

Gender and equity in the Protected Areas of West Africa

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Why equity in conservation ?

According to a commonly accepted definition, taking into consideration the equity principle « aims at an equitable access of men and women to develop their capacities, regardless of their sex, gender, social class, religion or age».

This equity principle, which is often the guarantee of a certain social well-being of individuals, is also, in most cases, a factor of stability of communities. As such, taking into consideration the equity principle stems from a sustainable development approach which seeks to reconcile economic, environmental, but also social dimensions of the development of societies.

In the area of species and natural habitats conservation, taking into account the principle of equity is paramount. Indeed, all individuals hold knowledge, know how and practices in relation to biodiversity. Neglecting to take into account certain 'minority' groups (women, youngsters, old people ...) is to avoid considering environmental issues in their entirety, but also to deprive oneself of the support and participation of key actors of the communities.

For example, neglecting the equity principle man-woman and convening only men to listen to in the process of drafting natural resources management projects, is to deprive oneself of the valuable knowledge of women (who are specialists however of plants and shellfish collection, home gardening, rearing of small animals, etc.) and forget more than half of the dynamic forces of society.

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Preface



The strategies and approaches for the management of Protected Areas in Africa should make it possible to obtain concrete results, and thus ensure the conservation of biodiversity for future generations. Unfortunately, despite the considerable technical, scientific, and financial efforts made, we must admit that the natural resources remain “fragile and insufficiently protected”, to such an extent that one third of the ecosystems are in “very bad shape”.

Improving the relations between the managers of protected areas and the local populations, in particular the women, is one of the main challenges to be met. Several African countries have already become aware of the essential necessity to engage in dialogue with the communities affected so that the protected areas can survive, but to what extent and how much has this dialogue been opened up to women, of which the importance in numbers and the complete dependency on the resources there have been fully established? Do the managers of protected areas, and more generally speaking the States take into account the women’s “recognised” rights to use these resources? Do the co-management models for protected areas really involve the women in the services and jobs created within the framework of the valorisation of the protected areas? Are the local partners involved in the co-management of the protected areas ready to share their roles and responsibilities with the women? What mechanisms have been set up for women’s capacity building so as to enable them to effectively assume the responsibilities given to them? What political commitments are likely to encourage better involvement of women?

The Cotonou workshop, “For a better consideration of the principle of equity in the management of protected areas in West Africa”, aimed to raise awareness about equity among high-ranking decision makers involved in the management of protected areas, so that they would commit themselves to working so that equity would be applied both in their organisation and in the projects they support.

This conference did not pretend to be able to provide answers to all of the questions listed above. Its aim was rather to make a real diagnosis in view of formulating the orientations and launching a call to the political decision makers, managers of protected areas, and local partners on the essential necessity of better valorising the efforts and potential know-how of the women.

Having worked in the field for many years, during which I was always in contact with the local populations in the protected areas in my country, Benin, I can say with certainty that the natural resources in the protected areas would be in much better shape if we took all the necessary steps to develop the capacities and valorise the know-how of women. Beyond the rights to use the resources, the women need to be given responsibilities in the decision-making and management bodies in the protected areas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo'.

Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo,

Benin’s Minister of the Environment and Protection of Nature



Context

From 30 May to 1 June 2007 in Dakar, Senegal, le Programme Aires Protégées pour l'Afrique du Centre et de l'Ouest (PAPACO) of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the International Foundation for the Banc d'Arguin (FIBA), organised a workshop entitled "Reflecting on capacity building for women in the processes of concertation and management of Protected Areas in West Africa".

This workshop brought together professionals from Protected Areas from various West African countries, as well as gender specialists. The objective was not only to provide a conceptual framework for a better understanding of this issue, but also to provide tools and other instruments for incorporating the principle of equity between the sexes in the programmes and projects of various protected areas in West Africa.

The presentations and analyses of concrete examples revealed many problems that are hampering the processes of recognising and integrating equity between the sexes, which include cultural, religious, political, and institutional issues, a lack of knowledge, and an incorrect interpretation of the question.

Among the many propositions put forward, the participants expressed the need to dispose of a guide accessible to the general public on the question of gender equity in the protected areas of West Africa, which would be educational and specifically designed for the managers of protected areas¹. This manual is organised in three parts:

- Theoretical reflections on the problematic of equity between the sexes in West Africa and in the Protected Areas
- Questions on equity between the sexes, based on case studies and practical propositions
- Concrete propositions for a real equity-based approach in West Africa and elsewhere

¹ : *The problematic investigated in this guide is adapted from Lorena Aguilar, Itzá Castañeda and Hilda Salazar 2002 En búsqueda del género perdido., equidad en las áreas protegidas, San José, C.R., UICN, ABSOLUTA, 224 p. "In search of lost gender, equity in protected areas"*



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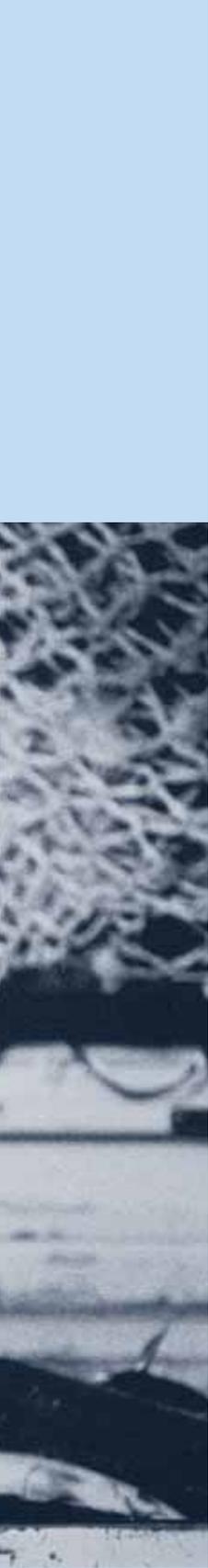
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1. The theoretical bases for understanding the principle of equity





1.1 What is the difference between sex and gender?

“Sex” is the set of biological, hereditary, and genetic characteristics that structure individuals in two categories: male and female.

The concept of “gender” defines a set of beliefs, attitudes, feelings, values, and behaviours which have made it possible to differentiate between men and women through a historical process of social construction, which is played out at various levels, such as the State, the labour market, schools, the media, law, and the family, as well as through interpersonal relations. This process presupposes the organisation of these beliefs into a hierarchy, such that a higher value is generally attributed to those of the masculine sex².

The concept of “gender” goes beyond the question of women. It refers to the way in which a given society defines the roles, responsibilities, rights, and opportunities associated with the fact of being a man or a woman. These characteristics, which are acquired through the process of socialisation, are specific and context-dependent. Gender is cultural, whereas sex is biological. In many traditional African societies, these roles are flexible; they can even sometimes change.

² : Lourdes Beneria, 1987:46, cited by Maria Teresa Caramés Garcia, 2004: 47 « *Processus de socialisation en sciences de la santé* » [*Process of socialisation in the health care sciences*].



The Tikar of central Cameroon make an unequivocal difference between sex and gender. Political power is shared by a chief and his female counterpart.

The monarch has a senior manservant at his service, who is in charge of ensuring his well-being: a role traditionally attributed to women. He brings him his meals, tastes his medicines, helps him into bed, dresses and undresses him, organises the order in which his wives visit him in his bedroom, and shares all of his secrets. The wives call him “our jealousy” because he is their husband’s “favourite wife”. Nevertheless, this manser-

vant is also a husband and the father of a family: he combines his social role and biological characteristics perfectly.

As for the queen, she houses a man in her palace who is completely at her service, and plays the traditional role of a wife: he serves her her meals, does the household chores, shares her bed, takes care of the children, and ploughs her fields. He is also the biological father of the queen’s children, but he cannot make claims to this role, because the society does not recognise him as such. He is considered to be the queen’s “maidservant”.

