

# Women, girls and biodiversity loss: an evidence and policy review (Part 1)

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## List of Acronyms

APROSC Agricultural Projects Services Centre in Nepal  
CBD Convention on Biological Diversity  
CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora  
COP Conference of the Parties  
CSW Commission on the Status of Women  
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization  
FFI Fauna and Flora International  
FFP Forest Peoples Programme  
GBF Global Biodiversity Framework  
GBV Gender-based violence  
GEAC Gender Equality Advisory Council  
GPA Gender Plan of Action  
GPS Global Positioning System  
IGO Intergovernmental organisation  
IIED International Institute for Environment and Development  
IIFB International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity  
IPLC Indigenous Peoples and local communities  
IUCN International Union for the Conservation of Nature  
IWT Illegal wildlife trade  
KWCA Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association  
MEA Multilateral Environmental Agreement  
NAP National Adaptation Plan  
NBSAP National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan  
NDC Nationally Determined Contribution  
NGO Non-governmental organisation  
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
PES Payments for ecosystem services  
REDD Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation  
RISE Resilient Inclusive and Sustainable Environments  
SDG Sustainable Development Goal  
UNCCD United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification  
UNDP United Nations Development Programme  
UNEA United Nations Environment Assembly  
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme  
UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
UNICEF United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  
WEDO Women's Environment and Development Organisation  
WEF World Economic Forum  
WHO World Health Organization

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# 1. Introduction

Across countries and cultures, gendered differences and inequalities mean that women and men often have contrasting roles and responsibilities, knowledge, needs and priorities, access, user and ownership rights, decision-making power, and risks and vulnerabilities.<sup>1</sup> These gendered differences and inequalities shape the ways women and men use and conserve biodiversity, and affect their sensitivities to biodiversity loss.<sup>2</sup> In particular, gendered inequalities will mean that women, girls, people living in poverty, rural communities, sexual and gender minorities and Indigenous Peoples are differentially, and disproportionately, affected by biodiversity loss<sup>3</sup>. This will detrimentally affect their human rights, including rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation, culture and self-determination.<sup>4</sup>

This report undertakes a rapid review to understand existing evidence about the impacts of biodiversity loss, specifically focusing on women and girls (Section 3). We complement this with a review of international and national policy to understand how it addresses women and girls' priorities (Sections 4 and 5, respectively). Throughout this report when we refer to priorities, we mean women and girls' perspectives, interests, knowledge and rights related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. We briefly address data and indicator gaps for understanding gender–environment relationships (Section 6), and we conclude with a series of recommendations for policymakers, together with examples of where action is already underway (Section 7). We also outline three suggestions for improving the evidence base to help make the case for action to explicitly address women and girls' priorities in international and national policymaking, and its implementation.

We compiled this report by bringing together information from a rapid literature review, a policy analysis of international commitments and decisions relating to women, girls and gender, and an analysis of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Detailed methodologies are available in the Annexes. In addition, we undertook 18 key informant interviews with global gender experts during February and March 2022. We also launched an IIED online questionnaire<sup>5</sup> (using SurveyMonkey) to capture experts' opinions over a four-week period from 2–31 March 2022 (for a copy see Annex A). The call to participate was issued to women's representatives, participants from women's networks and organisations, activists, researchers and policymakers. In total, 52 individuals from 32 countries<sup>6</sup> responded to the survey, and one response was marked “global” reflecting on experience from multiple countries.

A note on language: while our review focuses on women and girls we included the term gender in our policy and literature review searches as (1) there is a tendency to conflate the terms “women” and “gender” and the terms are often used interchangeably, and (2) the term gender may be used within a title or a headline of a report that covers relevant information on women

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<sup>1</sup> CBD (2019) Addressing Gender Issues and Actions in Biodiversity Objectives. [https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-towards2020-gender\\_integration-en.pdf](https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/cbd-towards2020-gender_integration-en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2020) Session 6.1. Biodiversity, agriculture, fisheries: Changing economic opportunities for women and men. 2020 Global Forum on Environment. Mainstreaming Gender and Empowering women for Environmental Sustainability. Paris, 5–6 March. <https://www.oecd.org/env/GFE-Gender-Issues-Note-Session-6.1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> EnGen Collaborative (2022) Gender inequality and biodiversity loss: Summary of literature review findings and resources. Washington DC, US. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D5iKYAKs4sHKuTVK\\_0hRXyB5oJeys1fb/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D5iKYAKs4sHKuTVK_0hRXyB5oJeys1fb/view)

<sup>4</sup> UNHRC, UNEP, UN Women (2021) Human rights, the environment and gender equality — key messages. [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/Final\\_HumanRightsEnvironmentGenderEqualityKM.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/Final_HumanRightsEnvironmentGenderEqualityKM.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> IIED (2 March 2022) New project explores impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls. <https://www.iied.org/new-project-explores-impacts-biodiversity-loss-women-girls>

<sup>6</sup> Albania, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Iraq, Italy, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and Zambia.

and girls (as well as information on men and boys). We refer to gender equity and equality in the report. These terms are distinct, and interpretations can vary across institutions. Typically gender equity is the process of being fair across genders, and refers to the need to address historical and social disadvantages. Gender equality is the equal enjoyment of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards by people of different genders.<sup>7</sup> Finally, biological diversity, or biodiversity, “means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems”.<sup>8</sup> Biodiversity loss can reflect, for example, a change in species abundance, distribution, phenology and population dynamics as well as changes to community structure and ecosystem function.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For example, see UNFPA (2005) Frequently asked questions about gender equality. <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-gender-equality>

<sup>8</sup> CBD (2006) Article 2. Use of Terms. <https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles/?a=cbd-02>

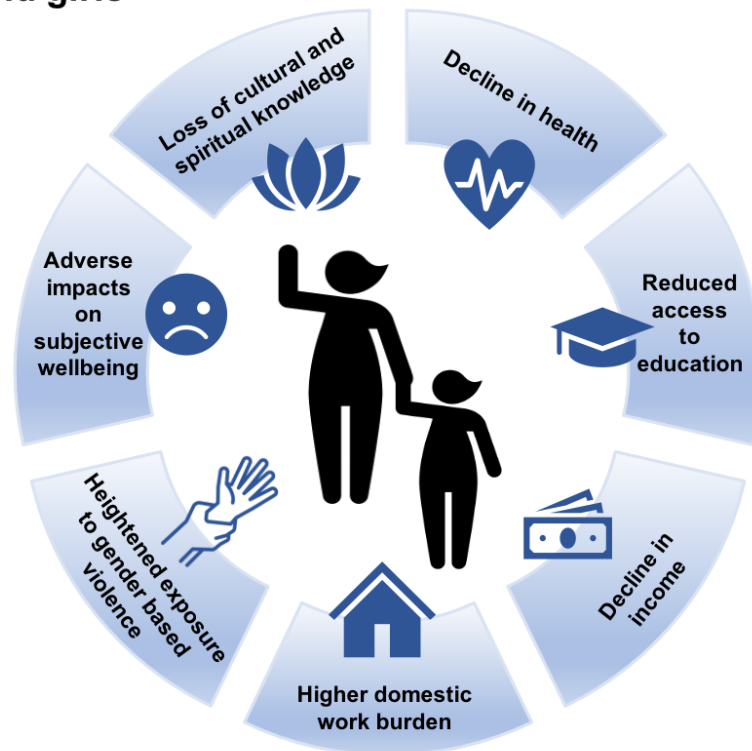
<sup>9</sup> IPBES (2019) Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Brondizio, ES, Settele, J, Díaz, S and Ngo, HT (eds). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>

## 2. Key findings

1. Women are negatively impacted by biodiversity loss through higher domestic work burdens, loss of income, declining health, heightened exposure to gender-based violence, loss of

girls often experience multiple interconnected impacts. For example, women's increasing domestic work burdens can lead to physical injury, as well as reducing time for income-

### The impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls



culture and traditional knowledge, and adverse impacts on subjective wellbeing. (See results in Sections 3.4 and 3.5)

2. Girls are negatively impacted by biodiversity loss through higher domestic work burdens and increased pressure to contribute to household income, which in turn reduces their access to education and heightens their exposure to gender-based violence. (See results in Sections 3.4 and 3.5)
3. These negative impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls are interconnected — one impact often leads to another — and women and

generating activities, which in turn affects their income and their decision-making power within a household. Impacts on women, can also lead to impacts on girls (and likely vice versa) — for example, larger domestic work burdens might be shared. (See discussion in Section 3.5)

4. There is a *lot* more we need to understand, and this list of impacts is by no means comprehensive. Important gaps include understanding other impacts beyond those we have identified (eg food security, resilience to shocks, freedom of choice), and the range of impacts within the seven broad categories (eg impacts on different

facets of physical and mental health and across different life stages including child health and maternal health). Additionally, building understanding about how impacts vary across different ecosystems and countries is crucial — there's a tendency to focus on the global south, overlooking women and girls in the global north. (See discussion in Section 3.5)

5. To build a strong evidence base, we need also to understand how other aspects of women and girls' identities — such as socioeconomic status, class, ethnicity, Indigeneity, religion, skin colour, (dis)abilities, age — interact to shape their experiences of biodiversity loss. This is critical, as women and girls are not a homogenous group. (See discussion in Section 3.5)
6. There is a wealth of unpublished knowledge — including Indigenous and local knowledge — held by women's networks and organisations, activists, researchers and policymakers on the impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls. Building from this will be valuable for identifying gaps in understanding and prioritising where to place investment and effort for generating new evidence. (See discussion in Sections 3.6 and 7.3)
7. In international biodiversity-related conventions there are varying levels of ambition for addressing women and girls' priorities related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The CBD and UNCCD clearly have the most ambition, though decision texts fall short of addressing substantive issues, for example gender-based violence, lack of rights to land ownership, and lack of access rights to natural resources. Conventions yet to significantly engage with women and girls' priorities include Ramsar and CITES as well as high-level intergovernmental meetings on illegal wildlife trade. (See results in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, and discussion in Section 4.3)
8. Women's representation is the dominant topic of international biodiversity-related policy decisions. In contrast, there is little substance on women's rights, knowledge about and contributions to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, as well as access to the associated benefits. Moreover, despite international attention to representation this remains a priority for women's representatives as they often feel their voices are not heard or respected. (See results in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, and discussion in Section 4.3)
9. International agreements such as Agenda 2030 are key to raising ambition, especially as targets reach beyond representation and include, for example, land rights and access to resources. In particular, the G7's commitments to climate, environment and gender equality are promising, although more specific commitments are needed to address the impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls. (See discussion in Section 4.4)
10. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) do not give adequate attention to women despite increased attention in CBD decisions and two iterations of its Gender Plan of Action. Analysis of post-2016 NBSAPs compared with pre-2016 NBSAPs continue to reveal gaps in (a) the profile of women and girls, (b) the use of sex-

disaggregated data, (c) the development of gender-responsive indicators, (d) women's participation in NBSAP development and (e) making connections to wider national gender policies. (See results in Section 5.1)

11. Across international biodiversity-related conventions and decision texts, and within NBSAPs, there are few references to girls. This is an important gap given the significant negative impacts biodiversity loss will have on a girl's childhood, and is a key issue for intergenerational justice. (See discussion in Sections 4.3 and 5.3).
12. Beyond NBSAPs, other domestic policy entry points to address women and girls' priorities include strengthening national gender strategies, adopting gender budgeting, pursuing green and equitable recovery strategies for "building back better" and opening up access to finance. (See results in Section 5.4).
13. A lack of sex-disaggregated data and associated indicators is a persistent and major constraint internationally and nationally in understanding how women and girls' lives intersect with biodiversity including how they are differentially impacted by biodiversity loss. National statistical offices are important entry points in addressing this constraint as are enhanced reporting requirements for biodiversity-related conventions. (See discussion in Sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4)
14. There are a multitude of reasons why international and national policy are not sufficiently addressing — or raising ambition on — women and girls' priorities related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Often cited issues include a lack of funds, capacity and sex-disaggregated data, and limited interest by parties and conservation NGOs. Underpinning these are more fundamental issues related to patriarchal social systems and persistent and pervasive norms about gender roles. Tackling such obstacles will require reaching out to men and boys as allies and advocates for change. (See Box 5.2 for an example)

15. Political will and commitment are key to progress, and there are clear ways forward in international and domestic policy processes for addressing women and girls' priorities, including the differential impacts of biodiversity loss. Taking action should involve tackling key policy and implementation gaps, creating space for women and girls' voices, accelerating progress on gender–environment data and statistics, improving accountability mechanisms and opening up access to nature-related finance. (See recommendations in Section 7)

## 3. How does biodiversity loss impact women and girls?

In this section we present findings from a rapid review to understand existing evidence on the differentiated impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls. After briefly outlining our methodology, we summarise where we found evidence (ie what countries, what habitats and for whom), the type of evidence, and the impacts detailed. We then share what expert opinion from IIED's online questionnaire tells us about impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of what the evidence is telling us, what is missing and what next?

