

Personal statement

Welcome address and general introductory remarks from a German perspective

Thank you Madame Moderator,

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I like to thank you for inviting me here today as a panelist for the thematic area of environmental policy and gender equality.

Since March I am head of a division which is in charge for the development and application of gender aspects in the field of environmental policy. It was set up on the initiative of the Minister who is persuing gender equality with great ambition.

We want to implement and mainstream these with concrete measures.

As stated in the UN ECE Regional report gender equality and environmental protection constitute an area with the least advances in the region. Gender aspects have often been neglected and I see many opportunities for improvement here.

From a German perspective gender equality should be seen as a cross-cutting issue and quality feature in all kind of areas of the German environmental policy. This means not only climate change, but also for example nature conservation, water and waste management, mobility and sustainable consumption patterns.

Let me give you a brief overview of what we have initiated and how we want to mobilize support in the future:

Within the recently adopted national climate change package we analyze the Co₂ reduction measures also by taking the lense on the gender impact. On the basis of initial research in the field of climate change we are developing a broad gender mainstreaming strategy for all areas.

Our aim is that the results of this strategy will be incorporated into legislation, policy documents, projects and the daily work of the German MoE as an internal guiding principle.

Our Minister has therefore strongly supported the idea of having an informal network for women to ensure more visibility for the key role of women in the process of Climate Action and the SDG Summit. The so

called “UN Women Leaders Breakfast” has brought together high-level representatives from governments, business and civil society in an informal atmosphere.

We want to continue this format.

Referring to the UN Climate Change Convention and the Paris Agreement MoE has started to develop gender-responsive climate change measures and strategies. Therefore the MoE has appointed a special national focal point who deals exclusively with questions regarding gender equality and climate change.

Good examples/ key achievements

Let me give you a few examples for further good practices to enforce the implementation of gender equality in German environmental policies.

MoE is one of the first public agencies to adopt a gender equality plan following the reform of the German Federal Equality Act 2015. With regard to appointments on national and international bodies MoE looks out for a gender balanced membership.

As part of the German International Climate Initiative (IKI), a wide range of projects is conducted on the integration of gender issues into climate and biodiversity projects, for example:

- project funding to ten partner countries to promote consideration of gender aspects in their NDC Support program for UNFCCC

We also believe that connecting different actors and enabling those whose voices are not heard enough. For us that means for example supporting also female youth delegates at the Climate Action and SDG Summit. More over Germany will also promote the idea of female youth delegates at the UN World Conference on Women and the Gender Equality Forum in 2020.

As you all know the on movement “Fridays for future” has an considerable impact the international climate change debate. In Germany most of the stakeholders (58%) are represented by young women.

The Federal Environment Agency (UBA) currently carries out two gender-specific research projects on impact assessment and interdependencies with other social categories.

MoE is promoting the education of women and girls in science, engineering technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment. We have published a report with regard to the question of

whether environmental aspects could be a key motivational factor for young women to focus their career choices on technological professions (STEM) and the so-called Girls` day.

We strive for developing a gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the way to COP 15 in autumn next year in China.

We share the analysis of the UN ECE review report that the absence of a gender perspective in the field of environmental protection and disaster-risk management is indeed the most obvious gap and marks an important opportunity for building women's concerns into policymaking in these fields. It will be key to link gender equality with other SDG goals of the Agenda 2030 (SDG 4 Education, SDG 5 gender equality, SDG 13 climate change, SDG 14 and 15 Life on land and water)

What are the barriers and what are our strategies to overcome those barriers?

We think that in the past environmental protection and gender mainstreaming have constituted an area which is not well advanced due to structural constraints, the lack of political support in the past.

Decision making power regarding biodiversity and ecosystem management tends to be concentrated among men. As Germany has lined out in its country report regarding the implementation of the Beijing platform for action it is necessary to overcome well-known stereotypes.

Raising awareness and capacity-building for gender issues among those in charge of environmental work as well as equality impact assessment trainings are other parts of the strategy. It needs to be gender-responsive so that suitable incentives are provided which enable women to participate. For the enforcement of this aim communication and promotion are of vital importance.

Environmental protection and climate change constitute the areas with the least advances across the region. Only a few countries within the EU have begun to adopt meaningful laws and policies in these fields and mainstreaming a gender perspective into these fields has yet to occur.

It is important to take an intersectional approach to gender equality also in environment policy. Most forms of disadvantages are linked, be it on the basis of gender, sexuality, class or any other criteria. Ignoring this in policy-making can create a system that creates and reinforces different forms of discrimination. Accordingly, in order to make good intersectional

environment policy, it is crucial to include those for whom policy is made and who will be affected by it.

There are isolated examples of women's leadership in environmental and climate change policies throughout the region. Women's participation in this area has partially been constrained by their poor representation in STEM professions, with few exceptions. At national level there are 14 women heads of state and of government.

Key messages

With regard to a holistic and sustainable environment policy it is of key importance that gender aspects are integrated and become a matter of course. We strive for the goal of full integration and implementation of gender mainstreaming into all relevant areas of the German environment policy.

Therefore from my point of view the following 3 aspects are of key relevance:

1. Awareness raising for gender equality
2. Solid gender impact assessments as a basis for tackling structural barriers
3. Tracking and controlling of concrete measures which were based on the results of a solid gender impact assessment

We will strongly support the efforts for gender equality in the Beijing+25-process.

Equal access to education and decent work as well as access to finance and natural resources are prerequisites for the future development of gender equality in the UN ECE region. At international level, Germany will continue to promote equality between women and men.

From 1 July to 31 December 2020, Germany will moreover hold the EU Council Presidency and we will set a focus on gender equality.

In addition, from November 2020 to May 2021 Germany will hold the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the European Council. Here too, the importance of gender equality policy will be emphasized.