It is important to remember that the concept of gender designates the social relations between the sexes. It is the social and cultural construction of these relations, which is the basis of inequalities and inequity in our societies.

1.2 How do inequalities between the sexes manifest themselves in our societies?

Restrictions of personal freedoms and fundamental rights

Society generally attributes more freedom to men than to women. In many countries, women must ask their husband, partner, or older brothers for permission before leaving the house or starting an economic activity.

In Guinea, some women in Bonfi were forbidden by their husbands to participate in the group of women developing fish smoking activities (COFUB). The men gave the excuse that with their increased economic power women might no longer obey them, a supposition that goes against the religious precepts according to which “the woman owes

submission and absolute obedience to her husband and master”. Every day, the strong-headed women in this group must face the anger and criticism of their husbands, families, and neighbours.

Interview with women from Bonfi, in the district of Conakry



If they fail to do this, their businesses are simply confiscated and their personal freedoms are restricted, the worst of these consequences being “honour crimes”.

These so-called honour crimes are an ancient practice legitimated by culture more than by religion. This custom, entrenched in a complex code, allows a man to kill or abuse his partner, or a woman in his family, for real or supposed "immoral behaviour". This may be triggered by a completely trivial matter, such as chatting with a neighbour of the opposite sex, receiving telephone calls from a man, or not having served a meal in a timely manner. But unfortunately, these women are most often accused of having had extra-marital sexual relations, having refused the "advances" made by their husbands (or the man imposed on them), or even of having been raped by a stranger. A woman who is a rape victim is considered to be guilty, she "let herself be raped"; the man to whom she "belonged" is the injured party and enjoys the support of the local population.

The code of honour is implacable: the women who are suspected of wrongdoings have no chance of defending themselves, and, for the members of their family, the only socially acceptable solution consists in re-establishing their honour by sacrificing them. Various methods are used, such as being axed to death, mutilated by acid, strangled, or having their throat slit. More than 5,000 honour crimes are recorded throughout the world every year! They are perpetrated in a large number of countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, the autonomous Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the United States of America, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Germany. The laws in certain of these countries show leniency with respect to the assassin, because he simply "cleansed" the honour of his family and society.

Amnesty International. www.amnesty.be.

In many countries, women do not have the right to own property, which is only permitted to their husbands, brothers, or other men in the family. They do not exist as people, but are considered to be a commodity that belongs first to their family, and then to their husband's family. In some cultures, when their husband dies, they are automatically "inherited", without their consent, by one of his brothers or uncles in the same way as his fields and properties (the levirat system).

In addition, according to certain traditions, the best portions of the food and the best cuts of meat are saved for the man: the woman and the children must often content themselves with the leftovers. Likewise, in public, a woman cannot and must not appear to be better dressed than her husband.

In 2004, in the province of Lubango in south-east Angola, those in charge of the World Food Programme (WFP) did not understand why the women chose clothes first for their husbands in the humanitarian aid packages, and not for themselves and their children. However, if they do not act in this way, their husbands oblige them to sell

part of their package and give them the money earned as a punishment for having gone against tradition. On the other hand, the men sell their food packages on the black market to buy alcohol and cigarettes. Meanwhile, those of the women are eaten by the family, and once again the men receive the best items.

Women are often considered to be less capable of making decisions or working in positions of responsibility. It is simply supposed that they do not have the necessary intelligence.

In Somalia, a proverb says that “the breast that produces milk cannot at the same time contain intelligence”.
Olivia Graham, S/a: “Pastoral women and drought: social dislocation in central Somalia”, LAG.

Society places more value on public decisions than on private decisions (domestic ones), because the former are very often made by men and the latter by women. Sometimes, society even gives men all the decision-making power within the family sphere, which can go as far as controlling the lives and activities of the women. The men have the right to make decisions concerning their women's health, body, resources, and income. In this way, adult women are relegated to the rank of young girl forever; they are considered to be minors, and subjected to a permanent state of dependency.

There is a different level of funding for the education of girls and boys on the pretext that girls do not need instruction, because when they are adults they will stay at home.

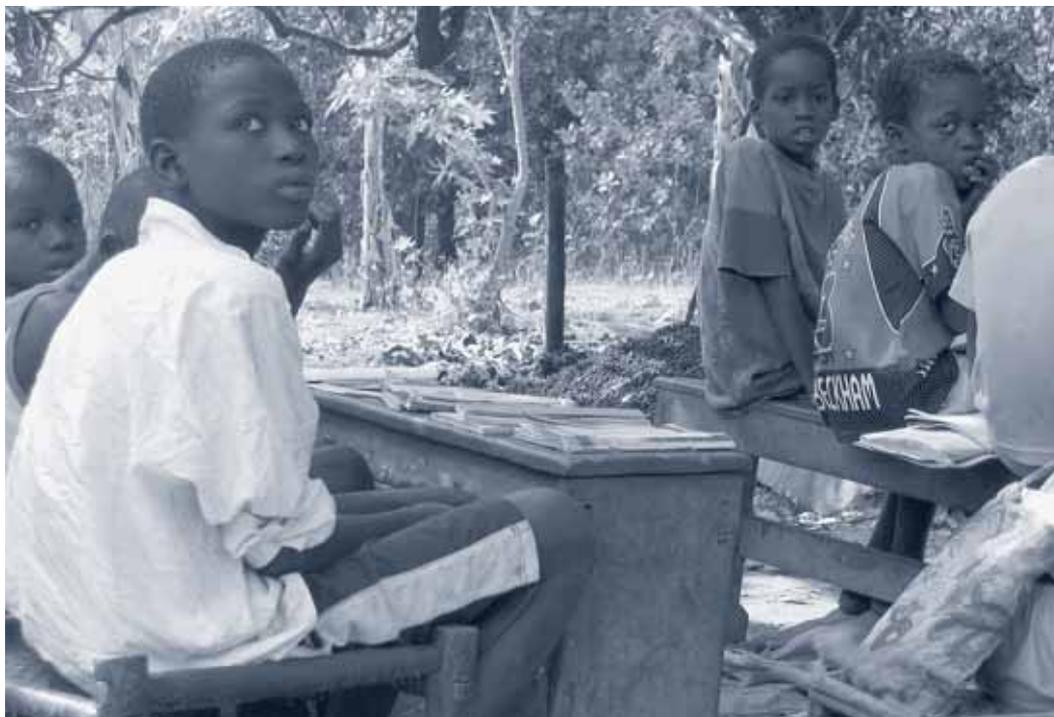
According to tradition, that is their destiny.



In several West African countries, many fathers refuse to enrol their girls in school on the pretext that education would make bad wives of them. In Guinea, for example, when girls were given access to Koranic schools, the teaching they received about the Koran was superficial. The lessons given to the boys are much more analytical, and enable them to acquire the basic tools of critical thinking: they are advised to acquire knowledge of and to completely memorise the Koran, in order to become masters.
Interview with the Heads of the Ministry of the Women's and Children's Condition and of the Ministry of Fisheries.

Somalian society believes that a young boy improves his social status through education, whereas a young girl improves hers through

an early marriage.
Olivia Graham, S/a: op. cit.

