

GENDER AND GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE: WITH A FOCUS ON THE UN SECRETARIAT AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Godwell Nhamo

<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5465-2168>

University of South Africa

nhamog@unisa.ac.za

Senia Nhamo

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0449-7232>

University of South Africa

nhamos@unisa.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Drawing mostly from publicly available data and information, we analyse how gender and geographical balance play out in the United Nations (UN) bodies, with a focus on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) structures and related activities. Unlike other UN bodies, the IPCC set-up is unique in that it is organised around volunteer expertise drawn from national focal points' secondment for specific tasks. As such, issues of gender and geographical balance remain sensitive, especially since the object of delivery—climate change—is traditionally framed from the science discipline. It emerged that both the UN Secretariat and the IPCC are still battling with gender and geographical balance matters. As of 2013, women comprised 31.3 per cent of the influential senior professionals (those with a minimum of 15 years' work experience and ranked at D1+ grades), while the geographical spread of contributors in the IPCC reflects strong dominance from developed countries. Bias in favour of male contributors further emerged. Although there is significant effort to address the situation, we recommend a deliberate fast tracking on the involvement of women and balance in geographical spread, especially in IPCC work. Such fast tracking will assist in having women's concerns and interests addressed in agenda setting and global programming on climate change and other matters.

Keywords: UN bodies; IPCC; gender; climate change; geographical; balance; women



Gender Questions

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INTRODUCTION

The issues of gender and geographical balance remain on the radar within the United Nations (UN) family tree. As such, being a key UN institution, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) work in constituting its expertise and other groupings leading to the production of global reports on various aspects of climate change, needs engendering and balanced representation from across different geographical regions.

In portraying the theory of gendered organisations, Acker (1990, 139) maintains that organisational structure is far from being gender neutral. To this end, assumptions made on gender underline documentation and contracts used in socially constructing narratives and forming structures. Male dominance is associated with global, national and organisational power resident in all-male enclaves presiding over these entities. This kind of gender blindness is further noticed by Khosla (2002, 17), who considered women activism in environmental governance. Khosla claims that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified in 1981, had not been domesticated for implementation in many countries more than two decades later.

Drawing from the historical transformation of the UN, Chatlesworth (1994, 422) reveals that the UN ignored one of the most significant challenges it faced, namely the exclusion and marginalisation of women. Although women's rights were dotted across key UN documents, there was no mentioning of the absence of women in senior and decision-making positions. Given this scenario, matters pertaining to gender were trivialised in the UN processes. This flew in the face of the UN mandates like concerns on international security, peacekeeping, election monitoring and environmental stewardship. With such omissions, it came as no surprise when the UN General Assembly adopted a 2000 resolution (S/RES/1325) that called for gender balance in all decision-making processes related to conflict resolution, peace and reconstruction (Khosla 2002, 20). Since the elevation of gender issues to global platforms, many organisations driving this agenda have emerged, like the Gender and Water Alliance (an association of more than 133 organisations and individuals globally), UN Women, and ENERGIA (an international network on gender and sustainable energy).

Gender balance in the IPCC system is a relatively new phenomenon. From an IPCC commission, a recommendation emerged demanding the IPCC to improve gender balance in the appointment of women authors (McKittrick 2011, 30). The IPCC Task Team established thereafter recommended the amendment of a section of rules to include "the notion that gender balance, and a balance in the mixture of scientific experts with and without experience in the IPCC process" (McKittrick 2011, 30). Earlier studies (O'Neill, Hulme, Turnpenny and Screen 2010, 997) considered gender dimensions in IPCC's Third Assessment Report (AR3). Their findings revealed that less than 33 per cent of oral presenters were women and this became more pronounced in the geosciences discipline where women presenters were less than 20 per cent. However, this figure went up significantly in the social sciences discipline where more than 40 per cent of

the presenters were females. These issues are not only peculiar to the IPCC, but also to the 1993 Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) (Alvarez and Lovera 2017). The CBD makes reference to women, although clear recognition of the importance of their full and effective participation in national and international policies, plans and programmes by the parties to the CBD, only became a reality during the 13th Conference of Parties in December 2016.

Given the abovementioned clear imbalance of gender and geographic representation, this paper seeks to audit gender and geographical balance in selected UN bodies, with a special focus on the IPCC. Since the IPCC is a specialised body, drawing mainly from the science discipline, it is crucial to determine the extent of progress or lack thereof in addressing gender and geographical balance. MacNeil and Ghosh (2017, 42) concur that “the reality of a global gender imbalance in the workforce is undeniable. However, it is even more profound in the traditionally male-dominated maritime industry, where women make up a mere two per cent of the workforce.” Since the IPCC is a specialisation entity, the gender and geographical balance question remains alive. The next section reviews relevant literature on matters of gender and geographical balance in the UN and other organisations.

GENDER AND GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE MATTERS

It is imperative that gender and geographical balance in (UN) organisations and processes remains on the global developmental radar. The quest for gender balance is not a new phenomenon. As a result of the lack of women’s participation in taking the 1992 Earth Summit’s (Rio) decisions into national environmental governance agenda, there were concerted efforts to ensure that women’s interests were placed on the agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 (Khosla 2002, 18). From the provisions of Rio’s agenda, 21 women were to participate in a range of matters pertaining to environmental governance. However, this had not been realised by 2002, as consistent gaps existed in gender balance in favour of men. Kholsa (2002) concludes that the exclusion of women from senior positions in national and multi-lateral decision making has resulted in the non-inclusion of their interests in national and global affairs.

The post-Rio technical negotiations that witnessed the birth of several global agreements and conventions like the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention to Combat Desertification, CBD—and many others—limited women’s participation and prevented geographical balance. Only one African woman was present during the 3rd Global Ministerial Environmental Forum/7th Special Session of the UN Environmental Programme in Cartagena, Colombia in 2002 (Khosla 2002, 20). With such challenges, the Women’s Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) launched “the 50/50 by 2005: Get the Balance Right Campaign” during the Beijing +5 review in 2000. Apart from promoting gender balance in decision making, the WEDO focused on enabling women’s experiences to be included in international and national agreements.

