "environment", "ecology" and "natural resources". That life in general is a gendered experience is clear from the PFA, but that environments are gendered and critical for survival receives little recognition.

Environmental issues are discussed as the eleventh of 12 critical areas of concern in Section K. 'Women and the Environment'. It highlights three strategic objectives, which appear to be a strong basis for action:

- K1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.
- K2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.
- K3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

Elsewhere in the PFA, environment is referred to in only 39 places¹³, of which about 20 relate to natural resources (the others being references to "enabling/political/social/etc environments"). All the references are general, such as "environmental security", "environmental disasters", "environmental degradation", "environmental health hazards", "environmental justice" and "environmental laws".

While the PFA certainly represents an improvement on the 3 lines about environment in the

Forward-looking strategies¹⁴, it does not build substantially and consistently on the statements enshrined in Agenda 21 towards either a gendered environmental perspective or an environmental gender perspective. Still, considering that the draft Platform did not mention environmental concerns, it is at least not a step back. From an environmental point of view, it:

- endorses the precautionary principle of UNCED;
- states a commitment to ensuring clean water by the year 2000;
- highlights the importance of biodiversity and women's role in maintaining that;
- recognises women's importance in making environmentally-responsible consumption decisions.

It also includes several strong, clear statements about gender, including its recognition as a critical area of concern: "**Gender inequalities in the management of natural resource and in the safeguarding of the environment**" (44). Many paragraphs which mention gender are powerful statements but few besides this one, are linked to environmental concerns and constraints.

Two specific environmental issues are given special treatment in lengthy paragraphs of their own: biodiversity (253.c) and hazardous wastes (258.c). While women's intellectual property rights over biodiversity are asserted, the Platform only encourages "**fair and equitable sharing of benefits**" leaving it unclear as to who should decide what is fair and equitable. Indigenous women's groups particularly opposed the current wording, seeing it as a license for further expropriation of their biodiversity resources and knowledge. The movement of hazardous wastes were not prohibited outright but simply "discouraged".

There is no mention of environment-related issues in the sections on "Institutional Arrangements" and "Financial Arrangements". These crucial operational sections of the PFA refer to social, political, economic policies but not to 'environmental policies'. While the PFA discusses in relative detail the links between poverty, structural adjustment, and development paradigms, it does not extend this to include environmental issues. Particularly striking by its absence is the importance of community participation that was prominent in the UNCED documents. In terms of commitments, the UN Conference Secretariat noted that initial statements from participating governments focused on reforming national policies, numerical targets for the year 2000, and international development cooperation¹⁵. There were no new innovations to implement the recommendations. However, since then, there has been much active and innovative follow-up by participants to the Conference (see Implications for Development Cooperation below).

3. Comparing the Achievements

Despite their respective strengths, and specific limitations, Agenda 21 and the PFA share several fundamental weaknesses related to the notion of "gendered environmental experiences". The two documents:

- make men invisible: thus creating a disproportionate emphasis on women's roles, women's impact, women's needs, and women's responsibilities related to the natural environment;

- treat women as a homogenous group: thus not recognising the immense differences that exist between them in terms of environmental needs, capacities, and knowledge (although there are a handful of references to "poor women" and "rural women");
- assume a static situation: do not acknowledge the continual process of social, economic, and ecological change that affect people's dependence on and interaction with the natural environment;
- simplify environmental issues, by taking in terms of "disasters", "hazards", and "degradation", and failing to relate them to the broader economic context.

A more detailed comparative review between the two documents allows for clearer identification of gaps and problems, and thus enables a clearer translation of the documents into implications for development cooperation. This section compares Agenda 21 and the Platform for Action from two perspectives¹⁶:

1. the conceptual treatment of gender and environment, based on recent research about gender, environment and development, notably Rocheleau et al (1996) and IDS (1995).
2. the operational recommendations, based on Levy's work (1996) on institutionalising gender.

3.1. Conceptualisation of Gender and Environment

Comparing Agenda 21 and PFA in terms of their comprehensiveness in dealing with gender, and environment issues requires a common analytical framework. The framework used below is drawn from recent work which outline persistent gender and environmental myths and new uncharted themes (Agarwal, 1997; Rocheleau, et al 1996; Leach et al, 1995; Jackson, 1993).

A common message from these studies is the importance of creating a better understanding of the *location- and time-specific gendered nature of environmental use and management*. In other words, all use and management of natural resources are shaped to some extent by gender relations and these people-landscape interactions are unique for each location. Continual changes to social and environmental conditions means ever-evolving human-environment interactions. Therefore development interventions become meaningful only if based on the recognition that gender power relations influence environmental decision-making, on women's and men's different positions in these power relations, and on the need to respond to changing circumstances. A key challenge for development agencies is to encourage environment-focused programmes and projects to work with the users of resources, conscious of the influence of local power relations affect.

The flipside of the coin is also pertinent for development cooperation agencies: the importance of bringing an *environmentally-aware gender perspective* to their work. While this version of the 'gender and environment debate' is not analysed in recent studies, it represents another important opportunity to integrate gender and environmental concerns in development. Much gender-oriented work that revolves around women's health, credit, and education issues, does not pay much attention to environmental considerations. A second key challenge is to find ways to make gender-focused interventions environmentally-sound, thus avoiding negative impacts on natural

resources which could harm women.

This section discusses nine key themes that represent conceptual priority areas for gender and the environment (see Box 2 above). Each theme is described briefly, followed by an assessment of how it is treated in Agenda 21 and the Platform.

i. Linking Environmental Threats with Gendered Impacts, Poverty and Survival

Environmental issues are not a luxury, they are a matter of survival.¹⁷ However, the environmental threat to survival experienced by local residents will differ from one situation to the next. It may affect a basic subsistence need, an income base, a cultural identity, or health and safety. Seeking to understand the local meaning of survival, as perceived by women and men, and how the environment is affecting and is affected by livelihoods, will allow for the identification of more focused and appropriate development activities. Both poverty reduction and environmental sustainability are central to the work of Governments and development agencies. Yet their interlinkages are often poorly conceptualised, for example "poverty forces environmental degradation" or "poor women depend on natural resources". However, gender inequality, poverty, and environmental degradation do not always go hand in hand¹⁸. Analysis must be location-specific to avoid ineffective prescriptive answers.

- **Agenda 21**

A21 recognises the central importance of the environment for human survival, and argues throughout for urgent action. It includes a chapter on poverty (Chapter 3) which acknowledges the complexity of poverty and that **"no uniform solution can be found for global application"** (3.1). It recommends that attention be paid to the rights of women (3.2) to overcome both poverty and environmental degradation. Central to A21 is the importance of promoting sustainable livelihoods, and the recognition of the advancement of women as a "cross-cutting measure" (3.6). First in a series of poverty-related recommendations is empowerment of women through full participation in decision-making. Recognition is given of the need to develop gender-sensitive databases, participatory research, and policy analyses to understand the impact on women of environmental degradation (24.8c). Gender sensitive databases are mentioned in several chapters, albeit not consistently.

- **Platform for Action**

The Beijing Declaration states that the **"eradication of poverty [is] based on... environmental protection.. [which] requires the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of .. development"** (16). Despite this clear opening statement, the PFA itself virtually ignores the centrality of the environment for survival. In the first critical area of concern, poverty, "environment" is only mentioned once - towards the end of the analysis. Paragraph 56 is perhaps the clearest articulation: **"equitable social development that recognizes empowering the poor, particularly women, to utilize environmental resources sustainably is a necessary foundation for sustainable development"**. It states that poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated (35) but does not analyse further

survival needs from an environmental perspective, beyond a statement on "unsustainable consumption patterns".

The PFA does mention that continuing environmental degradation often has a more direct "survival-related" impact on women, particularly rural and indigenous women (34). It also urges NGOs to **"mobilize to protect women's rights to full and equal access to economic resources, including... natural resources"** (60f). Many references are made to ensure that financial, technical and human resources are allocated to overcome poverty in general, but these are not linked to environmental considerations¹⁹. The only mention of the need for support for sustainable poverty alleviation in paragraph 66 does not link this to the importance of ensuring it is based on sustained use of natural resources. Reference to the value of adequate safety nets (58.g) is potentially a strong statement but refers to adverse economic environments.

ii. Valuing Local Environmental Knowledge

One key achievement of the gender and environment discussions this decade, is recognition that knowledge about the environment is often gender-specific. However, the importance of *valuing equally* the views, knowledge, and perspectives of women and men is still not universally recognised. By applying the knowledge and skills they acquire through their use of natural resources, women make an essential contribution to local environments and economies. Where socio-economic circumstances force men away in search of work, women are sometimes having to reconstruct what was once men's knowledge²⁰. Sustaining the transmission of detailed gendered knowledge about resource management is as essential as ensuring that women and men alike benefit from new, relevant information. Valuing and making optimal use of women's and men's knowledge requires a firm commitment to local participation in resource management.

