



**China Council for International Cooperation  
on Environment and Development**

**Report on Gender Mainstreaming in SPS  
Research for the Period 2023–2024**

**CCICED Secretariat and  
Secretariat International Support Office<sup>1</sup>**

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## Introduction

Gender mainstreaming has been a key commitment of the CCICED Executive Committee since 2018. To support the integration of gender considerations as part of the Special Policy Studies (SPS), each SPS research team receives gender mainstreaming guidance at the outset of the research process, as well as at various touchpoints during the drafting process. The guidance is meant to provide possible research avenues related to gender equality and highlight potential entry points for considering equity and diversity perspectives within each theme.

In addition to targeted guidance, CCICED updated its Toolkit on Gender Equality and Environmental Sustainability in 2022, which proposes practical tools for SPS teams to ensure gender equity, diversity, and inclusion are given due consideration in the course of their work to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of policies and programs, enhance and promote sustainability, and safeguard the human rights of all in the context of sustainable development.

This report provides a detailed overview of the integration of gender perspectives as part of CCICED's 2023–2024 SPS final research papers. The report also identifies best practices and provides recommendations to further strengthen the mainstream gender perspectives in the forthcoming phase of the research.

## Gender Equality and Environmental Sustainability: Recent Developments

In recent years, the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been overshadowed by what is referred to as an unprecedented triple planetary crisis characterized by climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. As each issue must be addressed, there is growing recognition of the interdependence between the three and the exacerbating effect each has on the other and on the rest of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given its cross-cutting nature, gender equality must remain a priority of any transformative environmental and climate action. In March 2023, the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment published an annex on Women, Girls and the Right to a Healthy Environment, in which he stated that “Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of the triple planetary crisis while being excluded from most environmental and climate decision-making processes.”<sup>2</sup> He added that “immediate gender-transformative action at the intersection of gender equality, environmental action and climate action is a prerequisite to remedying the trifold nature crisis.”<sup>3</sup> In this vein, important advancements were made at COP 26 in November 2023 with the adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact, which called on Parties to respect obligations on human rights and promote and respect obligations related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including women’s meaningful and equal participation in climate action, as well as those related to youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.

<sup>1</sup>Drafted by the WPS Group, Kristine St-Pierre and Jennifer Savidge.

<sup>2</sup>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Women, girls and the right to a healthy environment: Good practices, Supplementary information to the report of the Special Rapporteur, David R. Boyd, on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, March 2023, p. 3, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/environment/srenvironment/reports-annex/Annex1-to-A-HRC52-33.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

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## CCICED's 2023–2024 Special Policy Studies Gender Equality-Related Recommendations

In total, CCICED conducted nine SPSs focusing on four key topics: “Innovation in Global Environmental Governance,” “National Green Governance System,” “Sustainable Production and Consumption,” and “Low-Carbon Inclusive Transition.” The SPSs included several key recommendations specific to gender equality.<sup>4</sup> These recommendations provide important entry points for further research, particularly looking at how the recommendations can be translated into practice that can improve outcomes for all.

### *Innovation in Global Environmental Governance:*

- **Climate:** Develop policies that offer retraining, skills upgrading, and social security protections for women. Promote targeted efforts to encourage women’s participation and skills development in emerging green technologies and new energy sectors, including through regional and international technical cooperation and training programs. Consider the social and gender impacts of climate projects in cross-border investments.

- **Oceans:** Offer technical training and create inclusive spaces for learning to enable women’s increased participation in various aquaculture sectors. Promote women’s participation in the industrial transformation of offshore aquaculture to create more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

- **Biodiversity:** Improve the evaluation system for the effectiveness of protected areas, including issues relating to social equity, gender equity, and human rights.

<sup>4</sup>It should be noted that while this report focuses only on the SPSs, several special scoping studies have also highlighted gender. For example, the CCICED special scoping study on carbon pricing underscored the challenges of many fiscal policies in gender-related issues linked to distributional effects at the household and income levels.

### *National Green Governance System:*

- **Co-management:** Thoroughly consider gender mainstreaming when formulating emission mitigation policies and designing mechanisms. Doing so includes encouraging women’s participation in emission mitigation policy formulation and implementation and addressing gender discrimination within employment by emphasizing women’s roles and specifically targeting them for skills development and training.