The challenges of gender inequality, especially in specialised UN institutions like the UNFCCC, CBD, CCD and IPCC, can be traced from a disciplinary perspective. Sugimoto (2013, 211) studied global gender disparities in tertiary level science and concluded that gender inequality was rife. In research institutions, the author discovered that men publish more compared to women. This was the trend in almost all countries, with female authorship accounting for only 30 per cent globally. Women were also marginalised in terms of first authorship. In the IPCC system, such scientific publications are the primary basis for drawing up main reports and policy summaries.

UN Women (2012, 5–9) traced the history of gender participation, particularly that of women's involvement and reference in key Rio 1992 Conventions. The revelation was that while the CBD and the CCD both advanced gender matters, the UNFCCC, which works closely with the IPCC, did not originally do so. It was only after continuous awareness-raising on the linkages between gender parity and climate change, that the UNFCCC made critical decisions on gender representation and climate change. It emerged that the majority of bodies under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol had female membership of less than 30 per cent, with very low figures of 11–13 per cent in some instances (UNFCCC 2013, 1). The first decision focusing on gender equality came in 2001. The UNFCCC Parties in COP7 agreed on two critical decisions relating to gender. Decision 28/CP.7, relating to the preparation of National Adaptation Program of Actions (NAPAs), emphasised gender equality as key when deciding short-term adaptation needs. The second decision focused on gender parity and the promotion of women's participation in decision making in the Convention under Decision 36/CP.7 (Huyer 2016, 2). To this end, a Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) was created as one of the nine stakeholder groupings of the UNFCCC.

Other decisions reinforcing the 2001 decision came in the 2010 Cancún Agreements and the 2011 Durban Platform (UN Women 2012, 8). A ground-breaking development was linked to decision 23/CP.18, which focused on “Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or its Kyoto Protocol” (Clean Energy Nepal 2014). In assessing gender representation with reference to COP21 that took place in Paris, Huyer (2016, 2) reveals that although female representation is slowly getting there, the destination is still far. As of 2015, women's participation in the UNFCCC bodies ranged from as high as 40 per cent on the Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee and the Compliance Committee facilitative branch, to as low as six per cent on the Advisory Board of the Climate Technology Centre and Network. Additionally, gender imbalance was evident in the Heads of Party delegations to governing body sessions with a mere 33 per cent female representation.

Another UN body that has clearly spelt out principles on gender, regional and expert distribution balances is the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). In one of the first assessments to check IPBES' compliance with its functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements,

Montana and Borie (2016, 138) compared the constitutions of the 2013 interim Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) with the new 2015 MEP. The MEP is made up of 25 experts that oversee the scientific and technical aspects of the IPBES. It emerged that the 2013 MEP lacked disciplinary diversity and gender balance. The new MEP in 2015 formulated a three-year mandate. The two MEPs had proposals (nominations) for 89 and 87 members respectively. In 2013, only 19 (28%) of the 89 proposed experts were women, with seven (28%) making it to the final list (Montana and Borie 2016, 140). However, in 2015, more women were proposed. A total of 29 (36%) of the 89 experts proposed were women and nine (36%) made it to the final list of 25.

In terms of geographical spread, Eastern Europe only had six representatives in 2013, of which the figure went up in 2015 to 15. Other dynamics emerged from the Asia-Pacific region that nominated 10 experts with two groups of five experts on a year's rotational basis in 2013. Natural scientists dominated the 2013 MEP incorporating only two social scientists and two economists that made up 16 per cent of the 25 experts MEP. Africa did not have any represented expertise from any other disciplines apart from natural sciences. The 2015 MEP improved slightly on the number of non-natural scientists that stood at six (24%) of the total. The bias and credit, however, go to Europe that selected three non-natural scientists. The next section presents the methodological framework for the research paper that directed this article.

METHODOLOGY

As indicated earlier, both the UN family and the IPCC committed to gender balance and fair geographical spread in their governance and work programmes. To this end, a single objective was set; to determine the faithfulness of the UN family, particularly the United Nations Secretariat and the IPCC, to gender equity and fair geographical coverage. The research mainly utilised secondary data, academic papers and information publicly available from websites.

In its broader sense, gender goes beyond sex; thus, being men and/or women. It embraces other identities like transgender, intersex, gender queer, and so forth. Gender also involves social norms, attitudes and activities that society deems more appropriate for one sex over another. Acknowledging the aforementioned, this paper considers gender in its narrower sense as used in statistics obtained from the UN bodies to denote women and men.

Since the geographical balance was one of the key issues to be investigated, the 2015 formal guidance on developed and developing countries categories (provided by the IPCC) was used as the case study (IPCC 2015a). From this guidance, three variables are presented: developed countries (41 in number), developing countries (137) and countries with economies in transition (17). For ease of analysis, all countries with economies in transition were merged with developing countries to form a new category: transition and developing countries. The IPCC country classification is based on the

Statistical Annex to the World Economic Situation and Prospects Report of 2015 (IPCC 2015a).

To enrich the literature, gender data were further generated from various UN publications that included the Secretary General’s periodic two-year updates on the status of women in the UN system from 2008 to 2013. This period provided good interfacing, given that earlier publications had analysed gender representation in the UN from 1985 to 1993. This presented analysis lenses for a period close to three decades. These data sets were analysed to make sense of the general trends on gender and recorded challenges. Data and information retrieved from the IPCC website came in a range of formats. However, old data sets and information required significant analysis to extract meaning, including the traditional manual tallying to identify regional distribution and categorise it into male and female. Data from video recordings meant that authors had to go through the 13 videos totalling six hours of recording retrieved for the Experts’ Meeting on Communications that took place at the Norwegian Environment Agency on 9 and 10 February 2016 in Oslo, Norway. A total of 80 documents and videos were retrieved and a summary of retrieved material is shown in Figure 1.

