INCEPTION WORKSHOP

TA 7914: Harnessing Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives to Benefit Women

Hotel Cambodiana, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 1 April 2013

Meeting Summary

On 1 April 2013, approximately 25 policymakers, representatives from international organizations, and members of civil society convened an inception workshop for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Regional Technical Assistance 7914 (RETA 7914) Harnessing Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives to Benefit Women at the Cambodiana Hotel in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The meeting consisted of 1) opening remarks; 2) presentations; 3) session on work plans; and 4) discussion. A summary of the meeting follows.

1. Opening Remarks

Januar Hakim, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Laos PDR Country Director, began the meeting with opening remarks. He noted that the ADB is excited to see the launching of RETA 7914. He underlined that the ADB has emphasized shifting from conventional to clean energy; and the ADB recognizes that this shift often depends upon women as agents as change. This is why it is increasingly important to explicitly recognize and positively reward women for making that shift. He looked forward to creating an enabling environment that helped women acquire carbon financing.

Prak Channay, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), provided a second set of opening remarks. Ms. Prak Channay said that women suffer disproportionately from the impacts of climate change because they are often dependant on natural resources. She stressed that this project is not only well aligned with international climate change negotiations but other processes such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She then noted that this project also nicely coincides with activities being launched at MoWA on climate change. This includes a strategic program on climate change that features 1) promoting gender in policies and programs; 2) capacity building to implement policies and programs; 3) organizing and disseminating experiences on climate change from the national to the subnational levels; and 4) harnessing climate finance to benefit women. Ms. Prak Channay also welcomed support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (MAFF).

Ty Sokhun, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (MAFF), offered opening remarks. Mr. Ty Sokhun noted that this project is well timed because it focuses on the social element of sustainable development that is gaining more attention following the Rio+20 meetings. He noted too that is also in line with recent policy documents that have been adopted in Cambodia. For instance, he pointed to the national climate change strategy and green growth strategy (2013-2030) as recently enacted policy statements that have synergies with this project. He was especially pleased to note that the project will work with ADB project 7833 on a pilot that showcases the role of gender in biomass energy.

2. Presentations
Eric Zusman, the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), presented on international trends and best practices on climate and gender. He noted that women often bear a greater share of the costs of climate change, but acquire a smaller share of the benefits of climate finance. To rectify this imbalance, it will be increasingly important that women are recognized as not victims but agents of change when making decisions over climate finance. While in general mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) have not provided adequate incentives for women to be explicitly recognized, there are some encouraging practices in particular CDM projects. For instance, a few CDM gold standard projects have involved women's groups in the planning, monitoring, and distribution of revenue from the project. There have also been some encouraging trends at the international level with growing reference to women and gender in international climate negotiations, official development assistance (ODA), and the climate investment funds (CIFs). These trends could also have implications for nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) (voluntary actions that developing countries are currently pledging to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in accordance with the Bali Action Plan) and the rules governing the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This will nonetheless depend on strengthening linkages between gender and climate within and across different levels of decision making.

Jeanette Gurung, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management, (WOCAN) presented on the relationship between climate and gender. She observed that there exists a disconnect between work on climate and gender. While climate and gender is getting attention from high-level policymakers, there has not been commensurate activity on the ground. She then pointed to several obstacles and underlying reasons for this disconnect. The obstacles included: 1) little documentation of good practices for gender-sensitive mitigation; 2) gender in climate change focuses on adaptation rather than mitigation; and 3) factors constraining women's participation in decision making. Underlying these obstacles were 1) a tendency to see women as victims; 2) a sense that climate change science and low carbon technologies are “technical” areas and thus more relevant to men; and 3) a number of factors that constrain women's participation in decision making. She felt that to change this situation would require 1) creating a new message that started with women as leaders; 2) strengthening and supporting women's leadership and groups; 3) building men's support for women in communities and institutions; 4) expanding women's networks at various levels; 5) assuring women's access to technologies; 6) developing entrepreneurial capacities of women's groups to engage in renewable energy; and 7) demonstrating activities that can enhance women's empowerment and gender equality within mitigation projects. She further pointed to capacity building that will help women build leadership skills. She concluded by discussing a women's carbon standard that WOCAN will introduce in April. The women's carbon standard is voluntary set of gender-sensitive screening criteria, if met by the project, can earn a premium on the price of carbon credits.