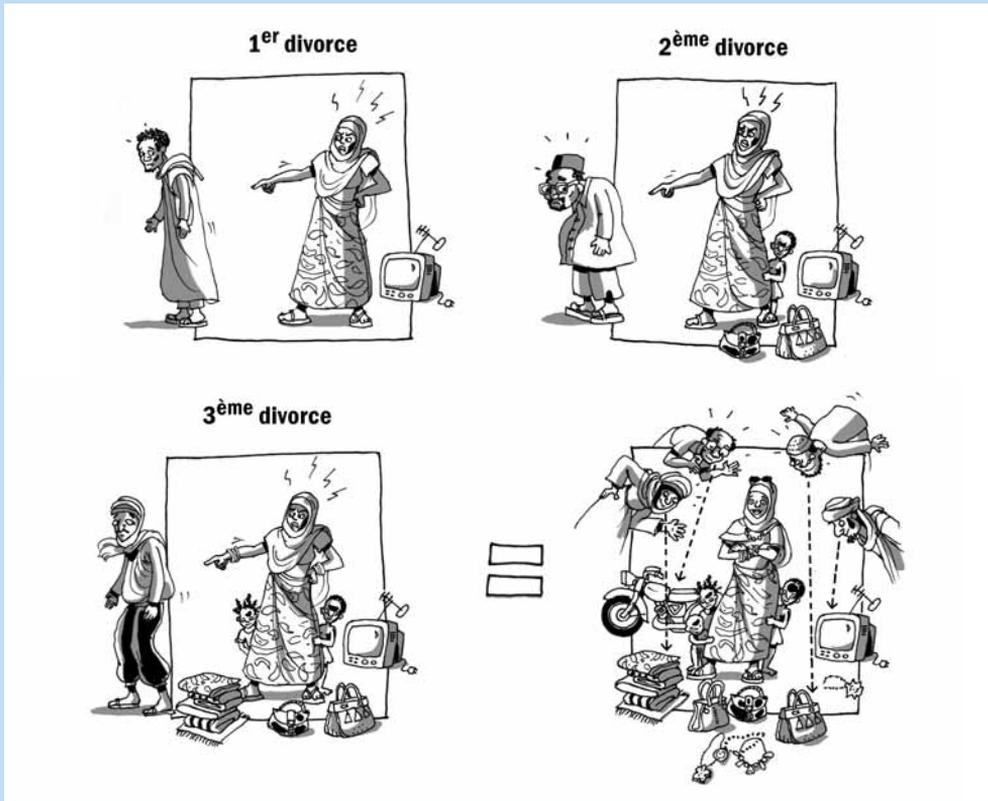


Activities in the area of continuing education, and access to knowledge and education are only for men, who thus have the opportunity to strengthen their capacities. In this way, they acquire both new knowledge and social recognition.

Being a woman in Mauritania: heaven but at what price?

For Mauritanian women, the situation and constraints are of an entirely other nature. Mauritanian women, especially if they are of Moorish origins, and not from the black Toucouleur ethnic group, which is subject to discrimination, have a great deal of power in the traditional society: they decide on the matrimonial status, and set the conditions for marriage and divorce. If there is a divorce because of their husband's infidelity, they keep the children and

the material goods. According to Shérif Abdoulatif from the IUCN, "In Mauritania, the women and the marabouts are the most important people. A man accused of being violent by a woman is rejected by society. Likewise, a man cannot have sexual relations with a woman without her consent". Divorce is tolerated to such an extent that, the more of them a woman accumulates, the more she is prized and courted. By getting divorced several times, a woman builds up material goods, and in this way attracts men who wish to take advantage of this wealth.



Mauritanian women are accused of being materialistic and “economically stripping the men”; an accusation the women do not deny. On the contrary, they justify it: “The men are womanisers; they often live secretly, running between two families. They cannot be trusted, so it is better to fleece them as a reward for so much suffering”. In spite of this state of affairs, many women recognise that they still dream of a man who would love and respect them.

valid reason, duly justified by her husband. He considers that she has everything, and that it is he who gave her everything: comfort, clothes, food, money, etc. What would she go look for outside of her home?

Unfortunately, behind this Mauritanian women's “heaven” there is a tougher reality: their power is restricted only to their home sphere. Outside of it, they have no freedom. Birth control and limitation are not authorised by religion. A woman does not have the right to leave her village or house, except for reasons of illness, giving birth, or another



Surely a lover... If they are caught in the act, the woman and her lover will have their throats slit: "You have to kill anyone that mars your honour. Why lodge a complaint for adultery when you know the police officers are going to make fun of you and treat you like a coward? the chauffeur who drove us to Nouakchott confided to us. Likewise, an unmarried single mother is rejected and sent back to her father.

Rejected and treated like "prostitutes", certain are forced into exile, and in the worst cases commit suicide. This is how the Mauritanian society "protects" women from the social dangers against which they could not defend themselves. Down through the centuries, they have progressively persuaded themselves that the outside world is teeming with danger, and that without the protection of men they would be lost.

Non-recognition and underestimation of female work

Because it takes place for the most part within the domestic environment, women's work is not recognised at its just value in our societies. Work can be divided up schematically into 3 functions: reproductive, productive, and community-related tasks:

- **Reproductive work** includes the activities linked to biological reproduction: having children, taking care of the family, and all of the educational, feeding, and health-related chores.



- **Community-related work** groups together all of the activities that are performed in the community. It ensures the defence and improvement of living conditions, as well as how the community is organised.
- **Productive work** includes the activities that generate financial income, goods and services. These earnings are used for the personal consumption of the family or they are reinvested in a business.

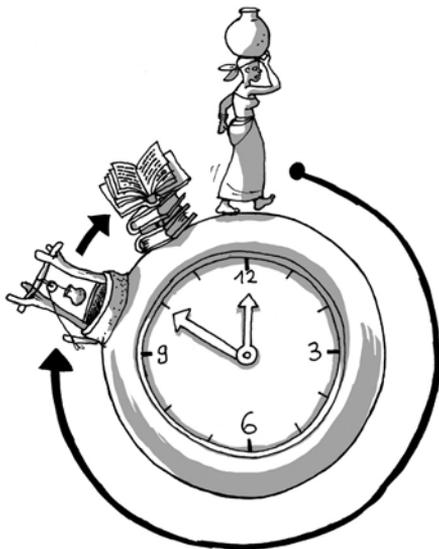
In most societies, the construction of gender identifies the “complementary” activities for which women are responsible, because they are not a source of revenue. Reproductive work, which is nonetheless at the base of productive work, is never taken into account in the computation of manufacturing costs. Women receive no salary for doing it, whereas it is essential.

To earn a salary and be recognised and valued as workers, the women must perform a productive job outside of the home. They must do this job in addition to their reproductive and community-related tasks, which creates a tremendous amount of work for them. This phenomenon is referred to as the **woman's triple workday**.

The society is also based on the false belief that reproductive work is less difficult and less tiresome than productive work. Once the man has finished working, he goes home to rest and eat. Since it is considered that a woman “wastes her time” during the day, it is “natural” that she take care of everything having to do with reproduction and the upkeep of the family. For example, the many kilometres walked by women to fetch water or wood are generally considered to be a routine activity that does not require any particular effort. Consequently, no time remains for women for their own education, recreational activities, or to participate in capacity building activities.



When there is an opportunity for training, gaining qualifications, or doing activities that generate income, a woman must find somebody to replace her for the reproductive activities. Most of the time this responsibility falls on the shoulders of grandmothers, female neighbours or young girls, even if this means they can no longer go to school.



The participation of women in development processes requires spare time and a peaceful environment, which are only possible if there is a mutual agreement between the women and men in the same community.