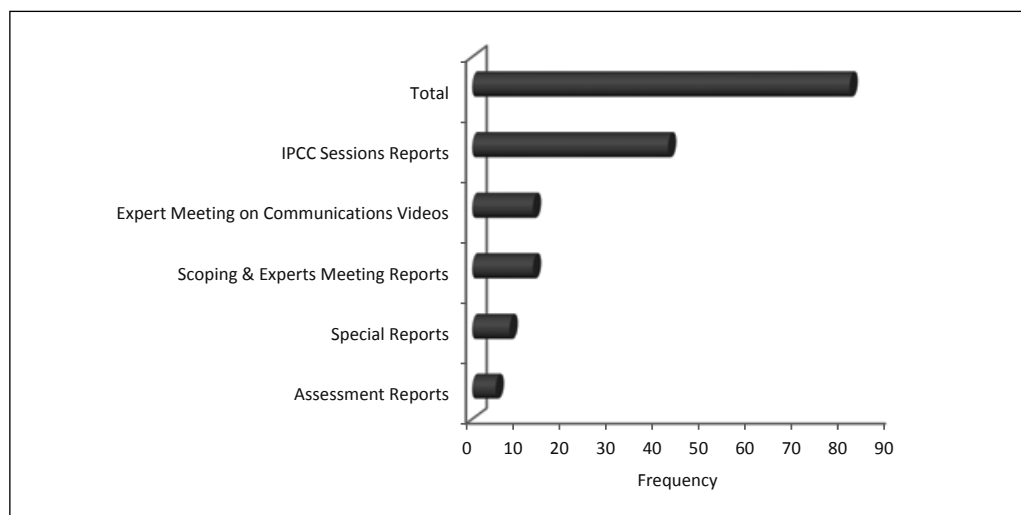


Figure 1: Documents and videos retrieved

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016b)

New data sets retrieved from the IPCC website showed names, citizenship, gender and region, graduation year, observer organisations, nominating countries, previous IPCC experience, distribution by region and country, regional expertise, sectors, and general statistics for experts. This user-friendly data provided the much needed detail for analysing the experts invited and participating in the Scoping of the Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related

global greenhouse gas emission pathways (SR15). The advantages of using secondary statistical data and information are well documented (Nhamo 2014, 158) and this is more pronounced if authors are drawing from official and authentic sources such as the IPCC website. Furthermore, the nature of the subject required that the researchers quarantine themselves to utilising such official statistics. Given that the preliminary data analysis done by the IPCC is not in an academic format, further analysis was done to enhance the intended outcome of this work—namely continued progress in advancing the principles laid out by the IPCC.

KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents key findings regarding gender balance and geographical spread in the UN Secretariat and the IPCC.

Revisiting gender in the UN Secretariat: Statistics from 1885–2014

Chatlesworth (1994, 422), was one of the early writers to audit women’s membership in the UN Secretariat. The author identified only eight members of the 184 member states who were head and/or acting head of missions to the UN. Furthermore, only two out of the 48 sessions of the General Assembly conducted since the founding of the UN had women presidents preceding them. All this took place against the backdrop of a UN Charter that places no restrictions on the eligibility of women to participate in any of its structures. The number of women and percentage share in the UN Secretariat between 1985 and 1993 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Women in the UN Secretariat (1985–1993)

Level	30 June 1985			31 December 1993		
	Total	Women	% Women	Total	Women	% Women
Senior professionals with minimum 15 years of work experience (D1+)	407	29	7%	346	47	14%
Professional staff (P1–P5)	2,695	697	25%	2,238	779	35%
Language staff	1,010	327	32%	870	304	35%
Other related categories ¹	1,232	180	15%	1,090	176	16%
General services	8,342	4,774	57%	8,208	4,589	56%
Totals	13,686	5,997	44%	12,752	5,895	46%

Source: Chatlesworth (1994, 433)

Overall, there was a two per cent increase in women representation in the UN Secretariat from 1985 to 1993, although the majority of women were in general services. Recruitment for senior officials and professional staff was subject to geographical distribution and gender imbalance was more pronounced in specialised agencies and in staff categories like project personnel. The African, Middle East and Eastern Europe regions were significantly under-represented. In addition, equitable distribution of posts—as per nationality—seems to have been prioritised rather than geographical distribution (Chatlesworth 1994, 433).

About 15 years later, since 1985, the UN Secretary General noted that the representation of women in professional and higher categories increased marginally from 38.4 per cent to 39.9 per cent (Ki-moon 2010, 6–7). Over a six-year period (2008–2013), the number of women employees increased on average by only about 0.88 per cent. This is an unbelievable snail pace signalling that it may take some time before gender parity is achieved. In fact, Ki-moon (2010, 1) observed that the lowest women representation between 2008 and 2009 was at D-2 level (senior professionals with more than 15 years of work experience) with only 26 per cent of the workforce being female. Among the barriers to improving women uptake were: “inadequate accountability, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms; lack of special measures for gender equality; weak integration of focal point systems; weak implementation of flexible working arrangements; insufficient outreach; and low numbers of qualified women applicants” (Ki-moon 2010, 1).

In the 2012–2013 reporting cycle, Ki-moon (2014, 6–7) presented comprehensive statistics on women representation across a range of levels. The inverse relationship was still pronounced. The record was: 54.3 per cent for entry level professionals with less than two years’ work experience (P-1 Grade); 57.9 per cent for entry level professionals with minimum of two years’ work experience (P-2 Grade); 45.3 per cent for entry level professionals with minimum of five years’ work experience (P-3 Grade); 40.5 per cent for mid-level professionals with minimum of seven years’ work experience (P-4 Grade); 34.2 per cent for mid-level professionals with minimum of 10 years’ work experience (P-5 Grade); 32.4 per cent for D-1; 30.1 per cent for D-2; and 26.7 per cent for the ungraded. It emerged that the P-4 to D-2 levels reached historic highs towards gender parity in 2013. In fact, the D-1 level realised an unprecedented 6.8 percentage points’ increase. With all the recorded progress, there remains a gap in gender parity. The next section focuses on gender and geographical balance in the IPCC.

The IPCC Case Study

The IPCC is the premier body tasked to review and assess “the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change” (IPCC 2016a). The IPCC membership is open to all member countries of the UN and the World Meteorology Organisation (WMO). As of

August 2016, there were 195 IPCC member countries. Thousands of scientists across the world contribute to the IPCC mandate (IPCC 2016b). Figure 2 shows the structure of the IPCC.