- **Adaptation:** Pay attention to social equity and gender issues in climate adaptation (including assessments, policies, and programs) and accelerate the enhancement of the climate adaptation capacity of less-developed regions and vulnerable groups.

### *Sustainable Production and Consumption:*

- **Digitization:** Leverage ICT applications to increase the participation of diverse stakeholders in informing the gender-responsiveness and inclusivity of service delivery; include a broader range of institutions representing social and environmental interests within smart city development efforts; include rural areas within smart city catchment areas to ensure that urban-rural inequalities are not exacerbated.

- **Finance:** Promote opportunities for women’s education, training, employment, and entrepreneurship within green technology, removing barriers that hinder their participation and actively incorporating their perspectives in the design and implementation of green technologies.

### *Low-Carbon Inclusive Transition:*

- **Trade:** Recognize that higher levels of gender equality within the workforce can enable countries to capitalize on the economic and environmental opportunities offered by sustainable trade and supply chains.

- **South–South:** Recognize that South–South collaboration can have a tremendous impact when it comes to advancing gender equality.



## CCICED's 2023–2024 Gender-Related Work Through Special Policy Studies: Key Observations

This section highlights the research conducted by each SPS in the areas of gender equality and social equity, as well as best practices in the integration of gender-related concepts. The section also identifies opportunities to further advance gender equality within environmental and climate change policy development and governance.

### *China's Pathway for Carbon Neutrality and Global Climate Governance*

As recognized by the global community within the framework of the SDGs, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and other international conventions, gender equality and climate change are interconnected in significant ways. The societal and economic roles traditionally assigned to women and men lead to gender-specific impacts of climate change, with women's perspectives, participation, and leadership in addressing these issues often excluded. Persistent gender stereotypes and discrimination often leave women with less access to and control over resources needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, limit their input in climate action decision-making, and restrict their access to rights. In recognition of the need to promote gender equality to fulfill human rights and to accelerate effective climate action, international frameworks aim to enhance women's participation and leadership in the transition to a green economy, within clean energy investments and across all areas of climate action.

The China's Pathway for Carbon Neutrality and Global Climate Governance SPS reviews recent advances in climate governance, focusing on China's efforts and challenges in achieving a green, low-carbon transition while also assessing China's role in promoting the global green energy shift and the development of sustainable supply chains. As part of this research topic, the SPS explores the importance of gender equality in climate governance and provides gender mainstreaming recommendations.

The SPS is highly effective in integrating relevant gender equality dimensions into the research topic. It does so through the inclusion of a substantive gender-focused

chapter entitled Pathways to Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change Analysis, which explores various aspects of the intersection between gender equality and climate change and draws on examples of frameworks, policies, and practices from both the international realm and within China. The chapter emphasizes the need to integrate gender considerations into global climate policies due to women's greater vulnerability to climate change, resulting from socio-economic disparities and gender norms that limit their access to resources, rights, and decision-making. It also recognizes that women possess valuable and unique knowledge and skills that are essential for climate adaptation and mitigation, necessitating their participation in climate governance.

The SPS highlights that in recent years, the incorporation of gender issues has gained increasing importance within global climate governance frameworks, such as the UNFCCC, and within national climate policies, including National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It recognizes that promoting gender equality within multilateral climate frameworks is vital, including through women's representation in international climate conferences, the provision of financial and capacity-building support to integrate gender equality into climate change initiatives, and funding to support women's participation in climate action. The SPS asserts that enhancing women's adaptability and influence in green and low-carbon sectors is important to advancing climate goals and ensuring gender equality. It lauds China's progress in promoting gender equality in its green transition through policies that emphasize women's participation in economic and social development.

To address economic costs borne disproportionately by women in certain sectors impacted by the green transition, the SPS recommends the development of policies that offer retraining, skills upgrading, and social security protections for women. It also recommends targeted efforts to encourage women's participation and skills development in emerging green technologies and new energy sectors, including through regional and international technical cooperation and training programs. In terms of international cooperation, the importance of considering the social and gender impact of climate projects in cross-border investments is recognized.