### 3.1 Methodology

This rapid evidence review is based on an assessment of peer-reviewed research, applying principles of systematic approaches (maps and reviews) to our search, inclusion and data-extraction protocol. We applied search strings using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to Scopus with key terms including “women”, “biodiversity loss” and “environmental degradation”, which were updated iteratively. We paid attention to the inclusiveness of our search terms related to women and included terms to refer to age (eg youth, elderly), position in society (eg class, caste, refugee), ethnicity and race, religious beliefs, marital status, (dis)abilities, and gender identity and expression. We reviewed the top 100 search results (due to the limited time available) when organised by relevance, and downloaded papers with relevant titles. We reviewed the papers' abstracts, followed by their full texts for inclusion in the review. Papers were included if they described an impact of biodiversity loss (eg deforestation, loss in agrobiodiversity, fisheries decline, soil degradation) on women and/or girls.

Altogether, we downloaded 331 papers to screen for their inclusion. From this, we identified 20 relevant papers and applied a data extraction strategy to capture details on context (geographical scope, demographics, diversity, habitat, biodiversity threat), design (study design, methods and analysis, sample selection and size), and impacts of biodiversity loss. The full details of the search strings, extraction table and references for the studies used in the review are available in Annex B.

When reading the evidence presented in this section, note that caution should be applied to generalising examples to other contexts outside of the countries (and indeed the study sites) as, for example, social norms relating to women will vary across different cultures and contexts.

### 3.2 Where is the evidence?

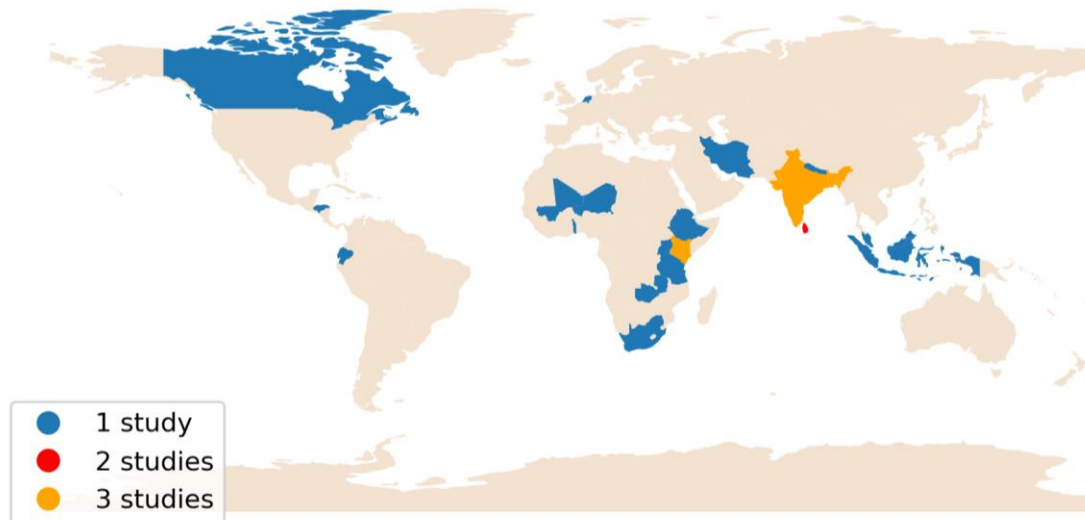
Figure 3.1 illustrates the 20 countries discussed in the 20 papers identified in our rapid evidence review. The map demonstrates that available evidence is primarily from the global south, and there is more evidence available for India and Bangladesh with three papers for each. Note that we found limited evidence for countries in Latin America, identifying just two papers (one from Honduras and one from Ecuador), though our review was conducted in English only.

All papers were categorised according to the habitat type using the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list habitat classification scheme.<sup>10</sup> There is more evidence available from forest habitats, with 13 papers, three papers from wetlands habitats, one paper

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<sup>10</sup> IUCN (2022) Habitats Classification Scheme (Version 3.1) <https://www.iucnredlist.org/resources/habitat-classification-scheme>

from a savannah habitat, one paper from a shrubland habitat and one paper from a marine habitat. One paper was unclear as the habitats covered were not clearly outlined — this was an opinion piece by nine experts. We did not find evidence from marine coastal, grassland, rocky areas, cave and subterranean habitats, desert, or artificial and introduced vegetation.



*Figure 3.1 A map to illustrate the countries discussed in 19 of the 20 studies. Note one of the 20 studies focused on the “global” level and discussed impacts generally over this scale, without specific mention of countries, and so is not included in this figure.*

Of the 20 papers identified, ten focused on women and men, nine focused on women and one on women and girls. Just eight papers provided details on the diversity of women included in their papers — four papers focused on specific Indigenous women, three focused on “peasant women” and women from rural areas, and one focused on “poor”.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.3 What type of evidence?

Of the 20 papers, nine used a mixed-methods approach,<sup>12</sup> six used a qualitative approach, two used a quantitative approach, two were expert opinions and one did not have a clear design stated (this paper was written in 1995). The papers mainly used textual/narrative analysis — this was the case in 16 papers — and descriptive statistical analysis was used in 11 papers. Two papers used statistical analysis to analyse the quantitative data collected; one paper used chi-square tests; and the other paper used Pearson correlations, mixed-effects logistic regression, a generalised linear model and model selection.

Just over half the papers used a purposive sampling process, two papers used random sampling and eight papers did not clearly state the sampling method. Of the papers that stated the sample size, nine had a sample size less than 50 (three were women only), three were less than 150 (one was women only), three were less than 200 (two were women only) and one paper was 303 (women only). One paper had a sample size of over 3,000 women and men as they used existing household data from national statistics sources. Only one paper mentioned the sample frame of a survey — it was conducted in four communities, covering between 25 and 50% of the households, depending on the population size. The sample size was not given.

<sup>11</sup> The terms “peasant women” and “poor women” are the descriptors used in these papers.

<sup>12</sup> Mixed methods refers to papers applying quantitative and qualitative methods. Papers that use a survey are categorised as mixed methods where they capture both qualitative and quantitative data.

Generally, we found that the suggested impacts on women were backed up by the data, but there was limited discussion, with impacts mentioned in passing and with little detail. This was often because assessing the impact of biodiversity loss on women was not the primary or only aim of the studies. Seven of the papers were written in the 1990s and had limited information about the design of the study.

### 3.4 What does the evidence tell us about the impacts?

Figure 3.2 illustrates the different impacts the 20 papers discussed, including negative impacts on women’s domestic work burden, health, income and experience of gender-based violence (GBV). “Other” refers to three papers that noted an important negative change for women — for example, a reduction in food sources — but did not fully articulate the impact on wellbeing. This section considers each of these impacts and provides examples from the 20 papers. Note that papers often discussed more than one impact, and at times papers linked one impact to another, though not always in detail. Figure 3.3 illustrates interconnections described in the 20 papers. The arrow thickness corresponds to the number of studies evidencing the connection.<sup>13</sup>

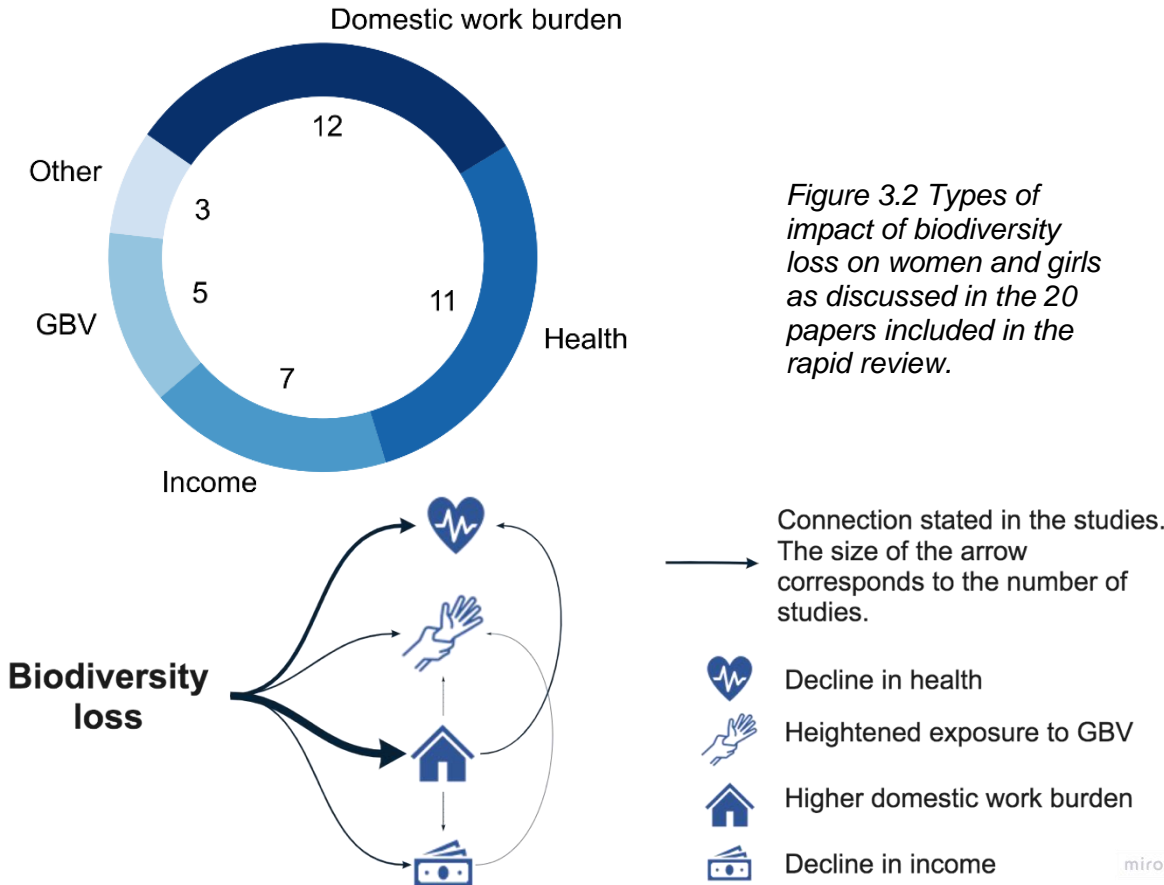
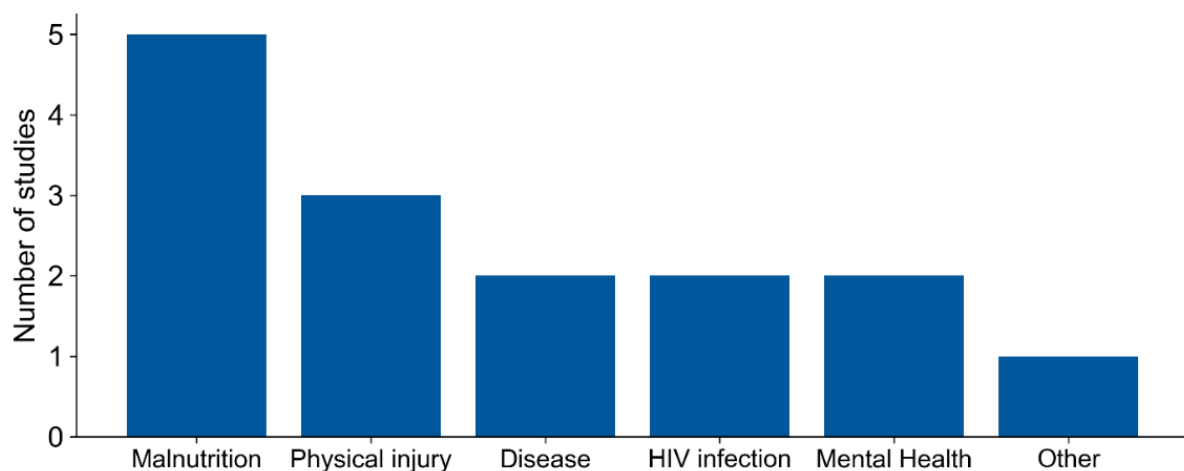


Figure 3.3 The interconnections between impacts as discussed in the 20 papers included in the rapid review.

<sup>13</sup> The studies relating to each impact connect are: Biodiversity loss to higher domestic work burden: ID: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19; Biodiversity loss to decline in health: ID: 2, 6, 7, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20; Biodiversity loss to heightened exposure to gender based violence: ID: 1, 2, 4, 9, 12; Biodiversity loss to decline in income: ID: 2, 3, 9, 15, 18; Higher domestic work burden to decline in health: ID: 1, 7, 13, 16; Higher domestic work burden to loss in income: ID: 1, 6; Higher domestic work burden to heightened exposure to GBV: ID: 16; Decline in income to heightened exposure to GBV: ID: 1. The ID. numbers in italics indicates hypothesised impacts - for example impacts that are suggested by the author, but are not supported by evidence in the paper.

Twelve studies reported an **increased domestic work burden** as a key impact of biodiversity loss on women and girls. Nine of these studies were from forest habitats and seven were from South or Southeast Asia (three in India, two in Bangladesh, one in Nepal and one in Sri Lanka). There was also one study from savannah, one from shrubland and one that was unclear. Regardless, all studies reported similar findings, that due to environmental degradation — such as deforestation and soil degradation — women were walking further and spending more time looking for natural resources. For example, in India, one study (ID:7<sup>14,15</sup>) using mixed methods (survey) found that “peasant” women and women from “tribal populations”<sup>16</sup> were walking further by up to 10–15km and spending 9–13 hours in one day to source water, fuel and fodder. Similarly, a study from Nepal (ID:13<sup>17</sup>) that used quantitative methods (secondary data from sources including the Agricultural Projects Services Centre (APROSC) in Nepal and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)) found that if deforestation increased by 1%, the time spent to collect forest resources (eg firewood, fodder and grass) increased by 45%. This meant an extra 1.13 hours of work for women in a day.

