



Women cross through forests on their way to work in Bardia, Nepal. © James Morgan / WWF-US

BRIEF

# CITES AND GENDER

NOVEMBER 2022

## WHAT DOES GENDER HAVE TO DO WITH CITES?

**1. The overwhelming reality of wildlife trade, whether legal or illegal, is that it is a gender-differentiated activity. Because it occurs in a gendered world, strong systemic and consequential gender dynamics infuse the trade and efforts to curb illegal or unsustainable trade.**

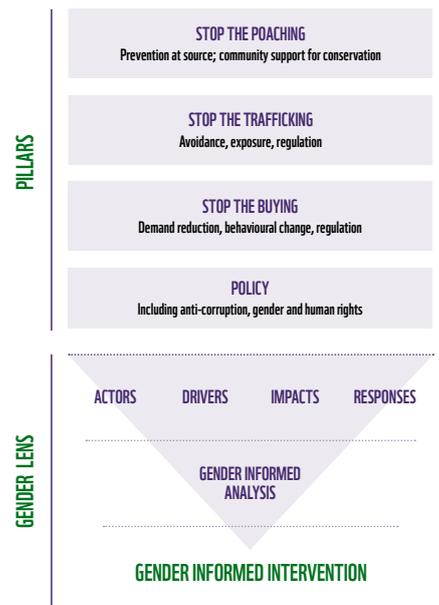
- ➔ Men and women don't necessarily have the same access to resources including land, control over resources, and economic opportunities to shift away from wildlife use.
- ➔ Men and women also play different roles in the trade as actors and drivers, as consumers, bystanders and observers.
- ➔ The impacts of trade and of curbing trade are different for women and men.
- ➔ "Communities" are not unitary, and women and men play different roles in setting and assessing community priorities and activities.

**2. Being gender-smart makes our conservation and wildlife protection work better.**

- ➔ Being curious about these gender dynamics, understanding them and taking them into account amplifies the effectiveness of conservation and wildlife protection.
- ➔ Gender-blind approaches to IWT can result in huge gaps in understanding real-world wildlife trade activities, processes and opportunities for intervention. It is, in the words of one conservation leader, "tackling wildlife crime with one hand tied behind our back" (Helen Anthem 2018).

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### 3. A gender lens illuminates intersectional identities, including the experiences of non-binary people, Indigenous peoples, etc.

- In August 2022, the CITES Secretary-General, Ivonne Higuero remarked that, “I hope to use the influence of the CPW’s<sup>1</sup> partners organizations to push for greater inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, in particular Indigenous women, in the promotion of the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife, given its importance for food security, livelihoods and human well-being. The survival of our wildlife for future generations requires their involvement and knowledge as Peoples who for so long have looked after so much of the world’s wildlife resources.”

## SO WHY BRING GENDER CONSIDERATIONS INTO CITES?

1. Embracing cutting-edge knowledge about gender differences in human-wildlife interactions is likely to make CITES more effective.

2. It’s the right thing to do. And it’s overdue. CITES is one of the few MEAs without a gender plan.

- The 2021 UNGA Resolution urged gender mainstreaming into responses to illegal wildlife trafficking, an advance welcomed by global conservation actors including the CITES Secretariat.
- Gender mainstreaming will bring CITES into alignment with other major conservation and multilateral environmental agreements and entities that have committed to gender mainstreaming, including UNEP, GEF, IPBES, the CBD, the UNCCD, UNFCCC.

3. Donors increasingly expect environmental and conservation work to be gender-sensitive.

- Targeted resources are often available through donors to support gender work. Funding mechanisms for gender-sensitive work can create links with other work streams, enabling more holistic approaches.

## WHAT MIGHT A CITES GENDER PLAN OF ACTION LOOK LIKE?

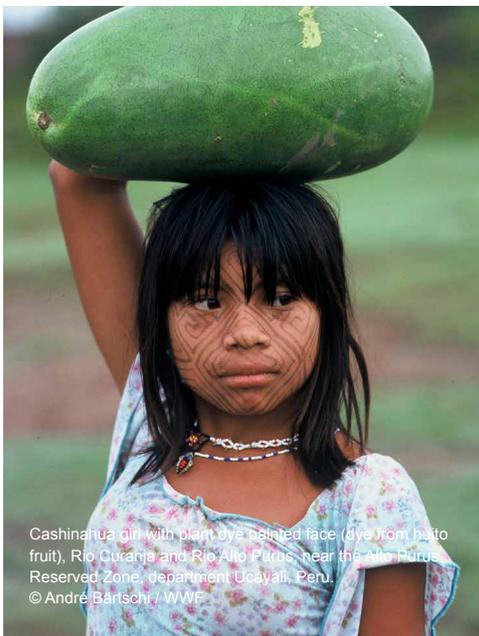
1. CITES CoP19 Doc. 25<sup>2</sup> submitted by Panama proposes:

- a decision directed to the CITES Secretariat to develop a Gender Plan of Action via an intersessional working group, (subject to the availability of supporting resources); and,
- the adoption of a Resolution on Gender and Wildlife Trade

2. The gender plan of action for each MEA reflects the distinct needs, gaps and priorities of that MEA, its Parties and the Secretariat. This means that CITES will determine its own path – there is no single template, and ultimately the Parties to each MEA decide the scope and nature of the gender plan.

<sup>1</sup>Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW); <https://cites.org/eng/news/international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-peoples>

<sup>2</sup>CITES CoP19 Doc.25; <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/COP/19/agenda/E-CoP19-25.pdf>



Cashinua girl with plant dye painted face (dye from huito fruit), Rio Curanja and Rio Alto Purus, near the Alto Purus Reserved Zone, department Ucayali, Peru.  
© André Bartsch / WWF



Teresa (left) and a neighbour gathering water. Every morning they need to walk miles to collect water for their families.  
© Ami Vitale / WWF-UK

### 3. Nonetheless, **MEA gender action plans typically share some characteristics**. A typical GPA commits the Secretariat, Parties, and partners to take gender mainstreaming actions, the range of which might include:

#### ➤ For a Secretariat:

- ☑ Assign a gender focal point;
- ☑ Take gender considerations into account in allocating resources;
- ☑ Integrate gender mainstreaming and gender equality goals within the practices of the Secretariat;
- ☑ Support or encourage the development of research to establish baseline information on gender;
- ☑ Develop guidelines on integrating gender equality into work carried out under the Convention;
- ☑ When collecting and disseminating case studies, ensure that they are distinctly gender-inclusive, including, as far as possible, that they effectively collect and use gender disaggregated data;
- ☑ Set participation/ inclusion goals towards bringing gender balance in projects, at CoPs, and amongst Party delegations.

#### ➤ For Parties and Partners:

- ☑ Ensure that national plans and activities carried out under the domain of the Convention are gender-aware and gender-responsive; strive for gender parity in staffing, project beneficiaries, delegations to official meetings;
- ☑ Share best practices and emerging knowledge about gender and monitoring accomplishments or challenges;
- ☑ Collaborate with gender experts to review national biodiversity strategies and action plans to improve gender sensitivity within those strategies;
- ☑ Evaluate the different risks faced by men and women due to actions taken under the auspices of the Convention, and benefits of becoming more gender-responsive.

4. A draft Gender Plan of Action typically goes through rounds of reviews with relevant stakeholders and then is presented for adoption at a subsequent CoP. The draft GPA can be prepared internally or by an experienced donor-funded gender expert working under the direction of the Secretariat. Most GPAs are developed incrementally and reviewed on an ongoing basis. A GPA is a living document that reflects new information as it arises, best practices, and changing circumstances.