### *Sustainable Oceans Management under the Vision of Carbon Neutrality*

Promoting gender equality, as emphasized in the SDGs, is essential for the effective



management and protection of ocean and marine resources. The distinct roles of men and women, who use and are impacted by marine ecosystems differently, often put women at a disadvantage, limiting their engagement in consultations and access to their rights and participation in decision-making processes. Environmental challenges and climate change affect women and men differently, meaning their needs and contributions to solutions also vary. Though they are present throughout the ocean economy, women tend to be concentrated in lower-paid industries and excluded from more technical fields, as well as from leadership and governance positions. To ensure a sustainable blue economy that benefits women and men from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous Peoples, barriers to women's participation and leadership throughout related initiatives must be identified and addressed.

SPS Oceans studies and recommends systems for ocean governance, blue finance, and green technologies for carbon neutrality to promote sustainable blue economic development in China, with a focus this year on offshore aquaculture, deep seabed mining, ocean energy industry transition, and ocean economy and blue finance. The SPS is effective in presenting the relevance of gender and equity considerations in two focused sections of the paper.

The SPS's first gender-focused section, explores the importance of equity considerations, with a focus on gender, to a sustainable blue economy and carbon neutrality goals. The second focus area relates to gender equality in offshore aquaculture. The SPS recognizes that gender equality is a key issue when evaluating the social risks of the aquaculture industry, though there is limited research on gender dynamics in offshore aquaculture. Across the entire aquatic food production sector, women make up about half of the workforce, yet they remain underrepresented in decision-making and leadership roles—often occupying lower-paid and low-skilled positions due to gender-based barriers. Engaging in offshore aquaculture, which requires higher investment and offers greater returns, poses further challenges for women, who, due to gender-discriminatory social norms and other barriers, face limited opportunities in this male-dominated industry.

The SPS asserts that offshore aquaculture's reliance on policy-driven transformation offers an opportunity for reform, through which governments can support women by offering technical training and creating inclusive spaces for learning, enabling their

increased participation in various aquaculture sectors. Additionally, because women often make more sustainable and environmentally conscious decisions, the SPS puts forth the idea that promoting their participation in the industrial transformation of offshore aquaculture can lead to more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

### *Biodiversity Conservation and the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Framework*

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework recognized the critical role that gender equity plays via its Target 22, which seeks to ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective, and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and Target 23, which calls on the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach. The focus is on recognizing that women and men generally have different roles in the use and management of natural resources due to societal gender norms and that understanding these roles is key to combating biodiversity loss and ensuring equitable access to limited and life-giving resources. While gender-differentiated responsibilities vary by region, in many communities around the world, women act as primary caretakers and natural resource managers—for example, procuring water and firewood, managing waste, and providing health care, often through plant-based medicines. As a result, biodiversity loss directly affects women's activities, and the related impacts on women's lives in terms of health, safety, and education are reinforcing unequal rights and access to decision-making.

*The Biodiversity Conservation and the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Framework* SPS focuses on strengthening biodiversity conservation and China's commitment to and strategy for implementing the Kunming-Montreal Framework. The study recognizes that within the Framework, Target 23 looks specifically at gender issues and, in doing so, calls on the importance of greater stakeholder participation and influence in biodiversity governance, including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, to ensure the long-term effectiveness of any initiative. For example, the SPS identifies the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as crucial when considering the development of biodiversity credit markets. Similarly, protected areas and OECMs also require involvement and support from surrounding communities to be effective and sustainable.

The SPS also focuses on the importance of considering equity and gender equality, particularly when it comes to the rights and social equity of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, which, as stated by the study, “requires refinement and wide application of social impact and governance assessments.” The SPS includes a specific section *on Challenges and best and practices in selecting areas and building the ‘social license to protect’, leveraging support from and generating socio-economic benefits to local communities*, which looks at the importance of engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities and addresses the inherent tension between what they refer to as “the need for speed,” referring to the 2030 deadline, juxtaposed with the need to bring people along with any conservation initiatives. The report also points to the fact that there are still important lessons to be learned when it comes to the benefits of a bottom-up approach to conservation—an opportunity for future focus when it comes to this SPS. In addition to the above, the SPS report identifies a gender-specific recommendation calling for the improvement of the evaluation system for the effectiveness of protected areas by including issues related to gender and social equity, as well as human rights. This recommendation provides an additional opportunity for future research when it comes to biodiversity conservation.