• Agenda 21

Overall, A21 has great potential to reinforce the equal valuing of women's and men's environmental knowledge but references to this are inconsistent. For example, it states the importance of revising educational material to promote the value of women's roles (24.2.e). It advocates for more public awareness of the role of women's groups in sustainable agriculture and rural development (14.17.a). It recognizes the **"traditional methods and knowledge of indigenous people and their communities, emphasizing the particular role of women, relevant to the conservation of biological diversity"** (15.4.g). Chapter 32 on farmers urges building on the knowledge of women farmers (32.9.c). The biodiversity chapter (15) discusses the need to respect and record knowledge of indigenous communities, and do research on this. However, it stereotypes women's roles by only mentioning them in the discussion of "social behaviours and nutrition habits that depend on natural ecosystems" but not when it concerns ecological data (15.5.f). Women are singled out when discussing issues such as demography and land resources. Yet in the technical chapters dealing with desertification or biotechnology, the importance of valuing gender-specific knowledge is not mentioned. The notion of equal valuing of women's and men's knowledge is not raised at all, not even in connection with gender-sensitive information data-bases (eg 24.8.a)

- **Platform for Action**

Most references in the Platform to "knowledge" refer to increasing knowledge *about* women and improving access to knowledge *for* women. It is rarely referred to in terms of valuing women's own knowledge. However, the chapter on environment contains five clear statements on women's knowledge and valuing it on an equal basis with men's is mentioned once²¹, for example ***"integrate women... their perspectives and knowledge, on an equal basis with men.. in decision-making regarding sustainable resource management"*** (256.a). Nevertheless, many opportunities to stress the existence of gendered environmental knowledge and the importance of valuing women's and men's equally, notably in the chapters on poverty, economy, health, and education, are missed in the Platform.

iii. Avoiding Simplifying Images and Stifling Ideologies

There are many more widespread images related to women and the environment, than is the case for men and the environment. Women are commonly portrayed as: helpless victims of environmental degradation, easy sources of labour for environmental work, planetary housekeepers, and destroyers of precious resources. They are perceived less often as farmers, water coordinators, or land managers, all of which are roles commonly associated with men. The imagery of women and environment perpetuate the "female" and "male" roles that are defined by ideologies. If repeated and reproduced often enough, such images have the power to create assumptions in people's minds which shape their attitudes and behaviour, local practices, and policies. These in turn determine the access that women and men have to information, resources, and technologies for using and improving their natural resource base. Ideologies, for example, perpetuate the undervaluing of women's labour, be it in the domestic or non-domestic sphere, thereby often leading to extra burdens for women in environmental projects. They also feed myths such as that of complementarity between women's needs and environmental interests. Yet women's involvement in environmental management might be a symptom of their subordination²². In some cases, environmental crises are forcing women to change the boundaries imposed by such images and ideologies, as they take on new jobs and roles that society is not accustomed to from them²³.

- **Agenda 21**

Generally, the environmental imagery of women in A21 is one of users of resources, victims of resource degradation, and global housekeepers. They are often listed alongside other "disadvantaged groups"²⁴. ***"Women's traditional roles should not be marginalized"*** (8.5.d) implying a status quo preference. In several cases there are separate references to women, alongside professional groups, for example ***"to ensure equitable access of rural people, particularly women, small farmers, landless people..."*** (14.17.b) or ***"train farmers and women's groups in ..."*** (14.91.b). This explicit reference to women, while backed by good intentions, encourages their exclusion from full membership of existing professional groups, such as farmers or fisherfolk. Other references highlight the image of women as fixers of environmental ills. Chapter 21 on Solid Wastes gives responsibility to women's groups (alongside youth and consumer groups) to campaign publicly for waste reuse and recycling.

Focusing disproportionately on women reinforces assumptions that women only want or are able to do certain activities. The only reference to ideology in A21 is a strong statement in the chapter on women, urging for **“programmes to eliminate persistent negative images, stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices against women”**(24.3.i). Similarly, a reference to eliminating stereotypes in educational material does not link this to environmental stereotypes (36.5.m).

- **Platform for Action**

The Platform contains no references to ideologies as perpetuating images that hinder women's equal opportunities, and therefore none relating to environmental issues. There are several references to the importance of promoting non-stereotyped images of women and men, particularly via education and improving the media (cf 72, 80, 124, 215, 179). However, almost all these references are related to how the media perpetuates violence against women, via degrading images. One statement related to health stereotypes indicates what would have been possible for environmental stereotypes as well: **“Health policies and programmes often perpetuate gender stereotypes and fail to consider socio-economic disparities and other differences among women and may not fully take account of the lack of autonomy of women regarding their health** (90). A similar statement for environmental policies and programmes would have provided a good basis for action to address some underlying causes of women's resource-related challenges. Its absence in the section on environment indicates the relative lack of recognition of how stereotypes influence environmental action.

iv. **Recognising Environmental Management Constraints caused by Structural Gender Differences**

The inevitable result of ideologies is uneven power relations, which usually disadvantages women in relation to men. Ideologies also shape gender-specific, and gender-discriminatory practices, further reinforcing structural positions. The structurally different positions that women and men have in their societies influence which new opportunities they have access to or could benefit from. One example is the growing trend for men to gain access to new information and income-earning opportunities by moving out into the wider political economy (eg through seasonal migration), while women are not. Women are tending towards more integrated economic and resource management activities²⁵. Despite many creative and positive responses to environmental threats, women are structurally disadvantaged compared to men of a similar class/religion/caste/socio-economic.

- **Agenda 21**

Chapter 24 contains a series of strong statements related to redressing inequalities, removing biases against women's involvement and ensuring their full participation, particularly in the chapter on women (24.4, 24.7, 24.8). For example, 24.2.f urges **“equality in all aspect of society... particularly as it pertains to [women's] access to resources...credit...property rights.. agricultural inputs and implements”**. The language weakens by adding 'taking measures towards ensuring women's access' but the recognition of women's structurally subordinate position presents leverage points for action. However, there is no definition of full participation, and no specification of

which constraints are caused by structural subordination. Chapter 8 on "Integrating Environment and Development in Decision-making" has four references to women but recommendations are couched in weak language, eg ***"the advantages of effective and equitable opportunities for participation by women should be discussed"*** (8.5.g; emphasis added). Chapters 14 and 32 on Agriculture and Farmers, respectively, are amongst the clearest, calling to ***"review and refocus existing measures to achieve wider access to land, water, and forest resources, and ensure equal rights of women and other disadvantaged groups..."*** (14.18.b). Chapter 32 stresses the need to protect and formalize women's access to the means of production. Overall, however, the language in A21 is one of access to resources, rather than one of changing attitudes and ideologies.

- **Platform for Action**

Compared to A21, the PFA includes many more and stronger statements about structural differences²⁶ but avoids any links to environmental concerns. For example, paragraph 38 states: ***"Throughout their entire life cycle, women's daily existence and long-term aspirations are restricted by discriminatory attitudes, unjust social and economic structures, and a lack of resources in most countries that prevent their full and equal participation."*** The only clear link between structural subordination and women's capacities to deal with environmental problems is found in paragraph 156: ***"... for the majority of women... continuing obstacles have hindered their ability to achieve economic autonomy and to ensure sustainable livelihoods... legal and customary barriers to ownership of or access to land, natural resources, capital, credit, technology and other means of production"*** (emphasis added). Thus while one reference in the Platform links women's limited access to resources and their progress, there is no recognition of the converse, ie the potential to manage the environment better by removing structural gender differences.

v. Balancing Resource Entitlements and Resource-based Responsibilities

Gender-based inequality of access to and entitlements over resources is a recurrent theme in research findings²⁷. Also, with increasing involvement of the state in local resource management, changes in resource rights or entitlements, are reducing women's access to the resources they need. Access has many forms: de facto/de jure, exclusive/shared, primary/secondary, ownership/use²⁸, and many themes: trees, money, markets, political power, etc. Whatever the form or theme, women's relative lack of access to essential resources is a universal issue. People's entitlements to resources are often simplified as property rights but are more far-reaching. To ensure that women are able to manage their share of the environment, they need rights to clean water, rights to tools for resource use, rights to information, and rights to decision-making fora. Essential is the recognition that resource use, and therefore entitlements and responsibilities, varies enormously amongst women²⁹. Assumptions about universal rights cannot be used to define development interventions. Great care is also needed to avoid an overly legalistic approach to dealing with unequal or lacking rights, as this can undermine more flexible traditional rights that might have favoured women³⁰.