Eleven studies discussed a **negative impact on women’s health** (Figure 3.4) and the impacts



on physical health included injury, malnutrition and risk to health from viruses or disease. Two studies stated impacts on mental health. One opinion piece (ID:18<sup>18</sup>) presented a hypothesis from an expert in Niger suggesting that deforestation decreases the amount of medicinal plants available to cure diseases, especially for children in rural areas. This study was classified as “other”, but it is highlighted here to illustrate that biodiversity loss can impact health via multiple pathways.

Figure 3.4. The types of health impacts on women from biodiversity loss, as discussed in 11 studies.

<sup>14</sup> The study ID no. is the unique number we use to refer to the study and corresponds to the detailed data extraction table in Annex B.

<sup>15</sup> Rawat, A (1995) Deforestation and forest policy in the Lesser Himalayana Kumaun: Impacts on peasant women and tribal populations. *Mountain Research and Development* 15(4), 311–322

<sup>16</sup> The term’s “peasant women” and “tribal populations” are the descriptors used in these papers.

<sup>17</sup> Kumar, S and Hotchkiss, D (1988) Consequences of deforestation for women's time allocation, agricultural production, and nutrition in hill areas of Nepal. International Food Policy Research Institute

<sup>18</sup> Gebremariam, EB, Yembilah, R, Kowsar, SA et al. (2008) Experts address the question: "Are women more severely affected by desertification, ... and if so, how?" *Natural Resources Forum* 32(4), 343–346

Malnutrition in women was associated with food and fuel shortages, a reduction in quality of food, and a decrease in vitamins obtained from wild plants. In Nepal, one study (ID:13<sup>19</sup>) used a quantitative approach (secondary data from sources including the APROSC in Nepal and the FAO) that showed increased deforestation led to women spending less time growing/cultivating agricultural products. This resulted in them growing products that were easier to maintain but that had a lower nutritional content. In Sri Lanka, another study (ID:16<sup>20</sup>) (design unclear) found that deforestation led to a decrease in foraging for wild plants. Foraged plants are an important source of vitamin A in their diets and so this could lead to nutrient deficiency.

Of the three studies describing physical injury, they all referred to the impacts that came from women carrying resources for longer distances. One study in Bangladesh (ID:22<sup>21</sup>), which used a qualitative approach (semi-structured questionnaire, secondary data), found that some women (proportion not stated) from the Garos Indigenous group suffered from spinal injuries from carrying heavy loads of firewood for longer distances as a consequence of deforestation. An opinion paper (ID:18<sup>22</sup>) presented a hypothesis from an expert in Iran suggesting that women could have miscarriages as a result of carrying resources for longer distances.

Disease was described in two papers as an impact of deforestation. In India, a study (ID:7<sup>23</sup>) using a mixed-methods approach (survey) found that forest loss led to a decline in water quality and subsequently increased the risk of waterborne diseases, causing women to experience leucorrhea, worm infestations and problems of the digestive system. Another study in Sri Lanka (ID:16<sup>24</sup>) (design not clear) described how in response to increasing firewood scarcity, women cooked inside to save wood, increasing their exposure to smoke inhalation. Women reported suffering from respiratory illnesses and throat cancer. The study further found that a lack of fuel for cooking meant women did not reheat food and often ate last so were more likely to consume cold leftover food compared to men, putting them at risk of food poisoning.

Two studies — both from around Lake Victoria in Africa (ID:11<sup>25</sup> and ID:20<sup>26</sup>) — detailed how a decline in fish stocks increases women's risk of HIV infection through sex-for-fish relationships.<sup>27</sup> For example, one of the studies, which looked across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (ID:20<sup>28</sup>), used a mixed-methods approach (interviews, cross-sectional survey, participant observation) and found that the risk of HIV infection was exacerbated when there was limited fish availability. This was because women were more likely to engage in sex-for-fish relationships, and men migrated between villages more to find new fish stocks resulting in multiple sex-for-fish relationships. Fish stocks vary naturally with seasonality, yet this paper detailed increased stress on stock numbers from overharvesting and a decline in levels of

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<sup>19</sup> Kumar and Hotchkiss (1988) Consequences of deforestation for women's time allocation, agricultural production, and nutrition in hill areas of Nepal. International Food Policy Research Institute

<sup>20</sup> Awumbila, M and Momsen, J (1995) Gender and the environment. Women's time use as a measure of environmental change. *Global Environmental Change* 5(4), 337–346

<sup>21</sup> Dey, S (2008) Deforestation and the Garo women of Modhupur Garh, Bangladesh *Asian women* 24(3) 57-81

<sup>22</sup> Gebremariam, Yembilah, and Kowsar et al. (2008) Experts address the question: "Are women more severely affected by desertification, ... and if so, how?" *Natural Resources Forum* 32(4), 343–346

<sup>23</sup> Rawat, A (1995) Deforestation and forest policy in the Lesser Himalayana Kumaun: Impacts on peasant women and tribal populations. *Mountain Research and Development* 15(4), 311–322

<sup>24</sup> Awumbila, M and Momsen, J (1995) Gender and the environment. Women's time use as a measure of environmental change. *Global Environmental Change* 5(4), 337–346

<sup>25</sup> Fiorella, K, Camlin, C, Salmen, C et al. (2015) Transactional fish-for-sex relationships amid declining fish access in Kenya. *World Development* 74, 323–332

<sup>26</sup> Nunan, F (2010) Mobility and fisherfolk livelihoods on Lake Victoria: Implications for vulnerability and risk. *Geoforum* 41, 776–785

<sup>27</sup> "Fish-for-sex" is a transactional exchange of sex for access to fish between female fish traders and fishermen in order for the traders to secure their supply of fish – see Nunan (2010) *ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> Nunan (2010) *ibid*

water in the lake, increasing the pressure on women to obtain fish for trading through transactional sexual relationships.

A further two studies noted impacts on women's mental health from not being able to fully provide for their families. For example, a study (ID:7<sup>29</sup>) in a forest habitat in India used a mixed-methods approach (survey) showing how an increase in domestic work burden from deforestation meant women had less time to care for themselves and their children. Women reportedly experienced defeatism, fatalism and pessimism.

Seven studies reported **declining incomes** due to reduced availability of natural resources and/or more time spent looking for resources instead of on income-generating activities. Four of these studies were from forest habitats, one was from marine, one was from wetlands and one was unclear (an opinion piece). An example (ID:6<sup>30</sup>) includes a study in India that used mixed-methods (questionnaire using recall method, focus group discussions) and found that women spending more time collecting forest resources (food, fodder, water etc) spent less time in wage employment. Another study (ID:1<sup>31</sup>) in Bangladesh that used a qualitative approach (field survey, interviews, semi-structured questionnaire) with women from the Indigenous Khyang community showed that an increase in the time women spent accessing forest resources as a result of deforestation meant they harvested fewer resources to earn income. As well as impacting their income, women's roles in family decision-making processes were taken away as a non-earner in the Khang community is not considered to be an "important person".

Five studies associated declining incomes due to biodiversity loss with women and men finding alternative income sources by migrating to towns and cities. In Bangladesh, a study (ID:3<sup>32</sup>) that used a qualitative approach (interviews, focus group discussions) found that due to declining fishing stocks and land degradation reducing farm productivity, women migrated to Dhaka to work in factories such as garment factories. The study observed that typically women wait longer than men to migrate as they have family caring and other social responsibilities and they fear travelling alone as it is regarded as unsafe. The longer time waiting to migrate makes it harder for women to plan for their future, making them more vulnerable to environmental degradation. Around Lake Victoria, in Kenya, a study (ID:20<sup>33</sup>) using mixed methods (interviews, focus group discussions using participatory research methods, survey) found that following men's migration to different lake landing sites, women experienced a reduction in money and food remittances from their partners as they often take new wives.

Five studies reported **gender-based violence (GBV)**,<sup>34</sup> all from forest habitats. Each study illustrated that GBV can manifest in a diversity of ways as a result of biodiversity loss. In

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<sup>29</sup> Rawat, A (1995) Deforestation and forest policy in the Lesser Himalayana Kumaun: Impacts on peasant women and tribal populations. *Mountain Research and Development* 15(4), 311–322

<sup>30</sup> Mishra, A and Mishra, D (2012) Deforestation and women's work burden in the Eastern Himalayas, India: Insights from a field survey. *Gender, Technology and Development* 16(3), 299–328

<sup>31</sup> Dhali, H (2008) Deforestation and its impacts on indigenous women: A case from the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh. *Gender, Technology and Development* 12(2), 229–246

<sup>32</sup> Evertsen, K and van der Geest, K (2020) Gender, environment and migration in Bangladesh. *Climate and Development* 12(1), 12–22

<sup>33</sup> Nunan (2010) Mobility and fisherfolk livelihoods on Lake Victoria: Implications for vulnerability and risk. *Geoforum* 41, 776–785

<sup>34</sup> More information on what GBV is and the associated harms can be found in (1) Conservation International (2020) Gender-based violence: recognizing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) in community conservation. Guideline GBV. [https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/guidelines\\_gender-based-violence.pdf?sfvrsn=236c2593\\_2\\_2](https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/guidelines_gender-based-violence.pdf?sfvrsn=236c2593_2_2); (2) Castañeda Camey, I, Sabater, L, Owren, C and Boyer, AE (2020) Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>

Ecuador, for example, a study (ID:4<sup>35</sup>) in a mangrove environment using a mixed-methods approach (ethnography, interviews, survey, GPS data) found that the replacement of mangrove forest with shrimp farms resulted in men who had previously relied on the forest for commercialisation of wood as a source of income turning to collect shells for income, a role traditionally taken by women. Women were instead pushed into domestic roles, and without an income from shell collection they had less power in household decision making. A study in Bangladesh (ID:2<sup>36</sup>) used a qualitative approach (semi-structured questionnaire, secondary data) that showed how women from the Garos Indigenous group were targeted by forest guards: “They tease them, demand money from them, send them to jail for forest robbery and according to some women a few cases of raping Indigenous women by the forest guards have also occurred”. Finally a study in Malaysia (ID:12<sup>37</sup>) used a mixed-methods approach (survey) that showed protests against logging resulted in the government cutting off access to family planning and maternal health services. The study suggested that decreasing access to family planning meant that more women in high-risk older categories would continue to bear children increasing the risk of maternal and infant mortality.

### 3.5 What does expert opinion tell us about impacts?

The 52 respondents to IIED’s online questionnaire were asked to select the top three impacts for women, and then for girls’ wellbeing from biodiversity loss in their country. Figure 3.5 illustrates the responses. For women, respondents selected the key negative impacts as economic living standards (eg income, employment, poverty), health (eg nutritional, maternal and mental health), culture and spirituality (eg traditional values, spiritual or religious beliefs, sense of home or self/being), and security and safety (eg GBV). For girls, the same respondents selected education, health, economic living standards, culture and spirituality, and security and safety. It is interesting to note that across such a diverse spread of countries, respondents coalesced around five key impacts, and no respondents suggested an impact category other than those presented. Table 3.1 provides examples given by the respondents of specific impacts on women and girls related to these broad categories.

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<sup>35</sup> Trevino, M and Murillo-Sandoval, P (2021) Uneven consequences: Gendered impacts of shrimp aquaculture development on mangrove dependent communities. *Ocean and Coastal Management* 210, 105688

<sup>36</sup> Dey, S (2008) Deforestation and the Garo women of Modhupur Garh, Bangladesh. *Asian Women* 24(3), 57–81

<sup>37</sup> Heyzer, N (1995) Gender population and the environment in the context of deforestation: a Malaysian case study *IDS Bulletin* 26(1), 40–46

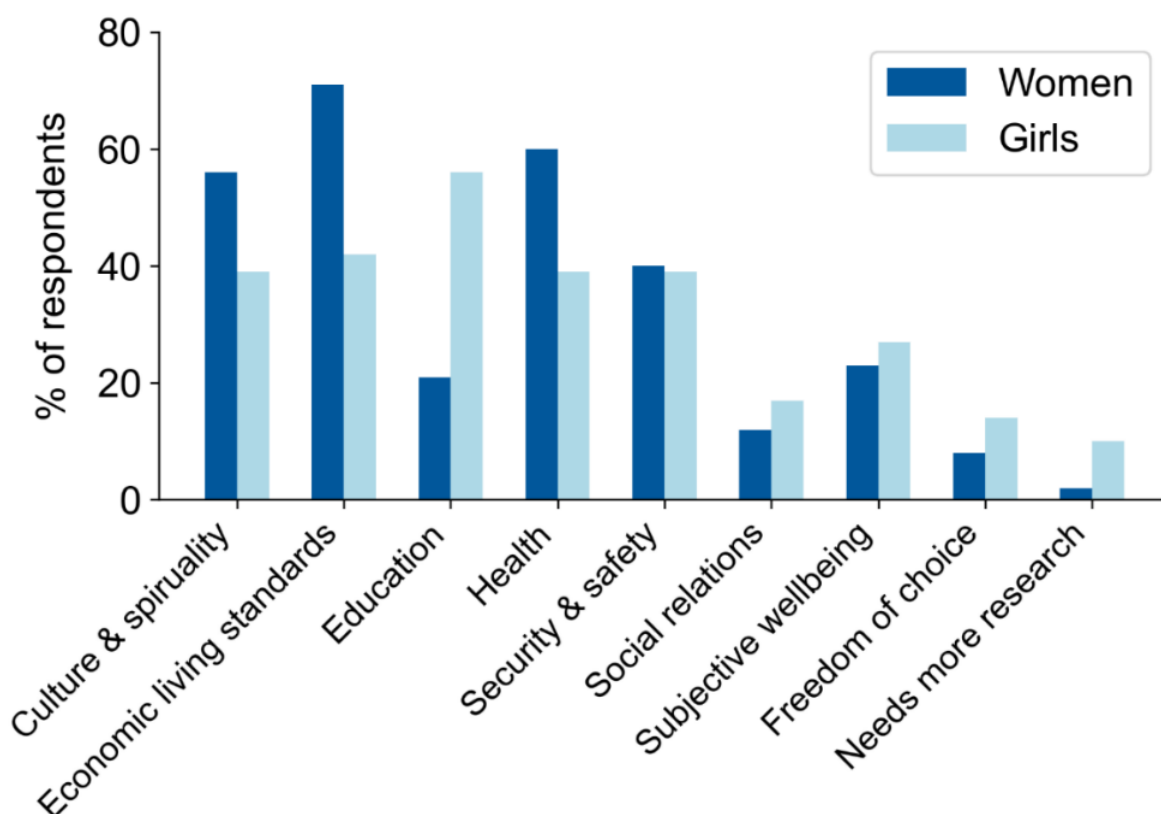


Figure 3.5. Questionnaire results: What do you think are the key impacts on a) women's and b) girls' wellbeing from biodiversity loss in your country?

