

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

by

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# Women's Participation in Environmental Decision-Making: Developing a New Global Dataset with the IUCN Global Gender Office

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## Abstract

Ensuring women's perspectives, experiences and needs inform policy making is critical for sustainable development and improving livelihood outcomes. Often, women are viewed as vulnerable victims to the effects of climate change, and their contributions to environmental decision-making and natural resource management are overlooked and ignored. In 2013, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Global Gender Office (GGO) launched the Environment and Gender Index (EGI), a composite index to monitor gender equality and women's empowerment in the environmental arena. To support the GGO and enrich the EGI, I collected information for a global dataset that compiles indicators on women's involvement in international environmental delegations, leadership of international environmental institutions, representation in elected green party positions and as heads of national environmental ministries. The indicator frameworks were applied to case studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines. The indicators provide information for policy-makers and civil society to evaluate countries' progress and identify gaps in achieving gender equality in environmental fora.

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## Acronyms

- (EGI) Environment and Gender Index
- (CI) Conservation International
- (COP) Conference of Parties
- (CST) Committee on Science and Technology
- (CRIC) Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
- (CSW) Commission on the Status of Women
- (IUCN) International Union for Conservation of Nature
- (GEF) Global Environment Facility
- (GGO) Global Gender Office
- (NGO) Non-governmental Organization
- (SBI) Subsidiary Body for Implementation
- (SBSTA) Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice
- (SDG) Sustainable Development Goals
- (UN) United Nations
- (UNCBD) UN Convention on Biological Diversity
- (UNCCD) UN Convention to Combat Desertification
- (UNFCCC) UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- (UNFF) UN Forum on Forests
- (WEC) World Energy Council

## Project Overview

Global environmental policy frameworks—such as the Rio Declaration, the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Combatting Desertification, as well as recent decisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—acknowledge that women’s unique perspectives, experiences and capacities play a crucial role in sustainable development and natural resource management.<sup>1 2</sup> Everyday, in their roles as farmers, household providers and/or entrepreneurs, women interact with their environments and manage natural resources.<sup>3</sup> However, although women are disproportionately adversely affected by climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation, they are often excluded from environmental decision-making at the local, national and international levels.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world’s oldest global environmental organization, working to, “find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges.”<sup>4</sup> IUCN has more than 1,200 government and NGO members, making it the world’s largest global organization.<sup>5</sup> The IUCN Global Gender Office (GGO) ensures that gender equality is central to IUCN’s environmental solutions at all government levels.<sup>6</sup> During the 2014-2015 academic year, I worked with the GGO through a fellowship position, working with the Environment and Gender Index (EGI).

### *Project Deliverables and Personal Contribution*

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<sup>1</sup> *Women, Natural Resource Management, and Poverty*. Publication. New Course, 2010. Web.

<sup>2</sup> *Gender in Environmental Policy and Programming*. Issue brief. IUCN Global Gender Office, Conservation International, 2015. Web.  
<[https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/gender\\_in\\_environmental\\_policy\\_and\\_programming\\_0.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/gender_in_environmental_policy_and_programming_0.pdf)>.

<sup>3</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making in the Philippines*. Rep. IUCN, 2015. Web.  
<[https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/egi\\_country\\_case\\_study\\_-\\_philippines\\_march\\_2015.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/egi_country_case_study_-_philippines_march_2015.pdf)>.

<sup>4</sup> "IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature." *IUCN*. Web. <http://www.iucn.org/about/>

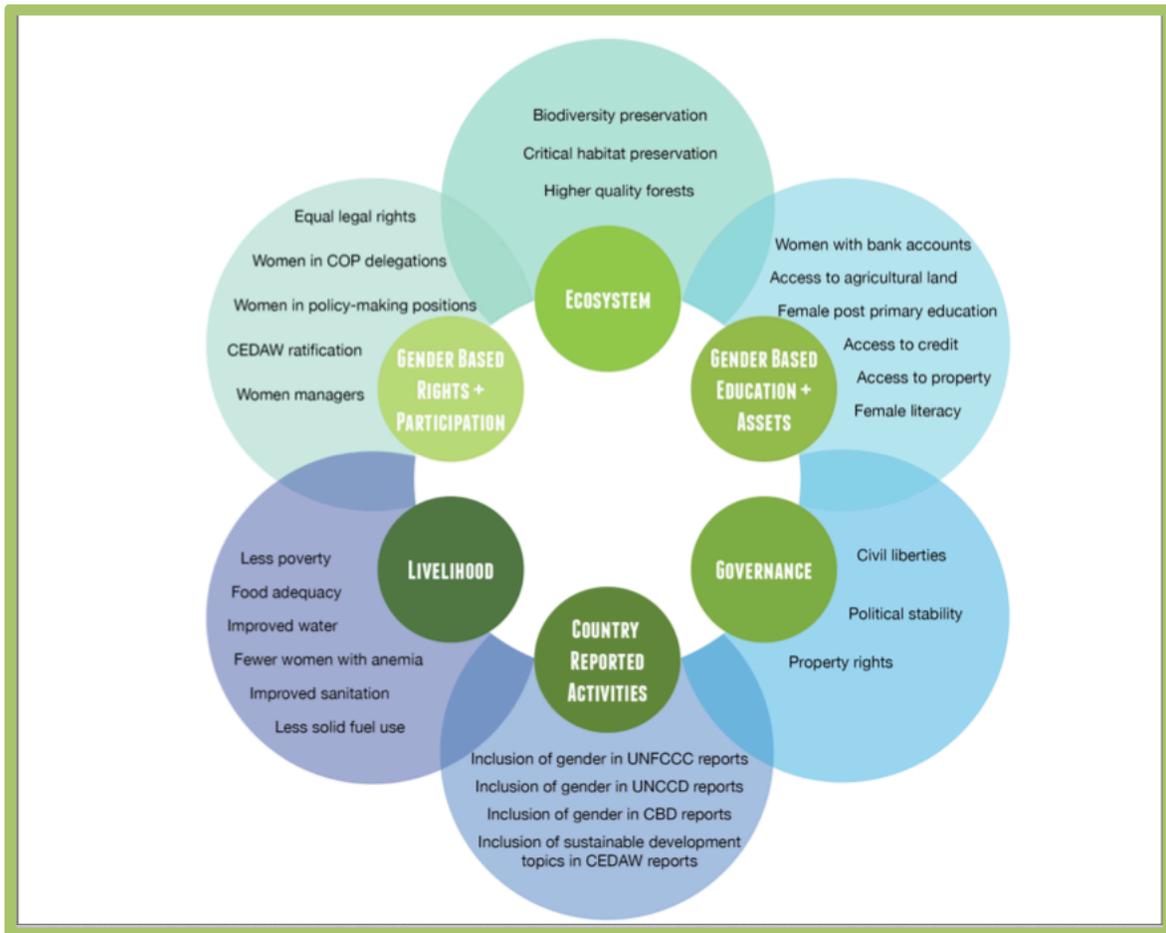
<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> "Mission - Global Gender Office." *Global Gender Office*. IUCN Web. 22 Apr. 2015.

- *Creation and management of a new dataset on women in environmental decision-making.* Working to quantify women's roles in decision-making around the world, I have supported the Global Gender Office in creating and managing a new global database on women's participation in environmental decision-making. The findings of this dataset were released at a side event at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59) in New York City, New York in March 2015. A brief analysis and summary of the indicators are discussed later in this report. Currently, I am drafting a more thorough dataset report, *The Environment and Gender Index (EGI): Developing a New Global Dataset on Women's Participation in Environmental Decision Making*, to be published by the IUCN Global Gender Office in 2015.
- *-A country case study report.* In collaboration with Conservation International, the IUCN Global Gender Office produced a three-country case study report assessing the participation of women in environmental decision making in the three case studies in the government, civil society and international governance sectors. Under lead researcher and author Melissa Luna, I contributed to these case studies by conducting interviews, collecting and managing data, conducting background academic research and report drafting and editing. The final report, *"Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines"* was published in March 2015 by IUCN and Conservation International, and is cited throughout this report.