A related phenomenon is the growing asymmetry between women's rights to resources and their resource-related responsibilities. It is crucial to recognise how rapid changes to the livelihood base

is affecting this balance. Here too, assumptions must be avoided, as women do not always contribute their own labour for the new/growing responsibilities but rather find ways and means to overcome such pressures³¹.

- **Agenda 21**

A21 makes several references to the importance of equal access to resources but are almost always in terms of resources as the means of production³². References to other essential inputs like information and technologies are generally limited to specific suggestions, such as agricultural techniques (14.81.b, 14.91.b). Other references are made to the need to balance workload and sharing household tasks (24.3.d), developing technologies and taking "particular note of the role of women" (14.27a), and valuing unpaid work in national accounts (24.3.e). Solutions are often suggested in terms of training of women (to overcome constraints in "access to knowledge" eg 18.7.d) or legal reform, eg **"strengthening/ developing legal frameworks for land management, access to land resources and land ownership - in particular, for women - and for the protection of tenants"** (3.8.f). A21 does not mention of diversity of needs/rights amongst women.

- **Platform for Action**

The Platform makes several clear references to differences amongst women (on the basis of age, class, religion, etc) and related differences in access to resources (cf para 31, 46). A call to **"eliminate all obstacles to women's full and equal participation in sustainable development and equal access to and control over resources"** (256.g) is strong in its intention but weak due to its general nature. The PFA urges for improved access mainly with a view, not for environmental regeneration, but for furthering women's economic progress, via legal reform (A.2), improved credit mechanisms (A.3), and information³³. Environmental degradation is held responsible for displacing women from productive activities (246) and adding to their unremunerated work (247). Important references are included about improving access to information and education to increase women's involvement in environmental decision-making (253.b), and to strengthen the contribution of women farmers, fishers, and pastoralists in resource management (255.b). However, the balancing of such rights with responsibilities is not mentioned. Neither is there any acknowledgment of the potential environmental benefits of improving access for women, or the need to ensure that improved access does not exacerbate environmental degradation. Only one paragraph (258.b) stresses the importance of providing technical assistance to women to help develop environmentally sound technologies. Assuming that equality of access will not harm the environment is a potential Trojan horse for environmental degradation, as it does not challenge the damage caused by current use of resources.

vi. Gendered Political Space and Environmental Decision-making

Resource use is determined in traditional and formal institutions. Understanding the importance of gendered institutional space³⁴ for resource use is critical. Women need equal access to decision-

making spaces that influence their capacities to use resources. These include community organizations, unions, and regional/national political forums. As meeting spaces are socially constructed as appropriate/suitable for men/women, women are often left out of essential discussions. A major development achievement would be to create more legitimate public political space for women³⁵. Support for women's organizations often helps either to create new spaces or open up spaces in existing organizations. Collective action helps limit risk, uncertainty and insecurity, while opening up new opportunities. The organization of women often forms a key strategy for meeting the challenges of a declining and unevenly distributed resource base and labour scarcity. However the importance of securing space for women in male-dominated arenas is also essential. This calls for gendered analysis of the institutions that define environmental use and management. As demographical patterns and the livelihood base change and the livelihood base changes due to external forces, it is imperative to assess whose institutional space is expanding or contracting, and how this influences people's capacity for sound environmental use.

- **Agenda 21**

UNCED strongly emphasised local organisations, and A21 reflects this by the many references to participatory decision-making, public participation techniques, lowest possible levels of decision-making, etc. Women's organizations are cited regularly as important sources of action in environmental management, such as related to agriculture, water management, forestry, and solid waste management³⁶. There are several references to the need to make space for women in existing political bodies (eg 3.8.i) but few in the crucial chapters on integrating environment and development in decision-making (Chapter 8) and NGO involvement (Chapter 27). There are few specific references to equal participation of women's groups in decision-making processes, and no mention of the need for more gender-balanced traditional decision-making forums for environmental management.

- **Platform for Action**

The PFA is strongly committed to and focused on ensuring women's equal involvement in politically strategic fora. Unfortunately, few of those references are explicitly linked to natural resource forums or those that make decisions with environmental repercussions. Critical area of concern G (on 'Women in Power and Decision-making') makes crucial references to redefining political priorities and the political agenda to reflect gender-specific concerns, values and experiences (182). It criticises women's under-representation in decision-making in art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and the law (183), but omits the environment. It voices the conviction that the "dominant male ethos" in non-formal networks and local decision-making restrict women's ability to participate equally (185). These are very powerful means by which action can be undertaken, but from an environmental perspective, the danger is a focus on the more mainstream political spaces to the detriment of involving women, on their terms, in resource-related decisions. A concrete translation to environment-focused political spaces will be necessary to act on the powerful but general language in the PFA.

vii. Seeing Environmental Symptoms within the Wider Political Economy

Local environmental issues, and their impacts on women and men, are part of larger scale

processes. Global trends towards commoditization, communications, and technology are affecting ecological, political, economic and social systems at different levels. External forces shape people's livelihood bases and their social interactions, and thus their natural environments³⁷. Communities are changing quickly and struggling ***“to find economic and political, environmental resources to resist, develop alternatives and confront effectively with externally induced changes”***³⁸. Many site-specific environmental problems are simply symptoms of wider societal failings. As a result many groups, especially women's groups, find that tackling an environmental problem often leads to dealing with wider political, social, and economic issues.

A related important issue is understanding the increasing importance of rural-urban linkages, their changing nature, and the effects on gender relations and human-environment interactions. Even in rural environments, livelihoods are increasingly dependent on non-agricultural, non-rural incomes³⁹. The need for cash due to commoditization drives many men to seasonal migration⁴⁰, yet does not necessarily mean increasing hardship for women who stay behind. New market opportunities for women could lead to greater economic autonomy and environmental protection, as higher prices per labour unit could mean less intense use of natural resources⁴¹. Recognising the fundamental links across large geographic areas requires more integrated and regional-oriented policies and programmes.

- **Agenda 21**

A21 makes some very clear linkages between environmental ills and the need for integrated and multi-faceted solutions. For example, 3.2 states the need to tackle poverty, development and environmental problems simultaneously by dealing with resources, production, demographic issues, health, education, women's rights, improved governance, etc. Water means dealing with health issues, food production and distribution; and disaster mitigation plans (18.68.c), and similarly for forestry. However, critics of A21 highlight its one-sided, technocratic rather than political-economic solutions. There is a chapter on biotechnology but not on intellectual property rights, on capacity-building but not on structural adjustment, on unions but not on multinationals, on indigenous people but not on terms of trade. A21 is weak on linking international and local power relations to environmental destruction. Neither is this discussion developed in relation to the situation of women and natural resources.

- **Platform for Action**

The PFA, by contrast, focuses to a large extent on the interdependence of economic and social injustices, focusing of course on how women are affected, but fails to extend it in detail to environmental injustices. Paragraph 14 of the Platform⁴² stresses the need for equitable and holistic social development, empowerment of the poor especially women, to use environmental resources sustainably if sustainable development is to be possible. There is one clear reference to the wider political system, ie of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in the North, which aggravates environmental stress (35), and one to rural-urban links (25). However, the perspective throughout the document is mainly a focus on linking economic mal-development, structural adjustment programmes, and women's rights to security, power, health, and education. In discussions on poverty, health, education, decision-making, the economy, virtually no reference is made to the effect of environmental degradation on these issues

and the potential role of redressing environmental problems through appropriate health, education, economic, etc strategies. In particular, the lack of recognition in the Platform of the reciprocity between (reproductive) health issues, women's political under-representation, and women's educational status, and environmental use is remarkable and unfortunate.

viii. Understanding Ecological and Degradation Processes

Ecological characteristics influence gendered roles, and are, in turn, determined by gendered use of space and resources. To be effective, environmental solutions cannot be prescriptive but must be able to deal with local biophysical and social processes and changes. Focusing on social/gender relations can lead to inadequate treatment of the importance of ecological characteristics. Simplifying ecological dynamics is as unhelpful as simplifying social relations.

- **Agenda 21**

The environmental focus of UNCED clearly allowed for a more sophisticated treatment of ecological phenomena than in Beijing. There are chapters on mountain development, oceans, freshwater resources, agriculture, land, deforestation, desertification, etc. Many of these discuss the key underlying processes of degradation, to the extent possible in non-technical, global documents of this nature. Many recommendations deal with the need to understand better how ecological processes take place and how human use affects degradation. They do not, however, deal with or recognise the gender-related impact on these ecological processes. The chapter on women includes two rather eclectic lists of environmental issues that are considered to affect women in particular, without further explanation: drought, desertification⁴³, deforestation, armed hostilities, natural disasters, toxic waste, the unsuitable use of agro-chemicals (para 24.6), drought, desertification, toxic chemicals and armed hostilities (24.8).

