

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



**NATURE  
FOR**

**GENDER  
EQUALITY**

**NATURE  
PLEDGE**

**NATURE FOR DEVELOPMENT  
ACTION KITS**



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## ABOUT THE 'NATURE FOR DEVELOPMENT' ACTION KIT SERIES

This document, 'Nature for Gender Equality' is one of a series of 'Nature for Development' Action Kits, as part of [UNDP's Nature Pledge](#). This series includes 'Nature for Water Security,' 'Nature for Climate Action,' 'Nature for Food Security,' 'Nature for Prosperity,' 'Nature for Disaster Reduction,' 'Nature for Peace,' and 'Nature for Gender.'

This action kit provides UNDP staff with an overview of the many intertwined relationships between nature and sustainable development. It also provides key facts, figures and talking points, as well as programming entry points needed to make the case for investing in nature to achieve development outcomes. This kit, which also provides the tools and information needed to learn more and take action, aims to:

- highlight entry points for implementation of the UNDP Nature Pledge;
- strengthen UNDP policy, advocacy and awareness-raising efforts;
- inform effective national, regional and integrated programming efforts, and support issue-based portfolio approaches in line with national priorities and UNDP's Moonshots;
- support resource mobilization with traditional and non-traditional funding partners;
- strengthen and forge new partnerships with sister UN agencies, other international development partners, national and local stakeholders in government, the private sector, academia, media and other civil society groups; and
- leverage and strengthen internal UNDP capacities and expertise at all levels.

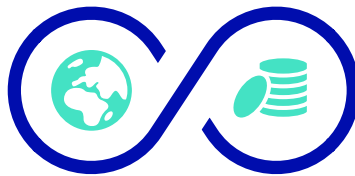
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## ABOUT UNDP'S NATURE PLEDGE

The Nature Pledge is UNDP's commitment to support more than 140 countries in achieving their ambitious goals under the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and nature-dependent Sustainable Development Goals. The Nature Pledge focuses on three system shifts essential to put nature at the heart of sustainable development:



**VALUE SHIFT**



**FINANCE AND ECONOMIC SHIFT**



**POLICY AND PRACTICE SHIFT**

**A 'Value Shift' to transform the value we place on nature and drive changes in people's behavior so that we place nature at the heart of development and across sectors including governance, economics, finance, health, and conservation.**

**An 'Economic and Finance Shift' to support a system where decision makers value natural capital, alongside financial, human and man-made capital.**

**A 'Policy and Practice Shift' to deliver change at scale on the ground - led by governments, and grounded in partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities.**

The Nature Pledge provides a pathway to transform our global systems by meeting vital targets to protect and restore our planet, eradicate poverty, reduce gender and other inequalities, protect human rights, and accelerate overall progress on nature-dependent sustainable development goals.

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## NATURE AND GENDER EQUALITY

The linkages between gender and nature are profound and multifaceted. Women play crucial and diverse roles managing and stewarding natural resources every day, but gender inequality means their rights, knowledge, priorities and influence are often sidelined. Gender inequality and environmental degradation and exploitation interact, often in a vicious cycle. **Rights-based gender-responsive biodiversity policymaking, programming and action can be game-changers for gender equality** – closing chronic gaps for improved food, livelihood and land security for women and their communities, for example. At the same time, the evidence is clear that gender equality delivers for nature, too: gender-responsive environmental interventions are not only more effective, equitable and sustainable, they are shown to deliver improved biodiversity outcomes, too.

The newly agreed Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework underscores these connections in the landmark [Target 23](#), which urges governments to **ensure gender equality and adopt a gender-responsive approach in biodiversity action**. While gender inequality persists around the world, UNDP works to accelerate progress for women's empowerment and gender equality by helping countries shift power structures and the economic, social and political systems that perpetuate gender-based discrimination, bias and disempowerment. UNDP's Nature Pledge opens **historic opportunities to help countries put nature at the heart of sustainable development, including to close gender gaps** and promote women's environmental leadership in at least 100 countries.