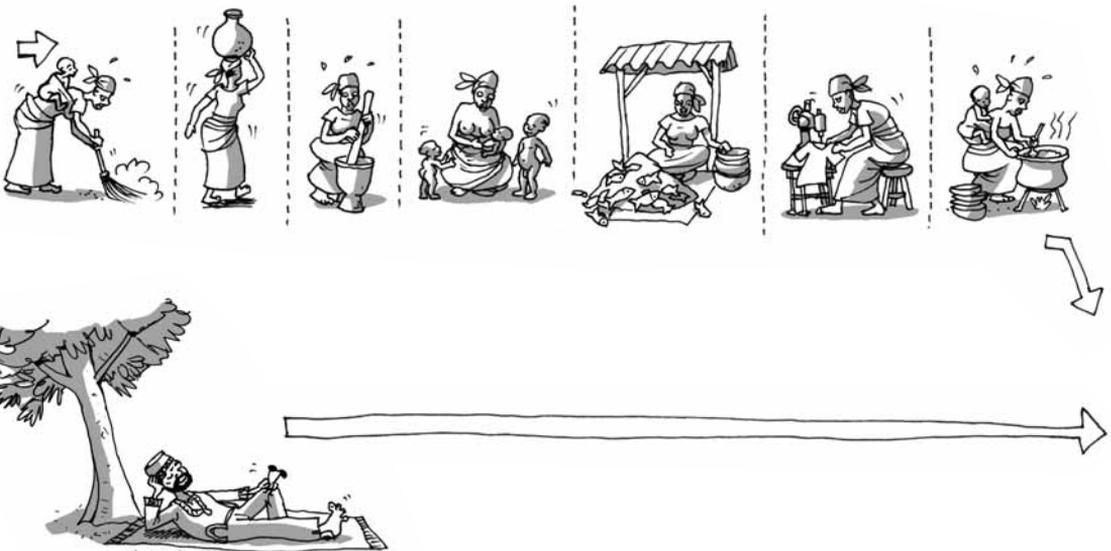
In charge of her income, but paying for most of the family expenses

Fortunately, in the traditional system in most West African countries, the woman is the only person in charge of and who manages her income. She manages her business autonomously, as well as the profits and savings within associations or mutual micro-credit banks in villages, but this can create difficulties.

In Mauritania, a man would lose his dignity and honour if he took interest in his wife's income. The society believes that "the money a woman can earn has no value and is of no importance". This saying is justified when the woman's income only comes from small domestic activities. However, when these earnings become greater than those

of their husband, that leads to frustration, physical aggression, confiscations of businesses, and even divorces. In Guinea, many women are victims of blackmail, and must sometimes choose between marriage and economic independence.

Most of the women must assume financial responsibility for 90% of the family's needs, including the children's schooling, food, clothing, and healthcare expenses, whereas the man limits what he provides to the strict minimum. In addition, they may sometimes be rejected by their husbands after their many pregnancies.



In Guinea, among those who smoke fish in Bonfi and Boulbiny, a woman is considered to be “old” by her husband as soon as she is 40, and sometimes even before. He reproaches her for no longer being sexually attractive, and focusing more on her economic activities and the future of her children than on her conjugal duties.

He obliges her to find a young girl for him, if possible a virgin, who will replace her in the conjugal bed and be completely devoted to him as prescribed by tradition and religion. As of this moment, the first wife goes to work almost full time with the other women in the smokehouse. She sleeps there, cooks there, eats there, and lives at the rhythm of the fish landing. When she can, she goes home and grovels before her husband, and offers him the best pieces of the choicest fish, the “sea catfish”, in the aim of “winning him back”. But, as they say, “it doesn't work, because he only has eyes for his young wife”.

In spite of this situation, the woman continues to assume responsibility for the family and even takes care of the young co-wife's children. She does this until they start going to school. In no case can she have a new love life or take a lover, because that would be considered as a direct confrontation with her husband. She would then be repudiated and have to live with the opprobrium of being a vilely unfaithful woman, which would lead to her being rejected by her family and friends. Many women refrain from such actions out of fear of bothering their children more than to protect their reputation. At the age of 40, most of them are already grandmothers and

help take care of their grandchildren. They are then embarrassed by the idea of having a sex life at the same time as their children. In addition to the fear of STDs and AIDS, the women resign themselves out of fear of and respect for religion, which forbids and condemns adultery.

Except for those who work in public administration or in trade, most of the men spend their time sitting in a group in the shade of a tree. Before going to the market, their wives take the time to prepare them their meal. In Guinea, the men prefer fonio and rice steamed in the traditional way – which are expensive and take a long time to prepare – to white rice, which is more accessible, under the pretence that the latter causes gastritis. However, the men rarely give the money needed to buy the steamed rice, thus obliging the women to spend their money to satisfy their husbands' culinary whims. In Guinea, the women jokingly say that “all lazy men suffer from gastritis”.

Fortunately, educated women are promoting changes in favour of women's rights by means of the radio, television, and sketches in local languages. Most of the subject matter relates to the inheritance rights of young girls and widows, because the Koran, as it is interpreted in the Koranic classes taught to girls, prescribes that “a girl cannot inherit from her father, nor a woman from her husband, if she did not have a child with him”. During these broadcasts, the educated women demonstrate the contrary, and denounce the ways in which the holy texts are manipulated.





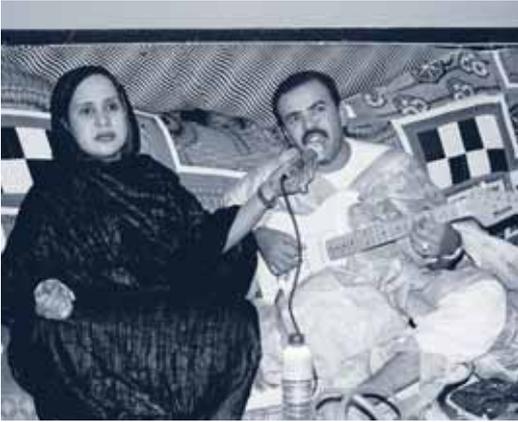
1.3 Toward a demystification of received ideas

Gender is fundamental in the construction of social inequalities, which are themselves based on myths such as: *“Women are incapable of making decisions and occupying positions of authority”*. *“Women are not capable of doing certain activities, such as steering a pirogue or hunting”*. *“The girls in the kitchen with their mothers, the boys in the living room with their fathers”*. *“Boys are not capable of doing household chores, and girls are not capable of doing mechanical and electronic work”*. *“Men have scientific knowledge, and women have empirical or practical knowledge”*.



In other words, women are incapable of thinking, and men are incapable of working manually and doing “small (domestic) chores”. However, if the boys do not know how to do the dishes or repair a button, it is simply because nobody has taught them to do this, and not because they are incapable of doing it. The same is true of the girls for installing a television, building a mill, or putting the wheels on a bicycle. Men and women have knowledge in different areas, but this does not mean that these areas are inaccessible or incomprehensible to the other sex.

The point of departure of any action must therefore be the demystification of these received ideas. Once this step has been taken, the promotion and dissemination of new ideas must be undertaken, so as to not contribute to the perpetuation of traditional conceptions.



In 1997, the NGO FAWECAM (Forum for African Women Educationalists Cameroon) set up a project in Cameroon with the aim of inciting girls to pursue scientific studies in high school secondary school instead of taking courses in cooking, home economics, and sewing. Within the framework of this project, the young girls could be rewarded

with free school materials. At the end of the first year, there was an increase of more than 20% of the girls enrolled in scientific studies and a doubling in the second year. These young girls' courage and motivation set an example for their society.

1.4 What is equity? Why should it be taken into account in development projects?

The goal of equity is to provide men and women equitable access to the development of their capacities, indiscriminately of their sex, gender, social class, religion, and age. The objective is to eliminate the barriers that block economic, legal, and political opportunities, and provide access to everyone to education and basic services. Equity also signifies justice: it means giving every person what rightfully belongs to him or her, while recognising the conditions and/or the specific characteristics of each person. Finally, equity is the recognition of diversity without discrimination.



Equity between the sexes tends to be thought of as a female issue, because they are the ones who have suffered and continue to endure most inequalities. Nevertheless, the concept is in reality broader than this single issue, and can be applied to men, young girls and boys, old people, Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, animists, etc.

An approach aiming to establish equity between the sexes recognises that every man and woman has his or her part of responsibility in achieving sustainable human development. Children and young adults, adults and the elderly from both sexes can and must contribute, through their experience, to the promotion and development of the community. The goal is to work for the concrete self-fulfilment of every woman and every man, to enable each human being to perfect himself or herself, improve the quality of his or her life, and at the same time of the entire community, by eliminating inequalities.

If we recognise the theoretical validity of this approach, we must make a commitment to act in order to give impetus to the social transformations needed so as to neither strengthen the inequalities nor contribute to their perpetuation.