- **Platform for Action**

The PFA fails to deal with ecological processes, not even recognising the importance of understanding these processes for providing effective support to women in their resource-related activities. There is one mention of *"the increasing fragility of the environment"* but other references to ecology, nature, and environment are mainly in terms of disasters, hazards, and catastrophes. Two references are made to specific resource issues: biodiversity and the transportation of hazardous waste. It is not clear why these are considered more important, than say, water which is dealt with in a one-line statement (256.1). The only reference to more specific resource issues is found in 256.f, which urges research on the role of women (note. not research on ecological processes) in: ***"food gathering and production, soil conservation, irrigation, watershed management, sanitation, coastal zone and marine resource management, integrated pest management, land-use planning, forest conservation and community forestry, fisheries, natural disaster prevention, and new and renewable sources of energy"***.

ix. Dealing with Change and Uncertainty

Research repeatedly points to the continually changing pattern of human-nature relationships⁴⁴.

Rapid external changes are forcing a quick evolution of local responses and livelihood strategies, and therefore of natural environments. Flexibility of gender roles is one response, for example, with women taking on new roles in some situations. But ideologies and past social patterns determine whether new opportunities that arise are shared equally⁴⁵. Development interventions that assume a static picture will have limited impacts. They react to crises, such as emergency situations, without detailed consideration of gender issues/needs, or larger processes of social, economic, political and environmental change. Instead, development policies and programmes must be based on a time, and context-specific understanding of the factors and processes which create and influence local gendered environmental experiences and environmentally-determined gender relations. Gender-sensitive support for women and men to learn to deal with changes in environmentally sound ways, can both further the advancement of women and the natural environment.

- **Agenda 21**

A21 frequently mentions the need to avert rapid environmental and economic degradation. However, there is no recognition that social relationships, too, eg gender relations are undergoing change. Calls for measuring the environmental, social, and gender impact (eg 24.8.f) of programmes and policies imply, one could assume, the need for understanding change. But the document does not stress the need to support women and men to learn to live better with change and uncertainty. Rather it assumes that change and uncertainty are extreme situations and that stability is possible. There is certainly no mention of gender-balanced strategies to ensure equal opportunities in living with uncertainty.

- **Platform for Action**

The PFA does not stress the changing natural environment, despite general recognition of **“profound political, economic, social, and cultural changes, which have had both positive and negative effects on women”** (10). References to global trends, such as rural-urban migration and population growth, neither includes nor is linked to environmental change (36). There are several interesting references to imbalances in changing gender relations, which marks an improvement over A21: **“boundaries of the gender division of labour between productive and reproductive roles are gradually being crossed as women have started to enter formerly male-dominated areas of work and men have started to accept greater responsibility for domestic tasks, including child care. However, changes in women’s roles have been greater and much more rapid than changes in men’s roles”** (27). One interesting reference to **“safety nets and strengthening of State-based and community based support systems”** can be found in the Platform, and refers to women’s ability **“to withstand adverse economic environments and preserve their livelihood, assets and revenues in times of crisis”** (58.g). But it does not deal with adapting natural resource use/management in the face of permanent change.

3.2. Institutionalising A Gendered Environmental Perspective

The general aim of gender units or programmes within development cooperation agencies is to institutionalise gender. This means a process which results in the acceptance and practice of social norms that are “institutions” and which affect social interactions significantly⁴⁶. Few agencies have

come to grips with how this process is best pursued for gender in general, let alone in relation to the institutionalisation of a gendered environmental understanding.

Theories and concepts, no matter how coherent or comprehensive, will not change the world if they remain non-operational. Translating the above nine aspects of a gendered understanding of environmental management into operational elements is a challenge no organisation has, as yet, accomplished. This task lies before all signatories to both Agenda 21 and the Platform for Action.

To make some inroads in understanding how this might happen, this analysis draw on recent work by Levy (1996) on institutionalising gender. Levy suggests that thirteen areas must be analysed and acted on for optimal effect. Her “web of institutionalisation” is discussed below, focusing specifically on institutionalising a gendered environmental perspective. Agenda 21 and the Platform are assessed for each of the thirteen web elements.

i. Building on Women’s And Men’s Versions of their Own Realities

Do the documents encourage the expression by local people of how they experience their environmental realities, and the central role of gender-balanced community participation in analysis and planning in this process?

- **Agenda 21**

UNCED had a strong focus on local people’s participation, local groups, NGOs, grassroots organisations, etc. A21 includes many recommendations for environmental action based on or research dealing with local level solutions/implementation, or the valuing of local needs and cultural values (eg in forestry). A typical example can be found in 18.68: “**local communities must participate in all phases of water management, ensuring the full involvement of women...**”. Although references to “gender-balanced” community participation are rare to find in A21, there are calls for equal representation of women in community forums do make the odd appearance (eg in Chapter 26 on indigenous peoples) which can serve as models for other forums dealing with specific resource management issues.

- **Platform for Action**

By comparison, the PFA has fewer references to community groups, and discusses women’s organisations particularly in the context of health problems and solutions. Men’s views, responsibilities or participation are rarely mentioned. Paragraphs 253.g and 256.j/k call for promotion of local participation, especially women, but somewhat bizarrely apply this only to urban planning and energy technologies. Overall, there is little emphasis on the importance of building on what already exists and what local women and men want. This represents a setback compared to A21.

ii. Creating Pressure From Political Constituencies

Do the documents recognise the importance of supporting women’s equal access to local political/decision-making fora which influence how environmental resources are used, controlled, and managed?

- **Agenda 21**

A21 clearly states, in the chapter on women, the need for strengthening and empowering women's NGOs and groups to enhance their capacity for sustainable development (24.3.b). But in other sections of the document, particularly the critical chapters on integrating environment and development in environmental decision-making and capacity-building (Chapters 8 and 37 respectively), the language is weak and inconsistent. Women's possible participation is urged (8.5.g) at the lowest level of public authority in some places, but they do not figure in the chapter on local authorities. Some chapters refer explicitly to women in local management forums, eg deforestation (Chapter 11), and mountain development (Chapter 13), and freshwater resources (chapter 18). For example: ***“Development of public participatory techniques and their implementation in decision-making, particularly enhancement of the role of women in water resources planning management”***(18.12.n). Another area where pressure from political constituencies could be found is the recognition, however weakly worded, of women's crucial role in sustainable consumption/production (4.27).

- **Platform for Action**

The PFA makes numerous references to the need for women's equal access to “all levels of decision-making” and some recognising women's contribution to community forums and NGOs (eg 26), but only one in relation to environmental issues (253.a). Despite recognition of the importance of the local level for environmental decisions (paragraph 20 in the Beijing Declaration), there is no specific statement on the value of having women participate actively in community-based forums that deal with natural resources. Potential leverage points for action include several references to women's cooperatives (cf 175, 176); “enhancing women's access to cooperative structures” (166.c); and strengthening community-based support systems to help poor women preserve their livelihoods (58.g). Where the PFA is clear is the potential strength of women to influence unsustainable consumption/production patterns (246), although this of course ignores the responsibility of men, too, to move towards sustainable consumption/production. It also recognises restrictions by a “dominant male ethos” at the community level in general (185).

iii. Presence in Representative Political Structures

Do the documents encourage creating opportunities for women to take up seats in formal political structures, particularly those that influence how environmental or environmentally-related resources are used, controlled, and managed?

- **Agenda 21**

Chapter 24 of A21 contains numerous references to the importance of increasing women's involvement in economic decision-making, increasing the proportion of women in government, and in senior UN policy-level and decision-making posts (24.1, 24.3.n, 24.10). Few of these are related specifically to environmental decisions, but aim instead to increase women's overall formal political clout. There is no mention of women in the chapter on NGOs. One reference to women in the chapter on local authorities only urges for some form of representation, but neither relates this to any

sense of gender-balance nor to environment-related forums.

- **Platform for Action**

One of the main themes running through the Beijing conference was the importance of putting women into seats of power. There are many references to ensuring women's active and powerful involvement in crucial decision-making structures. The first strategic objective in section K focuses on "***involving women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels***" but are followed by a strange mix of actions which do not deal with ensuring women's participation in political structures. For example, paragraph 253.a has much potential to advocate for women's representation in political structures but it is unclear what is meant by "ensuring opportunities for women to participate". More hopeful is paragraph 256 (second strategic objective) clearly views women as important decision-makers in programmes related to natural resource management. Again, though there is no translation of such intentions into clear standards (eg 40 % women's seats by the year 2000).

iv. Clear Political Commitment

Do the documents/events include clear statements of political commitment recognising that environmental experiences and needs are gender-specific, and ensuring that equality of development efforts are essential for women and men to be able and willing to manage environmental resources, as well as benefit equally from development?