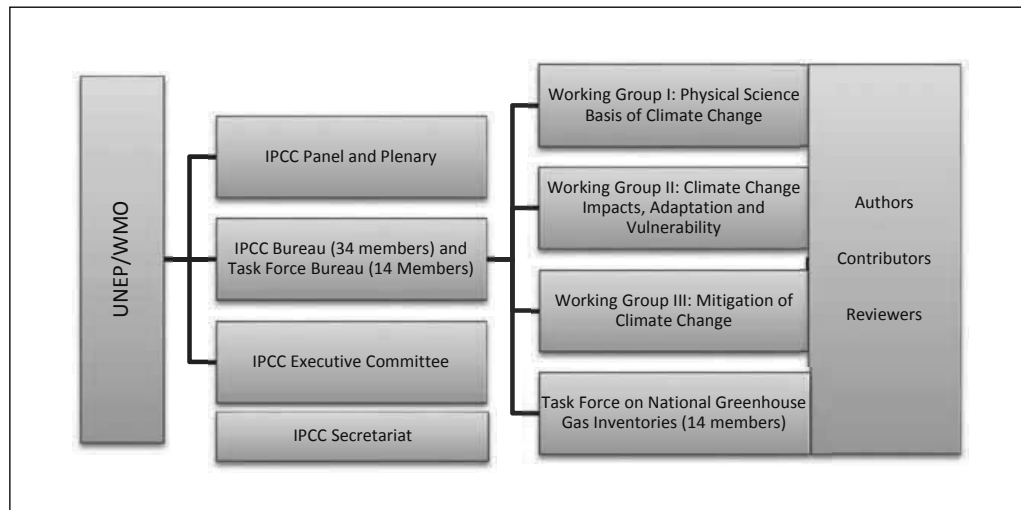


Figure 2: Structure of the IPCC

Source: Authors (Based on the IPCC 2016c Online)

The IPCC panel is constituted by government representatives of all member states that meet once annually in plenary sessions (IPCC 2016c). Observing organisations also form part of the plenary. Among key decisions taken by the panel in plenary sessions are: electing the IPCC Chair, Bureau and Task Force Bureau; deciding on the structure and mandates of Working Groups and the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories; deciding on principles and procedures; finalising work plans; dealing with budgets; confirming scope and outlines of reports; as well as approvals, adoptions and acceptance of reports (Alfsen and Skodvin 1998, 8–10). These mandates remain as they were to date. The IPCC Bureau is constituted by the Chair, Vice Chair, Co-Chairs as well as Vice Chairs of Working Groups I–III (WGI–III) and Co-Chairs of the Task Force (IPCC 2016c). Each Working Group, as well as the Task Force has a Technical Support Unit (TSU) (Manning and Wratt 2009) and these Working Groups sit in different countries (Ravindranath 2010, 27).

The key mandate of the Bureau is to advise the panel on technical, scientific and strategic matters. There is also a separate Task Force Bureau of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories made up of 12 members and two co-chairs. The other arm of governance in the IPCC is the Executive Committee. This committee’s mandate is to strengthen and facilitate the timely execution of the IPCC work programme done by strengthening cooperation and coordination between Working Groups and the Task

Force. Furthermore, the Executive Committee acts as a conduit for fast tracking urgent matters demanding action by the IPCC between sessions (IPCC 2016c). Lastly, there are volunteer authors, contributors and experts (Alfsen and Skodvin 1998, 8) selected by a relevant Working Group and/or Task Force. The IPCC Reports are prepared by these volunteers, coordinated and managed by coordinating lead authors and lead authors. “The composition of the group of Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) and Lead Authors (LAs) for a chapter, a report or its summary aims to reflect a range of scientific, technical and socio-economic views and expertise; geographical representation; a mixture of experts with and without previous experience in IPCC; and gender balance” (IPCC 2016c online).

Unpacking gender balance

The use of the term “gender” from the audited IPCC Sessions Reports pointed to its initial recognition from the 29th Session Report that took place from 31 August to 4 September 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland. This came during the discussions on the election of members of the Task Force Bureau. From the report, there were a number of concerns and suggestions of which “the need to provide for mechanisms to promote a better gender balance” was mentioned (IPCC 2008, 5). In follow-up reports, the 33rd Session Report from the 2011 Session held in Abu Dhabi from 10–13 May was more explicit on gender dimensions. The deliberations on the selection of participants to scoping meetings called for gender balance (IPCC 2011, 11). The Session further proposed an amendment of paragraph 4.2.2 of Appendix “A” to the Principles Governing IPCC work to include the notion of gender balance (IPCC 2011, 12). Since then, the issue of women in the IPCC system has grown with most of the sessions reporting matters on the need to work towards attaining gender balance.

An analysis of gender balance from the composition of the IPCC Bureaus and Task Force Bureaus (TFBs) was undertaken to audit progress towards the commitments. The findings regarding the Bureaus are shown in Figure 3. Given that no full names for individuals were supplied for the Second Assessment Report (SAR) and that there were no names at all in some instances for the First Assessment Report (FAR), these phases were excluded in the analysis. The main finding was that female experts are seriously underrepresented in the Bureaus. A shocking statistic was having no woman at all in the Third Assessment Report (TAR) Bureau. From a membership that averages 32 participants, the highest female representation is eight (24.53%) in the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) Bureau of 34. Other representations are: four out of 31 for the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), and five out of 31 for the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). Both these figures are low. From the TAR to the current AR6 cycle, there has been on average a mere 13.14 per cent female representation. The issue of gender seems to be on the IPCC agenda most of the time and in a press release of 8 October 2015, the IPCC could not hide the joy of having increased women representation in the AR6 Bureau.

Part of the press release read: “Members are drawn from all six of the IPCC’s regions, and include 8 women, compared with 5 previously” (IPCC 2015d, 1).