Accelerating Nature for Gender Equality requires a dual approach: targeted, gender-equality specific interventions that empower women and girls in all their diversity now, together with comprehensive gender integration that can leverage the full impact of environmental policy, programming and action for gender equality – and biodiversity – outcomes long-term. Aligned to its [Gender Equality Strategy](#), **UNDP can deepen investment, bridge knowledge gaps, steer innovation and new narratives, and help boost the enabling conditions for Nature for Gender Equality**. Key actions include:

- Embedding gender equality as a priority in environmental policies, plans and programmes – (and vice versa: including nature in women's empowerment, social inclusion and gender equality priorities, policies and plans)
- Ensuring gender-responsive natural resource governance, enabling cross-ministerial collaboration and supporting measures to increase women's representation, leadership and influence in decision-making
- Strengthening environmental institutions' capacity to forge policies, programmes, budgets and projects that work for gender equality
- Boosting recognition of and support to women's groups that contribute to environmental action, including for nature-positive behaviour change
- Investing in women-led and gender-responsive Nature-based Solutions
- Creating and expanding biodiversity finance channels, schemes and partnerships that enable women's economic empowerment and gender equality
- Deepening integration to tackle intersecting barriers, e.g. to address gender-based violence in natural resource exploitation or improve land rights
- Enriching the evidence base for improved policy and planning guidance, such as on gender social norms and natural resource management, or women's vital roles as environmental defenders and peacebuilders
- Developing, implementing, tracking and learning from a new generation of gender and biodiversity indicators, critical to realize the ambition of the GBF
- Fostering harmonization of efforts across related streams, for example to foster innovative harmonized action on biodiversity, climate and chemicals; and
- Anchoring Nature for Gender Equality in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) on climate action, as well as other sectoral plans and policies

# GENDER-RESPONSIVE ACTION ON NATURE BENEFITS THE SDGs

Gender inequality hinders progress across all Sustainable Development Goals. Gender-responsive environmental actions have cascading benefits that can be transformative across all Goals, benefiting people and the planet.



Gender inequality is a major cause and effect of poverty and hunger: 60% of chronically hungry people are **women and girls**.



Women's farm yields are **20-30% lower** and less than 20% of landholders are women, while they do more than half the world's agricultural work.



Addressing **differentiated effects** of pollutants and WASH services are crucial for **quality reproductive and maternal health**. Each year **1 million deaths** are linked to unsanitary births.



Women make up more than **two-thirds** of the world's 796 million illiterate people – with gendered cultural norms often determining women's access to information.



Pervasive gender-based violence, already affecting **1 in 3 women** in her lifetime, can be exacerbated by **environmental degradation** and stressors.



1.8 billion people still do not have drinking water on-premises, and in two out of three unconnected households, **women are primarily responsible for water collection**.



Ensuring clean cooking by 2030 could save **2.5 million lives** – mostly women and girls also responsible for fuel collection – and reduce the pressures on deforestation.



Women shoulder **76% of care work globally** – 3x more than men. Policymaking can help **bridge gaps** in paid and unpaid care work, including in relation to managing natural resources.



In an increasingly connected world, women are still on the outskirts – men are **21%-52%** more likely to be online than women. Women hold just **21% of STEM jobs** worldwide.



**90% of people** are still biased against women – showing the stronghold gender norms have on inequality. Women are **2x as likely** as men to report experiencing discrimination.



About 70% of the world's female population will live in urban areas by 2050 – with a **third living in slums or other informal, insecure settlements**, at major risk in times of disaster.



Women make 70-80% of household economic decisions, and evidence suggests they may be more likely to recycle, buy organic and engage in other **'green' consumer behaviours**.



The impacts of climate change exacerbate gender inequality. By mid-century, climate change may push **158.3 million more women and girls** into poverty and **increase displacement**.



Women play diverse and crucial roles in ocean communities – yet are often invisible in value chains or **left out of major decision-making**.



Lack of **land rights for women** entrench gender inequality, but also poverty, resource exploitation and instability; indigenous and other commonly disenfranchised women bear the brunt.