## Global Dataset on Women in Environmental Decision-Making

In November 2013—at the UN Climate Change Negotiations in Warsaw, Poland—the IUCN Global Gender Office released the pilot phase of the Environment and Gender Index (EGI), the first accountability and monitoring mechanism for environment and gender variables. This composite index scored and ranked 73 countries along 27 dimensions in six categories, illustrated below:<sup>7</sup>



*Photo from the 2013 Pilot EGI Report*

<sup>7</sup> *Results of the Environment and Gender Index (EGI)*. Publication. IUCN Global Gender Office, 2013. Web. <[https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/results\\_of\\_the\\_environment\\_and\\_gender\\_index\\_0.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/results_of_the_environment_and_gender_index_0.pdf)>

The 2013 pilot EGI revealed, among other things, that 1) women participate less in environmental decision-making than men at the local, regional and national levels, and 2) there is a lack of sex-aggregated data throughout the environmental sectors globally. Working to measure women's participation in global environmental decision-making, I collected data on ten (10) indicators on women's involvement in environmental decision-making for the new database. The indicators are as follows;

- Rio Convention Indicators
  - Rio Convention Government Delegates
  - Representation in Rio Convention COP Subsidiary Bodies
  - Rio Convention NGO Representatives
  - Focal Points for Rio Conventions
- Directors/Presidents of International Environmental Institutions
- National Focal Points to the UN Forum on Forests
- Ministers of Environment
- World Energy Council Indicators
  - National Committee Chair Positions
  - Secretary Positions
- Nationally Elected Greens

Information was collected from every country in the world—with available data—with the most recent data available. The data for these indicators was collected through United Nations, international environmental institution, national environmental ministries, World Energy Council and green party self-reported participant, membership or organization lists. For each indicator, the number of women in the indicator positions was tallied for each country, and a global average was calculated.

## Indicator Findings

### *Rio Convention Indicators*

The three Rio Conventions—the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Framework on the Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) are separate environmental treaties to advance international cooperation and decision-making.<sup>8</sup> The UNCBD is a framework for

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<sup>8</sup>*Review of Implementation of Agenda 21 the Rio Principles*. Publication. Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, Jan. 2012. Web.  
<[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/641Synthesis\\_report\\_Web.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/641Synthesis_report_Web.pdf)>.

global sustainable development that calls for “fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.”<sup>9</sup> The UNCCD is the only international and legally binding framework to address and mitigate the consequences of desertification and drought.<sup>10</sup> The UNFCCC is an international framework with the intent to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations and emissions and work towards a new international climate change agreement.<sup>11</sup>

For this dataset, information was collection on the following indicators related to the three Rio Conventions:

- The percentage of women government delegates participating as negotiators to the COPs
- The percentage of women NGO representatives participating in the negotiations
- The percentage of women serving in national focal point positions to the three Rio Conventions
- The percentage of women delegates serving as chairs of COPs and subsidiary sessions

### *Women in Rio Convention Government Delegations*

Conferences of Parties (COPs)—held annually or bi-annually—are the principle governing bodies of the three Rio Conventions. At COPs, parties review the implementation of the Convention and negotiation the decisions necessary to advance Convention mandates.<sup>12</sup> All party members to the convention are represented at COP meetings, by sending representative government delegations.

*Chart 1* presents the findings of the percentage of women at the most recent Rio Convention COPs with available data; UNCBD COP12 held in Pyeongchang, South Korea in 2014, UNCCD COP11 held in Windhoek, Namibia in 2013, and UNFCCC COP19 held in Warsaw, Poland in 2013. Across the three COPs, the total number of participants tallied was 6,113 individuals.

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<sup>9</sup> *Convention Biological Diversity*, Rio de Janeiro 5 June 1992. Available from <http://www.cbd.int/convention/text/default.shtml>

<sup>10</sup> *Convention to Combat Desertification*, 1994. Available from <http://www.unccd.int/en/about-the-convention/Pages/About-the-Convention.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> *Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992. Available from <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/about/>

<sup>12</sup> "COP." *COP*. UNFCCC. <<http://unfccc.int/bodies/body/6383.php>>.

*Chart 1*



At UNCCD COP11 and UNFCCC COP19, women filled approximately one-third of government delegate positions, whereas women filled only one-fifth of government delegate positions at UNCBD COP12. The overall average participation of women at Rio Convention COPs is twenty-nine percent, revealing that across all Rio Conventions, women are disproportionately underrepresented in the international negotiations. Other international mandates—such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)—call for the increased women’s participation in international decision-making processes.<sup>13</sup> As government delegates to the COPs are often the representatives of national environmental ministries, this indicator is perhaps indicative of women’s participation in national decision-making as well.

### *Women’s Representation in Rio Convention Subsidiary Bodies and Bureaus*

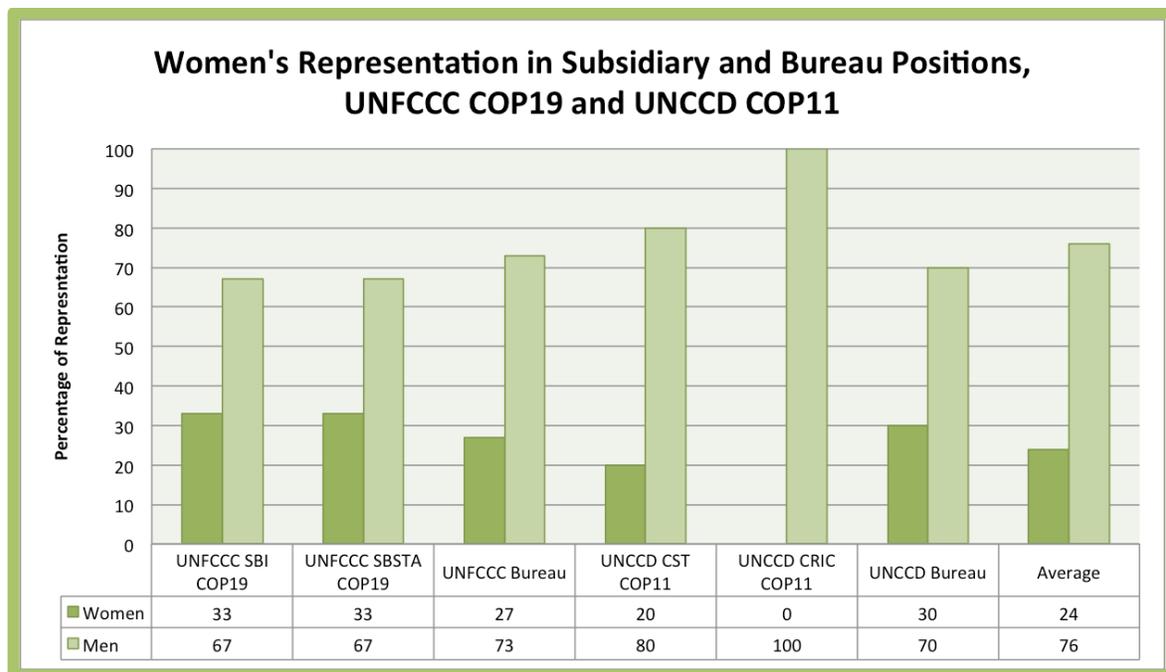
Each COP has organized subsidiary bodies that work to assist in the implementation of convention mandates and guide decision-making. For this report, the UNCBD was not considered, due to a lack of access to up-to-date information.

<sup>13</sup> UNFCCC Decision 23/CP.18. 2012. Available at [https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/election\\_and\\_membership/application/pdf/cop18\\_gender\\_balance.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/election_and_membership/application/pdf/cop18_gender_balance.pdf)

The UNFCCC has two permanent subsidiary bodies: the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA). The purpose of the SBI is to assess and review the implementation of the Convention and oversee the COP budget.<sup>14</sup> The SBSTA provides technical expertise and advice on the scientific and technological facets of implementation.<sup>15</sup> The UNCCD has two subsidiary bodies—the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST)—serving similar roles and purposes as the SBI and SBSTA, but to the UNCCD. COP bureaus are filled by elected individuals who provide additional advice and guidance to support the COP and assists the COP presidents in management duties.<sup>16</sup>

Chart 2 reveals the findings of the percentage of participation of women in subsidiary sessions as UNFCCC COP19 and UNCCD COP11.

**Chart 2**



Overall, chairs of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) and Subsidiary Bodies are on average only

<sup>14</sup> “SBSTA.” *SBSTA*. UNFCCC <<http://unfccc.int/bodies/body/6399.php>>

<sup>15</sup> “SBI.” *SBI*. UNFCCC <<http://unfccc.int/bodies/body/6406.php>>

<sup>16</sup> “Bureau of the COP and CMP.” *Bureau*. UNFCCC <<http://unfccc.int/bodies/body/6430.php>>