1.5 What is the relationship between conservation and equity between the sexes?

Both the ecological movement and the movement for equity among human beings plead in favour of a new, more integrated, more holistic way of life. The former denounces the way in which the human species degrades ecosystems, while the latter denounces the way in which one half of the human species oppresses the other half. Ecologists raise the issue of the value, respect, and recognition of the importance of biodiversity. Gender equity stems from the observation of social inequalities, and the recognition of social, personal, and cultural diversity. So we can say that the ecological movement and gender equity are complementary in terms of current worldwide problems.

1.6 Why do conservation projects provide an opportunity for promoting equity between the sexes?

Conservation and development initiatives are still too often based on formal, pre-established structures of property, and access to and control of natural resources. They perpetuate traditional models for the distribution of chores between men and women, and in this way participate in reinforcing the inequity between the sexes. The activities generally proposed to women remain within the domestic sphere, such as the farmyard and the breeding of small livestock, vegetable gardening, and oven work. These activities are often perceived to

be secondary, have a small budget, and no real impact in achieving the development project objectives. In addition, confining women to these activities keeps them outside of the activities that are central to conservation, and excludes them from sharing in the profits generated by these initiatives.



However, the conservation projects represent a unique opportunity to promote equity between the sexes. As they are innovative, the activities involved in the conservation and management of natural resources have generally not yet been catalogued in a traditional way as being the sphere of one particular sex. However, if we are not careful, they will be immediately attributed to the masculine sphere. For example, the monitoring of land or marine species should be a “neutral” activity from the point of view of gender, because traditionally it has not been assigned to either men or women.

Women tour guides for the observation of whales in the Vizcaino Biological Reserve (Baja California, Mexico)
Capacity building to help women become tour guides for the observation of whales in their natural habitat enabled them to develop knowledge of marine resources while also generating income. This initiative also established them as role models for the young generations.

The main obstacles in the project were that the women did not know how to swim and that, for cultural reasons, they had never worn swimsuits. The project leaders decided to forego the swimming classes and find an alternative to the swimsuit. The success of this project was based on the willpower and determination of everyone to get around the obstacles and break the taboos. Thanks to

the support of the project leaders, the women regained confidence in themselves and reinforced their credibility within the community.

Lorena Aguilar, Montserrat Blanco and Paula Zuñiga: Áreas Protegidas, el genero hace la diferencia (“Protected areas: gender equity makes the difference”).

Women who break with the traditions are often considered to be arrogant and regarded with consternation. However, they are decisive agents of change.

At Punta Allen in the Sian Ka’an protected area in Mexico, it was urgent to retrain the fishermen before the extinction of marine life near the reef. Therefore, the fishermen were given classes to learn how to be tour guides, and in particular English classes. A woman,

who was not a fisherman, was accepted by the group because of her charisma and motivation. As of this moment, she became a role model in her society for the other women.

Rojas, M. 2000 in Lorena Aguilar et al, op. cit. 2002: 161.

'Non-traditional activities' means tasks performed by women, but which are generally attributed to men. This is the case of jobs in the sectors of tourism, recycling garbage, gathering medicinal plants, and growing and selling organic products and ornamental plants, whether directly, via cooperatives, or in restaurants. The women can also be trained to perform the duties of a farm technician. They can learn, develop, and promote new methods for improving soil fertility (green manure, compost, and fungicides for organic pest control).

In 1999, the women of the Bahia do Sol association in Brazil were given remarkable training on managing the conditions for obtaining a fishing license, which is mandatory for any person involved in fishing activities in a rural area, from the IBAMA, the National Environmental Agency. Since then, they have

been helping the fishermen in their community in all of their administrative undertakings.

Maria Cristina Manshy, in Lorena Aguilar, Itzá castañeda, Hilda Salazar et al. 2002: “En búsqueda del genero perdido” (In search of the lost gender), San José, IUCN, Absoluta: 138.

Those who implement actions in the field of conservation must encourage equitable participation of men and women in the development of new activities. It will then be possible, not only to attain the objectives of nature protection, but also to contribute to the reduction of discrimination through equitable access to the opportunities and benefits of Protected Areas.

Golden manure in Thailand: The managers of the elephant park in Ayutthaya, located 80 km to the north of Bangkok, have proposed to women to raise funds by manufacturing and selling paper made from the fibrous remains in the dried dung of

pachyderms. The women call it “golden excrement” because of the significant income they make by selling the paper.

Lorena Aguilar et al, 2002, op. cit: 141.



1.7 In what way equity between the sexes contribute to the gathering of information in conservation projects?

Within communities, there are always people with a significant amount of theoretical and empirical knowledge about biodiversity. By improving their capacities, in particular their theoretical knowledge, these people can become excellent 'rangers' who can monitor



species, and participate in surveys, population studies, and missions to save knowledge about medicinal plants and/or marine species. These people are generally traditional healers and midwives, people who use plants on a daily basis, old fishermen, and retired hunters.

In Brazil, the technical team at the Jaú National Park was unable to determine the animal species and the number of animals killed by the men until after having consulted the women. Traditionally in charge of prepa-

ring and distributing food, they have extremely valuable information about the consumption, variety, frequency, and seasonality of the species.

Lorena Aguilar et al, op.cit.

In a Protected Area in Belize in Latin America, the women in the fishing communities as well as the retired fishermen were given training on the behaviour of birds in the mangroves. Recruiting them proved successful because of the precise observations and information on each species provided by the men and women for establishing inventories of and minutely detailed tables on the

species. Their pride came not only from their salary, but especially from their participation in protecting these species. All of them were paid homage by their communities, and they were invited to give seminars to share their experiences in schools.

Lorena Aguilar et al, 2002, op.cit.: 136.

Cooking recipes of women in the state of Yucatan in Mexico: Equity between the sexes encourages the elaboration and execution of research methodologies that draw on innovative sources of information, such as the cooking recipes used from generation to generation by women in the state of Yucatan in Mexico. These recipes constitute a databank

of the species used in the diet of the population and how it varies over time (species, quantities, etc.).

Lorena Aguilar, Montserrat Blanco and Paula Zuñiga: Áreas Protegidas, el genero hace la diferencia (“Protected areas: gender equity makes the difference”).

1.8 What does it mean to work from the perspective of equity between the sexes within Protected Areas?

Working from a perspective of equity goes beyond the promotion and inclusion of “women’s activities by and for women”. The main objectives consist in:

- generating awareness of the role of women and men as managers and subjects of development;

- setting up a permanent and open process, which includes men, women, and the young, and elderly people from both sexes in the different phases of the project.

The outcome of these processes is the finalisation of strategies and plans of action for men and women through:

- the preliminary recognition of the inequalities between the genders in terms of power;
- the recognition of the role of the women in the understanding, conservation, use, and management of natural resources;
- the promotion of social processes demonstrating how gender identities are currently being constructed;
- the establishment of an offer of services balancing the opportunities in the activities and introducing women's autonomy.

These different actions should help bring about the progressive introduction of a new way of feeling and experiencing reality, based on relations of equity and autonomy between the sexes.

1.9 What is a policy of equity between the sexes in Protected Areas?

The aim of a policy of equity between the sexes is to institutionalise the process of achieving equal opportunities for women and men, and their use of natural resources. It seeks to establish more equitable relations between women and men within an organisation that strives to have a visible impact.

Such a policy would obviously direct resources and preoccupations toward the objective of equity. It aims to improve the relations between the people comprising the technical, administrative, and hierarchical teams within institutions. It promotes the participation of women and men, as well as the rightful distribution of resources. Ideally, in the end, it would contribute to significantly improving the performance levels and effectiveness of environmental management.

1.10 Avoiding the pitfalls of a uniquely “pro-women” approach

Identifying the factors due to which power relations are still hardly equitable between the sexes requires an investigation of the issue with respect to both women and men. Indeed, within our societies, men hold and really exercise the power.