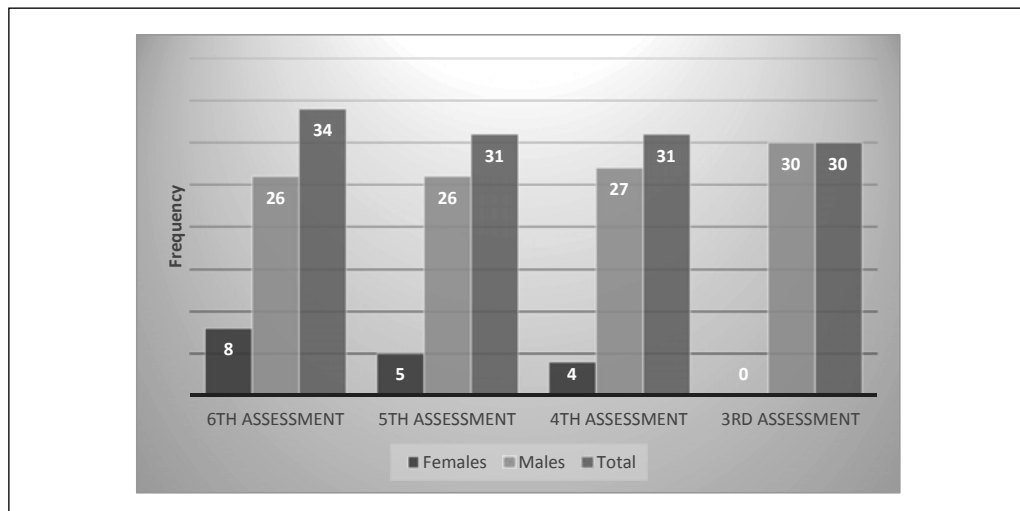


Figure 3: Gender in IPCC Bureaus since TAR

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016b)

The TFB are other structures in the IPCC that need engendering, with a focus on getting a balance between females and males. Data were generated for the AR4 to AR6. The details are shown in Figure 4. The findings reveal that there seems to be a radical shift toward gender balance. While there were four females in each of the AR4 and AR5 cycles, this figure has increased significantly to six in the AR6 set-up. In terms of percentages, the AR5 female representation was the lowest at 25 per cent (4 out of 16 members), followed by 28.57 per cent (4 out of 14 members) for the AR45 and 42.86 per cent (6 out of 14 members) for the AR6.

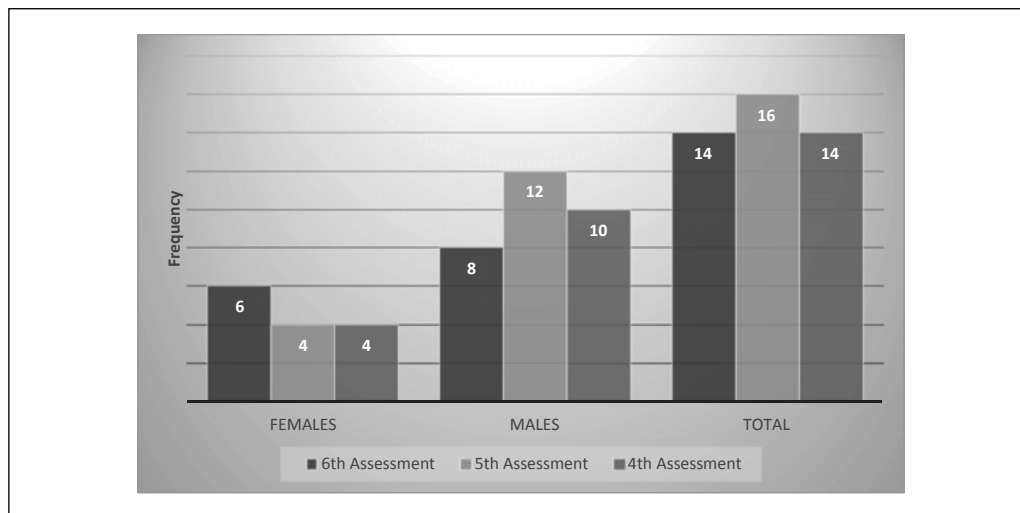


Figure 4: Gender in TFBS since AR4

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016b)

Gender dimensions were also reviewed in the SR15 Steering Committee that showed close balance at five females versus six males. However, more analysis was performed on the selection of the experts from the initial, to long, short and final lists. The gender dimension in the final Expert Panel list corresponds to the initial nominations (Figure 5). The nominations are done by the potential experts’ IPCC Focal Point in the country of origin. Only 159 (26.9%) of the 591 nominations were females in the initial SR15 Expert Panel nominations. This figure is in contrast to the final percentage of 28 (32.56%) out of the 86 finalists in the Expert Panel for the SR15. The other issue that comes out strongly is the possible deliberate attempt to narrow the gender gap. Although no explanation could be found on the IPCC website, this picture could have been as a result of expertise received and also the need to attempt to balance gender. Figure 5 shows that at each next level of selection, the gap between genders narrowed (although not significantly). For example, at the initial nomination, women represented 26.9 per cent. This figure grew to 27.78 per cent in the long list, to 30.20 per cent in the short list, and 32.56 per cent in the final selection list. This brought up a 5.66 per cent increase during the selection process for which the responsible IPCC arm needs to be congratulated. Overall, there seem to be a direct and proportional link between the nomination figures and those in the final lists.

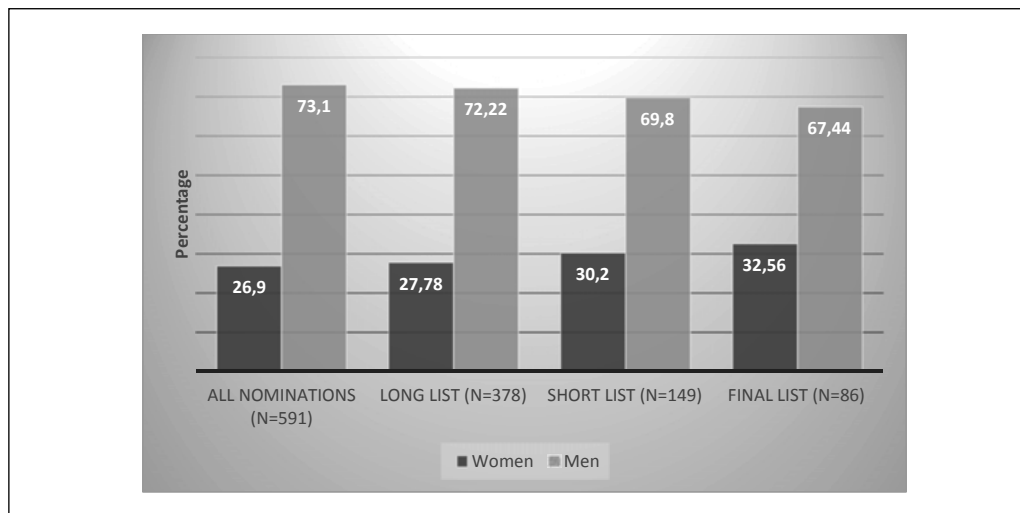


Figure 5: Nominations for the SR15 experts' panels

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016a)