Evidence shows that countries with more women parliamentarians **adopt greener policies** yet women are seriously **underrepresented** in environment-related sectors.



Women's organizations are key partners for nature and for sustainable development – but a mere **\$574 million** of ODA goes to **women's rights groups and movements**.

## TRENDS IN GENDER AND NATURE

Trends show that persistent inequalities and discriminatory norms continue to undervalue women's role in environmental action and limit positive impacts for gender equality and for nature.

### GENDERED ROLES, KNOWLEDGE, IMPACTS

Nearly a third of women's employment globally is in agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Women in developing countries are nature's stewards – managing water, food, fuels, and farming – and often the first to notice biodiversity loss and degradation.

Approximately 389 million women and girls collect fuelwood, likely the largest labour force in the entire global energy system.

Biodiversity loss negatively impacts women in different ways, including increasing care work and gender-based violence risks, declining health, and loss of cultural and traditional knowledge.



### UNDERVALUED AND UNDER-REPRESENTED

Women hold 15% of fish harvester jobs but do 90% of processing work in fisheries – work that often goes unaccounted for.

Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 8 out of 10 unconnected households, yet only 26% of countries have high levels of gender mainstreaming in water resources laws and plans.

Despite producing up to 80% of food in developing countries, less than 1 in 5 landholders worldwide are women.

Women make up only a third of the staff of environmental protection ministries globally and only 12% of ministerial staff are women across 193 countries.



Photo credits: Hasan Hüseyin BİRLİK/UNDP, UNDP Guinea

## GENDER INEQUALITY A BARRIER TO PROTECTING NATURE



Unequal rights, access and control of land and natural resources can lead to unsustainable coping mechanisms that harm nature.

Tradition and customs restrict women's rights to use and protect nature in 123 countries.

By 2030 the green transition is expected to create 30 million new green jobs, yet projections show that women might secure just 25% of them.

At the forefront of protecting nature, women environmental defenders face unique gendered attacks.

## GENDER EQUALITY CRUCIAL FOR BIODIVERSITY OUTCOMES

Including women equitably in natural resource management contributes to better governance and conservation outcomes.

Women's equal rights to land could decrease malnourishment by 12 to 17% and are a pathway to restoring degraded land and increasing resilience to drought.



Women are highly effective at de-escalating conflicts over nature, yet women make up only 3 to 11% of the ranger profession worldwide.

In the Brazilian Amazon, areas with a female mayor have 30% lower rates of yearly deforestation.

Photo credits: Jean-Yan Norbert/UNDP Mauritius and Seychelles, UNDP Bogani Nani Wartabone National Park Authority/CIWT Project Indonesia

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## KEY MESSAGES ON GENDER AND NATURE

### CLOSING GENDER GAPS IS KEY FOR NATURE

The Nature Pledge focuses on three systemic shifts for nature – but gender inequality stands in the way of each. Despite their crucial roles, knowledge and stewardship, women are under-represented in natural resource governance; have unequal and fragile rights over land and resources; face barriers to accessing finance, information and digital tools; and shoulder compounded pressures from biodiversity loss. Gendered power imbalances impact both people and planet: women’s insecure land rights, for example, is among major chronic barriers to women’s economic empowerment, while also linked to rampant resource exploitation and degradation, and reduced climate resilience for whole communities. Holistic solutions – e.g., to close gender gaps in governance, boost women’s leadership and influence, increase institutional gender capacity and coordination, and steer investments to women’s nature-based solutions – are key to power the transformation necessary for nature and gender equality.

### INVESTING IN NATURE AND GENDER EQUALITY, TOGETHER, HAS A MULTIPLYING EFFECT

Gender equality is a key global goal – with women’s human rights at the core. But accelerating gender equality is key for nature, too, as plentiful evidence has shown across the globe. When women’s perspectives and knowledge are ignored in decision-making processes, natural resource management strategies are likely to be less effective, less equitable, and more unsustainable. Gender equity and diverse women’s inclusion, influence and leadership is linked to more effective and efficient projects, environment-friendly legislation, environmental outcomes in natural resource management and much more. Closing gender gaps in access to land and resources, such as farmland and agricultural inputs, can reduce direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use while also improving food and livelihood security for whole communities.