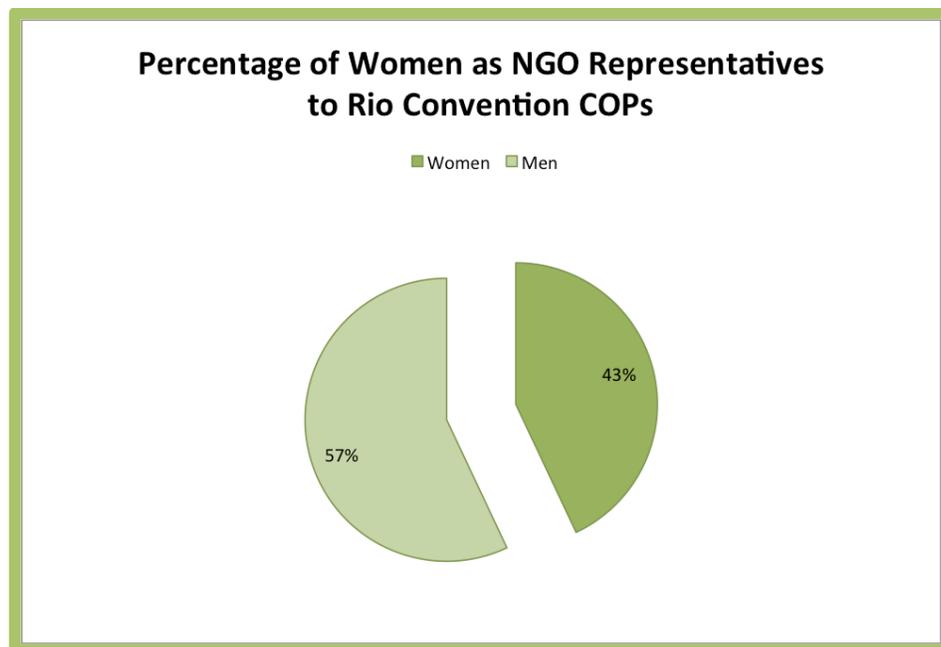
twenty-four percent women. Including women in leadership positions at supreme COP meetings is not only an objective by previous international mandates, but ensures that women's diverse experiences are communicated at an international level.

### *Women as NGO Representations to the Rio Conventions*

Non-government organizations (NGOs) are influential players in driving and shaping policy change within local, national and international spheres.<sup>17</sup> NGOs operate within the three Rio Conventions by attending COPs, using the COPs as platform to communicate and disseminate information and policy recommendations related to their mission.

*Chart 3* presents the findings of the percentage of women representing NGOs at Rio Convention COPs, including the UNFCCC COP19, UNCCD COP11 and UNCBD COP 12. Across the three COPs, the gender was determined for 4,341 individuals representing NGOs.

**Chart 3**



<sup>17</sup> Ghaus-Pasha, Aisha, Dr. "Role of Civil Society Organizations in Governance." *6th Global Forum Paper: Role of Civil Society Organizations in Governance* (2004): n. pag. Global Forum on Reinventing Government, Dec. 2004. <<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan019594.pdf>>.

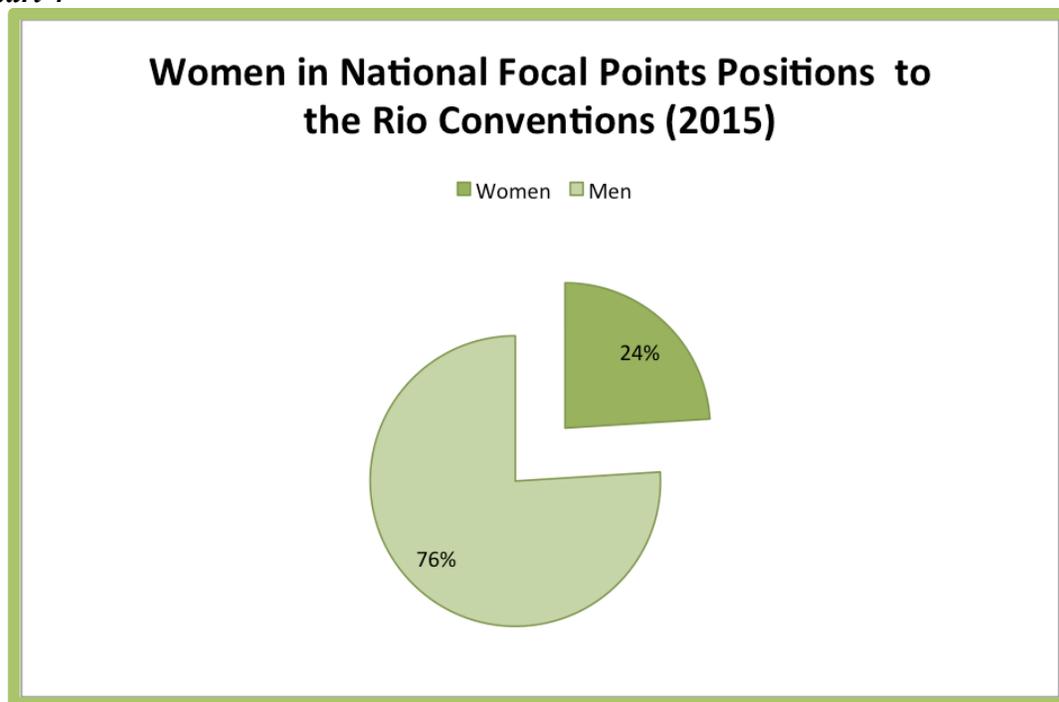
Across the three conventions on climate change, desertification and biodiversity, forty-three percent of NGO representatives are women. Comparatively, the above analysis of government delegates to Rio Conventions revealed that only twenty-nine percent are women. This is an indication that NGOs are currently outperforming governments in addressing gender parity with respect to environmental decision-making.

### *Women in National Focal Point Positions to the Rio Conventions*

Member states to the Rio Conventions have designated national focal point positions, serving as the intermediary between the member state and the Rio Convention. The focal point individual assists in policy and project formation and finance allocation.<sup>18</sup>

*Chart 4* depicts the average representation of women as national focal points to the three Rio Conventions in 2015.

**Chart 4**



Equal gender representation among national focal point positions is critical because it ensures women's experiences and approaches to environmental governance

<sup>18</sup> "National Focal Points." *National Focal Points*. UNFCCC < <http://maindb.unfccc.int/public/nfp.pl>>

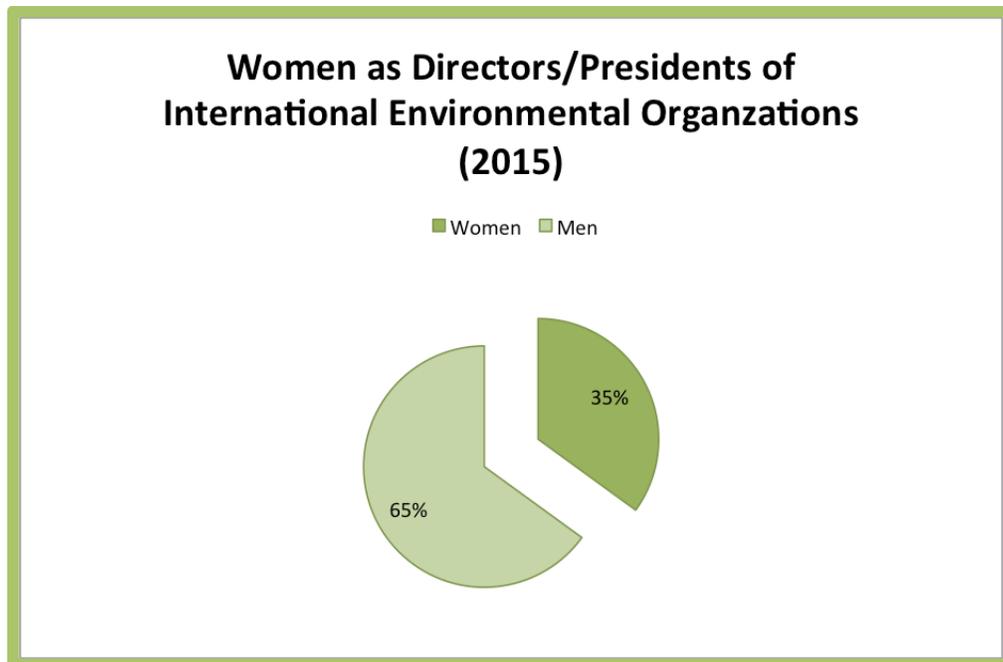
and project formulation are taken into consideration at both the national and international policy levels.<sup>19</sup>

### *Women as Directors/Heads of International Environmental Institutions*

Like NGOs, environmental institutions are critical in driving policy change and forging international cooperation.<sup>20</sup> International environmental institutions operate around the world, and embody a diversity of interests in their missions, from land tenure rights, to marine conservation to sustainable development. International environmental organizations strengthen national capacities and encourage governments to address environmental issues.<sup>21</sup> Forty-four environmental institutions—such as IUCN, Conservation International, Sierra Club and World Wildlife Fund—were surveyed to determine women’s leadership roles within the organization.

