

Women in Environmental Decision Making

New Research from the Environment and Gender Index (EGI)

A strong global policy framework recognizes the importance and promotes the active participation and leadership of women across all levels of decision making—including that on environment and sustainable development concerns. Ensuring women’s unique perspectives, experience, needs, and capacities inform sound policymaking is critical to development, poverty eradication, and livelihood outcomes, among others. Research has also shown that women’s leadership leads to better conservation and sustainable development outcomes. And yet, **new data from the EGI shows that across key environmental fora, less than 1/3 of decision makers are women.**

NEW EGI DATASET

In collaboration with UN Women, IUCN Global Gender Office’s EGI team has created a new global dataset on women’s participation in environmental decision making. This dataset, which aims to deepen understanding of a broad finding from the 2013 pilot phase of the EGI—that women have less access to environmental decision-making spheres at all levels—compiles indicators on women’s involvement in international environmental delegations and leadership of large environmental institutions, green parties, and environmental ministries at the national level. Results may be useful in the elaboration of a wide range of processes and frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

INTRODUCING THE EGI

The first accountability and monitoring mechanism of its kind, the EGI was launched in 2013. The pilot phase brought together environment and gender variables in a composite index that scored and ranked 73 countries worldwide along 27 dimensions in six categories: Ecosystem; Gender Based Education + Assets; Governance; Country Reported Activities; Livelihood; Gender Based Rights + Participation.

With some of the best data to date on how countries are translating their commitments to environmental protection and women’s empowerment at national level, the EGI found that countries taking seriously their commitments to advancing gender equality in environmental arenas are making strides well beyond survival toward long-term wellbeing for all their citizens.

At the present, the EGI team is developing new datasets and producing national case studies examining women’s participation and leadership in environmental decision making. In its next full phase, the EGI aims to include all countries of the world in an updated composite index.



29%*
of Rio Convention
government
delegates are
women

Less than 25%**
of Rio Convention
focal points are
women

43%**
of Rio
Convention NGO
representatives are
women

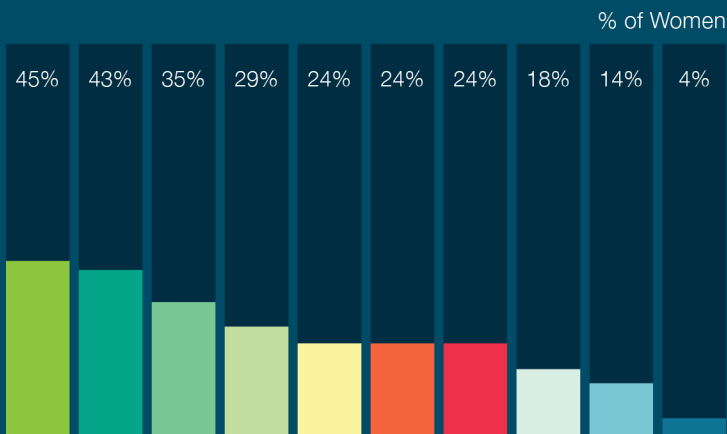
Out of 43
international
environmentally
focused
institutions,
35%**
of the executive
directors (or
equivalent) are
women

*As of 2014; **As of 2013

In 7 out of the 10
variables on decision-making processes,
women's participation
is under
30%.

The participation and representation of women was examined for every country of the world, in the most recent year that data was available. The following chart summarizes the key findings and demonstrates the lack of women's equitable participation in key spheres:

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION MAKING



- Nationally Elected Greens
- Rio Convention NGO Representatives
- Directors/Presidents of International Environmental Institutions
- Rio Convention Government Delegates
- Gov't Delegates as Chairs of COPs or Subsidiary Bodies
- Rio Convention / GEF National Focal Points
- National Focal Points for UNFF
- Focal Points for Rio Conventions and GEF
- Ministers of Environment
- World Energy Council Committee

Women are being significantly underrepresented on a global scale. Gender parity in environmental decision making ensures that the diverse perspectives of women and men are communicated and represented at multiples levels. Women serving as focal points or as government delegates to the Rio Conventions can ensure that women's unique needs and capacities are integrated into global policy making and potentially championed in national implementation strategies of Convention agreements. But in international and national spheres, only a fraction of positions are held by women.

The notable exceptions, or at least the areas of progress, appear to lie in women's representation in national Green Parties, in which participation is 45%, and in international environmental organizations, where 35% of organizations are headed by women. Women's roles in leadership positions in these organizations provide the opportunity for women to influence policy frameworks and broaden the expertise reflected in those negotiations, and can often serve as a link between government representatives and practitioners on the ground. Moreover, their technical capacity may offer important support to implementation of environmental plans and programmes.

NEXT STEPS:

To continue to strengthen the analysis of the EGI and minimize gaps in the data, GGO, in collaboration with UN Women, will develop a new dataset focusing on national-level policies and programmes. This dataset will consider the incorporation of gender in national policies for various environmental sectors, as well as the inclusion of gender focal points within national programmes.

CONTACT

IUCN Global Gender Office
1630 Conneticut Ave. NW Suite 1630 Washington, DC 20009
globalgenderoffice@iucn.org

For more information, visit
genderandenvironment.org/EGI



IN COLLABORATION WITH



MARCH 2015