The authors further sought to determine the geographical balance from the SR15 experts' selection process. The emerging findings are reflected in Figure 6. The highest initial nominations came from Europe and represented 39 per cent of total nominations. This was followed by North and Central America, and the Caribbean with 19.5 per cent and Africa came in third with 16.35 per cent of the 159 women nominated. During the process from the initial to the final list, North and Central America and the Caribbean had received the highest level of reduction. This was followed by Europe and Asia. In the final list of 28 women, however, Europe had the highest representation with 32.14 per cent, followed by Africa with 21.43 per cent and South America that had 17.86 per cent. Although many factors were at play in finalising the list, as noted from the literature, qualifications are usually a major factor. Needless to indicate, the criteria set by the IPCC also include new comers and areas of expertise balance.

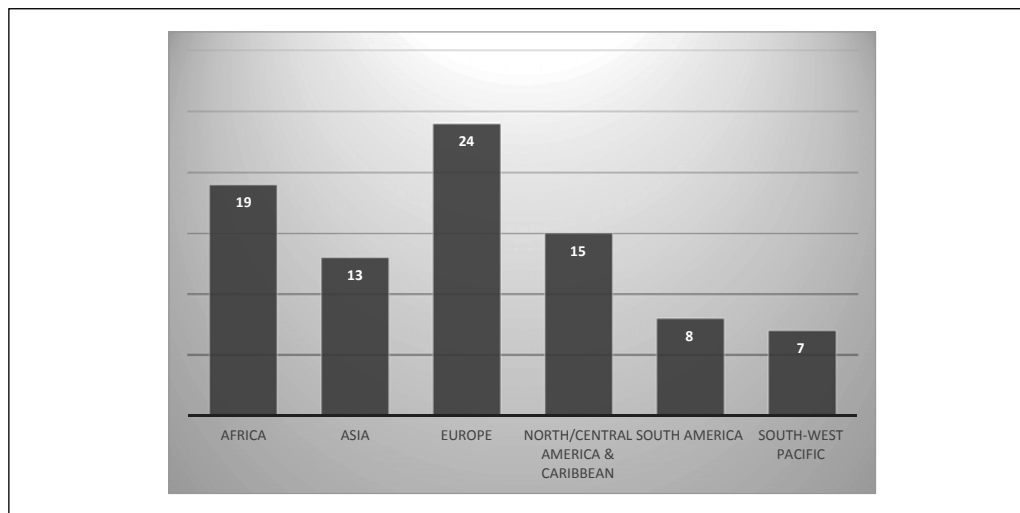


Figure 6: Gender geographical spread in SR15 experts' selection

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016a)

From the authors' perspectives, it was not good enough to only focus on gender balance figures without auditing the actual participation in critical meetings such as scoping and expert meetings. As such, and as indicated earlier, the authors retrieved videos of the February 2016 Experts' Meeting on Communications. The Experts' Meeting on Communications plenary results show that only 20 per cent (18 of the 90 contributions) came from women participants.

Matters on geographical spread

The geographical spread of expertise, as well as IPCC Bureau and Task Force Bureau, will always present fascinating perspectives. The main argument has been that United Nations and many global bodies are dominated by representatives from the developed countries. From an IPCC angle, countries are grouped in six regions as follows: Africa (Region I), Asia (Region II), South America (Region III), North and Central America (Region IV), South-West Pacific (Region V), and Europe (Region VI). However, for ease of analysis in this paper, the regions were collapsed to reflect economies in transition and those developing on one side, and the developed economies on the other side.

Based on the 2005 figures, the regional balance in the IPCC Bureau was as follows: five members apiece from Regions I&II; four members apiece from Regions III&IV; three members from Region V; and eight members from Region VI. The situation changed significantly in 2015 as recorded in the proceedings of the 41st IPCC Session that took place in February in Kenya. Region I now has seven members (up from 5);

Region II has six (up from 5); while Regions III–V now have four members each; and Region VI remains with eight members.

Geographical spread matters are a common feature on IPCC Session Reports, featuring in most of the 22 audited reports. The 41st Session Report is vivid in terms of this item and the 2015 Session Report is explicit in the actual figures of members from each of the six regions of the IPCC Bureau (IPCC 2015b). These are the figures discussed earlier for the AR6 work. The 42nd IPCC Session Report follows up on earlier commitments and tabulates members elected per geographical region for all key IPCC institutions including the three working groups (IPCC 2015c). Using data from the IPCC website, an audit was then undertaken to further analyse regional distribution in the IPCC Bureaus and Task Force Bureaus since the FAR to the AR6, based on transition and developing versus developed economies categorisation. The results are shown in Figure 7.

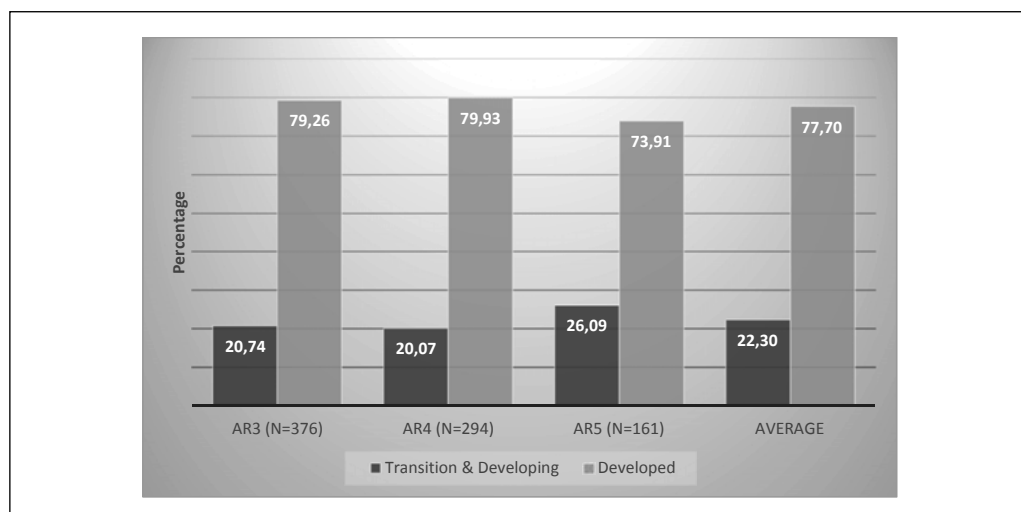


Figure 7: Regional divide of IPCC Bureau since FAR to AR6

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016b)