Finally, at the time of review, a few areas were identified that present an opportunity for a gender-responsive approach. The first is that when discussing support provided by international organizations, it is important to ensure that any support provided by international organizations is done with a gender perspective in mind and in consultation with the developing country (including those involved in biodiversity conservation). A second opportunity is, when carrying out assessments of the benefits of ecological redlining, it would be important to ensure that any assessment includes a gender analysis to understand the gendered impacts of ecological redlines and identify any inequities when it comes to their benefits, as well as possible drawbacks or gendered risks.

*Collaborative Mechanism for Carbon Reduction, Pollution Reduction, Green Expansion and Growth*

Integrating gender considerations into low-carbon development policies is necessary to ensure equitable access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy by all. These are preconditions for gender equality, health equity and well-being. We

know that climate change and related policies impact women, men, and social groups differently, based on their different needs, perspectives, and gendered realities. In addition, a lack of access to modern energy resources disproportionately affects low-income households and disadvantaged groups, including women, as well as those in rural areas, thereby exacerbating poverty and women’s marginalization. As such, the development of policies and laws that build equality, prohibit discrimination, and empower women to both participate in and benefit from emission reduction and economic growth is key.

*The Collaborative Mechanism for Carbon Reduction, Pollution Reduction, Green Expansion and Growth* SPS seeks to challenge the traditional concept that emission reduction is an impediment to economic growth and focus our attention on the mutually reinforcing relationship between emission reduction and economic growth. In doing so, the SPS calls on the recognition of the role of gender mainstreaming in reducing emissions and promoting economic growth. In other words, to further enhance the intrinsic power of emission reduction for economic growth, it is imperative to “fully consider the various asymmetric impacts that emission reduction may bring about, and take into account the practical interests of the main parties, encourage women’s participation in emission reduction policy formulation and implementation, and give full play to the roles of women’s participation and gender mainstreaming in emission reduction to promote economic growth.”

The SPS includes a specific section on the role of gender mainstreaming in reducing emissions and in the promotion of economic growth, which identifies several entry points for enhancing gender equality and social equity. These are:

**a The importance of encouraging women’s participation in emission mitigation policy formulation and implementation;** not only does women’s participation bring more diverse opinions and experiences, but it also improves policy formulation and implementation.

**b The importance of addressing gender discrimination within employment and leveraging social capital for emission reduction;** emphasizing women’s roles in emission mitigation policies and specifically targeting them for skills training and employment support can help alleviate gender discrimination and increase women’s involvement in promoting social capital for emission reduction.



In terms of recommendations, the SPS calls on the need to strengthen societal support and participation, including women's participation, in emission mitigation policies to form a consensus on green development involving the entire society. The SPS also calls on the importance of thoroughly considering gender mainstreaming when formulating policies and designing mechanisms to ensure the pursuit of a truly green just transition.

#### *Green Development and Climate Adaptation for Urban and Rural Areas*

Equity must be a central part of building a climate-adapted future if adaptation to climate change is to be transformative and sustainable. To do so, it is important that adaptation measures consider the disproportionate impacts of climate change due to factors such as disparities in income and wealth, access to land and resources, representation in government, health status, age, gender, indigeneity, etc. Measures that do not take these factors into consideration risk exacerbating social injustices and inequalities, which further undermine long-term adaptation goals. As more initiatives are shared in which equity perspectives are integrated at the community and regional levels, opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing on adaptation best practices will increase.

The *Green Development and Climate Adaptation for Urban and Rural Areas* SPS considers the escalating risks posed by climate change and the urgency of implementing more systematic and urgent climate adaptation measures. The SPS also considers the importance of social and gender equity as part of climate adaptation. This is done by introducing a separate section that looks at social inequities in climate change with a specific look at urban-rural and regional disparities. The section discusses how existing climate adaptation actions may, in fact, be exacerbating existing inequities due in part to government bias, neglect of disadvantaged areas and groups, the unbalanced distribution of resources, and limited public participation in the decision-making and implementation process.