Table 3.1 Examples of the negative impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls

Type of impact	Country	Example
<b>Economic living standards</b>	Mexico	"They (women) are forced to go to the cities or other villages for low payment jobs in order to compensate the loss of resources."
<b>Education</b>	South Africa	"[girls] removed from educational institutions to work to earn incomes."
	Iraq	"In rural areas in Iraq the economy; income; poverty largely depend on biodiversity, so that the education and well being of the girls in these areas [is] affected by biodiversity loss directly."
<b>Health</b>	Germany	"reduction of natural areas, which can be used (by women) for leisure time — relax and reduce stress"
<b>Culture and spirituality</b>	Norway	"With the loss of biodiversity also comes the loss of Sámi traditional knowledge connected to nature. Sámi women hold great knowledge about their surroundings, how to utilize sustainable resources from nature for food, tools, and traditional Sámi clothes."

	Zambia	"Societies have passed on cultural knowledge to children as natural resources are closely linked to culture, loss of biodiversity will mean girls will not learn about these things. For instance, use of sausage tree fruits as remedy for safety of a surviving twin, in an event that one dies, if sausage trees go extinct that cultural value will cease to work in the community."
<b>Security and safety</b>	Canada	"Big oil and gas projects, like pipelines, often have disproportionate negative impacts on women and girls — in particular, on Indigenous women and girls. There is a direct link in Canada to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and to camps established for pipeline construction. And of course, this construction and the downstream impacts contributes to biodiversity loss. Additionally, girls face intergenerational impacts of physical and mental distress due to the ways biodiversity loss will only compound with time and restrict our opportunities for a good future."
	India	"Loss of biodiversity leads to migration and alternative livelihoods. In new locations women suffer from lack of access to resources and physical violence."
	Mexico	"... girls sometimes are married very young or sent to live in the cities."
	Nepal	"Personal safety as girls must also travel further to collect resources."
<b>Subjective wellbeing</b>	India	"Women spend time together when they go to forage in the forests. This enhances their well-being as well as provides them with fruits, nuts, firewood, herbs, medicinal plants. Loss of biodiversity will adversely impact their lives."

### 3.6 What does the evidence tell us, and what's missing?

It's clear from our rapid evidence review that there are significant gaps in what we know. Without this evidence review, we already know that women are — and will continue to be differentially affected by biodiversity loss because of existing gendered inequalities. Yet it is important to understand how impacts of biodiversity loss play out in women and girls' lives. We need to know this to support better evidence-based international and national policymaking that addresses women and girls' priorities, as well as to identify more ambitious programme and project responses and, moreover, to understand how we can better support women-led responses.

In our rapid evidence review, we identified four broad impact categories — domestic work burden, health, income and GBV. However, it is clear from wider literature that women and girls' lives intersect with biodiversity in much more diverse ways. As the expert respondents to our questionnaire highlighted, biodiversity is key to culture, tradition and spirituality. For example, research from Colombia has described how the Indigenous Wiwa women believe they are expressions of "Mother Earth", and direct harms to "Mother Earth" — such as biodiversity loss — are perceived as direct harm to Wiwa women.<sup>38</sup> In India, the Adi women's traditional knowledge of plants and wildlife are important for providing medical care — for example, porcupine quills are used to cure skin disorders and create tattoos, and elderly women use indigenous plant species to care for women trying to conceive.<sup>39</sup> And in Spain,

<sup>38</sup> Pastor, L and Sanatamaria, A (2021) Experiences of spiritual advocacy for land and territorial itineraries for the defense of Wiwa women's rights in postconflict Colombia. *Transitional Justice* 15(1), 86–107

<sup>39</sup> Singh, R, Rallen, O and Padung, E (2013) Elderly *Adi* Women of Arunachal Pradesh: "Living Encyclopedias" and cultural refugia in biodiversity conservation of the Eastern Himalaya, India. *Environmental Management* 52, 712–735

research has described how women use chrysanthemums to decorate graveyards on All Saints Day to remember past family members.<sup>40</sup>

These examples illustrate just a few ways that women's wellbeing interacts with biodiversity, and from these we can infer other ways that women may be impacted by biodiversity loss. There are also studies showing the importance of biodiversity to women's subjective wellbeing, freedom of choice and social status. For example, research in an urban area of Gothenburg (Sweden) has found that women enjoy a greater sense of wellbeing from green urban spaces that they perceived as 'naturalised', such as "nature-like", "rich in species" and "varied".<sup>41,42</sup> In Timor-Leste, research has described how rural, poor women in coastal regions practise gleaning (nearshore collecting and gathering) to enjoy nature, and often cook their harvest on the beach to eat their catch without competition from other household members.<sup>43</sup> In Brazil, research has shown how women use mangroves as a way to connect and spend time with their families from neighbouring communities.<sup>44</sup> Other research in Brazil found that elderly female healers — "curandera" — in rural areas and small towns gain social prestige from their knowledge of how to use local flora to heal.<sup>45</sup>

As with women, there will be impacts of biodiversity loss on girls that are yet to be fully understood. There's limited wider literature to draw insights from, but research from Kenya has shown that traditional ecological knowledge can provide young girls with household strategies for coping with external change such as environmental degradation.<sup>46</sup> IIED online questionnaire respondents highlighted that biodiversity loss poses an important risk to girls' education as well as increasing domestic work burdens as girls are kept home to help with domestic tasks or to earn income. One respondent to the IIED questionnaire noted that in Cambodia, girls' early exit from school is often associated with trafficking of children for labour or sex work.

This is an impact that has been evidenced in the climate change literature. For example, a longitudinal study since 2001 of the lives of over 12,000 children in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam has shown how girls and young women take on more household work (eg collecting resources, childcare responsibilities) in times of drought and flooding when there are increased food shortages and a lack of access to clean water.<sup>47</sup> The extra household work reduces the amount of time girls and young women spend studying and increases their chances of dropping out of school. Another report from the Malala Fund has estimated how in 2021 climate change-related events could have prevented at least four million girls from completing their education in low and lower middle income<sup>48</sup> countries.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Calvet-Mir, L, March, H, Corbacho-Monné, D et al. (2016) Home garden ecosystem services valuation through a gender lens: a case study in the Catalan Pyrenees. *Sustainability* 8(8), 718

<sup>41</sup> The terms "naturalised", "nature-like", "rich in species" and "varied" are descriptors used in the paper to categorise perceptions from women in the study.

<sup>42</sup> Sang, Å, Knez, I, Gunnarsson, B et al. (2016) The effects of naturalness, gender, and age on how urban green space is perceived and used. *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening* 18, 268–276

<sup>43</sup> Grantham, R, Lau, J and Kleiber, D (2020) Gleaning: beyond the subsistence narrative. *Maritime Studies* 19, 509–529

<sup>44</sup> de Souza Queiroz, L, Rossi, S, Calvet-Mir, L et al. (2017) Neglected ecosystem services: Highlighting the socio-cultural perception of mangroves in decision-making processes. *Ecosystem Services* 26 (part A), 137–145

<sup>45</sup> Vokes, R (2007) Are women reservoirs of traditional plant knowledge? Gender, ethnobotany and globalization in northeast Brazil. *Tropical Geography* 28(1), 7–20

<sup>46</sup> Tian, X (2017) Ethnobotanical knowledge acquisition during daily chores: the firewood collection of pastoral Maasai girls in Southern Kenya. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine* 13(1), 1–14

<sup>47</sup> Porter, C (8 November 2021) Education is under threat from climate change - especially for women and girls. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/features/education-under-threat-climate-change-especially-women-and-girls>

<sup>48</sup> The term's "low and lower middle income countries" are the descriptors used in the report.

<sup>49</sup> Malala Fund (2021) A greener, fairer future: Why leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education. [https://assets.ctfassets.net/00an5gk9rgbh/OFgutQPKIFoi5lfY2iwFC/6b2fffd2c893ebdebee60f93be814299/MalalaFund\\_GirlsEducation\\_ClimateReport.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/00an5gk9rgbh/OFgutQPKIFoi5lfY2iwFC/6b2fffd2c893ebdebee60f93be814299/MalalaFund_GirlsEducation_ClimateReport.pdf)

IUCN's seminal work<sup>50</sup> on GBV and environmental linkages has described how resource stress and scarcity, particularly in times of weather-related disasters and climate change heightens women and girls' exposure to GBV. In their review, they found evidence of impacts on domestic and intimate partner violence, child marriage, sexual exploitation and trafficking, and migration and displacement. However, the authors note that there is limited information and concrete evidence to understand how environmental degradation and climate change risk contribute to GBV. As this report similarly shows, GBV has serious impacts on women and girls' wellbeing and girls' childhood experiences. The role of biodiversity loss in driving — and exacerbating — these risks needs to be better understood.

There will be more ways that biodiversity loss negatively — and differentially — impacts on women and girls' lives that we are yet to understand. A lack of robust inquiry in this area is a significant challenge. This is especially the case for addressing how biodiversity loss affects the diversity of women and girls. To build a strong evidence base, we need to understand how other aspects of women and girls' identities — such as socioeconomic status, class, ethnicity, indigeneity, religions, skin colour, (dis)abilities, age — interact to shape their experiences of biodiversity loss. Just 8 of the 20 papers in our rapid evidence review provided details of the women and/or girls included in their studies. This is critical, as women and girls are not a homogenous group.

For those impacts that we did find evidence for, the analysis and discussion was often limited to a couple of sentences, with little elaboration of what they meant for women and girls' wellbeing. Again, the wider literature on how women's lives intersect with biodiversity is helpful to add knowledge to the rapid evidence review. Taking the economic/income impact, we know from wider research that biodiversity is key to women's economic security. In Kenya and Mozambique, research has shown how women attribute ecosystem services (such as resources from mangroves and fisheries) more strongly with economic security than men.<sup>51</sup> Another example from a group of women in coastal areas of Tanzania shows how women rely on octopus fishing as their main source of income, which is severely affected when prices increase due to a decline in numbers.<sup>52</sup> Other research from Ethiopia has found that women generate around four times more forest income than men from the same household (77% versus 23% of household forest income), and for women-headed households, forest income makes a larger contribution to total household income than in male-headed households (58.2% versus 29% of total household income).<sup>53</sup>

The lack of detail in the evidence also meant that we could not present the complexity of how impacts interconnect and feedback, which worsens women's wellbeing. One example of this interconnectedness is found in a study in India (ID:1) with the Indigenous women of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This study describes how deforestation increases Khyang women's domestic work burden as they have to travel further distances to collect resources, which: (1) increases time carrying heavy loads, leading to health complaints (such as headache and fever); (2) reduces time available for income-generating activities. In turn this led to less power for women in household decision making.

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<sup>50</sup> Castañeda Camey, I, Sabater, L, Owren, C and Boyer, AE (2020) Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.  
<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Fortnam, M (2019) The gendered nature of ecosystem services. *Ecological Economics* 159, 312–325

<sup>52</sup> Marilyn, P (2008) Globalization and women in coastal communities in Tanzania. *Development* (51)2, 193–198

<sup>53</sup> Asfaw, A, Lemenih, M, Kassa, H et al. (2013) Importance, determinants and gender dimensions of forest income in eastern highlands of Ethiopia: The case of communities around Jelo Afromontane forest. *Forest Policy and Economics* 28, 1–7

Unsurprisingly, the review identified more studies discussing biodiversity loss as a concern for women in the global south than in the global north. However, as one of the 18 key informants stressed, “we need to talk about women in the [global] north and our relationship with biodiversity and ways to relate and regain spaces to enjoy nature and biodiversity, for example traditionally more masculine spaces of birdwatching, fishing ... but also such as safety in green spaces in urban areas”.<sup>54</sup> For example, there’s a growing body of literature in the global north about how biodiversity in rural and urban areas can contribute to mental health including reducing stress and anxiety. In Japan, for example, forest therapy has been used to treat women’s physical and mental stress.<sup>55</sup> In Copenhagen, Denmark, women reported that natural spaces<sup>56</sup> play a key role in reducing stress and anxiety, restoring attention and positively altering mental consciousness.<sup>57</sup> It should be noted that the degree to which the quality of urban green spaces in terms of biodiversity richness may affect and improve health outcomes for women is not fully understood.