- **Agenda 21**

By signing A21, all nation states committed themselves politically to the implementation of the recommendations. Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration is a clear statement valuing women's contribution to environmental management. However, the Agenda does not include recommendations that urge nation States to make additional public political commitments to ensuring that all environmental policies and programmes are informed by a gender perspective.

- **Platform for Action**

As with Agenda 21, the Platform is itself a public political commitment. It includes a reaffirmation of the importance to implement Agenda 21 (10). The importance of "political commitment" as a prerequisite for successful implementation of recommendations is recognised in 203.b and 345 but neither reference is focused around commitment to ensure, for example, "a gender-responsive environmental policy", or "an environmentally-sound gender policy".

v. Supportive Policy

What policies are suggested in support of gendered environmental actions, or environmentally-aware gender-focused interventions?

- **Agenda 21**

In effect, the content of Agenda 21 is one long policy statement. Every reference to activities focused on women is a policy suggestion. Many of these relate to training for

women or ensuring legal access for women to land tenure, information, etc (eg 32.6.b). More common are references to the need to formulate better policies, but few of these pay attention to women. One exception is Chapter 32 on farmers, which suggests a participatory policy-formulation process: ***“to enhance participation of farmers, women and men, in the design and implementation of policies directed towards [sustainable agriculture] through their representative organisations”*** (32.6.f). The eight objectives in Chapter 24, together form the heart of a women-focused environmental policy but are weak due to their tentative and/or general nature. For example ***“to consider developing a strategy of necessary changes”*** (24.2,c) or ***“to formulate and implement clear government policies...”*** (24.2.f). There are many calls to review existing policies, including 24.3.a, which aims ***“to increase the proportion of women”*** in all aspects of sustainable development.

- **Platform for Action**

As with A21, the Platform is itself a policy, which if carried out in full, should greatly improve the status of women. Whether it will also accomplish a sound natural resource base is less clear, as the references to environmental concerns are general and not comprehensive. It tends to provide suggestions for making, reviewing or monitoring policies, rather than suggesting specific policies themselves, for example strategic objective H.2. ***“Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes, and projects”***. H.2 includes powerful paragraphs which, although not environmentally focused, can be translated and made more concrete to great effect. Strategic objective K.2. ***“Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development”*** is equally general but potentially a strong advocacy tool.

vi. Explicit Allocation Of Resources

What resources are being pledged, or in place, to support policy?

- **Agenda 21**

UNCED included a clear recommendation to allocate \$40 million from 1992 to 2000 for implementing Chapter 24. However this was not binding and a recent assessment suggests that nothing has been pledged. This figure compares to \$30 billion for poverty programmes and US\$ 20.7 billion for biotechnology which does not refer to women at all. While some of which would in theory reach women, Agenda 21 makes no mention of mechanisms through which specific financial allocations will be decided on, implemented or monitored, nor are any suggestions made to ensure that these reflect gender-specific needs and contributions to development.

- **Platform for Action**

The Platform includes no allocation of resources, although Governments did agree to providing ***“new and additional resources”***, which have so far not been forthcoming.

vii. Mainstream Location Of Responsibility

Who/which agency/organisation is mandated with the responsibility to implement gender-balanced environmental action and environmentally-aware gender programmes and projects?

- **Agenda 21**

The implementation of Chapter 24 is considered first and foremost to lie with national Government, with the collaboration of academic institutions. Specific responsibilities are given to UN bodies, including DAW, UNIFEM, UNICEF, and INSTRAW. UNDP is allocated a very specific task of establishing a women's focal point on information exchange related to development and environment in each office. CEDAW is charged with establishing a monitoring system to help strengthen the Convention. In other chapters, stronger roles are suggested for NGOs, local authorities, development cooperation, trade unions,

- **Platform for Action**

The Platform nominates a broad range of institutions for implementing the environment recommendations. Besides Governments at all levels, these include international organizations, the private sector, NGOs, and regional organizations. Primarily, however, it is the Government's responsibility (286, 293). Recommendations are made for more active use of existing national machineries for the advancement of women (H), and for the following UN bodies - CSD, ECOSOC and CSW - to help monitor the implementation of the Platform (258.d). The CSD, along with "**other appropriate United Nations bodies and.. international financial institutions**" (254.a), is urged to take gender impact into consideration. However, no other specific environment-related themes or organisations are singled out.

viii. Consistent Procedures

What routine activities are suggested/in place to encourage more gender-aware environmental programmes and projects, and a more environmentally-aware gender approach?

- **Agenda 21**

The general nature of A21 does not accommodate specific procedures. It does however, repeatedly call for assessing gendered impacts and/or incorporating women's knowledge into databases (eg 8.49 and 24.8). Paragraph 24.d rather optimistically urges Governments to "**establish mechanisms at national, regional, and international levels to assess progress by 1995**". 24.8.f calls for gender impact analyses and environmental analyses separately, but unfortunately does not urge for gendered environmental analyses. This separation of gender impacts and environmental impacts must be redressed. Other suggested regular activities (rather than specific procedures) are policy and programme reviews.

- **Platform for Action**

The focus of the Platform is similar to A21. There are few references to regular activities other than reviewing policies and programmes and monitoring gendered

impacts. The PFA copied Paragraph 24.8 of A21, as 258.b but adding a slight economic dimension to it and taking out references to integrating unpaid work (which is dealt with elsewhere in the Platform in more detail). Strategic objective H.2 “Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes, and projects”, suggests several types of procedures⁴⁷ but links these only to economic, and not environmental policies and programmes.

ix. Focused Human Resource Development

What is being suggested to make women and men more competent in pursuing more gender-aware environmental programmes and projects, and a more environmentally aware gender approach?

- **Agenda 21**

Women are recognised in Agenda 21 as (potential) decision-makers, planners, technical advisers, managers, extension workers, researchers, not to mention farmers, leaders, fishers, pastoralists, etc. However, repeated references point to the need to include them more in important education and training opportunities⁴⁸. Chapter 24 refers to the need for equal employment opportunities as well as universal access to training. Unfortunately, inconsistency strikes again with women not mentioned in the critical chapters on capacity building and NGOs, avoiding discussion on discriminatory recruitment and promotion opportunities that limit women’s capacity to develop and use their capacities. Recommendations are generally worded in terms of increasing numbers or “the proportion of women” but no minimum numbers are set.

- **Platform for Action**

In line with the entire thrust of the Beijing conference, the Platform emphasises repeatedly the need to train women, create opportunities for them, put special measures in place, etc. Paragraph 195.a is a crucial improvement over Agenda 21 in its recognition of women’s self-values that inhibit their willingness and capacity to take decision-making positions, but needs translation to environmental issues. Paragraph 256.i is also a powerful advocacy tool, explicitly referring to hiring, promoting, and educating more girls/women in sciences, in general⁴⁹. Similarly 258.a calls for technical assistance for women farmers, fishers, entrepreneurs, etc. This fairly technocratic focus on “gender-environment” pervades the PFA. Neither the training of men in gender issues nor of training women (and men) in gendered environmental understanding are stressed. The section on education⁵⁰ represents a lost opportunity for reinforcing the importance of developing curricula that highlight environmentally-sounded knowledge and information. There is no mention of changing the curricula to include a gendered perspective of environmental problems and solutions.

x. Clear and Integrated Methodology

Does a clear philosophy and set of methods exist, or is one suggested, to ensure a more gender-aware environmental programmes and projects, and a more environmentally-aware gender approach?

- **Agenda 21**

There is no reference to or acknowledgment of, the importance of a gender-aware methodology. There are no principles set out other than that of “full involvement of women” in various steps of a project cycle, in several chapters, eg that on water and deforestation. There is also no mention of methods⁵¹.

- **Platform for Action**

A weakness shared with A21 is the Platform’s lack of a clear methodological framework. Had it existed, then the discussion of environmental issues would probably have been more consistent and comprehensive. Where the PFA is clearer than A21, however, is in recognising the influence of methodological weaknesses (200, 205.a). It also includes numerous references to methodologies⁵², and it is even a strategic objective within the poverty discussion: “**gender-based methodologies and research on feminization of poverty**” (A.4). Almost all the references are in the context of economic policy-making or economic/social impact. Together they make for a strong case but lack an environmental emphasis. Paragraph 258.b includes an important reference to the need for participatory methodologies to look at women’s resource knowledge, gendered environmental impacts, structural gender/development/environment links, and monitoring programmes and policies.

xi. Collaborative Delivery Of Programmes And Projects

How do women and men participate in the delivery of environmental/gender programmes and projects?