Indeed, one of the risks identified by the SPS relates to the body of evidence that demonstrates how socially and economically disadvantaged regions and populations are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, leading to further inequity. As part of the research, the study considers four case studies highlighting climate adaptation efforts and identifying gaps in policies and practices.

While the case studies do not specifically address gendered considerations, the examples identify low levels of awareness of and attention to climate change among the population and local communities, as well as limited public participation and grassroots-level engagement in climate adaptation assessments, disaster and emergency management, and the implementation of adaptation efforts as an important gap. The case studies also point to the importance of public participation in the co-creation of a shared vision for the future to increase support and effectiveness of policies. The SPS introduces two additional examples of social equity done well in climate adaptation: the Canadian Healthy Plan City tool and the Chinese “photovoltaic poverty alleviation” and green finance policy, which allow for greater prioritization of climate adaptation efforts to communities who would benefit the most.

The study calls on a more inclusive planning process to ensure equitable policy outcomes. This means assessing how adaptation policy decisions affect vulnerable groups by identifying those who benefit from these decisions and those who are disadvantaged by them. As such, an important recommendation put forward by the SPS is to “pay attention to social equity and gender issues in climate adaptation (including assessments, policies and programs), and accelerate the enhancement of the climate adaptation capacity of less developed regions and vulnerable groups.”

#### *Digital-Green Dual Transformation and Sustainable Development of Cities*

The digital-green dual transformation and sustainable development of cities creates new opportunities for the economic empowerment and increased well-being of women and groups often marginalized based on intersectional identity factors such as gender, age, and ethnicity, but also presents risks of their exclusion from emerging employment and economic opportunities given gender-based barriers. To harness the potential of digitization to achieve gender equality and enable women's empowerment, the way digitalization affects women and men differently must be recognized, and gender-based barriers that prevent them from equitably benefiting from digital advancements must be addressed. This includes considering the perspectives of diverse women and men, ensuring that women have access to digital tools and employment in STEM fields, and considering the structural and transformational changes necessary within digital governance and the broader digital ecosystem to make them more gender-responsive and reduce the gender digital divide.



The *Digital-Green Dual Transformation and Sustainable Development of Cities* SPS explores how China can best achieve its digital and green transformation goals while integrating economic, social, and ecological considerations into the sustainable development of cities. The SPS effectively integrates relevant considerations in a gender-focused section and at various points within the research.

The SPS explores gender equality and intersectionality in the context of China's rapid development of smart cities and emphasizes that understanding intersectionality is essential for identifying vulnerable groups and effectively implementing measures to address inequality. The paper demonstrates that in China, the development of smart cities risks worsening existing inequalities, especially for women, the elderly, and migrant workers. Over the past decades, gender inequality in China has increased despite improvements in women's access to education, healthcare, and wealth. Women's ability to benefit from smart city developments is limited due to their underrepresentation in high-paying jobs, such as those found in STEM fields. Rural households, particularly those of migrant workers, also face significant challenges, particularly the risk of job displacement due to technological advances. Female migrant workers, who often hold lower-skilled jobs, are especially vulnerable, while the elderly, particularly women, often struggle with low pensions, chronic health issues, and difficulties in using digital technologies.

The SPS also shows that a large proportion of China's workforce lacks higher education. This education gap particularly impacts women, especially female migrant workers, who lack the higher education required to effectively adapt to the demands of smart cities. The gig economy integral to smart cities provides new opportunities through flexible work options but also job insecurity and isolation, particularly for women, necessitating gender-sensitive designs and support mechanisms for gig workers to address these challenges. The paper also highlights the lack of sex-disaggregated data in China, the scarcity of which is exacerbated by strict data privacy laws. The scarcity of such data hinders efforts to identify and address gender bias and inequality—a gap that could be addressed by improving data transparency and sharing information with research institutions.