The evidence in this review was also mainly from forest habitats (13 out of 20 studies), yet women depend on biodiversity in all types of environment. In coastal and marine environments, women play an important role in gleaning, fish processing and trade. For example, in Africa and Asia 60% of seafood is marketed by women.<sup>58</sup> In wetlands, women collect water for drinking, cooking and cleaning, and use natural resources such as reeds from marshes for their home-building and crafts. For example, in Iraq women from the Ma’dan people are custodians of livelihoods and crafts in the Mesopotamian Marshes that date back over 5,000 years.<sup>59</sup> In agriculture, women have an important role in agrobiodiversity, for example as seed keepers and innovators using their knowledge to maintain or increase diversity in agricultural practices.<sup>60</sup> The evidence from forest habitats is also limited in its scope. There are ways other than collecting firewood that women’s lives interact with forests. For example, in some countries globally, women from rural and urban areas depend on forest habitats as a source of wild meat,<sup>61</sup> as do children.<sup>62</sup> Declines in wildlife populations threaten their food security, posing risks to their health.

There is likely more evidence that could be drawn from development, women and gender studies, which was beyond the scope of this rapid review. This evidence may not be described in a way that appears to be explicitly relevant to biodiversity loss, but we know from other bodies of work that this literature can add detail to a complex issue. For example, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)’s Global Gender and Environment Outlook (GGEO) (2016) draws on evidence from development studies literature to illustrate the complexity of coercive

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<sup>54</sup> Malmer, P (SwedBio), personal communication in reference to the following research as examples (1) Lee, S, McMahan, K and Scott, D (2015) The gendered nature of serious birdwatching. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife* 20(1), 47–64; (2) Rodriguez, L, Chitwood, C, Peterson, N et al. (2016) Gender differences in hunter recruitment and dedication in Denmark. *Wildlife in Biology Practice* 12(2).

<sup>55</sup> Ochiai, H, Ikei, H, Song, C, et al. (2015) Physiological and psychological effects of a forest therapy program on middle-aged females. *International Journal for Environment Research and Public Health* 12(12), 15222–15232

<sup>56</sup> The term “natural spaces” is the term used in this paper to describe “environments dominated by natural elements such as trees, grass, water”

<sup>57</sup> Thomas, F (2015) The role of natural environments within women’s everyday health and wellbeing in Copenhagen, Denmark *Health and Place* 35, 187–195

<sup>58</sup> IUCN (2019) Advancing gender in the environment: gender in fisheries—a sea of opportunities. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2019-040-En.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> Ali, M and Grobicki, A (7 November 2016) Women’s roles in managing wetlands. *The Solutions Journal*

<sup>60</sup> Bioversity International (2019) Agrobiodiversity Index Report 2019: Risk and Resilience. Rome (Italy): Bioversity International. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/100820>

<sup>61</sup> Friant, S, Ayambem, W and Alobi, A (2020) Eating bushmeat improves food security in a biodiversity and infectious disease “hotspot”. *EcoHealth* 17(1), 125–138

<sup>62</sup> van Vliet, N, Nebesse, C, and Nasi, R (2015) Bushmeat consumption among rural and urban children from Province Orientale, Democratic Republic of Congo. *Oryx* 49(1), 165–174

sex for trade relationships, which can lead to women using extreme coping mechanisms such as “loan sharks” and are linked to debt bondage and child marriage.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, it is interesting to highlight that the identified evidence typically focuses on how women or girls are dependent on the abundance or availability of specific species and resources. There was just one example that described the importance of diversity for resilience — that is, providing girls with traditional knowledge about how to cope with external changes such as environmental degradation. This is an observation that has been noted in other evidence reviews seeking to understand the contribution of biodiversity to poverty alleviation; often evidence suggests that it is the abundance or availability of specific components of biodiversity that is important (eg for providing food, medicine, fuel, tradeable goods), and there is little evidence on diversity itself.<sup>64</sup> However, diversity is vital as it “underpins the abundance, extent and condition of nature, natural resources, ecosystems and secures the flow of benefits to people”.<sup>65</sup>

### 3.7. What next?

A key reflection from this rapid review is that follow-up work to address gaps in evidence needs to draw on insights from existing knowledge and understanding about how women and girls’ lives interact with biodiversity. Although this body of literature in itself is limited, many of the key informants agreed that there is a lack of literature addressing themes related to women, girls and biodiversity. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has also acknowledged gaps in understanding related to women’s roles in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, particularly the knowledge, roles and responsibilities of Indigenous women.<sup>66</sup>

Further research is needed, but first it would be valuable to understand what we already know that is not published or written down. As is clear from IIED’s questionnaire (which was online for just four weeks and captured 52 responses from 32 countries), there is a wealth of knowledge — including Indigenous and local knowledge — held by women’s networks and organisations, activists, researchers and policymakers. Note that in our questionnaire, respondents could have selected the option “not sure, we need more research” as one of their three responses, but few did (only six respondents). Understanding what we know — and from a diversity of perspectives — is an important step to collating existing knowledge and prioritising where to place efforts for generating further evidence. Crucially, any exercises to do this must reach out to a diversity of women’s representatives at national and especially local levels to understand in their words, and from their experiences, how biodiversity loss impacts on their lives.

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<sup>63</sup> See Hossain 2009, Mendoza 2009, Béné and Merten 2008 in: UNEP (2016) Global Gender and Environment Outlook

<sup>64</sup> Roe, D, Thomas, D, Smith, J, Walpole, M and Elliot, J (2011) Biodiversity and Poverty: Ten Frequently Asked Questions — Ten Policy Implications. IIED. <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/14612IIED.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> Roe, D, Seddon, N and Elliot, J (2019) Biodiversity loss is a development issue. A rapid review of evidence. IIED. <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/17636IIED.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> CBD (2020) Enabling a gender-responsive process for the development of the post 2020 biodiversity framework: supplementary background and tools. CBD/COP/14/INF/15 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/5ab6/13f3/3cff0c5b52c856db19b279ec/cop-14-inf-15-en.pdf>

## 4. Women and girls in international biodiversity policy

Transformative and societal change is necessary to address the combined biodiversity loss and climate crises.<sup>67</sup> The importance of political will in initiating transformative change is well recognised as essential to driving through reforms to governing institutions and their policies and implementation. Such changes must respond to the priorities of women and girls reflecting their perspectives, knowledge, interests and rights.

In this section, we outline where women and girls' priorities are reflected in international biodiversity-related conventions. We follow this with a discussion about the gaps in international biodiversity-related conventions, and what other international agendas are key to raising ambition.

### 4.1 Biodiversity-related conventions

Internationally, there are ten biodiversity-related conventions, but few reflect and respond to women and girls' priorities. Table 4.1 lists the conventions and notes where there is reference to women, girls or gender. Of the ten conventions, six make no reference to women, girls or gender in the titles of any texts, key decisions or targets. Of the four other conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (1993) stands out as having made the most progress towards reflecting — and responding to — women and girls' priorities, though it does not go as far as to explicitly recognise the differential impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls.

#### 4.1.1 The CBD

The CBD references women and girls in its preamble, recognising: “the **vital role women play** in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirming the need for **full participation of women** at all levels of policy making and implementation for biological diversity conservation”.

The scope and substance of decisions by the CBD has previously been analysed by WEDO<sup>68</sup> and IUCN<sup>69</sup> and brought up to date for this report. Since 1996, the CBD has taken 78 decisions that make some reference to women or gender (see Figure 4.1) though none refer to girls. Of these 78 decisions, 7 refer to women or gender only in the preambular paragraphs, 28 refer to

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<sup>67</sup> IPBES (2019) Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>

<sup>68</sup> WEDO (2012) Gender Equality and the Convention on Biological Diversity: A compilation of decision text. <https://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/folletofinalCBD-WEB.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Wells, H (2015) Gender and Biodiversity Technical Guide. IUCN. <https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/gender-and-biodiversity-technical-guide-3.pdf>

women or gender only in operative paragraphs<sup>70</sup> and 22 refer to women or gender in annexes to the decisions. The remaining 21 refer to women or gender across both preambular and operative paragraphs.

**Table 4.1. Gender, women and girls in biodiversity-related global agreements**

Convention	Relevant convention text	Key decisions relating to women, girls or gender	Relevant targets	Gender action plan
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, FAO, 2004	None	None	None	No
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), 1996	Reference to women in preamble	Four decisions	Strategic Framework 2018–2030; objective 2, outcome 2	Yes
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1993, including the Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols	Reference to women in preamble	78 decisions that refer to women, including 5 key decisions on gender mainstreaming and Gender Plans of Action	Aichi Biodiversity Target 14	Yes
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979	None	None	None	No
Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, 1979	None	None	None	No
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), 1975	None	None	None	No
World Heritage Convention, 1972	None	One key decision related to operational guidance which refers to gender	None	No
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), 1971	None	One key decision on gender mainstreaming	None	No
International Plant Protection Convention, 1952	None	None	None	No

<sup>70</sup> Preambular paragraphs provide the context of the decisions. Operative paragraphs include a call or invitation to action of some kind by Parties and other stakeholders.

International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, 1946	None	None	None	No
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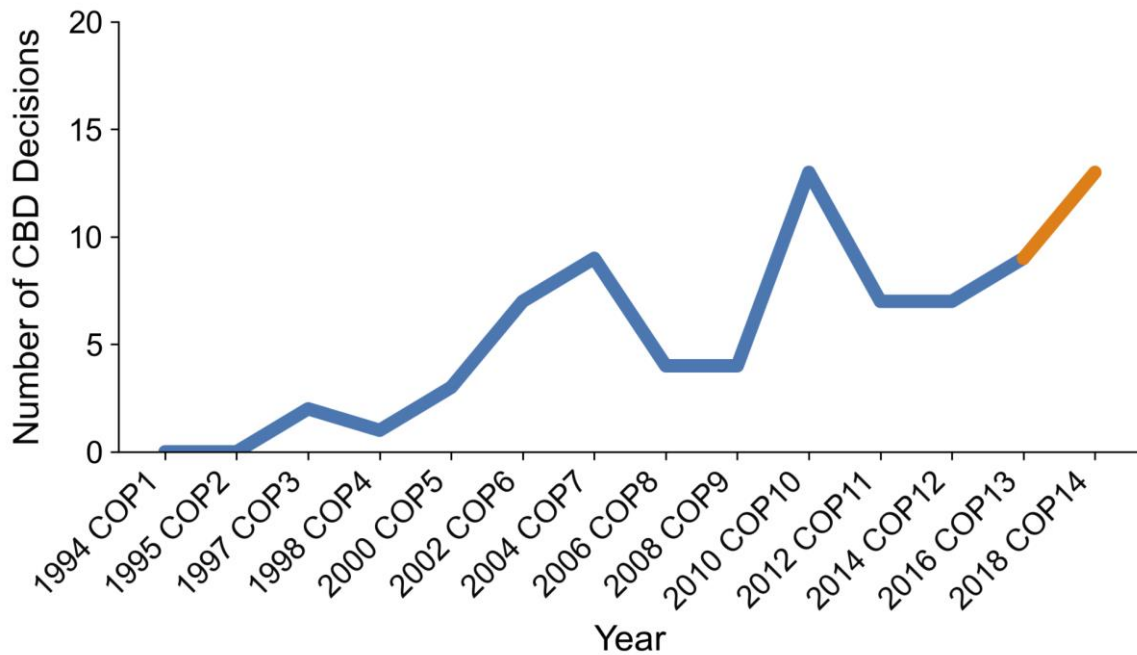


Figure 4.1 Number of CBD decisions addressing women, girls or gender since COP1 in 1994  
Source: Wells (2015) and this report

Analysis of the references to women or gender within decisions by topic (see Table 4.2) shows that references are dominated by gender balance, representation and participation of women in convention processes and initiatives, and to a lesser extent by recognition of women’s roles in thematic programmes of work (eg in protected areas conservation) and the need for capacity building and access to finance. A pattern emerges of preambular paragraphs that reflect the importance of women’s issues followed by operative paragraphs focused on enabling conditions predominantly about representation and some attention to access to finance and capacity building. While these issues are important, operative paragraphs do not substantively address other key priorities — for example, women’s rights such as equal access to land and natural resources, recognition of the diversity of women and their circumstances, access to devolved nature/biodiversity finance, and recognition of the importance of particular knowledge women hold. A similar pattern was observed in motions proposed for the IUCN 2021 World Conservation Congress relating to gender.<sup>71</sup>