3. Session on Work Plans

Eric Zusman presented the work plan for IGES serving as the regional knowledge hub. He stated that the IGES work plan will be divided into three complementary phases. The first phase
will focus on scoping of international trends and best practices, an initial round of interviews, and small group consultations. This will help determine where the project fits in the international and national policy landscapes of participating countries. A second phase will focus on quantifying the GHG mitigated and other co-benefits from one of the pilot projects. It will also look at the non-quantifiable benefits, barriers to realizing those benefits, and countermeasures that can help overcome those barriers. A third phase will look to integrate the lessons learned from the scoping studies and the case studies into a series of recommendations that can strengthen stakeholder engagement mechanisms and benefit sharing rules for climate finance in the GMS. The three phases will also help support the generation of knowledge products that will be disseminated to wider audiences and help raise the profile of the project.

Jeannette Gurung presented WOCAN's work plan for the project. She noted that the work plan began with a scoping of the status of climate policy/finance (attention to gender within national/sub national climate policies, strategies and institutions) in Laos PDR, Cambodia, and Viet Nam. This will be complemented by a capacity building assessment that aims to identify need areas for training sessions. The second phase will then focus on delivering three tailored courses on carbon financing, gender mainstreaming, and gender analysis. A third phase will focus on refresher training (reinforcing leadership, technical and business skills), participating in concluding workshops and setting up a pipeline of additional projects that could help sustain outcomes through the project’s conclusion.

4. Discussion

The discussion section focused on how stakeholders in the room could contribute to the project; and recommendations for shaping the project moving forward.

- There are several relevant policy documents and institutional arrangements related to the project under the Ministry of Environment (MoE). These include the Cambodia climate change committee; the Cambodia climate change alliance (which has some of the authority for allocating climate funding); and the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (which brought together 20 ministries and agencies to work on 19 projects in 16 sectors).
- As project participants looks for entry points for mainstreaming gender into climate decisions the following issues should be kept in mind: 1) the Ministry of Agricultural Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has a gender policy strategy; 2) the Ministry of Environment (MoE) has a gender working group; and 3) the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) consistently works to mainstream gender in different agencies administrative portfolios.
- RETA 7914 is well-timed to coincide with important shifts in the climate policy landscape. For example, many countries are developing nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs). Cambodia has yet to develop a NAMA and there could potentially be inclusion of gender-sensitive language in the NAMA. More information will be necessary on how to formulate a NAMA and how NAMAs will qualify for finance under the Green Climate Fund (GCF).
• The pilot project RETA 7914 in Cambodia will piggyback off of the ADB technical assistance project RETA 7833 that focuses on biomass energy (biogas, biochar, and bioslurry) and is also financed by the Nordic Development Fund (NDF). TA 7833 aims to scale up use of technologies at the household level, including biogas, biochar and improved cookstoves for improved soil/crop production. There is currently sufficient capacity to support the project and 35-50% of the participants in the project are women.
• It will be increasingly important to involve local governments (from province, district, commune and village level) in the pilot project. Many of the responsibilities for planning these projects have been delegated to local governments. Experience from community forestry suggests linking the project to commune since this is the level at which there are investment plans. At commune level, there are gender focal points that are already being training on the environment; gender aspects may be added to that training.
• In addition to the project’s pilot project, WOCAN has been contracted to identify a pipeline of additional projects that could benefit from climate finance. In this connection, it would be good to keep in mind that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has done work on solar energy in Cambodia.
• RETA 7914 should also considering supporting enterprises where participants can generate incomes from non-farm activities. This is particularly important because climate change will make accessing income from agriculture increasingly difficult. On a related note, it was recommended that participants should look at development of a biodigesters. A project focusing on biodigesters would have several additional benefits, namely, it would allow for capacity building on a type of infrastructure; and dissemination of a replicable technology. The National Biodigester Programme has set up a program to develop rural enterprises by disseminating biodigesters. There could potentially be room for collaboration with that program.
• The UNDP pointed to three areas with potential links to the project. They include: a small grant program that is jointly administered with Global Environmental Facility (GEF); pilot projects under United Nations Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) as well as Cambodia’s National Adaptation Programme’s of Action (NAPA); and a training program that has already been provided on climate and gender (with a focus on adaptation). The training for adaptation was useful but could have been even more so if the training materials were less technical.
• The ADB Cambodia mission has resources to develop measurement and evaluation (M and E) indicators, and would like to work with this RETA 7914 on that development. The ADB also has a TA on Strengthening Coordination Amongst Line Agencies. It would be good to consider enhancing coordination between climate and gender. The ADB has also participated in the development of Cambodia’s green growth strategy. The green growth strategy is more general than the climate change strategy but may also offer some useful entry points for this project.