Ultimately, the paper concludes that smart city developments that fail to consider and address existing inequalities are at risk of creating a future with even greater

social disparities. For smart cities to be sustainable, they need to identify and address gender and other inequalities. The SPS recommends that ICT applications be leveraged to increase the participation of diverse stakeholders in informing the gender-responsiveness and inclusivity of service delivery; that a broader range of institutions representing social and environmental interests be included within smart city development efforts; and that rural areas be included within the catchment areas for smart cities to ensure that urban-rural inequalities are not exacerbated.

### *Economies of Scale and Green Technology Innovation: Great Potential in Capital Markets*

Gender considerations are important in green technology innovation, as women are often marginalized within development and deployment processes as employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders within green technology fields. The gender dimensions of green technology innovation relate to the need to address existing inequalities in women's and men's access to resources, including financing, to participate in green technology innovation and acquisition; their inclusion within livelihood opportunities related to green technology development; their ability to benefit from innovation processes; and consideration of their diverse perspectives as green technology users in designing and implementing innovation processes and outcomes that support their inclusion and ability to benefit from innovation. Considering gender equality within such processes also has a multiplier effect on promoting green technology innovation among a wider population of women and men.

*The Economies of Scale and Green Technology Innovation: Great Potential in Capital Markets* SPS examines China's capital market's role in supporting technological innovation, focusing on the investment process to enhance its effectiveness. As part of this analysis, the SPS includes a gender-focused section on the gender dimensions of talent within the green technology innovation ecosystem.

The SPS asserts that the construction of a green technology innovation ecosystem heavily relies on talent and that gender inclusion is vital in this process, despite women's current low representation within the scientific research and development global workforce. Various factors, including discriminatory social norms and limited access to STEM education, hinder women's participation in male-dominated sectors like green technology. The environment is often unsupportive or hostile,

creating additional challenges for women entering and advancing in this field. The SPS continues by explaining that the exclusion of women from green technology innovation can limit the incorporation of women's perspectives, which may prevent technological innovations from fully addressing the needs of society, thereby reducing their overall societal impact.

To create a more inclusive and effective green technology innovation ecosystem, the paper asserts that it is essential to promote opportunities for women's education, training, employment, and entrepreneurship within green technology. This would remove barriers that hinder their participation and actively incorporate their perspectives in the design and implementation of green technologies. Doing so would ensure that green technology innovation serves the interests of all members of society, maximizing the potential benefits of green technology.

#### *Sustainable Trade and Sustainable Supply Chains*

Trade in low-carbon technologies can bring new economic development opportunities for women, such as more access to low-carbon technologies, reduced time burdens, and new job opportunities. However, the potentially negative impacts associated with increased trade in low-carbon technologies may also be most keenly felt among women, who start at an economic disadvantage due to discriminatory gender norms. These gender norms result in women's lower access to resources, such as training and skills development, particularly in STEM fields; concentration in lower-paid and lower-skilled jobs; and lesser access to information and resources to enable them to benefit from low-carbon technologies—all of which give them less flexibility than men in adapting to economic shifts and climate change and risk their exclusion from the economic and environmental benefits of trade in low-carbon technologies.

In recognition of the importance of a global shift to sustainable trade to address climate change, the *Sustainable Trade and Sustainable Supply Chains* SPS analyzes China's bilateral trade in low-carbon technologies (LCTs) and their associated minerals, exploring the environmental impacts and economic factors influencing them. This includes a gender-focused section analyzing the role of gender equality in the labour force and its impacts on trade in LCTs and their associated minerals.

The quantitative analysis the SPS carried out for this section examined factors such as

the ratio of female employers, the female employment rate, and female employment in services against international trade in LCTs and minerals. In the countries examined outside of China, these gender-based factors were found to be positively correlated with LCT exports, suggesting that female representation and leadership in the workforce were strongly linked to LCT exports to China, highlighting the importance of female leadership in driving trade. However, the SPS finds that LCT imports from China were less correlated with gender-specific performance, except for a negative association with female employment in industry. For mineral trade, the SPS finds that both imports from and exports to China were significantly related to gender variables. Female leadership and participation in the workforce, particularly in industry and services, were found to positively influence mineral exports to China, while the ratio of female employers and the female-to-male employment rate were found to positively impact mineral imports from China.