Analysing the CBD decisions from the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) 1–12 using an equity lens<sup>72</sup> emphasises these disparities — 57% of the references related to procedural equity (eg women’s representation and participation), 36% related to recognitional equity (eg recognising women’s rights) and just 7% of references related to the distribution of benefits and costs (eg

<sup>71</sup> Anthem, H (19 May 2021) Gender is linked to the biodiversity and climate crises. When will our policies reflect this? <https://www.iucn.org/crossroads-blog/>

<sup>72</sup> Recognitional equity is the acknowledgement of, and respect for stakeholders’ rights and their identities, knowledge systems, values and institutions. Procedural equity is about the inclusiveness of rule and decision making, transparency and access to information, accountability for action (and inaction), access to justice and dispute resolution. Distributional equity refers to the sharing of costs and benefits among different stakeholders, and how the costs experienced by some stakeholders are mitigated. See IIED (2021) Strengthening equity in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2021-04/20156IIED.pdf>

access to benefit-sharing mechanisms).<sup>73</sup> Looking at decisions for COP13 and COP14, a similar pattern emerges with 50%, 30% and 20%, respectively. Examples of commitments across the equity framework are illustrated in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.2 Analysis of topics covered in CBD decisions (preambular and operative text, annexes) referencing women or gender 1996–2018**

Topic	Number of references	Topic	Number of references
Gender balance and women's participation	42	Calls for research, information, data	8
Recognition of role of women	19	Gender Plan of Action	5
Finance	12	Respect for traditional knowledge	3
Capacity building	11	Sustainable use	3
Mainstreaming	10	Total number of references	<b>113</b>

**Table 4.3 Examples of CBD decisions referencing women**

Recognitional equity	Procedural equity	Distributive equity
Decision COP XIII/3 Strategic plans and Aichi Biodiversity targets	Decision IV/9 Implementation of Article 8 (j) and related provisions	Decision X/1 Access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization
"Recognizes the vital role of women in mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and tourism and other sectors as well as the need to take fully into account the role, rights, needs and aspirations of women in all biodiversity mainstreaming policies and actions"	"Recommends mechanisms to ensure full and equal participation of Indigenous women in CBD implementation, and to support unique responsibilities of Indigenous women in caring for traditional lands and protecting biodiversity"	"Parties to endeavour to support development of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources by Indigenous and local communities, including women."

The CBD was the first biodiversity-related and the first Rio convention in 2008 to agree, prepare and implement a Gender Plan of Action (GPA). The GPA is central to defining the CBD's approach to improving gender equality. The CBD is currently (at the time of writing this report in March 2022) in the final stages of preparing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) and the third iteration of the GPA, though the link between the two is not yet clear.<sup>74</sup>

Creating pressure for change in how the GBF and the GPA recognise women and girls is the CBD Women's Caucus, coordinated by Women4Biodiversity. This group is a recognised

<sup>73</sup> Quesada Aguilar, A(2018) Gender and the CBD. Policy perspective: global and national (Costa Rica). Presentation as part of IIED Webinar Gender and Biodiversity Conservation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2hZTaB8U0&list=PL1iUHL94bWo7PPXC0LlwHhgn5XCfZEplC&index=2>

<sup>74</sup> CBD (2022) Draft Post-2020 Gender Plan of Action. CBD/SBI/3/4/Add.2/Rev.2

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/0919/6830/6fe8d737b8192a39f3378e23/sbi-03-04-add2-rev2-en.pdf>

constituency within the CBD and convenes over 300 different organisations.<sup>75</sup> Another key group is the Friends of Gender Equality Group<sup>76</sup> co-chaired by the governments of Canada and Malawi and including representatives from other government delegations and civil society. There are also other networks advocating for women and girls — and a recognition of their diversity — including the Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity<sup>77</sup> and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network.<sup>78</sup>

“Gender equality” appears within the GBF’s overall theory of change and the enabling conditions<sup>79</sup>. While Target 21 of the proposed GBF explicitly refers to women and girls (see Box 3.1) the CBD Women’s Caucus note that this mention feels like “an afterthought”, which is not sufficiently dealt with by the alternative text proposed by the co-chairs.<sup>80</sup> Costa Rica has proposed an additional stand-alone target, Target 22, that focuses solely on women and girls, and this has the support of the CBD Women’s Caucus, WWF and the Human Rights in Biodiversity working group<sup>81</sup>, but not all of the stakeholders represented in the Friends of Gender Equality Group.

During the third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the GBF in Geneva in March 2022, Guatemala, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Togo, Benin, Cameroon and Tanzania supported Costa Rica’s proposal of a Target 22.<sup>82</sup> At the meeting, the GBF co-chairs additionally made a proposal for a new section in the GBF on principles and approaches to implementation, which includes a reference to “gender equality and gender-responsive approaches”.<sup>83</sup> However, civil society groups fear that this approach may be used in subsequent negotiations to argue against Target 21 and the proposed Target 22, and weaken the text of the GBF by removing reference to principles of equity and rights from the operative text on vision, goals and targets.<sup>84</sup>

Opinions differ as to how to give women and girls a stronger profile in the GBF. Stakeholders favour either:

- a) A stand-alone target such as Target 22; or
- b) A series of gender indicators under all the relevant goals and targets to capture progress related to women and girls. Relevant goals and targets include those related to equitable benefit sharing (Goal C, Targets 9 and 13); protected areas management (Targets 4 and 20); access to resources, including clean air and water (Goal B, Target

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<sup>75</sup> Women4biodiversity: <https://www.women4biodiversity.org>

<sup>76</sup> The Friends of Gender Equality group arose from a 2018 workshop organised by UN Women, which now serves as the interface between Parties and non-Party gender equality advocates such as UN Women and the Women’s Caucus (civil society voice).

<sup>77</sup> International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity: <https://iifb-fiib.org>

<sup>78</sup> Global Youth Biodiversity Network: <https://www.gybn.org>

<sup>79</sup> CBD (2022) Draft post-2020 Gender Plan of Action – Highlighting linkages with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. CBD/SBI/3/INF/41. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/444a/f794/c4ff3e8f037180bb33fa0afc/sbi-03-inf-41-en.pdf>

<sup>80</sup> CBD (2021) Reflections by The Co-Chairs Following the First Session of the Third Meeting of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. CBD/WG2020/3/6. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e26d/3f00/7cb7a016a3b9bed6304f86aa/wg2020-03-06-en.pdf>

<sup>81</sup> The Human Rights in Biodiversity working group was established in Chiang Mai in 2020 and members include the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), SwedBio, CBD Alliance, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), ICCA Consortium, Natural Justice, Tebtebba Foundation, WWF, International, Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN), CoopeSoliDar R.L., Friends of the Earth International, the CBD Women’s Caucus and Women4Biodiversity.

<sup>82</sup> CBD Alliance (20 March 2022) A new Target 22 on gender equality is proposed by Parties. <https://eco2022cbdalliance.blogspot.com/2022/03/a-new-target-22-on-gender-equality-is.html>

<sup>83</sup> CBD (2022) Preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework: Draft recommendation submitted by the Co-Chairs CBD/WG2020/3/L.2. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/c949/b2cc/a311c0c411d3a81134e2c7f3/wg2020-03-l-02-en.pdf>

<sup>84</sup> CBD Alliance (2022) Guidance for the implementation of the global biodiversity framework. <https://eco2022cbdalliance.blogspot.com/2022/03/guidance-for-implementation-of-global.html>

11); safety of public green spaces (Target 12); biodiversity education (Targets 16 and 20); and decision making (Target 21).<sup>85</sup>

Arguably, a series of gender indicators that span all relevant goals and targets would be the ideal long-term outcome and would help to integrate gender fully by broadening the scope of ambition beyond participation in decision making to consider other issues of recognitional and distributional equity. But in the short term a standalone target would give much needed — and more immediate — visibility to women and girls' priorities. 3.1.2

#### 4.1.2 UNCCD, Ramsar and CITES

The UNCCD has made some progress in recognising women and girls since 2011 through four decisions<sup>86</sup>. In 2011 Parties asked the UNCCD's Secretariat to undertake advocacy on drought taking into account gender<sup>87</sup>, followed by a request in 2013 to mainstream gender issues.<sup>88</sup> In 2017, the UNCCD adopted a GPA, which acknowledged its approach on gender had not been strong enough.<sup>89,90</sup> The plan includes priority actions on strengthening women's rights and access to resources and increasing economic empowerment to tackle poverty. The fourth decision in 2019 reaffirmed commitment to the GPA and to "making the implementation of the Convention gender-responsive and transformative". However, an analysis of the UNCCD in 2018 by UN Women argues that "the Convention stops short of employing a gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach and of drawing a clear connection between gender equality issues and the realization of Parties' obligations".<sup>91</sup> UN Women identified key entry points for addressing gender including, for example, establishing a dedicated gender mechanism (eg the Women's Major Group).

For the other biodiversity-related conventions listed in Table 3.1 there is much less (if any) recognition of women and girls. This is likely a function of the era in which many of the older conventions were negotiated and came into force when the broad issue of gender and the gendered impact of biodiversity loss was not recognised, and few women delegates were present. Furthermore, texts of the International Plant Protection Convention (which focuses on plant health) and the International Whaling Convention are focused principally on technical and scientific considerations.

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar) only formally began to address issues related to gender in 2018. A review on gender-related content of Ramsar (and World Heritage Convention) national reports from 2016<sup>92</sup> inferred a lack of awareness or

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<sup>85</sup> CBD (2021) Developing and measuring a gender-responsive post-2020 biodiversity framework: information on gender considerations within the post -2020 monitoring framework. CBD/WG2020/3/INF/10. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/93f6/fcd9/4cb5a6fad7bcefe994d72e9f/wg2020-03-inf-10-en.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> Decision 9/COP10 (2011); Decision 9/COP11 (2013); Decision 30/COP13 (2017); Decision 24/COP14

<sup>87</sup> UNCCD (2011) Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies. Decision 9/COP.10. <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/dec9-COP.10eng.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> UNCCD (2013) Ways of promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies. Decision 9/COP.11. <https://www.unccd.int/official-documentscop-11-windhoek-2013/9cop11>

<sup>89</sup> UNCCD (2018) Gender Action Plan. <https://www.unccd.int/publications/gender-action-plan>

<sup>90</sup> A roadmap to accompany the GPA will be considered at UNCCD COP15 in Cote d'Ivoire in May 2022: UNCCD (2022) Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Gender. Note by the secretariat. <https://www.unccd.int/official-documentscop-15-abidjan-cote-divoire-2022/iccdcop1517>

<sup>91</sup> UN Women (2018) Towards a Gender Responsive Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification: Research Paper. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2018/Towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-UN-Convention-to-Combat-Desertification-en.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> Bastian, L, Gilligan, M and Clabits, B (2016) Gender and Protected Areas – exploring national reporting to the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention. IUCN, Washington.

understanding by national officials from the very limited responses provided and recommended: more rigorous reporting; the introduction of gender equality policies; and gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the conventions. In 2018, Parties agreed Resolution XIII.18 on gender and wetlands.<sup>93</sup> This encouraged gender perspectives and empowerment of women in wetland management, and requested an analysis of the benefits of taking a gender perspective and having balanced representation within delegations.

Negotiations on a future legally binding agreement under the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) are continuing. However gender perspectives on women and the oceans are poorly understood as the lack of gender-related analysis in the second World Ocean Assessment shows<sup>94</sup>. As of March 2022 the draft convention text makes only two passing references to gender and the role of women, one on gender balance in its proposed scientific and technical body and the second on a gender-responsive approach to capacity building and the transfer of marine technology.<sup>95</sup>

A further clear gap is the recognition of women and girls in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) (1975). CITES focuses on legal wildlife trade in which women participate and benefit in different ways from men.<sup>96</sup> However, CITES has yet to develop any relevant convention text or resolutions and guidance that recognise women and girls. While CITES is considering how to effectively engage Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in CITES processes, discussion on this strategic matter at the 74th Standing Committee meeting in March 2022 was a missed opportunity as there was no consideration of gender, women or girls in the pre-meeting paper.<sup>97</sup> A WWF report has also observed this gap stating that “CITES is notably gender-unaware. Pressure, support and encouragement should be brought to bear to remedy this”.<sup>98</sup>

Another related gap is in high-level, intergovernmental processes to respond to illegal wildlife trade (IWT). The conferences and statements of Kasane<sup>99</sup>, Hanoi<sup>100</sup> and London<sup>101</sup> make no reference to gender, women or girls and there are almost no commitments by national governments that reflect an understanding of the role of gender in IWT<sup>102</sup>. This is a significant

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<https://genderandenvironment.org/gender-and-protected-areas-exploring-national-reporting-to-the-ramsar-convention-and-the-world-heritage-convention/>

<sup>93</sup> Responding to this resolution, the convention recently published gender mainstreaming guidance along with examples of good practice in gender-related wetland management. See Aguilar, L (2021) Guidance on mainstreaming gender under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands, Gland. <https://genderandenvironment.org/guidance-on-mainstreaming-gender-under-the-ramsar-convention-on-wetlands/>

<sup>94</sup> UN (2021) World Oceans Assessment Vol 2. UN New York <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa2launch>

<sup>95</sup> UN (2022) Fourth substantive session. <https://www.un.org/bbnj/node/391>

<sup>96</sup> Collaborative Partnership on Wildlife (2016) Sustainable Wildlife Management and Gender. CPW Fact Sheet 5. FAO. <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/1e737507-7dcb-4978-81eb-b0ceeb6581bb/>

<sup>97</sup> CITES (2022) Engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities. <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/74/E-SC74-20-02.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> Seager, J (2021) Gender and illegal wildlife trade: Overlooked and underestimated. WWF, Gland. [https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/gender\\_iwt\\_wwf\\_report\\_v9.pdf](https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/gender_iwt_wwf_report_v9.pdf)

<sup>99</sup> Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade (2015) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417231/kasane-statement-150325.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417231/kasane-statement-150325.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade (2016) Viet Nam. <https://www.traffic.org/site/assets/files/2808/hanoi-statement-on-illegal-wildlife-trade.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade (2018) Declaration. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/declaration-london-conference-on-the-illegal-wildlife-trade-2018/london-conference-on-the-illegal-wildlife-trade-october-2018-declaration>

<sup>102</sup> This observation is based on an unpublished database of national country's self-reported progress against commitments made at the three conferences of Kasane, Hanoi and London. This database was used as part of the analysis in the report: WWF and IIED (2019) More than word: Are commitments to tackle illegal wildlife trade being

gap, as evidenced by WWF's review of gender and IWT, which found that gender dynamics infuse IWT and are overlooked and underestimated. Findings related to women and girls include: (1) women play roles as traffickers and marketers; (2) women and men have different experiences of the costs and benefits of poaching, trafficking and consuming wildlife; and (3) women's sexual exploitation, prostitution and trafficking facilitates IWT transactions from local to global scales.<sup>103</sup> An IUCN review<sup>104</sup> has similarly highlighted GBV as both a means and an impact of IWT, including the impacts not just of criminal activities on women and girls, but also of attempts to combat environmental crimes through militarised anti-poaching responses.