Chart 5 presents the share of women in international environmental institution leadership, as of 2015:

**Chart 5**



<sup>19</sup> *The Environment and Gender Index: Developing a New Global Dataset on Women’s Participation in Environmental Decision-Making*. Publication. IUCN. 2015

<sup>20</sup> Haas, Peter M., Robert O. Keohane, and Marc A. Levy. *Institutions for the Earth: Sources of Effective International Environmental Protection*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1993

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

In 2015, women lead thirty-five percent of the forty-four environmental institutions examined for this dataset. Of the ten indicators, this indicator ranks third overall—behind women as NGO representatives at Rio Conventions and women in elected Green Party positions. Women’s representation as heads of international environmental institutions—like that of women’s representation in NGO positions—is crucial as representational provides women the opportunity to influence national and international policy frameworks and connect to government representatives and practitioners working at the local level.<sup>22</sup>

### *Women as National Focal Points for the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)*

In 2000, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established with the objective to promote and provide, “the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.”<sup>23</sup> The UNFF monitors and reports on countries’ progress on forest-related policy and program coordination. Like to the Rio Conventions, member states to the UNFF have focal points, serving as the liaison between the UNFF and national government.<sup>24</sup>

*Chart 6* displays the percentage of women in national focal point positions to the UNFF, as of 2015.

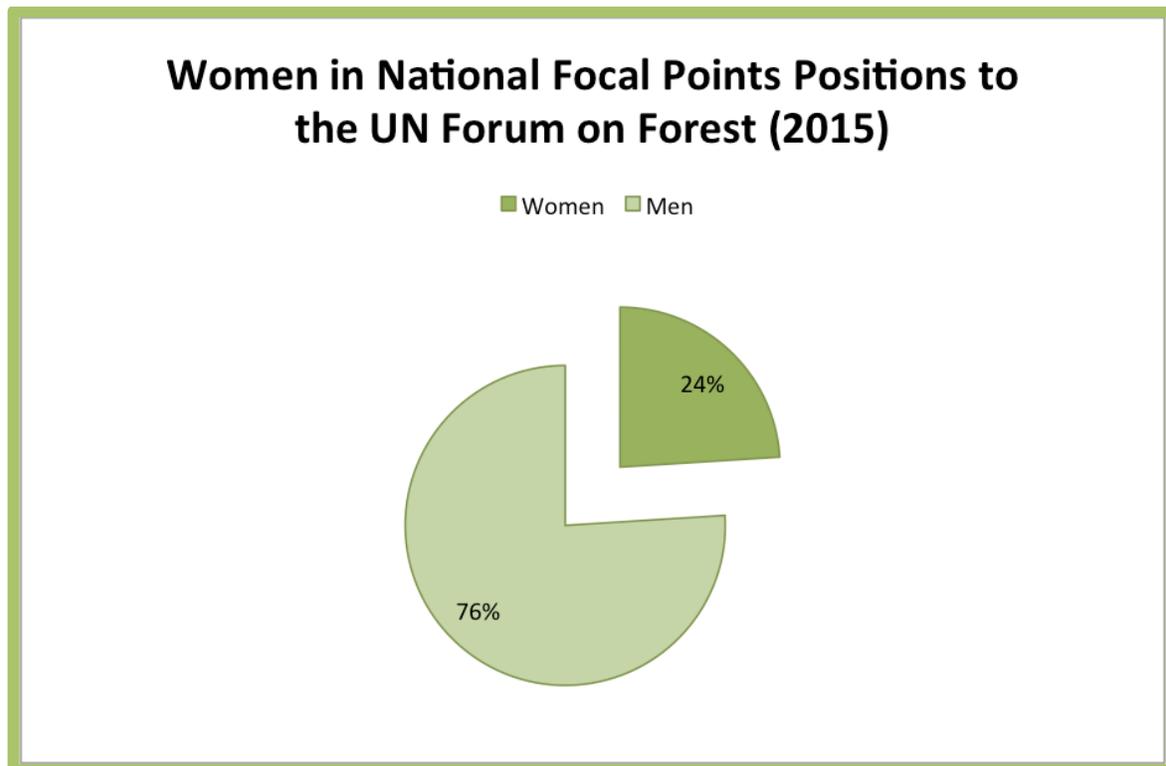
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<sup>22</sup> *The Environment and Gender Index: Developing a New Global Dataset on Women’s Participation in Environmental Decision-Making.*

<sup>23</sup> “United Nations Forum on Forests.” *UN News Center* < <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/about.html>>

<sup>24</sup> *The Environment and Gender Index: Developing a New Global Dataset on Women’s Participation in Environmental Decision-Making.*

**Chart 6**



As of 2015, women hold less than a quarter of national focal point positions to the UNFF. Gender parity in focal point positions provide the opportunity for women’s perspectives on and approaches to managing forest resources are included in forest policy formation. Women’s participation in managing forest resources—including the local level—improves forest resource conservation and regeneration.<sup>25</sup>

*Women in Leadership Positions to the World Energy Council (WEC)*

Access to energy is essential improve the quality of life for the world’s poor. To meet their daily household needs, forty percent of the world’s population rely on biomass fuel sources such as animal waste or wood.<sup>26</sup> Around the world, women are girls are the one primarily response for the household chore of collecting fuel for household cooking and heating needs.<sup>27</sup> Energy poverty extends beyond the household level—women led

<sup>25</sup> Agarwal, Bina. “Gender and Forest Conservation: The Impact of Women’s Participation in Community Forest Governance.” *Ecological Economics* 68.11 (2009): 2785-799.

<sup>26</sup> *Gender and Energy*. Issue brief. GGCA and UNDP, 2013. <  
<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/PB4-AP-Gender-and-Energy.pdf>>

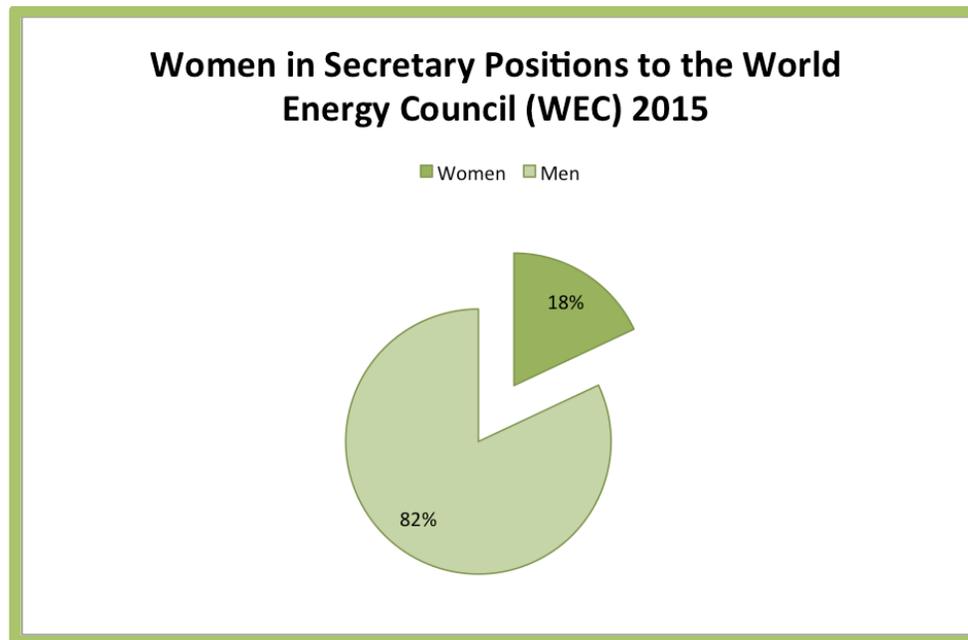
<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

businesses often experience less access to energy services than men-headed businesses.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, with the burden of energy poverty adversely falling on women, it is imperative that women are represented in energy governance.

The World Energy Council (WEC) is a global alliance of more than ninety countries, with the mission to “promote the sustainable supply and use of energy for the greatest benefit of all people.”<sup>29</sup> The WEC is the UN-accredited energy body and collaborates with more than 3,000 member organizations, including corporations, NGOs and national and state governments.<sup>30</sup> National Member Committees to the WEC represent the country’s diverse energy-related interested and are represented in Chair or Secretary positions.<sup>31</sup>

*Chart 7* presents the percentage of women in Secretary positions to the WEC and *Chart 8* reveals the representation of women in Chair positions to the WEC, as a calculated percent.