Based on the results of the overall analysis, the SPS concludes that gender equality in the workforce enhances countries' competitiveness in international trade in LCTs and minerals. This suggests that countries with higher levels of gender equality may be better positioned to capitalize on the economic and environmental opportunities offered by sustainable trade and supply chains.

#### *Green Opening-up and South–South Cooperation*

South–South cooperation can play a critical role in promoting gender equality and advancing the broader SDGs. South–South cooperation can facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources, enhancing the capacity of countries to implement gender-responsive policies and programs. South–South cooperation can focus on empowering women and mainstreaming gender into activities across all SDGs. To ensure the adoption of inclusive and impactful South–South cooperation models; however, it is imperative to recognize the unique challenges faced by women and girls and ensure women's leadership and active participation, including that of women's rights and feminist organizations, at all levels and in all stages of the South–South cooperation practices.

The *Green Opening-up and South–South Cooperation* SPS report sought to better understand the importance of green opening-up and South–South cooperation for China by identifying the needs and challenges of developing countries in responding



to climate change, renewable energy development, and other fields, as well as the requirements for ensuring win-win cooperation. Through the report, it is clear that collaborative efforts among countries are key to green development. The leading role that China plays in the Global South and its promotion of South-South cooperation means that it can offer valuable lessons and provide a model for sustainable development through green policies. It also means that it can have a tremendous impact when it comes to advancing gender equality.

The SPS report includes several specific paragraphs on the role of women and gender equality, which are important contributions to the theme at hand. The SPS also references the importance of engaging a wide range of partners, including government departments, enterprises, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and diverse social groups.

Finally, at the time of review, a few areas were identified that present an opportunity for a gender-responsive approach as part of a long-term vision for China's involvement in Green Opening-Up and South-South cooperation. The first area relates to the opportunity to deepen the research on the importance of gender mainstreaming as part of South-South cooperation, looking specifically at how South-South cooperation can benefit women and support gender equality. The second area relates to the SPS's recommendation to include comprehensive environmental, social, and governance (ESG) indicators in the evaluation system of South-South cooperation projects. In addition to doing so, there are important linkages between ESG and gender equality that should be explored to better understand how ESG can be leveraged to support gender equality. A final area relates to the importance of carrying out gender analyses to ensure that any initiative or effort undertaken considers the differentiated impacts on women and diverse social groups and how they can contribute to the design and implementation of sustainable solutions. For example, when looking at collaboration between Chinese and African companies, a gender analysis would help identify specific barriers facing women-led companies, which would allow the establishment of specific support or measures to facilitate their participation. Similarly, when looking at support for engineers and technicians, a gender analysis would help identify specific barriers faced by women engineers

and technicians and would help to create targeted solutions to ensure their equitable access to training, employment, and career development.

## Good Practices in the Integration of Gender Equality Perspectives

The following section highlights several best practices from the SPS final research papers that should continue to be incorporated into SPS research and development.

- **Carrying out a preliminary gender analysis early in the planning process.** Conducting an initial gender analysis early in the research planning process can enable the identification of the gender equality issue(s) most pertinent to the research topic and with adequate existing research to draw upon. This can then provide the basis for resourcing the researching and drafting of this section appropriately by either an existing member of the SPS team or an external expert. A more in-depth gender analysis could then be carried out by the researcher responsible for that section.

- **Including a gender-focused section in the SPS.** Including a gender-focused section within the SPS improves the visibility of gender equality-related considerations and enables the provision of adequate context to raise awareness of the relevance of gender equality to the research topic. Previous SPS have done this in the form of text boxes of gender-focused chapters or sections of the SPS.

- **Integrating gender considerations throughout the SPS.** In addition to a gender-focused section, it is good practice to also integrate gender considerations at relevant points throughout the SPS. The integration of gender within the text can follow from the context provided within the gender-focused section, or it can be independent of the context provided in the gender-focused section. There are gender dimensions in most research topics, so the integration of gender considerations throughout is generally relevant.