Experience has shown that efforts to correct the inequalities by means of actions oriented exclusively toward women can cause certain men to react negatively. Likewise, in West Africa, sociocultural and religious constraints can negatively influence the success of projects intended for women, and produce effects contrary to the ones desired.

Micro-credit projects in Mali: women jailed for non payment: In Mali, several women who had accepted micro-credit funds without the consent and involvement of their husbands had these funds confiscated by their spouses. Unable to pay back the micro-credit, some of them have been put in jail. The arrests, which were encouraged by their husbands, were carried out like a genuine “witch hunt”: police van, speakers blaring out the

names of the “guilty” and a crowd to accompany the police officers. The women who did not want to be subjected to this humiliation were forced to flee, abandoning their children, homes, and families.

Testimony of Traore Touré Néné (Women's association for environmental education) and Diahara Touré (Representative in the Malian National Assembly).

Women's support and development projects must therefore analyse every context, take account of the constraints that weigh on the women, provide guarantees in terms of mentoring and the means to prevent frustration and tense situations, and also the tools and solutions required for women to fully benefit from the fruit of their participation in development actions.

Men must be trained, sensitised, and integrated into processes of change, through the setting up of workshops on subjects such as masculine identity, male chauvinism and women's rights. They must also have access to the goods and resources generated by the project to assist in community development activities.

It is also important to identify and support the men already won over to the cause of equality in order to demonstrate the value of decreasing inequality between the sexes. However, this does not exclude the undertaking of actions or programmes addressed exclusively at women in contexts where it has proven difficult to apply them.

Enabling a woman to become involved in a conservation project will provide her with income, and require that she spend time outside of her home. This can generate conflicts in her family, and be a reason to increase her domestic chores. It is therefore important that actions for the prevention and reduction of conflicts related to change must be scheduled at the same time as participa-

tory and capacity building activities. Actions can be organised such as workshops, meetings and awareness-raising campaigns on domestic violence, health, the rights of women and men, children's education, and the fair distribution of the domestic chores. **Lorena Aguilar et al 2002, op. cit.: 142.**



2. The situation in West Africa: case studies in the Protected Areas





2.1. Brief overview of the situation of women in West Africa

In addition to the ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, West African countries have adopted and put into place many national and international tools for the promotion of equity (see Appendix 2). Unfortunately, sociocultural and/or religious preconceptions have slowed down their actual application in the field. In Senegal, for example, the actual exercise and application of these rights are subjected to many paradoxes.

The promotion of the Senegalese agreement on the elimination of all forms of discrimination aimed at women (CEDEF) does not prevent many violations against the women from being perpetrated (forced marriages, genital mutilation, conjugal violence, repudiation of women, etc.). Legal procedures are characterised by slow conflict reso-

lution and extremely high costs. The collaboration of legal and extra-legal stakeholders remains limited (doctors, police officers, religious leaders, judges, and lawyers).

FEDDAF/WILDAF, *The situation of women in Senegal*, www.wildaf-feddaf.org

There are many causes to explain these paradoxes:

- the lack of real political desire on the part of the States;
- the lack of knowledge that these texts exist, and the difficulties in implementing them;
- the weight of social constraints, traditions, customs, and religion;
- the lack of information from traditional authorities, who are still very often the informal judges in most conflicts having to do with gender issues;

- the lack of sensitivity of the legal and extra-legal actors to the problems facing women;
- the high rate of female illiteracy, the lack of solidarity between the women in defending their rights, and the absence of family planning;
- the difficult access to legal institutions, the lack of knowledge and complexity of legal procedures, the slowness of the judicial machine for conflict resolution, the high cost of legal fees, the difficulties involved in interpreting legal texts for people who are not legal specialists;
- the gaps in the law or the lack of emphasis in the penal codes placed on specific violations of the women's rights, such as sexual harassment, forced marriage, genital mutilation, the banishment of a widow from the family of her ex-husband, conjugal rape, conjugal violence, the banishment of a woman or daughter who refuse a forced marriage;
- the lack of effectiveness of repressive measures on the guilty parties, which contributes to the perpetuation of certain violations, thereby reinforcing the feeling of a lack of protection among the victims;
- social exclusion for witchcraft, the father's refusal of paternity, and the refusal to fulfil family obligations;
- the fiscal pressure that weighs more and more on women;
- masculine privileges in terms of land access, especially access to good land.



In terms of politics, women are greatly under represented in decision-making bodies. Much effort still needs to be made in terms of political activism and the involvement of women in the political decision-making process. However, apart from Guinea Bissau, throughout West Africa the percentage of women in the population is slightly greater than that of men.

The involvement and participation of women in politics is running up against obstacles, such as the fact that there is no obligation for political parties to place women in electable positions, the rejection of individual candidatures, the lack of political training and financial support for female candidates, the absence of reliable criteria for being named to certain decision-making positions, and the low budget and unequal distribution of the resources allocated to promoting women. Countries like Senegal and Burkina Faso have set objectives in terms of female candidatures; however, it has proven difficult to apply them.

| National governance in Benin ³ in 2007 | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| | Total | M | F |
| % population | | 48% | 52% |
| MPs | 82 | 93,9% | 6,1% |
| Ministers | 23 | 78,3% | 21,7% |
| City councillors | 1152 | 95,9% | 4,1% |

Source: Government of the Republic of Benin (01/07) and FEDDAF (08/07)

| National governance in Burkina Faso in 2007 | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| | Total | M | F |
| % population | | 49% | 51% |
| Deputies | 111 | 88,3% | 11,7% |
| MPs | 32 | 90,6% | 9,4% |
| Pres. Judicial Insti. | 4 | 75% | 25% |
| Town mayors | 49 | 97,6% | 2,4% |
| City councillors | 1902 | 88% | 12% |

Source : Government of Burkina Faso, 2007

| National governance in Guinea in 2007 | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Total | M | F |
| % population | | 50% | 50% |
| MPs | 114 | 83,3% | 16,7% |
| Ministers | 19 | 84,2% | 15,8% |
| Ambassadors | 22 | 95,4% | 4,6% |
| Sec. General of the Ministries | 22 | 100% | 0% |
| Town mayors | 38 | 92,1% | 7,9% |
| Leaders of political parties | 46 | 97,8% | 2,2% |

Source: Government of the Republic of Guinea, 2007

| Governance in Guinea-Bissau in 2007 | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Total | M | F |
| % population | | 56% | 44% |
| MPs | 100 | 87% | 13% |
| Ministers | 21 | 76,2% | 24,8% |
| Secretaries of state | 9 | 100% | 0% |

Source: Government of Guinea-Bissau/
African Press Agency, April 2007.
www.apanews.net

³ : The President of Benin's Constitutional Court is a woman, as is the case for the President of the High Court of Justice.

| National governance in Mali in 2007 | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Total | M | F |
| % population | | 48% | 52% |
| Deputies | 151 | 97,3% | 2,7% |
| Ministers | 29 | 86,2% | 13,8% |
| Ambassadors | 22 | 83,4% | 13,6% |
| Constitutional court | 9 | 66,7% | 33,3% |
| Town mayors | 701 | 98,4% | 1,6% |
| City councillors | 8415 | 96,7% | 3,3% |
| Economic and social council | 47 | 93,6% | 6,4% |
| High commissioners | 9 | 100% | 0% |
| Prefects | 56 | 100% | 0% |

Source: Government of Mali, 2007

| Governance in Senegal in 2007 | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Total | M | F |
| % population | | 48% | 52% |
| National Assembly | 150 | 87,3% | 12,7% |
| Office of the NA | 16 | 81,2% | 18,8% |
| Ministers | 35 | 71,4% | 28,6% |
| Regional, municipal, or rural Councillors | 14 352 | 88,1% | 11,9% |
| National council for social dialogue | 39 | 94,9% | 5,1% |

Source: Government of Senegal, 2007

| National governance in Mauritania in 2007 | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Total | M | F |
| % population | | 48% | 52% |
| Parliament | 120 | 95% | 5% |
| Ministers | 24 | 91,7% | 8,3% |
| Delegated Ministers | 6 | 83,3% | 16,7% |
| Managers in the civil service sector | | 93% | 7% |
| City councillors | 3333 | 99,7% | 0,3% |
| Leaders of political parties | 26 | 96,1% | 3,9% |

Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, April 2007

While they remain inadequate, given the magnitude of the issue, praiseworthy efforts have been made in most of the countries in the subregion with respect to:

- mandatory and free education for girls up to the age of 14, and the granting of scholarships to young girls;
- the granting of social rights to women;
- equal pay;
- raising awareness on the question of equity;

- the setting up of national strategies for the promotion of women and girls;
- the active involvement of certain States in the cross-disciplinary promotion of women's rights issues;
- the creation of ministries for women and children;
- the promotion of networks that lobby for women's rights;
- the progressive increase in the number of women in government positions;
- the training of national female executives who represent the administration and the civil society;
- the setting up of follow-up groups and multi-sectoral "gender" committees.