**Chart 7**



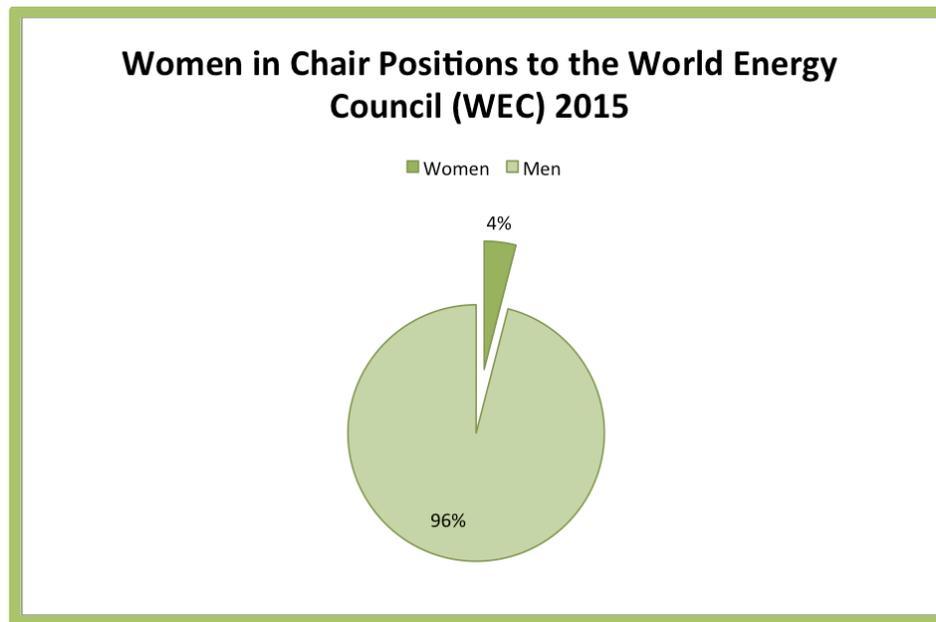
<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> “Collaborations.” *World Energy Council*. 2015 < <http://www.worldenergy.org/wec-network/collaborations/>>

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *The Environment and Gender Index: Developing a New Global Dataset on Women’s Participation in Environmental Decision-Making.*

**Chart 8**



This data reveals that women are represented in only four percent of Chair positions and eighteen percent of Secretary positions. Women’s representation in Chair positions is the weakest performing indicator, and women’s representation in Secretary positions is the third-lowest performing of the variables, indicating that the energy sectors has the largest gender-gap within all environmental sectors. With women excluded from decision-making in the energy sector, outcomes are more likely to be gender-blind, therefore ignoring women’s unique needs.<sup>32</sup> As alleviating energy poverty is a cross-sectoral challenge, energy governance institutions—such as the World Energy Council—have the potential to ensure equality sustainable outcomes and rights for women, such as land ownership and improved health.<sup>33</sup>

### *Women in Nationally Elected Green Party Positions*

The Green Party claims to be the world’s fastest-growing political party, with a presence of elected representatives in countries around the world.<sup>34</sup> An indicator

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<sup>32</sup> *The Environment and Gender Index: Developing a New Global Dataset on Women’s Participation in Environmental Decision-Making.*

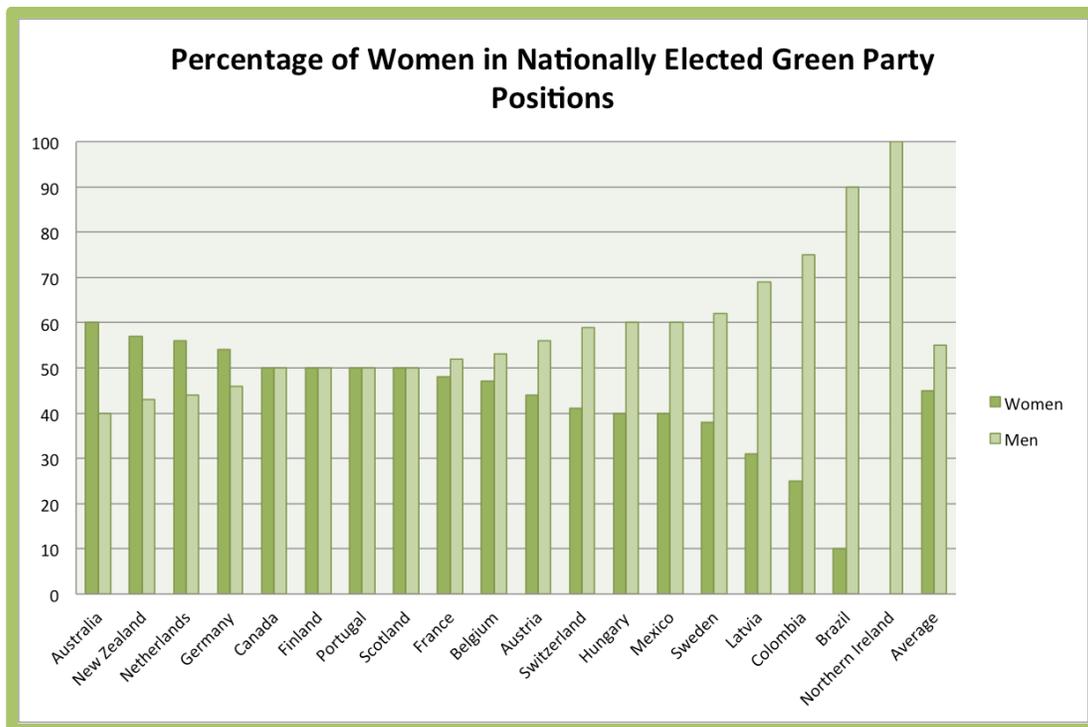
<sup>33</sup> Danielsen, Katrine. *Gender Equality, Women’s Rights and Access to Energy Services.* Rep. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark, Feb. 2012. Web. <[http://eu2012.dk/EN/Meetings/Other-Meetings/Apr/~/\\_media/Files/Other%20meetings/April/EU%20Sustainable%20Energy%20for%20All%20Summit/Gender%20Energy%20Report.pdf](http://eu2012.dk/EN/Meetings/Other-Meetings/Apr/~/_media/Files/Other%20meetings/April/EU%20Sustainable%20Energy%20for%20All%20Summit/Gender%20Energy%20Report.pdf)>.

<sup>34</sup> “About Us.” *Global Greens.* <<http://www.globalgreens.org/about-us>>

examining green parties was included in the dataset as women serving in elected green positions are perhaps a measure of their overall participation in national environmental decision-making. Founded on the principles of social justice, ecological wisdom, grassroots democracy and nonviolence, women in elected green positions are at the forefront of advocating for environmental issues to be included in national policy agendas.<sup>35</sup>

*Chart 9* is a representation of women’s participation in nationally elected green positions in nineteen countries/regions.

**Chart 9**



This dataset reveals that this indicator measuring women’s participation in elected green positions is the strongest performer the dataset—with an average of forty-five percent of elected green positions being held by women. In comparison, women hold only twenty-two percent of parliament seats worldwide.<sup>36</sup> The opportunity for women for women’s leadership in green party positions can influence policy frameworks with an

<sup>35</sup> "Global Greens Coordination." *Global Greens*. <<http://www.globalgreens.org/ggc>>.

<sup>36</sup> "Women in Parliaments: World and Regional Averages." *Women in Parliaments: World and Regional Averages*. Inter-Parliamentary Union, <<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>>.

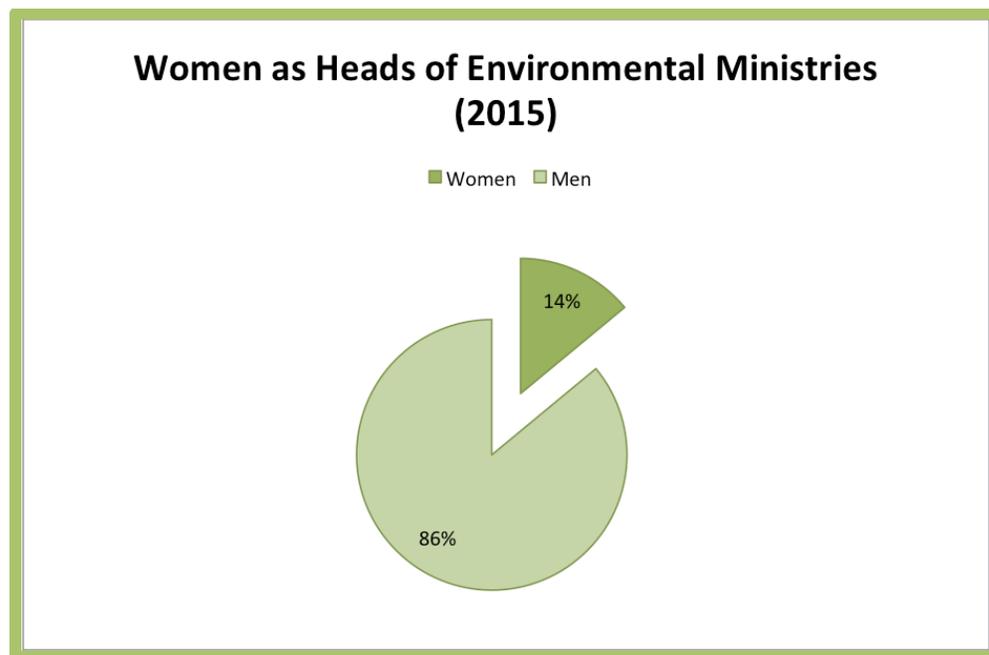
emphasis on green party values. However, green party members only hold a small fraction of national-level decision-making positions globally. Expanding the representation of elected green party officials to national-level policy positions is imperative to bring environmental issues forward to political agenda and include women in the policy process.<sup>37</sup>

### *Women in Environmental Ministry Positions*

Environmental ministries are national government/political agencies that manage environment and natural resources. Comparable agency names include the Environmental Protection Agency of Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in India and the Ministry of Environmental Protection in China. For this indicator, environmental ministries were surveyed to determine the percent of women in leadership positions in environmental ministries.