- **Agenda 21**

Alongside a general strong focus on community participation is an equally strong emphasis on local people’s involvement in the delivery of programmes and projects. The need to mobilise, facilitate, create opportunities for, involve, include, etc “local people, especially women” in the design and implementation of policies and programmes are frequent but inconsistent in the chapters⁵³. Thus they appear in relation to water, forest, land, and biodiversity management, but not in NGOs, desertification, biotechnology, capacity-building, etc. Chapter 24 on women stresses the importance of involving women in the design of environmentally sound technologies (24.3).

- **Platform for Action**

The PFA makes a limited number of very focused references to local people, and does not build on some of the well-worded passages in A21. One very lucid and clear paragraph outlines a range of ways in which women and men can participate in delivering appropriate health programmes and projects (106.c; see endnote for suggested environmental version)⁵⁴ but this is not replicated for environmental programmes and projects. The paragraphs related to 176 on how to strengthen women’s economic capacity and commercial networks provides many suggestions that would have equal relevance to women’s environmental capacity and networks, as would the reference to mobilizing community resources to combat violence against women (124).

xii. Supportive Research

What research is suggested/being carried out to improve our understanding of the multiple, complex relationships of gendered environmental experiences, and how they are changing?

- **Agenda 21**

Research receives systematic attention within the structure of A21. Virtually all references are in relation to biophysical processes of degradation and rehabilitation (see chapters on water, deforestation, agriculture). A handful of references can be found related to research on human use of these resources. There is no mention of women-or gender-related research, outside references in Chapter 24, which mentions the need for research on gender-differentiated impacts of structural adjustment programmes.

- **Platform for Action**

The PFA fares considerably better with many references to women and research⁵⁵. However, these generally relate to the role of women in research and general research on gendered impacts of social, political, economic, and cultural policies/programmes, with no mention of environmental topics. Other references to health-oriented research are quite specific, mentioning diseases by name and stressing the gender-related failings of current research. Recommendations for environment-focused research are limited to assessing the impact on women, ensuring that research informs human settlement development, and the role of women (256.c/e/f). Nevertheless, paragraph 258 presents a good starting point to develop a coherent research strategy, with references to the need for a better understanding of women's knowledge, impact on women (note: not research on gendered impacts), and the structural links between gender relations, environment, and development.

xiii. Contribution to Theory-building

What importance is attached to theory and what suggestions are made to further new and better theories about the problems and opportunities related to gender and the environment?

- **Agenda 21**

Despite many references to research, the importance of translating that into more accurate and relevant theories is not discussed in A21.

- **Beijing**

The word "theory" is not mentioned once in the Platform, despite the many references to research.

3.3. An Integrated Perspective?

From the conceptual and operational analysis of A21 and PFA, it is clear that despite the many potentially powerful recommendations made, there are also major gaps to be filled and misconceptions to rectify in terms of gender and the environment.

At a conceptual level, the following stand out:

- A21 shows a stronger appreciation than the Platform of the urgency of environmental issues as the survival basis for women and men alike;
- A21 clearly emphasises the importance of local knowledge, although women's knowledge gets a mixed review across the chapters, while the Platform stresses women's environmental knowledge but fails to highlight its relevance for other sectors, such as health and education;
- A21 refers to women through a range of positive and negative images and does not address the relevance of gender-discriminating ideologies for environmental management, while the PFA stresses oppressing ideologies repeatedly but does not relate them to environmental management issues;
- A21 and the PFA both acknowledge the structural constraints that women face in achieving sound environmental use, but these are only dealt with superficially in A21. While structural constraints are treated in much more detail in the Platform they are only superficially dealt with in relation to the environment;
- Neither A21 nor the PFA stress how environmental change is affected by gender-discriminatory resource entitlements and affects women's capacity to meet responsibilities;
- Agenda 21 fails to stress the importance of opening up space for women's equal involvement in decision-making forums. The PFA places this high on the agenda but does not translate it into concrete measures where it concerns environmental decisions;
- A21 deals only in general terms with broader political economic questions, avoiding contentious statements, while the PFA urges for more radical types of reform of unjust power relations (ranging from gender relations to international finance relations) but fails to link these to environmental processes of degradation;
- A21 deals in considerable depth with ecological interactions but fails to link them to gendered resource use and needs, while the Platform totally fails to discuss ecological processes;
- Neither A21 nor the Platform discuss the continually changing nature of human-resource interactions.

From an operational perspective, the following can be discerned.

1. Agenda 21 is clearer than the Platform in urging for:

- local people's perspectives and their involvement in the delivery of programmes and policies, although the emphasis on gender-balanced participation is limited;
- allocation of resources for gender and environment related actions;
- ensuring an integrated environmental policy and political commitment;

2. The Platform for Action is more emphatic than A21 in urging for:

- ensuring women's representation on key decision-making bodies;
- recognising women's structural inequalities that hamper full participation in the

- economy, with some references to difficulties in natural resource management;
- ensuring gender-balanced human resource development and gender-focused research, although the emphasis on environmental capacity-building and research is limited;
- ensuring the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into programmes and policies.

Neither document deals well with the question of location of main responsibility, procedures to ensure that policies are implemented, a methodology that integrates gender and environmental perspectives, and the need to build new theories on which to base more effective programmes. Neither manages to achieve a consistent set of policy recommendations for, or articulates a clear political commitment to, development that is based on integrating gender and environmental perspectives. These critical gaps are largely due to a weak conceptual understanding of gender and the environment that underpins the two documents.

4. Implications for Development Cooperation

“I raise the issue of implementation today to remind each of us of the importance of the commitments governments made here. Sadly, only one-third actually picked up the challenge and announced actions...some 60 countries made commitments covering different critical areas of concern. A majority of commitments dealt with balancing work and family responsibilities, health and education.” Bela Abzug, WEDO speech, Beijing.

This year, the Commission on the Status of Women will consider progress in implementing actions related to women and the environment, the Commission for Sustainable Development will review global implementation of UNCED agreements, and the UN is holding a special session of the General Assembly to review this global progress. Women’s organisations are actively using these opportunities to bring their perspectives to bear on the world’s governing bodies, eg WEDO’s “Rio+5” Action. What can development cooperation agencies contribute to these events, to improving the understanding of gender and environment, and to the general implementation of the principles and recommendations in A21 and the PFA?

Sustaining the momentum created by the PFA and monitoring progress with the implementation of the recommendations of both the PFA and A21 is a recurrent theme in the newsletters and other documentation that has appeared since Beijing. Participants in the Beijing Conference were energised to take on new issues or take up old battles again. The spotlight is on women in many countries, in several innovative ways and with greater intensity.

From the analysis in 3.1 and 3.2 above, it is clear that there is an urgent need to consolidate and integrate the gains made in Rio and Beijing in relation to our understanding of and action related to gender and the environment. Neither document represents a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the key issues, nor is there a consistent and integrated approach for institutionalising a gendered environmental awareness. Translation, implementation and monitoring seem to be the areas of greatest urgency: *translating* general principles into concrete suggestions for laws, programmes, services that reflect an awareness of gendered environmental issues; *implementing* the suggested activities, and above all, *monitoring* progress in achieving the principles via the activities.

4.1. Identifying the Focus of Action

The focus of the efforts of development cooperation agencies to support the sustaining of post-Rio/Beijing momentum and tackle the identified challenges is largely determined by four factors: (1) their formal spheres of influence; (2) the range of different stakeholders; (3) possible types of support; and (4) the prioritised theme(s).

- *Sphere of influence*: Agenda 21 suggests a series of measures for development cooperation agencies to support. In the PFA there is relatively little mention of the role of such agencies, particularly in relation to the environmental recommendations. In practice, of course, development agencies have considerable freedom and many existing programmes and partnerships through which to act. Nevertheless, much that individual staff members of development cooperation agencies may find desirable is not within their reach, due to the conditions of the agencies mandates, accountability requirements, funding restrictions, internal human resource limitations, and legal constraints (eg prohibitions on supporting party political activities).
- *The range of different stakeholders*: Development cooperation agencies can usually, and should, influence the following stakeholders to implement aspects of A21 and the Platform:
 - ⇒ government agencies of countries with which they have an agreement and with whom lies the main responsibility for both A21 and the Platform;
 - ⇒ multilateral aid agencies⁵⁶, including financial institutions;
 - ⇒ CBOs and NGOs that receive direct support through grants for programmes or projects;
 - ⇒ other development cooperation agencies;
 - ⇒ themselves.
- *Possible types of support*: The strategies that development cooperation agencies will undertake also depends on their analysis of the needs and types of activities. The two UN documents reviewed here call for action, simultaneously, at several levels, with different stakeholders:
 - ⇒ research;
 - ⇒ awareness-raising and public education;
 - ⇒ implementation via programmes and projects
 - ⇒ monitoring and impact studies.
- *The prioritised theme(s)*:
 - ⇒ improve conceptual understanding of gender and environment, using the nine elements presented in 3.1 above;
 - ⇒ apply this understanding to existing policies, programmes, and projects, or use as the basis for creating new ones, using the 13 elements in 3.2 above;
 - ⇒ monitor progress in achieving integrated action on A21 and PFA principles.