However, these positive initiatives still remain confined to only the urban zones and are insufficiently promoted in rural zones, precisely where most of the protected areas are located. It is therefore obviously not the laws that are lacking throughout the entire subregion, but rather a lack of enforcement. Putting the laws into practice is blocked by mentalities that are still dominated by age-old traditions, which are often discriminatory. Promoting equity between the sexes can thus be seen as a real challenge for West African societies: an active campaign is required to put into place a real process for changing mentalities. The progressive institution of equity in all economic and social sectors will enable women and groups suffering from discrimination to fully participate in the process of development, and to benefit from its effects.

Much work remains to be done. However, conservation can be an innovative framework in which to promote this concept. The actions developed could then serve as examples for other sectors.

2.2. Case study in several Protected Areas in West Africa

2.2.1 A diagnosis of the situation made during the Dakar workshop in May 2007

The array of protected areas in West Africa reflects extremely variable situations, ranging from conventional protected areas (subsidised and managed by committees with or without involvement of local communities), to community-based areas (managed directly by the local populations) and sacred forests, and include areas managed only by the State with no concertation. Certain protected areas only exist on paper: no conservation actions have been undertaken since their creation.

Beyond this diversity, it must be recognised that the design and management strategies of these structures often been set up on inequitable basis between the sexes.

In terms of participation, equity was not generally taken into consideration in the set up of the original projects. The participation of the local populations in the concertation and creation processes was low, or even nonexistent, and in some cases, certain social groups were not consulted. There is almost no commitment by the administrations with respect to equity. Therefore, an equity strategy for all of the protected areas is sorely missing.

In certain Protected Areas, “taking account of equity” is expressed by very precise actions (activities that generate income) aimed at the women and/or youngsters within the projects. The women use almost all of the income generated by these activities to cover the needs of their family, whereas the men spend this money essentially for their own needs. Unfortunately, most of these actions remain rooted in traditional models for dividing up chores.



Women remain in marginal positions (passive monitoring, and collection and restitution of information) in the programmes for the conservation and sustainable management of resources. They are not involved in either decision making, or in processing information concerning the species, the adoption of sanctions, and biological and environmental conditions, etc. The community does not recognise their roles as producers, users, and conservers of natural resources.

Apart from a few particular cases, such as the Popenguine reserve in Senegal, the training programmes confine the women to their traditional roles (cooking, arts and crafts, small shops, and repairing the sails of pirogues), instead of involving them in more technical actions, such as the management of natural resources and the use of new tools.

The participation of women in meetings and awareness raising actions is insufficient and sometimes totally nonexistent. On the one hand, because of the heavy workload in terms of reproductive and community chores, and on the other hand, because of the scheduling of concertation meetings, which does not take account of their time constraints.

In the Protected Areas, in which efforts are being made for shared governance, equal involvement of and responsibilities for men and women are still far from being attained. Illiteracy is still too high among women, and it is an obstacle and at the same time a pretext, which limits their involvement in Protected Areas management processes. The weight of sociocultural and religious traditions limits their access to decision-making power, and influences management practices considerably. However, in certain cases, when they are given the chance to speak, the remarkable contribution of women in decision-making bodies becomes apparent.



2.2.2 Case studies in several Protected Areas in the subregion

In the Banc d'Arguin National Park (PNBA) in Mauritania

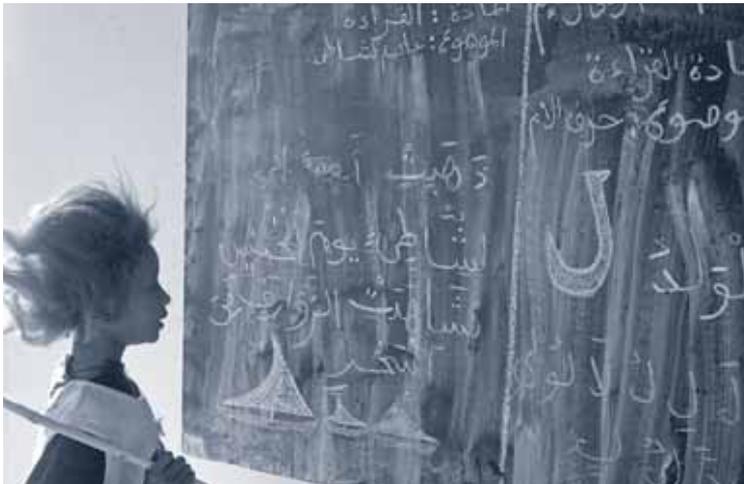
The women and men in Teichott have noticed a significant increase in miscarriages. In their opinion, this is due to “cold desert weather”. Since the Teichott health centre is dilapidated and has no health staff, the sick must be evacuated to the village of Mamghar, 55 km away, which requires either renting a vehicle to drive on a path that crosses sand dunes, or transportation in a *lanche* (a traditional Imraguen fishing boat), which requires the sick person to walk or ride a camel the last 5 km. This explains why, in most cases, woman wait for the natural process of spontaneous abortion to follow its course.



According to Farida Habib, an Imraguen of the NGO Blue Sea (Mer bleu): *“The cause for the increase in miscarriages is not the cold, but a problem of personal hygiene. The lack of water; but also and especially the absence of good hygiene and promiscuity are responsible for many infections. The women do not consult a doctor; and do not speak about this because of their sense of propriety. They are neither used to nor convinced of the importance of consulting a specialist. In most of the villages there are neither toilets nor bathrooms. They do everything in the sand and use twigs to wipe themselves. From November to February, during the cold winter months, the village residents take very few baths. Since the water is not heated, they must brace themselves to wash outside the tent in the evening in cold and windy conditions. Unlike the women, the fishermen wash themselves at least once a day in seawater”.* In addition, the lack of drinking water exposes the entire population to infections and diarrhoea.

Imraguen fishermen spend very little money to pay for the needs of their families: Most of the fishermen take out loans with the pretext of buying a fishing boat or sails. However, they spend a great deal of it in fact for their wedding or to buy themselves magnificent boubous embroidered in Bazin, which cost between 100 and 200 euros a piece. After having sold their fish, most of the money they make goes up in smoke on sensual pleasures in Nouakchott. The amount they spend to meet the food needs of their families (rice and fish) is very small, even if it is their duty as a Muslim. Consequently, the expenses for education, health, and clothing fall on the women's shoulders.

Schooling of Imraguen children in the village of Teichott stops after primary school, around the age of twelve: There is no secondary educational establishment nearby, and children who would like to continue their studies must go all the way to Nouakchott. This imposes many constraints upon the family: the mother's lack of financial means to meet the needs of the child and logistical and family-related difficulties. In general, the price to be paid is considered too high and the schooling not sufficiently important. So the children stay in the village: the boys become fishermen like their fathers, and the girls, married between the ages of 13 and 15, reproduce the cycle of life of their mothers by perpetuating the tradition of fish processing.



