

# A BirdLife Position on Conservation and Gender

## Background:

As part of BirdLife's wider commitment to inclusiveness and equality, this paper describes the Partnership's commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, in the workplace and in its projects and programmes.

The BirdLife Partnership wishes to see a world where nature and people live in greater harmony, more fairly and sustainably. The impact of environmental and nature protection policies and programmes often depend on a person's gender, age, ability, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status, sometimes resulting in unequal benefits or costs. More often than not women and men have different access to and impact on natural resources, and different priorities for the use and potential benefits from these.

The importance of integrating a gender perspective in conservation and natural resource management is recognised by signatories of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which in 2008 presented a Gender Plan of Action with the aim of mainstreaming a gender perspective and promoting gender equality in achieving the CBD's objectives<sup>1</sup>. Gender mainstreaming and equality is also laid down in most donor policies and is often a requirement for funding.

A gender perspective requires focusing on women and men, their relationships with each other, and their differentiated relationship with their social, natural and cultural environment. It also obliges recognition of regional, national, and local diversity.

## Overarching Objective of this Position Statement

The objective of this position statement is to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into BirdLife's policies, programmes, projects and research, and that equality is promoted between women and men in the communities and institutions where, and with which, we work.

## BirdLife's Position

BirdLife seeks to understand and take account of gender differentiated roles and to promote gender balance internally (within the Partnership) and externally in the locations and among the communities with which we work.

In the implementation of its projects and programmes BirdLife aims to:

- understand the roles of women and men in the places where we work and the implications for conservation and natural resource management, based on an analysis of gender differentiated data from the local context and knowledge about women's rights and gender related policies at the national level;

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<sup>1</sup> It also supports commitments to gender equality made by signatories of the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- carry out gender-sensitive conservation that builds the capacity of women and strengthens their rights and roles in natural resource management;
- facilitate a balanced participation and representation of women and men in institutional processes and structures created for the management of natural resources;
- promote the fair and equal rights of women and men in relation to natural resource management and benefits and support the empowerment of women wherever this is needed for equal participation;
- integrate a gender-sensitive viewpoint in conservation research, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation, including the development of measurable indicators for gender and the collection, analysis and dissemination of this monitoring data;
- encourage and provide support to staff so that they have the knowledge and skills to mainstream gender into their work;
- ensure gender balance in the process of recruiting project staff, in the terms and conditions of employment, and in representation and participation in institutional decision-making processes and structures;
- raise awareness of the daily reality of women's management of natural resources and the effects of environmental degradation on women and build women's capacity to advocate for their rights, roles and potential contributions to nature protection

A requirement for implementing conservation that is sensitive to gender is that gender is mainstreamed across an organisation and its operational culture. Therefore BirdLife is also committed to advancing gender equality in its own workplaces and workforce. This issue is addressed through the Equal Opportunities Policies of the BirdLife Secretariat and BirdLife Partners (and their development and promotion as appropriate).

*BirdLife International Partners and offices have different capacities, needs and experiences in integrating gender into programmes and operational structures, and operate in different cultural and legal contexts. The implementation of the position outlined in this paper will be applied by Partners as appropriate and within the context of national legislation.*

## **Definitions**

The following definitions are adopted from the CBD Gender Plan of Action (UNEP/CBD/COP/9/INF/12/Rev.1)

*Gender:* The term gender refers to the social roles and relations between women and men. This includes the different responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location. Unlike the sex of men or women, which is biologically determined, the gender roles of women and men are socially constructed and such roles can change over time and vary according to geographic location and social context.

*Gender equality:* Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the

limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

*Gender mainstreaming:* Gender mainstreaming involves ensuring that attention to gender equality is a central part of all environmental and sustainable development interventions, including analyses, policy advice, advocacy, legislation, research, and the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.