4.2. Learning From Others

Much can be learnt from the innovative responses to the PFA⁵⁷ (see Box 5) since Beijing. The

most common action by governments was to convey information about the conference. There have been many forums for debate. Most of the actions have been focused on health, formal political power, and legal reform. The most common action by governments has been to feedback the conference outcomes through various forums and translation of documents into local languages, summarising key points of action.

However, a WEDO survey in 1996⁵⁸ found little new money being spent anywhere on women's issues, with many advances awaiting legislative enactment and some countries even cutting their budget for women. Activities seem to be carried out by reallocating and using existing funds. As the coverage of environmental issues is weak in the Platform for Action and its follow-up, there is much that can be undertaken by development cooperation agencies.

4.3. Recommendations for Development Cooperation Agencies

The conceptual and operational analytical framework in Section 3 presents a clear overview for structuring a response to the challenges of the strengths and weaknesses of A21 and the Platform for Action. The table below contains a series of recommendations that would support the development of an integrated, comprehensive, and consistent strategy to deal with environmental concerns in a gender-responsive manner and to deal with gender concerns in an environmentally sound way.

Faced with this wide array of possible action areas, perhaps the first priority for development cooperation agencies would be to assess if current approaches to gender and environment are based on a comprehensive and consistent framework. Without a solid basis and clear starting point, it is not realistic to expect a development cooperation agency to develop an effective response in the long term. Questions that will require answers include:

- ⇒ What are we currently undertaking with respect to the analytical framework suggested here, in each country with respect to the different partners (government agencies, NGOs, CBOs, research institutes, own agency staff, DAC members, etc)?
- ⇒ What gaps exist and how are these affecting the impact of our development support efforts?
- ⇒ Why do these gaps exist, and to what extent are they also perceived as problems by our partners?
- ⇒ What gaps can we realistically address in the short term, middle term, and longer term, and how can we go about tackling these?

Institutionalising a gendered environmental perspective, or an environmentally-aware gender approach, is complex. There are many interlinked issues to consider, as is highlighted by the framework above and the table below. It will be essential for donor agencies to learn slowly how to ensure that the different aspects are being addressed and are working in the same direction, rather than against each other. Two ways to launch a concerted learning effort are to commission a hypothetical study and/or to undertake an initiative that attempts to implement all the aspects of the framework in one location.

1. *Imagining the Ideal World.* Sometimes action is hampered by the lack of a vision of what is possible. Many organisations may find it inspiring to have a clear and complete example of what an organisation looks like that has taken on board a gender-balanced approach to environmental action, or environmentally-aware gender and development efforts. Take, for example, an NGO working in a certain district of country X on sustainable agriculture or community forestry, is keen to pursue an integrated gender approach, and has strong external support. Staff members of the NGO could use the framework, both the conceptual and the institutional strands, to analyse the quality and focus of their current work. With this as their starting point, they could then outline what would be necessary, in terms of building skills, financial and other resources, new research areas, etc to become an organisation that is consistent in its gender and environment approach. This would provide a myriad of concrete ideas for other organisations. It could also be used by the NGO as a systematic plan to guide support from development cooperation agencies, thus limiting ad-hoc and piecemeal responses to organisational development needs.
2. *Making the Ideal Reality.* To understand better how the translation from the ideal to reality would be made, donor agencies could undertake an action learning study that implements the ideal scenario developed in point 1 above. For example, a two year collaboration could be started with the NGO to attempt the institutionalisation of a gendered environmental perspective. In the process of tackling the plan, the analytical framework would be refined and strategies to overcome problems identified. Documenting this process and disseminating that widely would provide a valuable learning tool for other organisations.

Armed with these thoughts, and the many suggestions in the table below, each development cooperation agency will need time to develop a concrete organisation-wide proposal. The table is of a general nature and simply illustrates how the analytical framework, that was used to assess Agenda 21 and the Platform for Action, can serve to identify a consistent and comprehensive strategy for development agencies. A better understanding of current activities of individual donor agencies would be needed to refine these suggestions. Gaps in current policies and practices, the nature of partnerships with Governments, NGOs, and other organisations would need to be identified in order to prioritise action areas. Only then would it be possible, and worthwhile, to transform these ideas into more concrete country- or sector-specific activities to further a gendered environmental programme in which gender-focused activities reflect an understanding of environmental processes and needs.

Table 1. Possible Action for an Integrated Gender and Environment Approach by Development Cooperation Agencies

	Local Realities	Political Constituencies	Political Structures
Environment And Survival	check if own programmes encourage local women and men to express and explain the urgency of environmental problems, their coping mechanisms, and gendered impacts	support CBO/ NGO programmes that encourage women's participation on committees that deal with urgent environmental issues, poverty-related initiatives, and urge them to consider gendered environmental impacts of their activities	support NGO and govt programmes that support women's equal representation on formal decision-making structures related to environmental, environment/ poverty issues, via training of women and/or men, and/or reform of statutes
Valuing Local Knowledge	check if own programmes are based equally on women's and men's knowledge	support efforts that allow women's and men's experiences to be expressed equally in CBO/NGO/ traditional forums	encourage Government agencies to value and build equally on women's and men's knowledge in the development of programmes
Images And Ideologies	fund work that aims to understand local women/men's images and ideologies and how they might affect proposed plans	support efforts within CBOs/NGOs/ traditional structures to examine internal gender-environment images and discriminatory ideologies	support efforts within formal political/Government agency structures to examine internal gender-environment images and discriminatory ideologies
Structural Inequalities	understand local interpretations of structural inequalities and check against assumptions on which programmes/ policies are planned	support CBO/NGO/tradition group efforts to identify key structural inequalities that affect environmental use, and to support women's equal and active involvement in local decision-making structures related to environmental issues, via training of women and/or men or reform of statutes	support NGO and govt programmes that encourage women's equal representation on formal decision-making structures related to environmental issues, via training of women and/or men or reform of statutes
Rights/Responsibilities	seek women's and men's views on how rights/responsibilities are currently or will be affected by plans	support CBO/NGO/tradition group efforts to assess any proposed environmental management solution in terms of its likely impact on the balance between women's rights/responsibilities	support CBO/NGO/tradition group efforts to assess any proposed environmental management solution in terms of its likely impact on the balance between women's rights/responsibilities
Gendered Political Space	seek women's and men's views on which are key political spaces for environmental decisions, and current hindrances to gender-balanced representation	support CBO/NGO/tradition group efforts to open up forums equally for women and men, changing if necessary the timing/format/ location of meetings to accommodate women's needs	support Government agencies efforts to open up environmental decision-making forums equally for women and men, changing if necessary the timing/format/ location of meetings to accommodate women's needs
Wider Political Economy	seek women's and men's views on what external forces are affecting them positively and negatively, and what they propose to offset negative or enhance positive impacts	support CBO/NGO/tradition group efforts related to resisting detrimental external influences that negatively affect the natural environment and/or women/men's capacities to use resources wisely, and to welcome potential positive influences	support Government agencies efforts to assess systematically the likely local gendered environmental impacts of all proposed economic, social, cultural, political interventions
Ecological Processes	seek women's and men's views equally on ecological processes before and during all planned interventions	support CBO/NGO/tradition group efforts to base environmental management solutions on sound understanding of ecological processes and how these are affected by women/men differently	support Government agencies to base all planned programmes on a sound understanding of ecological processes, as perceived by local women, men, and external experts
Living With Uncertainty	seek women's and men's views on key areas of uncertainty and past/current/new coping strategies	support CBO/NGO/tradition group efforts to seek solutions for environmental problems that allow for maximum flexibility for women and men alike	support Government agencies to develop gender-responsive environmental programmes that allow for maximum flexibility for women and men alike