What emerges from Figure 7 is that apart from the FAR, the IPCC Bureau’s regional representation is biased toward transition and developing countries. Of the 15 members for the FAR, eight came from the developed north with seven from the developing south. This picture has changed since then with the next five constitutions tilting the balance towards the transition and developing countries. The largest gap is from the AR6 Bureau that has 22 members out of the 34 from the transition and developing countries. This is a commendable move by the IPCC, given that the bulk of the global populations are from transition and developing countries, some of which are critically affected by climate change. As for the regional spread in the TFB and as indicated earlier, three periods

could be traced with authenticity and also given that this body is a new phenomenon and absent from the FAR to the TAR. Like in the IPCC Bureau, representation from the developed countries dominated in the AR4, AR5 and AR6 of the 14 member teams.

Additional analysis on regional distribution of contributors for the TAR to the AR5 was performed and is shown in Figure 8. The figures reflected are based on data that were manually extracted from the reports and may vary from those highlighted elsewhere in IPCC briefings and or press releases. Apart from the fact that there is a growing trend on the reduction of contributors (376 in AR3, to 294 in AR4 and ultimately 161 in AR5), there is a huge imbalance of contributors from the developing countries, as in all the assessment reports the developed countries contributed between 73.91 per cent in AR5 to as high as 79.93 per cent in the AR3. Whilst the highest number of contributors from the developing countries in the AR3 came from Argentina (14), followed by China (11) and India (5), this was in sharp contrast to figures from the developed countries from the USA (73), United Kingdom (40) and Japan (31). A similar pattern emerged for the AR4, with the USA having 48, the United Kingdom 30 and Japan 22. On the other hand, China had the highest number of contributors at 15, followed by Argentina (6) and India (5).

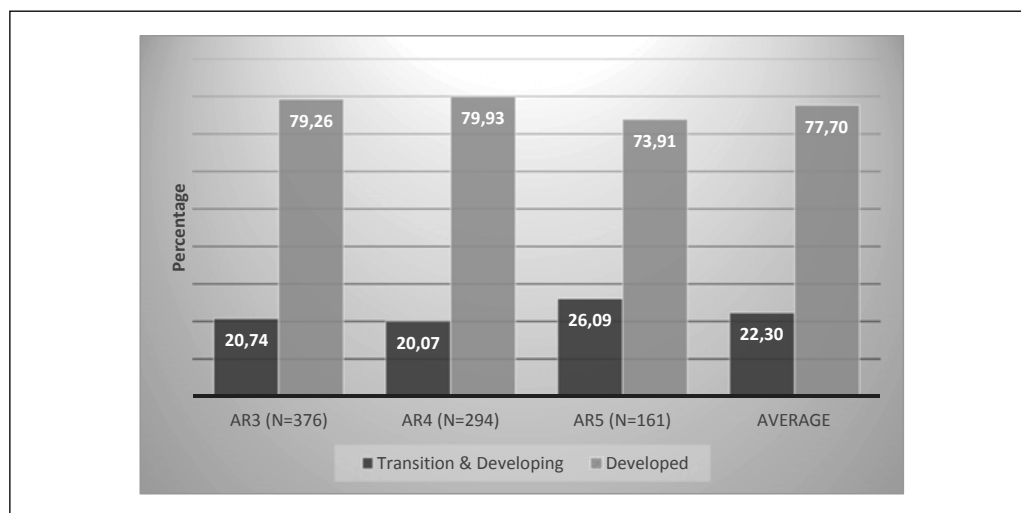


Figure 8: Geographical spread of contributors to the TAR, AR4 and AR5

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016b)

In the AR5, the same trend is revealed, with the USA having 24 contributors, followed by the United Kingdom (19) and Japan (14). However, there is a huge increase in contributors from China (17), followed by Argentina and India with three apiece. On average, there is a 77.7 per cent dominance in contributor involvement by representatives from the developed countries.

The authors further traced the geographical spread of expert and scoping meeting participants from 2004 to 2016. Thirteen such events were retrieved as follows: Expert Meeting on Industrial Technology Development, Transfer and Diffusion (EMIT); Expert Meeting on Emission Scenarios (EMES); Towards New Scenarios for Analysis of Emissions, Climate Change, Impacts, and Response Strategies (EMTN); Expert Meeting Integrating Analysis of Regional Climate Change and Response Options (TGICA); Scoping Meeting on Renewable Energy Sources (SMRE); Expert Meeting on Detection and Attribution Related to Anthropogenic Climate Change (EMDA); Expert Meeting on the Science of Alternative Metrics (EMSA); Expert Meeting on Assessing and Combining Multi Model Climate Projections (EMAC); Expert Meeting on Economic Analysis, Costing Methods, and Ethics (EMEA); Expert Meeting on Geoengineering (EMGE); Expert Meeting on Potential Studies of the IPCC Process (EMPS); Expert Meeting on the Future of the Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impacts and Climate Analysis (EMFT); and SR15.

Figure 9 shows the spread that has dominance by representatives from the developed north. On average, there has been a 73.55 per cent dominance by representatives from the developed countries. One outlier is visible in terms of bias towards attendance by representatives from transition and developing economies, and this outlier comes in the form of the 2007 GGICA. On further analysis, it emerged that this meeting was held in Fiji with 13 participants from this country resulting in the tilt. Hence 13 out of the 37 participants were locals. Another observation to note is the 50/50 representation in the SR15, which reflects a good movement toward the set objective of regional balance. Once more, the responsible IPCC organ should be congratulated for this. It takes great effort and courage, as it is like swimming against the current.