The percentage of women leading national environmental ministries in 2015 is presented in *Chart 10*.

**Chart 10.**



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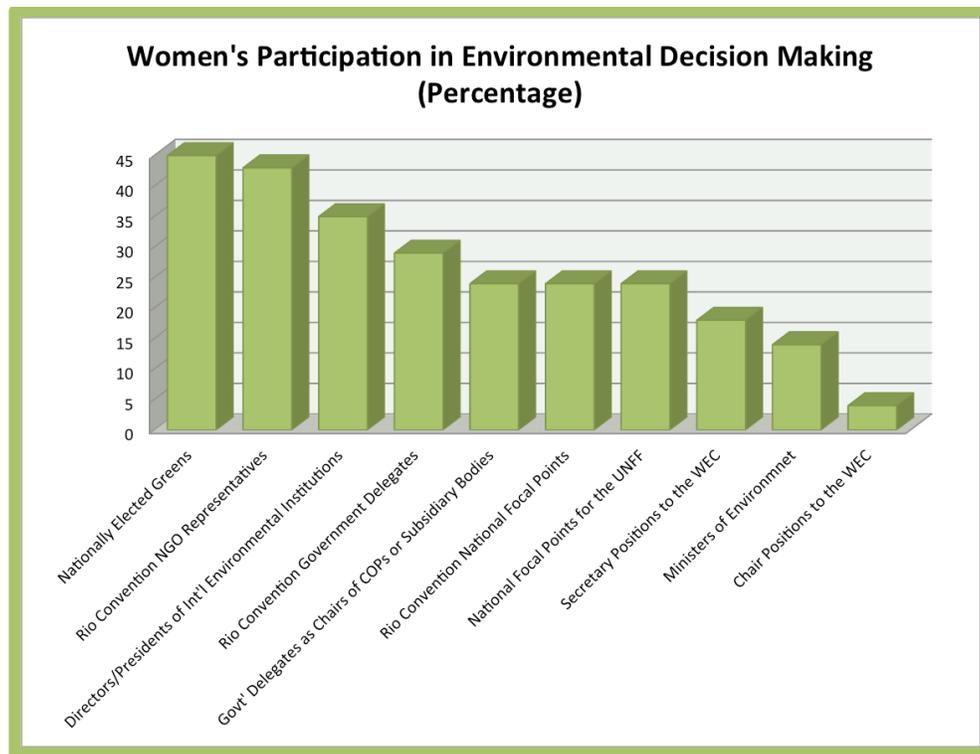
<sup>37</sup> *The Environment and Gender Index: Developing a New Global Dataset on Women's Participation in Environmental Decision-Making.*

Globally, women hold only fourteen percent of leadership positions in national environmental ministries—the second lowest ranked indicator in the dataset.<sup>38</sup> The results suggest that women are severely underrepresented in national environmental spheres. Women’s participation in national-level environmental ministries increases the likelihood that women’s capacities and gender-sensitive policies are integrated into national environmental regulations and implementation strategies of the Rio Convention agreements.<sup>39</sup>

### Dataset Conclusion

For ten indicators, the participation of representation of women was surveyed across all countries, in the most recent year with available data.<sup>40</sup> The following chart, *Chart 11*, presents a ranking of the ten indicators.

*Chart 11*



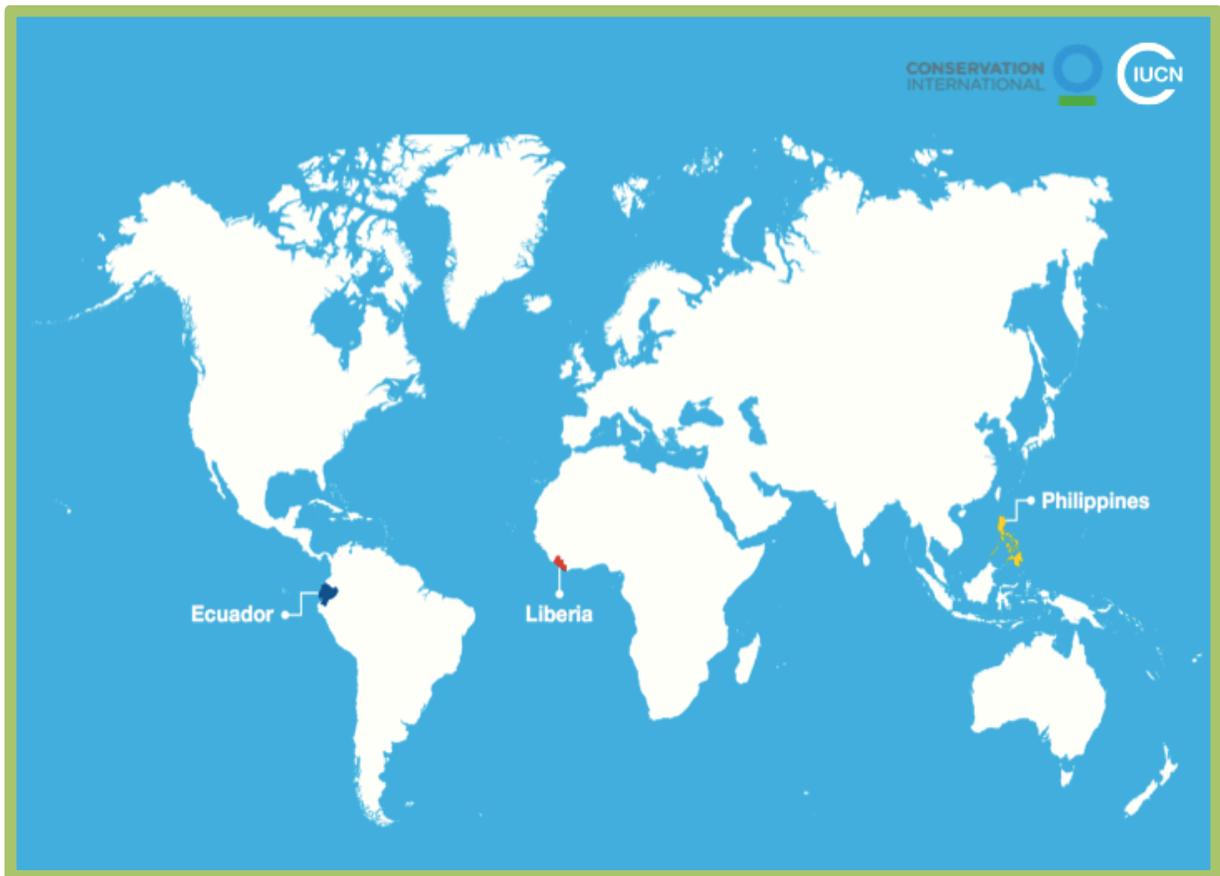
<sup>38</sup> *The Environment and Gender Index: Developing a New Global Dataset on Women’s Participation in Environmental Decision-Making.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making in the Philippines.* Issue brief. IUCN Global Gender Office, 8 Mar. 2015. Web. <<http://genderandenvironment.org/resource/women-in-environmental-decision-making/>>.

Overall, in seven of the ten indicators of decision-making processes, women’s participation is less than thirty percent.<sup>41</sup> This dataset works to expand upon the broad findings of the pilot EGI in 2013, which indicated that women are underrepresented in environmental decision-making. The results of this dataset can be used to inform policy decision making, and contribute to international processes and frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Country Case Studies: Women in Environmental Decision-Making in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines



*Photo from Country Case Study Report, IUCN, 2015.*

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## Case Studies Introduction

To complement the Women in Environmental Decision Making dataset, the Global Gender Office, in collaboration with Conservation International, compiled a three-country case study report on women in decision-making within the country-specific contexts of Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines. The three countries were chosen based on their regional and cultural diversity, the capacity of civil society organizations in the country and availability and accessibility of regional data. The final report, “*Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines*” was published in March 2015. The document and country specific results—summarized below—are available as factsheets on the IUCN Global Gender Office website. The team responsible for the publication is:

- Melissa Luna, lead researcher and author
- Lorena Aguilar
- Molly Gilligan
- Cate Owren
- Maria Prebble (myself)
- Kame Westerman

The case studies examined how each country ranked on various gender equality indices, including the EGI. In addition, country-specific data on ten (10) variables within the government, civil society and international sectors was collected. The variables include women’s representation in/as/at:

- Government Sector
  - Ministers of Environment-related sectors
  - Vice-Ministers of Environment-related sectors
- Civil Society Sector
  - Environmental NGO Presidents/Executive Directors
  - Environmental NGO Board Membership
- International Sector
  - Government Delegates to UNFCCC COP19 (2014)
  - Government Delegates to UNCCD COP11 (2013)
  - Government Delegates to UN CBD COP12 (2014)
  - Average representation to the 3 Rio Convention
  - National Focal Points to the 3 Rio Conventions
  - National Focal Points to the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

General findings reveal that although the three countries enacted gender-sensitive policies, women’s participation and representation in environmental decision-making is

inconsistent across the three (3) sectors and levels of governance within each country.<sup>42</sup> In all three countries, traditional gender roles and cultural stereotypes restrict women's ability to engage in environmental decision-making.<sup>43</sup> The report concludes with targeted country-specific recommendations and policy options to improve the participation of women in environmental decision-making. Target audiences for the report include country offices of the project partners and CI and IUCN, in an effort to enhance local programme implementation on environment and gender issues.