	Main Responsibility	Procedures	Human Resource Development
Environment And Survival	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with urgent environmental issues, environment and poverty links, and gendered impacts	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of programmes that deal with urgent environmental issues, environment and poverty links, and gendered impacts	support skill development of own agency staff, Government agency staff, CBOs, NGOs, and the revision of educational material, to better deal with urgent environmental issues, environment and poverty links, and gendered impacts
Valuing Local Knowledge	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, and encourage these to value and build equally on women's and men's knowledge	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of programmes that value and build equally on women's and men's knowledge	support skill development of own agency staff, Government agency staff, CBOs, NGOs, and the revision of educational material, to better value and build equally on women's and men's knowledge
Images And Ideologies	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, which aim to identify discriminatory environment-related gender images and ideologies and how they might affect proposed development interventions	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of programmes that are not based on discriminatory environment-related gender images and ideologies	support skill development of own agency staff, Government agency staff, CBOs, NGOs, and the revision of educational material, to better understand their own and other existing discriminatory environment-related gender images and ideologies and how they might affect proposed development interventions
Structural Inequalities	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, which seek to identify and redress structural inequalities that hamper women's ability to provide for a viable livelihood and maintain a healthy environment, and about men's responsibilities to tackle these inequalities	which seek support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of programmes that identify and redress structural inequalities that hamper women's ability to provide for a viable livelihood and maintain a healthy environment, and about men's responsibilities to tackle these inequalities	support skill development of own agency/ Government agency/CBOs/NGO/etc staff, and the revision of educational material, to enable identification and redress of structural inequalities that hamper women's ability to provide for a viable livelihood and maintain a healthy environment, and about men's responsibilities to tackle these inequalities
Rights/Responsibilities	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, which seek to identify and redress imbalances in gender-based rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of policies that avoid creating imbalances in gender-based rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use, and where possible redress them	support skill development of own agency/ Government agency/CBOs/NGO/etc staff, and the revision of educational material, which raise awareness of existing imbalances in gender-based rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use, and facilitate redressing these
Gendered Political Space	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, that can make a strategic difference in ensuring women's equal and active use of decision-making forums that influence environmental management	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of policies that facilitate and ensure women's equal and active use of decision-making forums that influence environmental management	support skill development of own agency/ Government agency/CBOs/NGO/etc staff, and the revision of educational material, that facilitate women's equal and active use of decision-making forums that influence environmental management
Wider Political Economy	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, to resist those external influences in the wider political economy that will have negative impacts on women and on the environment	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of programmes that incorporate, to the extent possible, a deep understanding of the wider political economy, resisting those elements that will have negative impacts particularly on women and the environment	support skill development of own agency/ Government agency/CBOs/NGO/etc staff, and the revision of educational material, to be able to recognise and respond to the wider political economy in ways that will avoid negative impacts particularly on women and the environment
Ecological Processes	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, to ensure that all efforts are based on a sound understanding of ecological processes	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of policies that aim to understand and are based on sound ecological processes	support skill development of own agency/ Government agency/CBOs/NGO/etc staff, and the revision of educational material, to reflect a sound understanding of ecological processes
Living With Uncertainty	support efforts focusing on those most responsible for dealing with environment issue and gender concerns, to ensure that their interventions allow for maximum flexibility for women and men alike, in response to changing human-environment interactions	support the development of procedures that allow for effective implementation of policies that ensure maximum flexibility for women and men alike in response to changing human-environment interactions	support skill development of own agency staff, Government agency/CBO/ NGO/etc staff to recognise the need for and how to ensure optimal flexibility in programme implementation in response to changing human-environment interactions

	Research	Theory--Building
Environment And Survival	support research on urgent environmental issues, gender/environment/poverty links, and gendered impacts of environmental degradation	support translation of research findings into new theories on urgent environmental issues, gender/environment/poverty links, and gendered impacts of environmental degradation, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Valuing Local Knowledge	support research equally on local women's and men's environmental knowledge	support translation of research findings into new theories on local women's and men's environmental knowledge, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Images And Ideologies	support research on local women/men's images and ideologies and how they might affect environmental management/gender relations, and ways to address those with a negative impact	support translation of research findings into new theories on local women/men's images and ideologies and how they might affect environmental management/gender relations, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Structural Inequalities	support research on structural inequalities, and ways to overcome these, that hamper women's ability to provide for a viable livelihood and maintain a healthy environment, and about men's joint responsibilities to tackle these inequalities	support translation of research findings into new theories on the structural inequalities that hamper women's ability to provide for a viable livelihood and maintain a healthy environment, and about men's joint responsibilities to tackle these inequalities, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Rights/Responsibilities	support research on imbalances in gender-based rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use, and ways to redress them	support translation of research findings into new theories on imbalances in gender-based rights and responsibilities related to natural resource use, and ways to redress them, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Gendered Political Space	support research on ways to ensure women's equal and active use of decision-making forums that influence environmental management	support translation of research findings into new theories on ways to women's equal and active use of decision-making forums that influence environmental management, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Wider Political Economy	support research on how the wider political economy affects gendered environmental management, identifying those elements that will have negative impacts particularly on women and the environment, and ways to resist/redress this external influences	support translation of research findings into new theories on how the wider political economy affects gendered environmental management, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Ecological Processes	support research on key ecological processes that affect women's and men's environmental management	support translation of research findings into new theories on gender and ecological processes, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes
Living With Uncertainty	support research on the local processes of socio-environmental change, and how women and men can learn to deal with that	support translation of research findings into new theories on socio-environmental change processes and how women and men can learn to live with uncertainty, and ensure that these inform new and existing policies and programmes

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¹ Chair of WEDO, a prominent campaigning NGO in both Rio and Beijing, in her speech at the Fourth World Conference on Women

² And sometimes not even that, with the Holy See and 30 countries taking exception to substantial chunks of the PFA.

³ This analysis deals with environment as a set of essential natural resources. More references are made to rural environments than to urban environments. Gender is defined here as culture- and historically-specific ideas of femininity and masculinity, and to the power relations between women and men.

⁴ Women's concerns and issues appeared in less than a handful of places (all in the "poverty" section) notably in the context of women and children as "vulnerable groups" or victims.

⁵ Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration states that: "Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development".

⁶ For example, in Chapter 3 on 'Combating Poverty', women are mentioned throughout as a special disadvantaged category, with the "advancement of women" (3.6) suggested as a cross-cutting measure to tackle poverty. While representing an instrumental view of women, it also presents scope when arguing the case for incorporating gender in poverty alleviation plans.

⁷ The Forward Looking Strategies are the official document of the Nairobi World Conference on Women in 1985.

⁸ Guijt, 1993.

⁹ With special references to the impact on women of a rather eclectic mix of environmental threats: drought, desertification, deforestation, armed natural disasters, toxic waste, and the use of agro-chemicals (para 24.5).

¹⁰ However, if the political implications of 'full participation' had been discussed, this principle probably would not have been agreed in the first place.

¹¹ As the entire document focuses on women, the focus of analysing this document revolved around how 'environment' and 'gender-environment' linkages were conceptualised.

¹² Not to be confused with another Beijing Declaration, which is an alternative document produced by 130 indigenous women at the NGO Forum and highlighted biotechnology and biodiversity related issues.

¹³ There are 5 references to 'ecology', in terms of crisis, consumption/production patterns, linkages and 'ecologically sound environments'. There are 7 references to natural resources, several related to ensuring equal access to natural resources, and other referring to deterioration and women's roles. By comparison 'health' is mentioned more than 70 times outside the section on health.

¹⁴ WEDO, 1995b.

¹⁵ WEDO, 1996b.

¹⁶ These two aspects reflect the requirements of the Terms of Reference, which asked for a conceptual and operational assessment of Agenda 21 and Platform for Action.

¹⁷ Rocheleau et al, 1996.

¹⁸ Jackson, 1996; IDS, 1995; Agarwal, 1997

⁵⁴ If translated for environmental programmes it would read as follows: "Design and implement, in cooperation with women and community-based organizations, gender-sensitive environmental programmes, including decentralized environmental services, that address the needs of women throughout their lives and take into account their multiple roles and responsibilities, the demands on their time, the special needs of rural women and women with disabilities and the diversity of women's needs arising from age and socio-economic and cultural differences, among others; include women, especially local and indigenous women, in the identification and planning of environmental priorities and programmes; remove all barriers to women's environmental services and provide a broad range of environmental-focused support services;

⁵⁵ See: strategic objective A.4; paras 59.b, 67.b, 82, 82.f, 83.d, 87.b, 109.f, 175.e, 206.I, 207.c.

⁵⁶ Before the recent World Food Summit, Governments stressed that FAO has a role in the "integrated follow-up" to this and other UN conferences. However, FAO assigned its gender unit the responsibility of organizing a programme for First Ladies during the Summit. It seems there is some way to go still. Source: WEDO, 1996b.

⁵⁷ WEDO, 1996b.

⁵⁸ WEDO, 1996a.



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