## 4.2 What does expert opinion tell us about gaps in international policy?

In IIED's online questionnaire, 41 respondents were asked what are (a) the policy gaps and (b) the implementation gaps in policy frameworks related to women, girls and biodiversity. Chiefly, respondents felt that issues lay across the local, national and global levels (59% and 56% for (a) and (b), respectively) and this was followed by national level (24% and 20% respectively). Few respondents singled out the local level (10% and 17%, respectively) or the global level (7% for both). Respondents were then presented with eight predefined categories and asked to select the top two, or suggest an "other" gap (which no respondent gave). Figure 4.2 presents the results illustrating the top four gaps identified as:

1. Recognition of women and girls as agents of change (eg traditional knowledge-holders, environmental defenders)
2. Representation of women in policy decision making and implementation, and
3. Mainstreaming women and girls' perspectives (interests, needs and human rights) into relevant international and/or national policies.
4. Policy differentiation to respond to the diversity of women and girls' interests, needs and rights (considering for example, ethnicity, Indigeneity, socioeconomic status, age (dis)abilities)

In addition to views from questionnaire respondents, the key informants raised a number of issues about gaps in international frameworks including the lack of coherence in how biodiversity-related conventions treat gender and understanding of gender synergies between them, and the lack of recognition of women's rights in implementing protected areas policies.

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met. A review of progress against commitments made at intergovernmental conferences.  
[https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/WWF\\_IWT\\_Report\\_v8.pdf](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/WWF_IWT_Report_v8.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> Seager J (2021) Gender and illegal wildlife trade: Overlooked and underestimated. WWF, Gland.  
[https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/gender\\_iwt\\_wwf\\_report\\_v9.pdf](https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/gender_iwt_wwf_report_v9.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> Castañeda Camey, I, Sabater, L, Owren, C and Boyer, AE (2020) Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.  
<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>

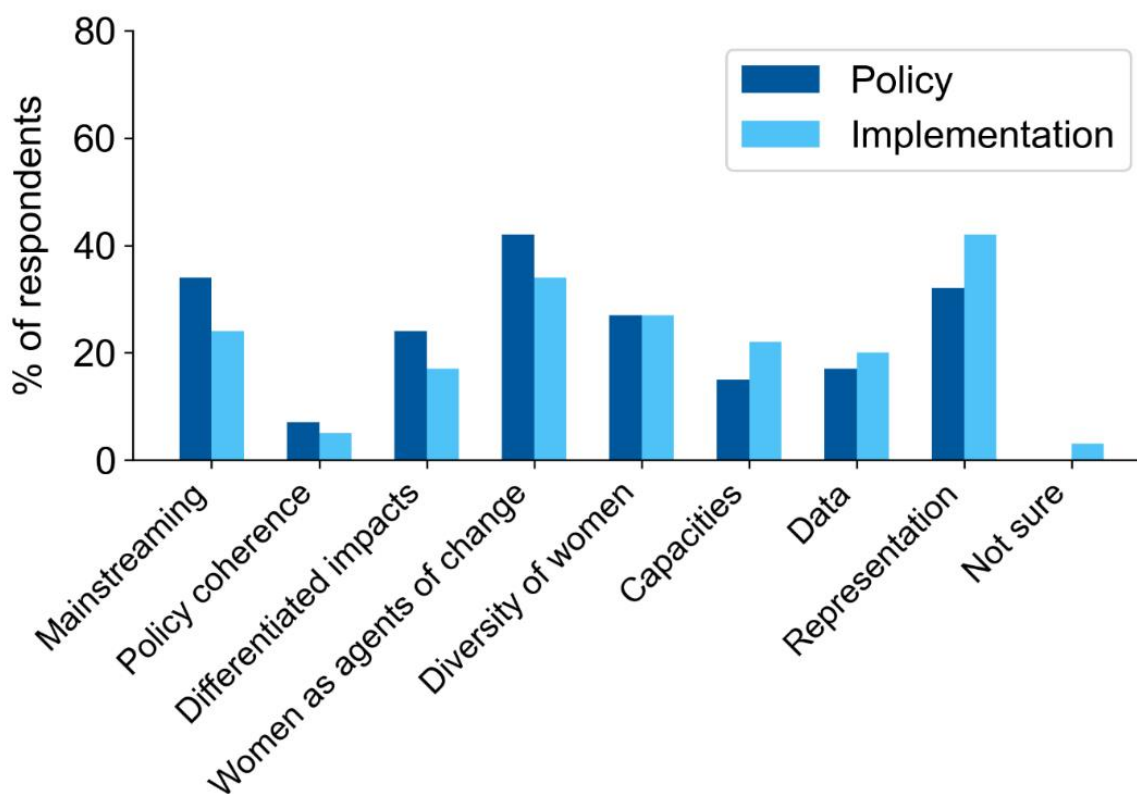


Figure 4.2. Respondents' perspectives on the gaps in biodiversity-related policy and implementation for women and girls<sup>105</sup>

### 4.3 Is international biodiversity policy addressing women and girls' priorities?

This review of the formal decisions of biodiversity-related conventions such as the CBD, Ramsar, the UNCCD and CITES shows the varying degrees to which women and girls' priorities are addressed. The CBD and UNCCD clearly have the most ambition, though they fall short of addressing substantive issues, for example GBV, lack of rights to land ownership, and lack of access rights to natural resources. These issues were in part recognised as far back as 2000 as important policy gaps during the Beijing +5 review so while these are not new issues, progress in addressing them has been slow.<sup>106</sup> Increasingly, there is more attention internationally to GBV and its links to the environment. Issues that international biodiversity-related policymaking should engage with include the role of GBV in limiting access to, use of, and control over natural resources, the role of biodiversity loss in exacerbating GBV; and

<sup>105</sup>The options in survey question included: Mainstreaming women and girls' perspectives (interests, needs and human rights) into relevant international and/or national policies; Policy coherence and synergy across international and/or national policy commitments; Recognition of the differentiated impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls; Recognition of women and girls as agents of change (eg traditional knowledge-holders, environmental defenders); Policy differentiation to respond to the diversity of women's interests, needs and rights (considering ethnicity, indigeneity, socio-economic status, age, disability for example); Capacities of governments or supporting agencies on gender equity and equality; Data to be able to monitor progress towards and impact of policy implementation towards gender equity and equality; Representation of women in policy decision making and implementation; Other — please state; and Not sure/don't know.

<sup>106</sup> UN Women (2000) Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action — Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome. <https://www.icsspe.org/system/files/Beijing%20Declaration%20and%20Platform%20for%20Action.pdf>

environmental and human rights defenders' exposure to GBV.<sup>107</sup> Reluctance to address these issues is partly linked to views among some stakeholders (including but not limited to Parties) that these issues are beyond the mandate of these biodiversity-related conventions.

Other conventions yet to significantly engage with women and girls' priorities include Ramsar and CITES. This is important to address because both conventions focus on areas of concern — wetlands and wildlife trade — where biodiversity loss can directly impact upon women and girls' wellbeing. Additionally, overlooking women and girls in IWT-related intergovernmental processes is an important oversight that needs to be addressed in future high-level meetings, especially given the role of GBV as a facilitator and impact of IWT with serious implications for women and girls' lives.

UN Women's analyses of the UNCCD and the CBD recommend pursuing synergies between the Rio conventions (the CBD, UNCCD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)) and their actions to address gender to: (1) strengthen cooperation and knowledge sharing; (2) mobilise resources for joint activities; (3) support and develop strategic partnerships; and (4) map gender mainstreaming opportunities.<sup>108,109</sup> There may, in particular, be learnings from the UNFCCC, which is regarded by some gender experts as "having undergone a paradigm shift since 2008 and starting to address gender equality and women's empowerment in a substantive manner."<sup>110</sup> Creating synergies across the conventions in this way should help to respond more holistically to the interconnected drivers and impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls, as well as land degradation and climate change.

Opinions differ on whether women and girls' priorities should be the subject of a stand-alone target(s) or addressed in gender indicators that sit under all relevant goals and targets of biodiversity-related conventions. It's likely the best approach will vary depending on the convention. However, there is agreement that women and girls should not be treated in conventions' targets or goals as an afterthought — as is the case with Target 21 of the current draft of the post-2020 GBF.

Often, women and girls' representation is the dominant topic of international biodiversity-related policy decisions (see Table 3.2 above for the full list of topics). Take for example, the CBD where 42 of 113 references to gender, women or girls are about gender balance and women's participation. Contrast this with 19 references to the recognition of women's role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. This reinforces a pattern seen at household, local, national and regional levels of underestimating and undervaluing women's knowledge and contributions, and a tendency to frame women as weak and dependent, overlooking their historical role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Castañeda Camey, I, Sabater, L, Owren, C and Boyer, AE (2020) Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.  
<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>

<sup>108</sup> UN Women (2018) Towards a Gender Responsive Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.  
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2018/Towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-the-Convention-on-Biological-Diversity-en.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> UN Women (2018) Towards a Gender Responsive Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification: Research Paper.  
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2018/Towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-UN-Convention-to-Combat-Desertification-en.pdf>

<sup>110</sup> Aguilar Revelo, L (2021) Gender equality in the midst of climate change: what can the region's machineries for the advancement of women do? Gender Affairs series, No. 159. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/47358/1/S2100451\\_en.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/47358/1/S2100451_en.pdf) (see in particular Table 1 Gender Decisions in UNFCCC by subject matter)

<sup>111</sup> Alvarez I, and Lovera, S (2016) New times for women and gender issues in biodiversity conservation and climate justice. *Development* 59, 263–265.

Biodiversity-related convention decisions should therefore encompass a broader set of commitments and actions to address not just women and girls' representation within governance matters (procedural equity), but also issues related to accountability for action/inaction (procedural equity), access to and benefits from biodiversity such as non-timber forest products (distributional equity), GBV (recognitional equity), access to resources including secure land tenure (recognitional equity), and acknowledgement of the distinctive role women play in addressing biodiversity conservation (recognitional equity). This is the motivation behind Target 22 for the CBD.<sup>112</sup>

Interestingly, while there are references across biodiversity-related conventions to women's representation and participation, this is still an issue that women's representatives and organisations campaign on. In IIED's questionnaire, representation of women in policy decision making (and implementation) featured as a key gap that respondents suggested is an issue at all levels of decision making — from global to local. At the international level, an issue raised by the key informants is that representatives feel their voices are not always heard or respected, partly due to a lack of understanding of the importance of addressing women and girls' priorities, or cultural perceptions about the role of women in decision making. In a key informant interview, Martha Mphasto Kalemba stated: "What does it mean when both women and men sit at the table? Just because they are sitting at the same table doesn't mean they are fully contributing to decision making."

One opportunity for advancing ambition in biodiversity-related conventions is through adopting a human rights-based approach. Simply put, this means that biodiversity policy frameworks and their implementation should not violate human rights — including the rights of women and girls.<sup>113</sup> This is particularly timely given the formal recognition for the first time in October 2021 of the right to a clean, safe and sustainable environment by the UN Human Rights Council and the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on this issue.<sup>114</sup> UNHCR, UNEP and UN Women have highlighted 17 human rights obligations and responsibilities of states and other actors related to environmental change (including biodiversity loss) and gender equality including: taking urgent and ambitious gender-responsive action; addressing GBV in the context of environmental crises; and ensuring equal ownership of, access to, and benefits from resources.<sup>115</sup> In current negotiations around the post-2020 GBF, civil society — including the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), SwedBio, and the Forest Peoples Programme (FFP), among others — are advocating for a human rights-based approach. In a key informant interview, FFP's Joji Carino emphasised: "The human rights framework is intended to give attention to the vulnerable and for everyone to be treated equally — this is where we [Indigenous women] can exercise agency on issues like water, land, food, environment, and biodiversity."