### NEW WORK IS NEEDED TO VALUE BOTH NATURE AND WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Economies are underpinned by nature’s exploitation and subsidized by women’s (under- and unpaid) work. [\\$44 trillion](#) of economic value generation – more than half of the world’s GDP – depends on nature and its services and is therefore exposed to nature loss. But while \$200 billion is invested each year in nature-based solutions, \$7 trillion is invested nature-negative flows. Meanwhile, [women contribute \\$10.8 trillion in unpaid care work each year](#). These are problems of power, and they are inter-related. A new generation of gender-nature work can develop and deploy strategies to align narratives and unleash new social and economic models that put nature and gender equality at the core of sustainable development.

### UNDP IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO DRIVE SYSTEMIC SHIFTS FOR NATURE AND FOR GENDER EQUALITY

With unparalleled convening power, advocacy influence, and implementation expertise across countries, UNDP builds on a [track record of results](#) for gender equality, including across environment-related efforts. In 2023, over 80% of UNDP country initiatives working on Signature Solution 4: Environment contributed significantly or principally to gender equality and women’s empowerment, investing over \$210 million. With a unique mandate for integration, UNDP also bridges different fields and stakeholders, for example creating spaces to ensure those with least power are at the table.










### THE TIME IS NOW TO HELP COUNTRIES TAKE ACTION

[Every major environmental fund and multilateral agreement](#) (MEA) now has gender equality commitments and requirements. The GBF has a first-of-its-kind gender target, accompanied by a new Gender Plan of Action. More than [half of all existing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans](#) (NBSAPs) include gender in some way – signaling some progress as well as major opportunities for deeper work. And, while overall ODA for gender equality objectives is down, ODA for integrated gender equality and biodiversity has increased since 2011 from \$2.1 billion to \$3.6 billion in 2020. All told, the time is right to support countries in integrated policymaking, programming and action, for a ripple-effect of impact.

# RESOURCES

This section highlights recent publications, tools, videos, blogs, photo essays and data on the linkages between nature and gender equality, including from both UNDP and partners.

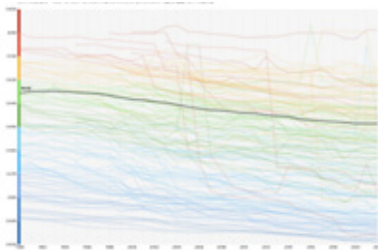
## TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS – ESSENTIAL READING

<p><b>Best Practices in Gender and Biodiversity</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">104-page guide</a> by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity showcases best practices and multiple benefits in gender equality and biodiversity.</p>	<p><b>Gender-based Violence and Environment Linkages</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">272-page global review</a> on how gender-based violence and the environment are linked across sectors and regions.</p>	<p><b>The status of women in agri-food systems</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">264-page report</a> by FAO uses extensive data and analyses to provide a comprehensive picture of women's participation, benefits, and challenges they face globally.</p>
<p><b>Advancing Women's Rights, Gender Equality and the Future of Biodiversity in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">42-page review</a> that explores gender and environment linkages, women's roles in biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and more in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework-based solutions.</p>	<p><b>Gender Equality for Greener and Bluer Futures: Why Women's Leadership Matters for Realizing Environmental Goals</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">35-page guide</a> provides seven entry points for mainstreaming gender into planning, monitoring, and reporting for revised or updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).</p>	<p><b>A Manual for Gender-Responsive Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">42-page report</a> outlines efforts for achieving land degradation neutrality through transformative efforts to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation through gender-equitable means.</p>
<p><b>Women, girls and biodiversity loss: an evidence and policy review</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">2-part review</a> by DEFRA offers insight into the differential impacts of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation on women and girls around the world.</p>	<p><b>Towards a Gender Responsive Implementation of the CBD</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">42-page research paper</a> by UN Women summarizes advances in gender-responsive implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity</p>	<p><b>Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan</b></p>  <p>This <a href="#">82-page guide</a> by the CBD highlights key steps in integrating gender into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).</p>

## TOOLS AND TOOL KITS

This section highlights recent publications, tools, videos, blogs, photo essays and data on the linkages between nature and gender equality, including from both UNDP and partners.

### UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) Database



This [database](#) is a composite metric of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market, for as many countries as data of reasonable quality allow.

### Gender and Environment Resource Center



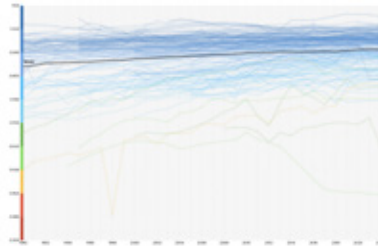
This [resource center](#) curated by IUCN includes knowledge, tools and promising practice for realizing gender equality and environment goals, together.

### World Bank Gender Databank



This [portal](#) makes the latest gender statistics accessible through narratives and data visualizations to improve understanding of gender data and facilitate policy analyses.

### UNDP Gender Development Index (GDI) Database



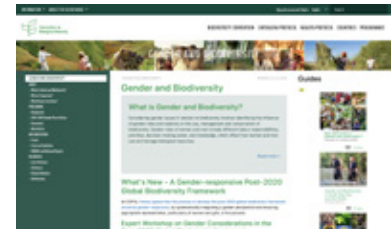
This [database](#) measures gender inequalities in achievement in: health, measured by female and male life expectancy at birth; education, and command over economic resources.

### FAO Gender and Land Rights Database



This [database](#) analyses the extent to which national legal frameworks and policies and programs support the advancement of women or improve gender-differentiated access to land.

### CBD Gender and Biodiversity



This [webpage](#) links to CBD gender and biodiversity resources, Parties' decisions on gender, the latest Gender Plan of Action, and more..

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## COMMUNICATIONS – BLOGS, PHOTO ESSAYS AND VIDEOS

### Blogs

- Our nature blogs are written by global experts covering field stories, interviews and insights from around the world examining the ways in which we can meaningfully put nature at the heart of development. All of our nature blogs can be found [here](#).
- Cultivating resilience: Women’s leadership in biodiversity conservation. This blog explores how women play a critical role in safeguarding biodiversity and its benefits to people. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/blog/cultivating-resilience-womens-leadership-biodiversity-conservation>
- In defence of nature, women at the forefront: This blog explores how women, especially indigenous women, are particularly vulnerable to environmental-related violence. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/blog/defense-nature-women-forefront>
- Three things we’ve learned about managing gender-based violence in environment projects: This blog explores practical ways to address the risk of gender-based violence in environmental programming. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/blog/three-things-weve-learned-about-managing-gender-based-violence-environment-projects>.

### Photo essays

- Ranger Power. This photo essay highlights how female community rangers help stamp out wildlife crime in Indonesia. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/ranger-power>
- Investing in Women to Move Mountains: This photo essay explores how women in Bosnia and Herzegovina Are Reaching New Heights in the Sustainable Development of Remote Mountain Regions. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/investing-in-women-to-move-mountains>
- Her land, Her Rights: This photo essay explores how UNDP is supporting women’s crucial role in land management. Available at: <https://stories.undp.org/her-land-her-rights>
- We, the Women: This photo essay explores how UNDP is empowering communities from farm to market in Viet Nam. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/we-the-women>
- Women, Culture, Territory: This photo essay explores how to safeguard biodiversity by recovering traditional productive practices has increased solidarity in collective territories for environmental benefits and women’s leadership. Available at: <https://undp-nature.exposure.co/women-culture-and-territory>