- **Including diverse demographic groups in stakeholder engagement.** When discussing the engagement of stakeholders, it is good practice to promote the meaningful participation of women and diverse demographic groups,



particularly those marginalized based on their intersectional identities. Such participation is important as part of policy development and decision-making, as well as within consultations.

## Recommendations to CCICED for the Forthcoming Research Phase

The following recommendations are made to strengthen gender mainstreaming within the forthcoming SPS research phase:

- **Include gender from the beginning of the research cycle.** To ensure that gender perspectives are most effectively integrated as part of the research, it is imperative that a gender analysis be carried out prior to the development of the detailed research outline. Doing so will also ensure that gender equality goals are integrated into the planning and execution of the policy research. This would require the integration of gender equality perspectives as part of the implementation plan and the SPS team's gender equality approach as part of the kick-off meeting. See Tools 1 and 2 of the revised Toolkit on Gender Equality and Environmental Sustainability.

- **Allocate a specific budget to support gender-specific research within each SPS.** Numerous SPS research teams conducted field visits, including interviews. These efforts present an important opportunity to gather more comprehensive information that includes gender-specific information. Doing so requires additional resources to ensure adequate resourcing of time and expertise (either of SPS team members or a gender specialist) to carry out gender research. Specific budgetary allocations geared toward gender and social equity research would also further support a robust gender analysis and ensure that CCICED policy recommendations are grounded in this analysis. For example, as piloted by the SPS Adaptation this year, a Chinese gender expert joined the consultation session and provided more targeted guidance on the Chinese context and policy recommendations. It might be worth considering expanding this approach if resources allow.

- **Include gender-focused case studies.** Researching and developing gender-

focused case studies can be highly effective in demonstrating the impact of integrating gender perspectives in a particular research area, especially where equitable outcomes can be identified. Including such case studies is also aligned with gender action plans of international environment and climate change conventions.

- **Design the gender policy recommendations as robust and concrete as possible.** This will increase the likelihood of the recommendations leading to a positive policy and real-life impact and will also improve CCICED's ability to track these recommendations. Recommendations like "pay attention to" are rather vague, easy for policy-makers to dismiss, and hard to track.

- **Include additional research and analysis on the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on different social groups.** Within research, it is important to make visible the different ways that different marginalized groups are impacted by environmental issues and climate change and can contribute to solutions. This includes such groups as Indigenous communities, LGBTQI people, persons with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities. People in marginalized communities often face multiple forms of discrimination based on their gender and other identity factors, such as age, disability, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, so it is important to take note of differences between women, men, and gender-diverse people within these communities when conducting research. This approach is aligned with international commitments to "leave no one behind" and recognizes that the perspectives of many groups that are marginalized based on their intersectional identities are not accounted for. Research to understand the perspectives of these different groups would enable the CCICED to develop a more nuanced approach to gender equality aligned with good global practice.

- **Develop a gender- and social equity-specific annotated bibliography to support and guide SPS teams in their research and analysis.** A foundational part of a gender analysis is the review of research and documentation, as well as the analysis of data. While a previous literature review was conducted and published in March 2019, important developments have taken place since then. It would be incredibly valuable to the teams to have a gender- and social equity-

specific annotated bibliography that they can use and refer to when developing their next research focus. It is recommended that the CCICED undertake an exercise of collating recent research and analysis related to gender and social equity and the different subjects explored by the SPS teams.

● **CCICED Secretariat to commit to improving the gender balance of CCICED's Council Members and Special Advisors year by year, with the aim of reaching gender parity by the end of the decade.** Although the primary focus of the gender mainstreaming work is the SPS reports and the accompanying policy recommendations, the gender structure of the organization is an important measure of success and contributes to furthering the integration of gender equality perspectives as part of the SPS research themes.

● **Consider gender considerations in the design of CCICED events.** This could involve ensuring balanced representation, addressing gender/equity-specific topics, and creating inclusive platforms for participation and discussion.

The CCICED believes the work of SPS research teams around gender equality can have an important impact on policy direction and future environmental efforts related to climate adaptation, carbon reduction, biodiversity conservation, South–South cooperation, and more. As such, the CCICED will continue to support SPS research teams in integrating gender equality considerations and reinforcing their gender mainstreaming approach.