### *Ecuador*

Home to the Amazon rainforest, the Andean highlands, Pacific beaches, and the Galapagos Islands, the South American nation of Ecuador is known for its ecological and geographic diversity. The economy relies heavily on tourism, and Ecuador is a regional leader in biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.<sup>44</sup> However, extractive natural resource industries and agricultural production are lucrative sectors of the Ecuadorian economy, and these industries, combined with high country poverty rates, threaten sustainable development and the country's natural resources.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1990's, Ecuador established several legislative policies to promote and protect women's rights and encourage political participation.<sup>46</sup> This case study examination reveals that although women's livelihoods—particularly in the rural regions—are interconnected to natural resource management, Ecuador lacks specific gender-sensitive environmental policies.<sup>47</sup> Disparities in livelihood outcomes exist between urban Spanish-speaking and rural indigenous women.

The key findings of the Ecuador case study are presented in *Chart 12*.

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<sup>42</sup> Luna, Melissa, Lorena Aguilar, Molly Gilligan, Cate Owren, Maria Prebble, and Kame Westerman. *Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines*. IUCN Global Gender Office, Conservation International, March 2015.

<<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/Rep-2015-002.pdf>>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

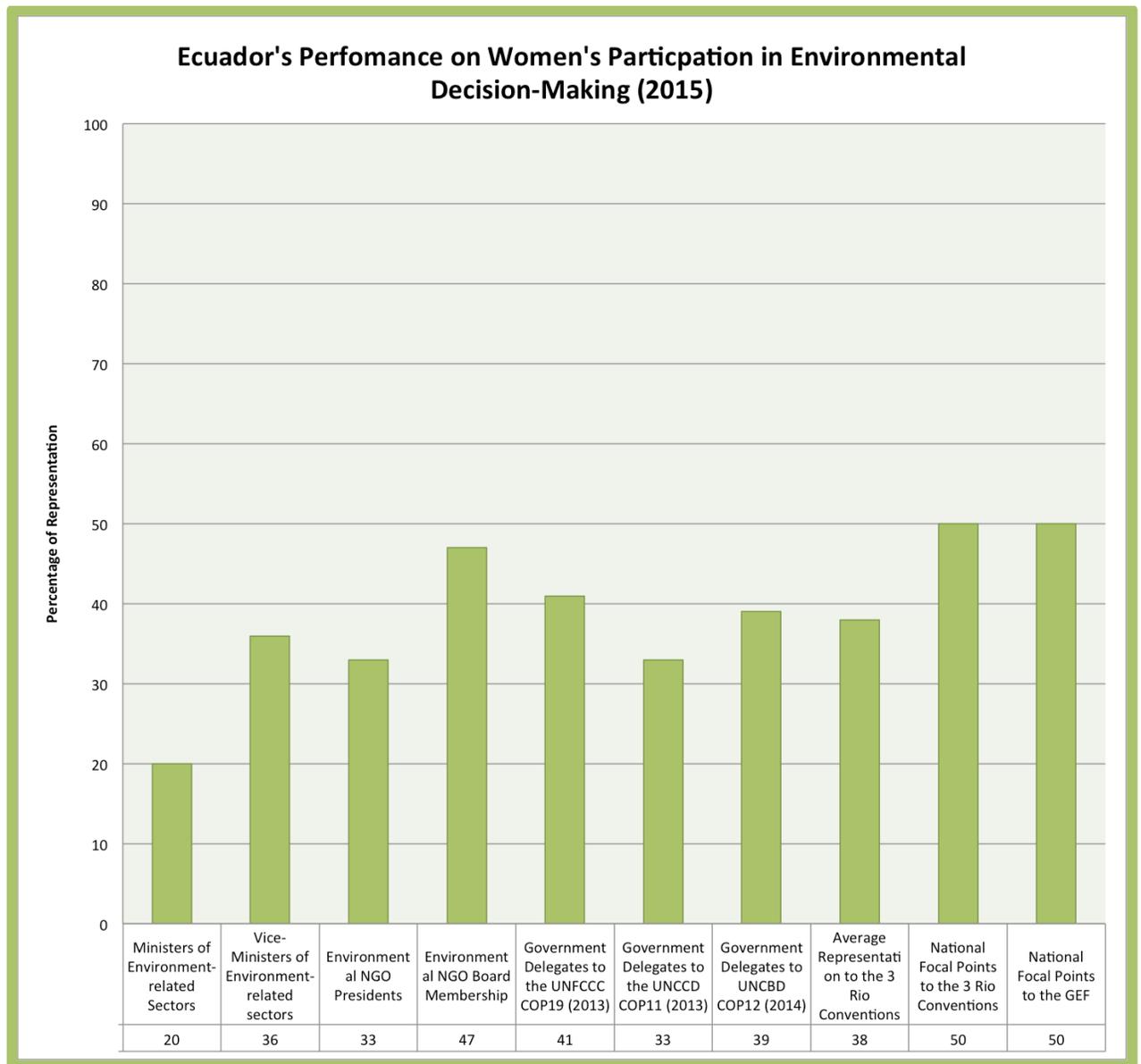
<sup>44</sup> Larea, M., Leiva P., Manosalvas, R., Munoz, J.P., Peralvo, F.S., and Saenz, M. *Buscando Camions Para El Desarrollo Local*. Ecociencia. 2005.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making in the Philippines*. Issue brief. IUCN Global Gender Office, 8 Mar. 2015. Web. <<http://genderandenvironment.org/resource/women-in-environmental-decision-making-in-philippines/>>

<sup>47</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines*.

Chart 12



Recommendations for policy and practice in Ecuador, from the report, include:

- Establish initiatives to advance professional women to higher levels of leadership in environmental ministries/positions
- Address the disparities in education and training between urban and rural Ecuadorian women, paying particular attention to indigenous women
- Engage men to better understand the mutual benefits of gender-responsive approaches.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines.*

## Liberia

The Republic of Liberia is a biodiverse forested nation on the Atlantic coast of Africa. Fourteen years of civil war devastated the economy and infrastructure, making the country vulnerable to environmental negligence and degradation and social instability.<sup>49</sup> Today, Liberia's economy relies heavily on extractive industries such as timber, gold and rubber.<sup>50</sup> These industries, along with population growth and nascent national environmental protection plans, threaten sustainable development in Liberia.<sup>51</sup>

Since the conflict, the Liberian government has prioritized advancing gender-equality through gender-sensitive policies such as the National Gender Policy, which encourages women's participation in natural resource management.<sup>52</sup> This case study analysis of Liberia indicates that improvements in women's representation in the environmental sector are varied, as there is high representation of women in national positions, but an underrepresentation in international delegations. In addition, the report suggests that there is a discrepancy between policy and practice.<sup>53</sup>

The key findings of the Liberia case study are presented in *Chart 13*.

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<sup>49</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines*.