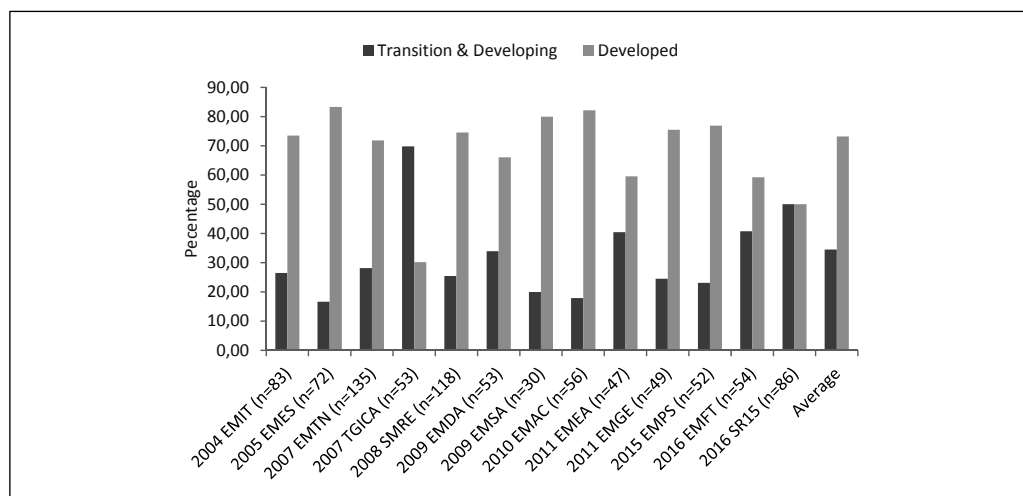


Figure 9: Geographical distribution in experts and scoping meetings (2004–2016)

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016b)

Geographical spread in IPCC Sessions reflects a picture where the transition and developing economies have a larger representation. This is probably so because representation is mainly member based and there are more transition and developing economies than those that are developed. In order to have further insights in terms of regional representation, the authors picked the SR15 as a case study. Figure 10 summarises the representation from the initial to the final list. Although the spread between developing and developed countries was evenly balanced, there emerged other dynamics in the finalisation of the selection process. For example, Europe dominated final appointments with 24 of the 86 experts. From the developing countries, Africa also dominated with 19 appointments. In terms of percentages, the Europe and African appointments constitute 27.91 per cent and 22.09 per cent of the total appointments—exactly 50 per cent. In as much as there is independence in setting the agenda for, debating and documenting synthesis reports, one cannot rule out bias in favour of views coming from regions with stronger representation. Given the population figures and number of countries in South America, one would expect more than the current eight representatives (9.3% of total).

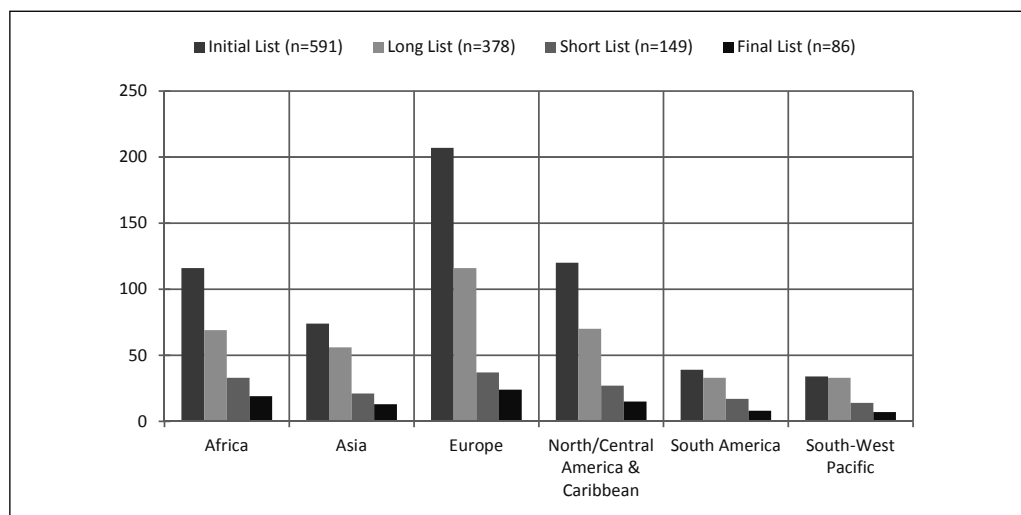


Figure 10: Regional representation in SR15 expert member constitution

Source: Authors (Data from IPCC 2016a)

Another silent factor emerging is the manner in which the selection dealt with the huge numbers of nominations from Europe (207 initially and cut down to 24 in the final list); North and Central America and the Caribbean (initially 120 and cut down to 15) as well as Africa (initially 116 and cut down to 19). Apart from the analysis that emerges from the available data, there are untold stories that the authors could not trace the details of the selection process, as this was not available publicly.

CONCLUSION

The gender balance question remains alive in the UN family. Since 1985, the UN Secretariat has made progress towards gender balance, rising from seven per cent to slightly above 31 per cent in the senior professionals with minimum of 15 years' work experience (D1+ grades) that are responsible for decision making. Both the UN Secretariat and the IPCC are well aware of the agenda to engender their structures and systems. Solid commitments have been made to narrow the participation gap between females and males. As reflected in the selection of the SR15 experts by the IPCC, there was a deliberate intention to narrow the wide initial nomination gap as seen by a 5.66 percentage points' increase in the final list. It also emerged that female voices continue to be subdued during inputs and debates in plenary session, possibly given their proportional share in the IPCC. Regarding the regional distribution, there still remains a huge deficit on representatives from the developing countries. For example, out of the 13 experts and scoping meetings by the IPCC, 12 had a strong bias towards developing countries. The only exceptions were the 2007 GGICA, which had more representation from developing countries and the 50/50 balance achieved when selecting the 86 experts for the SR15 scoping. Similar challenges in terms of deficits from developing nations' representation are vivid in the three Assessment Reports where 22.3 per cent of contributors were from this region. There are also other matters regarding the sub-regional difference. Therefore, more work remains regarding a need to fast track and incentivise female involvement in the IPCC systems.

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NOTES

1. These include field and security service, trades and crafts and public information assistants.