There are a complex set of reasons why biodiversity-related conventions are not sufficiently addressing — or raising ambition on — women and girls' priorities. The CBD Secretariat's review of its 2015–2020 GPA cites challenges to progress in areas such as gender mainstreaming, collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, funding, capacity building, and limited focus on involvement of other relevant organisations such as intergovernmental

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<sup>112</sup> Women4Biodiversity and FARN (2022) A New Target 22 on Gender Equality is Proposed by Parties. <https://eco2022cbdalliance.blogspot.com/2022/03/a-new-target-22-on-gender-equality-is.html>

<sup>113</sup> SwedBio (2021) Implementing a human-rights based approach; guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. [https://swed.bio/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/humanrights\\_3-10.03.226.pdf](https://swed.bio/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/humanrights_3-10.03.226.pdf)

<sup>114</sup> UNHRC (2021) The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. A/HRC/RES/48. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session48/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx>

<sup>115</sup> UNHRC, UNEP, UN Women (2021) Human rights, the environment and gender equality – key messages. [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/Final\\_HumanRightsEnvironmentGenderEquality\\_KM.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/Final_HumanRightsEnvironmentGenderEquality_KM.pdf)

organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in implementing GPA activities.<sup>116</sup> Proposals for capacity building in particular occur across many reports and decisions but it is often unclear whose capacity needs to be built (ie which particular groups of women and men), at what level (global to local) in relation to what (ie the knowledge and skills areas where capacity is needed) and how this might be done to genuinely foster learning, engagement and behaviour change (beyond the standard methods of workshops and remote learning modules). Understanding these needs more fully through reviewing what has already been done — and its impact — would be an important first step in helping to overcome some of the knowledge gaps and skills that hamper the advancement of women and girls' priorities across biodiversity-related conventions.<sup>117</sup>

Underpinning obstacles related to funding and capacity is the fundamental issue of political will and inertia among Parties (and some implementing agencies, including conservation IGOs and NGOs) about the relevance of gender to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. This is discussed further in section 4.3. Internationally, one response to this should include improving the evidence base on women, girls and biodiversity — including how the diversity of women and girls are differentially affected by biodiversity loss, but additionally evidencing their contributions to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Another related suggestion from a key informant — Lorena Aguilar — was for “a global observatory that tracks countries' commitments under MEA reporting systems (ie NBSAPs and NDCs), mandates from their COPs, existing and new data, knowledge and information to evidence the impacts of changes in policy and practice for women, girls and biodiversity.”<sup>118</sup>

Inadequate international finance to support Parties to address women and girls' priorities is an important obstacle to progress. But, arguably, just as (if not more) important is ensuring that women can access nature-related international finance. Analysis of multilateral climate and environment finance including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) shows that despite attention to gender (through gender policies and/or action plans) few projects are genuinely engaging — in 2018 for example, GEF found that just 15.7% of projects reviewed undertook a gender analysis prior to their approval.<sup>119,120</sup> Similarly, an analysis published by Global Greengrants Fund and Prospera International Network in 2014 showed that as little as 3% of grant dollars awarded as part of foundations' philanthropic environmental funding were for supporting women-led efforts.<sup>121</sup> There's little reason to expect this to have substantially shifted.

Across the biodiversity-related conventions, we found very few references to girls. UNICEF suggests that children will be affected by biodiversity loss through effects, for example, on their

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<sup>116</sup> CBD (2020) Review of Implementation of the 2015–2020 Gender Plan of Action. CBD/SBI/3/2/Add.3 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/2a29/307a/3235fdabd9edd01b9576e42b/sbi-03-02-add3-en.pdf>

<sup>117</sup> CBD's draft long-term strategic framework for capacity development recognises that gender perspectives should be fully integrated into biodiversity capacity development effort as one of its key principles. CBD (2020) Draft Long-Term Strategic Framework for Capacity Development to Support Implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. CBD/SBI/3/7/Add.1. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e660/b9bf/9cb474bfb0e1ed9c4fa03cba/sbi-03-07-add1-en.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> Aguilar, L (Independent gender consultant), personal communication

<sup>119</sup> See Box 4.1 in: UN Women (2021) Beyond Covid-19: A Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Feminist-plan-for-sustainability-and-social-justice-en.pdf>

<sup>120</sup> Schalatek, L, Zuckerman, E and McCullough, E (2021) More than an add-on? Evaluating the integration of gender in Green Climate Fund projects and programs. Heinrich Böll Stiftung Washington and Gender Action. [https://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/hbs%20Washington\\_Gender%20Action\\_More%20than%20an%20add-on\\_Evaluating%20integration%20of%20gender%20in%20Green%20Climate%20Fund%20projects%20and%20programs.pdf](https://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/hbs%20Washington_Gender%20Action_More%20than%20an%20add-on_Evaluating%20integration%20of%20gender%20in%20Green%20Climate%20Fund%20projects%20and%20programs.pdf)

<sup>121</sup> Dobson, C and Lawrence, S (2018) Our Voices, Our Environment: The state of funding for women's environmental action. Both ENDS. [https://www.bothends.org/uploaded\\_files/document/Our\\_voices\\_our\\_environment\\_march\\_2018.pdf](https://www.bothends.org/uploaded_files/document/Our_voices_our_environment_march_2018.pdf)

food security, access to clean water, and resilience to shocks.<sup>122</sup> In IIED's questionnaire, respondents expressed concerns about the impact on girl's education as increasing domestic work burdens for women mean that girls are kept home to help with these tasks, or to earn income, and as a consequence girls are more exposed to GBV. These issues of intergenerational justice are not sufficiently addressed by biodiversity-related conventions. Ways forward to address this significant gap include working with self-organised groups of young people (such as the Global Youth Biodiversity Network and the Major Group for Children and Youth<sup>123</sup>) as well as engaging with civil society actors that work for children — for example, a coalition of these NGOs have provided recommendations on how to create space for children's voices at the UNFCCC.<sup>124</sup>

#### 4.4 How can we raise ambition?

Beyond biodiversity-related conventions, we also need to look to other international agendas. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for example, regards gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development<sup>125</sup> and is a key international policy framework for raising ambition to address women's priorities related to biodiversity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include 13 targets relevant to women and biodiversity (these are listed in Annex C), four relating to Goal 5 (gender equality) and the other nine relating to Goals 1 (end poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities), 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land). Crucially, these targets cover more than procedural equity (eg women's participation and representation, which as we have seen dominates biodiversity-related convention decisions) and begin to address issues of recognitional equity such as land rights and access to natural resources.

The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the highest-level decision-making authority on the environment, advancing global commitment and action on the 2030 Agenda. In 2019 UNEA adopted a resolution reaffirming the principle of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.<sup>126</sup> It invites member states to undertake a package of measures relating to national policies, multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) gender plans, finance for women-led efforts, international cooperation and assistance, the participation of women in decision making, and provision of information on national progress. It is hard to identify progress to date and an information document provided for UNEA 5.2 based on a questionnaire survey to identify progress revealed a disappointingly low response from only 21 out of 193 countries.<sup>127</sup> Future sessions of UNEA must return to this theme to encourage further global dialogue on environmental equity and empowerment for women and girls.

In addition to UNEA, the Commission on the Status of Women is a key platform for gender and biodiversity connections through its regular review of progress on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) supported by 189 countries,<sup>128</sup> arose

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<sup>122</sup> Colon, C (12 November 2020) Why biodiversity is important for children. UNICEF.

<https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/stories/why-biodiversity-important-children>

<sup>123</sup> UNMGCY (2020) Youth #ForNature Manifesto. <https://www.unmgcy.org/for-nature>

<sup>124</sup> Save the Children (2021) A COP Fit For Children: How to support children's participation.

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/cop-fit-children-how-support-childrens-participation/>

<sup>125</sup> UN (2016) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Para 20.

<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

<sup>126</sup> UNEA (2019) Gender equality, and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance. <https://www.informea.org/sites/default/files/decisions/UNEP-EA.4-Res.17-en.pdf>

<sup>127</sup> UNEP (2020) Information on the implementation of resolution 4/17 on promoting gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance.

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35116/INF19.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>128</sup> UN (1995) Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome.

<https://www.icsspe.org/system/files/Beijing%20Declaration%20and%20Platform%20for%20Action.pdf>

out of the 1979 Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>129</sup> and is considered the most powerful and coherent blueprint of action to advance women's rights. Women and environment is one of its twelve critical areas of concern. While analysis has tended to focus on climate rather than on biodiversity, a UN Women review of progress on the Beijing Platform 20 years on recognises the need to accelerate progress to mitigate the impacts of biodiversity loss on women, and urges: legal and policy reforms that protect rights to land and resources; financing of sustainable development policies and investments that promote gender equality; and addressing data gaps with respect to women and environmental sustainability.<sup>130</sup>

The theme of the most recent session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) in March 2022 was progress towards the Beijing Declaration in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. The CSW stressed how women and girls are disproportionately affected by environmental crises and disasters, which include biodiversity loss, desertification and land degradation. It stated unequivocally that "national policy and legal frameworks on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction do not yet provide a cohesive basis for gender responsive governance that fulfils the rights and needs of women and girls, nor do they ensure women's participation in decision-making."<sup>131</sup>

The agreed conclusions for CSW66 include a comprehensive package of 48 actions grouped under the themes of: strengthening normative, legal and regulatory frameworks, inclusion of gender considerations in climate change and environmental disaster and risk reduction policies and programmes, promoting the full participation and leadership of women, expanding gender-responsive finance, enhancing gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data, and fostering a gender-responsive just transition to green and blue economies.<sup>132</sup>

In 2019, the G7 Metz Charter on Biodiversity<sup>133</sup> set out a commitment to enhance the benefits biodiversity provides to all vulnerable groups (including women, youth and elders) and explicitly recognised the disproportionate impacts of biodiversity loss on these groups. This was echoed in the G7 Nature Compact in 2021,<sup>134</sup> and the related Climate and Environment Communiqué is explicit about the importance of gender-responsive action including securing resources and tenure rights for women.<sup>135</sup> The G7's Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) recommendations to the G7 leaders include reaffirming commitments to the CBD and UNCCDs' GPAs to "...better equip and empower women and girls to confront the challenges they are

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<sup>129</sup> UN (1979) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

<sup>130</sup> UN Women (2015) The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action turns 20. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1776The%20Beijing%20Declaration%20and%20Platform%20for%20Action%20turns%2020.pdf>

<sup>131</sup> CSW (2022) Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. E/CN.6/2022/3 <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=E%2FCN.6%2F2022%2F3&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

<sup>132</sup> CSW (2022) Agreed Conclusions (Advance unedited version). [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/CSW66%20Agreed%20Conclusions\\_Advance%20unedited%20version\\_25%20March%202022.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/CSW66%20Agreed%20Conclusions_Advance%20unedited%20version_25%20March%202022.pdf)

<sup>133</sup> G7 (2019) Metz Biodiversity Charter. [https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2019.05.06\\_EN\\_Biodiversity\\_Charter.pdf](https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2019.05.06_EN_Biodiversity_Charter.pdf)

<sup>134</sup> G7 (2021) G7 2030 Nature Compact. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50363/g7-2030-nature-compact-pdf-120kb-4-pages-1.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> UK government (2021) G7 Climate and Environment: Ministers' Communiqué, London, 21 May 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-meeting-may-2021-communiqué/g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-communiqué-london-21-may-2021>

facing, and to adapt, participate and benefit from resetting our relationship with nature...”<sup>136,137</sup> However, most of the recommendations in the GEAC’s report focus on climate and energy. More specific commitments on biodiversity loss and gender are needed (eg the role of women in nature-based solutions, women’s access to finance, tackling the impacts of biodiversity loss on girls education, and responding to heightened GBV as result of environmental changes). Despite this, the increased visibility of women, girls and biodiversity could help to raise ambition among G7 governments, which may, in turn, provide leadership for other countries globally.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> G7 (2021) G7 Carbis Bay Health Declaration. <https://www.g7uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/G7-Carbis-Bay-Health-Declaration-PDF-389KB-4-Pages.pdf>

<sup>137</sup> G7 (2021) Recommendations of The Gender Equality Advisory Council 2021 to the Leaders of the G7. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/992410/RECOMMENDATIONS\\_OF\\_THE\\_GENDER\\_EQUALITY\\_ADVISORY\\_COUNCIL\\_2021\\_TO\\_THE\\_LEADERS\\_OF\\_THE\\_G7.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/992410/RECOMMENDATIONS_OF_THE_GENDER_EQUALITY_ADVISORY_COUNCIL_2021_TO_THE_LEADERS_OF_THE_G7.pdf)

<sup>138</sup> A promising route to increase accountability and ensure G7 countries fulfil their declarations is via the W7, a coalition of civil society groups whose objective is to ensure G7 leaders adopt concrete commitments leading to tangible and lasting impacts on women and girls’ lives. The W7 has an Accountability Working Group, which wants to institutionalise a process of reviewing progress on the GEAC recommendations at future G7 meetings, as well as algorithmic accountability (Caitlin Kraft-Buchman, Women at the Table, personal communication).