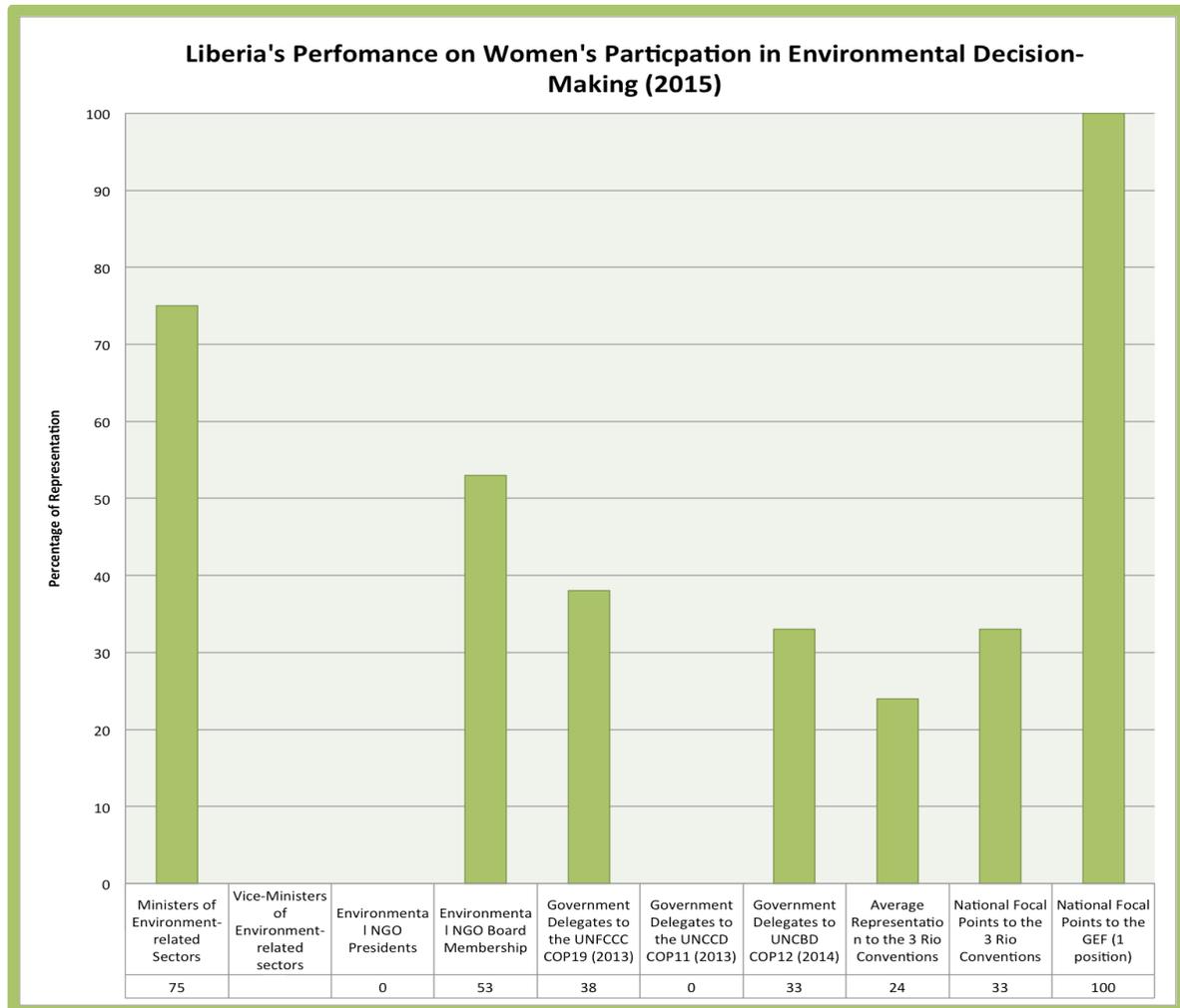
<sup>50</sup> *LIBERIA'S NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN*. Publication. The Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia, n.d. Web. <<https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/lr/lr-nbsap-01-p1-en.pdf>>.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

Chart 13



Recommendations for policy and practice in Liberia, from the report, include:

- Promote equal access to professional training, education and economic empowerment to women—particularly in rural areas.
- Engage men to better understand the mutual benefits of gender-responsive approaches.
- Ensure that the government and civil society organizations/NGOs have the technical capacity to implement gender policies and programmes.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

## *The Philippines*

With more than 7,100 islands in Southeast Asia, the nation of the Philippines is both culturally and ecologically diverse. Although the Philippines have instilled institutional frameworks to manage its natural resources, the rapid depletion of these resources challenges sustainable development outcomes.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the Philippines is extremely vulnerable to natural disaster events, such as Typhoon Haiyan (2013) one of the most devastating typhoons on record.<sup>56</sup>

Overall, the Philippines has strong national gender policies in place, is a regional leader in gender equality.<sup>57</sup> For example, in the 1990's, the Philippines mainstreamed gender into national environmental policy, including setting a quota requirement that women's participation is at least thirty-five percent.<sup>58</sup> However, as the results below indicate, the implementation of these policies is uneven across environmental sectors and decision-making levels.

The key findings of the Philippines case study are presented in *Chart 14*.

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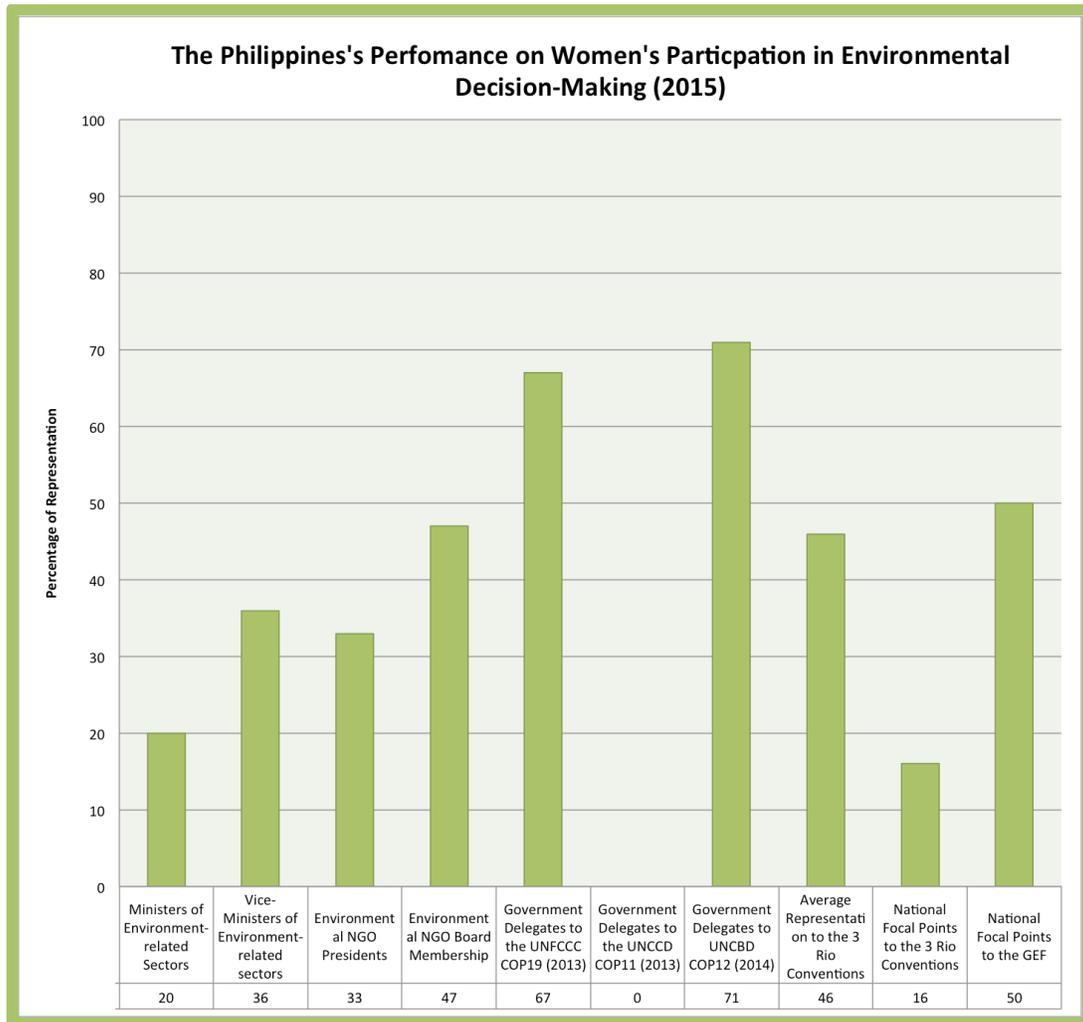
<sup>55</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making in the Philippines*

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Fast Facts: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Philippines*. Publication. UN Development Program, <<http://www.ph.undp.org/content/dam/philippines/docs/Governance/fastFacts%20-%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Women%20Empowerment%20in%20the%20Philippines%20rev%201.5.pdf>>.

<sup>58</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines*.

Chart 14



Recommendations for policy and practice in the Philippines, from the report, include:

- Ensure that the government and civil society organizations/NGOs have the technical capacity to implement gender policies and programmes
- Ensure that women have equal access to professional training and education at all levels
- Promote the understanding of women as equal citizens<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making in the Philippines*

## Case Studies Conclusion

Although the countries of Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines recognize the importance of including women in decision-making across environment sectors, the countries face context specific development challenges that limit efforts towards women's empowerment. Across the three countries—although geographically and culturally diverse—women face barriers to political participation due to inherent patriarchal structures within the country.<sup>60</sup> In these three countries—as in most—women's contribution to natural resource management and their traditional ecological knowledge is overlooked, undervalued and ignored. In addition to the country-specific recommendations, national environmental institutions in the countries must enhance their capacities to empower and include women, to ensure a society that benefits from the participation of both men and women.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Women in Environmental Decision Making: Case Studies in Ecuador, Liberia and the Philippines*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

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