### Videos

- Climate Change and Gender: This video showcases successful action on climate change and environmental degradation depends on engaging women as stakeholders and planners to ensure that both women and men have opportunities in the new green economy. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=579XPcc5ERw>
- Gender Equal Economies: This video unpacks how even though women are paid less than men in the same jobs; they do most of the unpaid household and care work and often have difficulty accessing finance and other wealth-creating resources, making the point that it’s time to build “gender equal economies.” Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5--JkZ43Dgo>
- Increasing Economic Benefits for Women Fisherfolk in the Maldives: This video showcases how women are using digital technologies to increase their earning in the fishing industry and support more sustainable practices. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cn43RK5ogMQ>
- Women in Biodiversity Conservation in the Philippines: This video introduces Ria Esteves and the women of SAKAILAP, a women-led organization committed to conserving and managing natural resources in Aurora Province. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gzff97XI0x8>.

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## EXAMPLES OF UNDP'S WORK ON NATURE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

UNDP has an extensive number of projects that work for gender equality and nature around the world. Below are some examples from around UNDP's global portfolio.

### SECURING LIVELIHOODS IN THE HIMALAYAS

In India, with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, and financing from the Global Environment Facility, UNDP has worked to **foster women's leadership** that is contributing significantly to restore 1,200 Ha of land in the Himalayas. The project has been supporting the Ladakh Biodiversity Council to constitute 61 Biodiversity Management Committees made up of at least 30% women in leadership roles. Women leaders and one women-only management committee passed a resolution to restrict the movement of tourists and local grazers for land restoration, resolved to declare Yaya-Tso as a Biodiversity Heritage Site. Learn more at: <https://www.undp.org/india/projects/securing-livelihoods-himalayas>



### SUPPORTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY IN LEBANON

In Lebanon, UNDP is working with the Ministry of Environment to **enhance women's representation and decision-making in natural resource governance**, particularly in the agricultural and tourism sectors. By integrating gender issues in all trainings, UNDP is supporting the shift from women's predominant representation in health and education sectors to more representation in agriculture and tourism, especially in management roles. Capacity-building workshops and trainings for more than 5,000 women, including on sustainable land management, agricultural practices, including agri-food, forestry, and tourism, have increased women's involvement, fostered financial independence and increased representation. Learn more at: <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/projects/land-degradation-neutrality-mountain-landscapes-lebanon-0>.



### STRENGTHENING BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS MANAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, work in one of the country's key biodiversity hotspots, the Lower Zambezi Valley to reduce threats on wildlife, such as poaching, illegal wildlife trade and deforestation, and to boost the livelihoods and resilience to climate change of local communities has reached over 10,000 women who have taken up leadership roles in **promoting alternative livelihoods** for biodiversity conservation, including in protected areas and community conserved lands. Women, trained as rangers as part of an all-female ranger unit and known as the Akashinga, or 'brave ones,' protect communities and wildlife. Learn more at: <https://medium.com/undpzimbabwe/women-and-wildlife-in-the-zambezi-valley-d6f9e042d7bc>



### PROMOTING RESTORATION, SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAINS AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia, UNDP and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development are **strengthening local institutions** to improve connectivity and conserve biodiversity. The result is more inclusive value chains; improved women's leadership; increased livelihood opportunities for women; and improved ecosystem restoration, conservation and sustainable production. Notably, in recent elections for Community Action Boards in five villages of the Yari Sustainable Productive Landscape, there was an increase in women elected into management positions and roles as farmer promoters to implement local technical assistance models. <https://www.undp.org/es/colombia/projects/amazonia-sostenible-parala-paz>



## ENSURING WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES IN NATURE-BASED LIVELIHOODS IN TAJIKISTAN

In Tajikistan, engaging more women in eco-tourism and **promoting equality in natural resource management** has played a significant part in efforts to protect snow



leopards' ecosystems and ensure sustainable livelihoods for communities. While women are typically discouraged from working, UNDP has helped put in place some of the country's first women rangers to help to save snow leopards, increased access to nature-positive livelihoods for over 13,500 women and supported more women to be engaged in high mountain pasture and forest land management.

Learn more at:

<https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/events/Snow%20Leopard%20Gender%20Mainstreaming%20presentation%20Final.pdf>

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