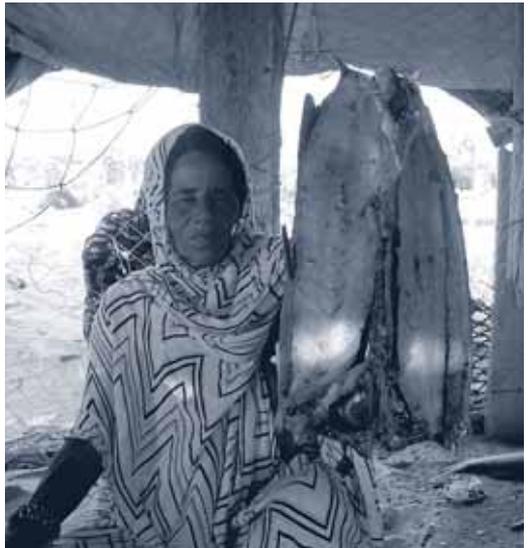
Women's production is limited by the lack of electricity: During the high season of mullet fishing, the women are forced to limit their hours of work due to the lack of electricity. When the fishermen bring in the fish around noon, the high temperature does not allow the women to process it. The lack of electricity also prevents them from working after nightfall.

Therefore, they can only work three hours per day, which means that the products purchased have probably deteriorated.

Fortunately, there have been successful initiatives: Several initiatives aiming to improve women's income, such as repayable micro-credits put in place by the IUCN/the Netherlands/FIBA, have achieved their objective. The women have improved upon age-old fish processing traditions, mainly with the introduction of new techniques for enhancing the value of and preserving mullet-based products: the famous Poutargue Imraguen "bel"⁴, a high added value product sold for a very good price when exported to France and Italy; the flesh of the yellow mullet, called "tishtar", cut into strips, dried, and served as an

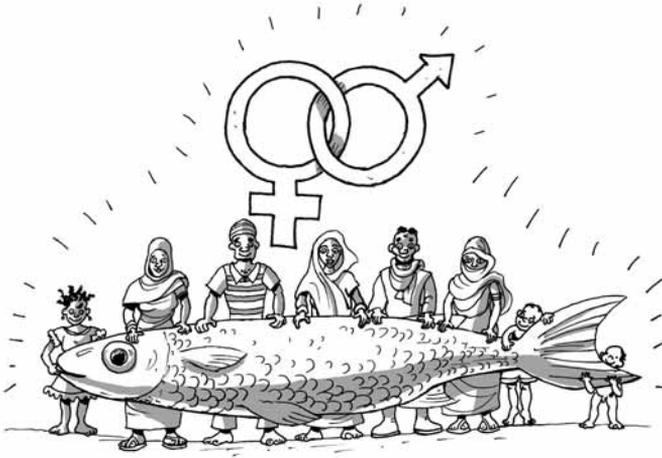
⁴ : Mullet eggs processed in a specific way and dried only in the cool early morning breeze during the winter months.

appetizer; not to forget the bones of mullet, used as fuel to extract the oil from the mullet heads, which is served with Tichtar (dried flesh) dishes. The Imraguen women also make the sails of lanches, weave rugs, and sew and put up the tents they rent to tourists, visitors or their neighbours for festive ceremonies.



The women use their income to grant loans to the men: Thanks to the profits they make, they make loans to their husbands and the other men of the community to buy new fishing nets or change the sails on the lanches. They hope to earn more money to be able to buy a lanche for their husbands, and in this way guarantee themselves a personal source of fish.

In the Bamboung Protected Marine Area in Senegal



Men, women, and children handle and process the fish: Traditionally, men and women work together to gather oysters and other shellfish. Together, they dry the shellfish and farm them sustainably by sorting them by size. This activity provides considerable income for these populations, which are wedged in between the sea and the protected forest. In addition, the men fish and sell their catch to the women who process it. Certain men even help their

wives scale the fish before drying it. Finally, women and men are working together on a mangrove reforestation project.



Women are helped by men in projects to farm oysters on ropes: The women from the village of Soukouta were given oyster-farming training in order to protect and select the species, but as they have not learned to drive the motorised pirogues, they must be accompanied by a man in the village.



Women's working conditions have been improved: The WFP (the United Nations World Food Programme) has provided a complete line for transforming and processing fish (drying racks, wash basins, gloves and knives, a room for meetings and literacy programmes) to the women of Soukouta, where the protected marine area's head office is located. The IUCN has created a micro-credit project for the women, which has helped them consolidate the local associative movements. This project has strengthened the economic capacities of the women in the 14 outlying villages.



Women grant loans irrespective of sex: Out of their concern to help their husbands, women granted them loans from the profits of their own micro-credits. Since the men did not pay them back, the women submitted the case to the traditional authorities who condemned the guilty parties. As a result, incidents of this kind have decreased. Today, there is a local union of the Community Savings and Loans Groups (GEC) with 314 people of which 187 are women. With the profits from the savings and loans, the GEC built offices in 2006, and trained and recruited two women employees to do the accounting for the funds. The GEC has planned to finance scholarships for some men and women students going abroad, improve the living conditions, organise pilgrimages to the Mecca, and buy a safe to protect the money before it is deposited in a mutual micro-credit bank.

The women would like to diversify their work by developing market gardening activities and learning the technique for making batik tissue for which they were given training. According to the leaders of villages, the women in the Bamboung Marine Protected Area have land rights, and are free to create their vegetable gardens.

Women take care of the day-care nursery to lighten the workload of their neighbours: After a conflict with an NGO from which they were receiving support, the women in the Bamboung Marine Protected Area took over the children's day nursery in Toubacouta, in order to lighten the workload of the women who process fish products. The 8 women teachers and the cook, members of women's associations, are all volunteers, and have made a compromise to help the community. They manage 4 classes 36 students, 2 to 6 years old, teaching them to read, write, and giving them courses in civic education and school life. The school does not have tap water, and they buy jars of water every morning. One thousand francs per year per person is hardly enough to give the children a decent breakfast. In January 2007, two classrooms burned, and since then the families have been struggling to collect the necessary funds to rebuild them. They have no support from either the national authorities, or the private promoters, and can continue operations thanks to the good will of certain people. The day-care nursery is far away, and every day the school kids must walk 1.3 km from Soukouta, where most of the kids and women teachers live, to Toubacouta.



A male and a female technician run the FM radio station: Thanks to a UNESCO/IUCN project, the village of Soukouta has an FM radio station that broadcasts to 4 rural communities within a 75 km radius. Ms. Fatou Diame and Mr Babacar, respectively head operator and assistant operator, are the two hosts of this radio station, which broadcasts music and programmes in Mandingue on education and health, ICTs, agriculture, livestock breeding, conservation, and sustainable management of the environment.

Girls and boys work together in the tourist camp: Together, they do the cooking, take care of the hotel service, and welcome tourists to the camp.

However, the women remain in a role of the passive monitoring of the Marine Protected Area: In terms of the actual management of the Marine Protected Area, women are only involved in passive monitoring activities. They use their mobile telephones to call the Marine Protected Area managers from the beach to advise them when there are illegal fishermen in forbidden zones. In addition, they refuse to buy fish and shellfish that are smaller than the legal size, thus obliging the fishermen to throw back into the sea their catch.

On the other hand, we noticed that they are not involved in the active monitoring of the Marine Protected Area and the marine species, because they have not been trained to do this. In addition, they do not participate in the training sessions on how to drive the motorised pirogues, whereas they admit that they have the courage and ability.

In Bonfi and Boulbiny in Guinea

Fish smokers have a significant impact on wood resources: The men and women fish smokers in Bonfi and Boulbiny do not live in a Marine Protected Area; however, their age-old activity transforms this group into a symbol of the negative impact of the entire Guinean society on wood resources. These communities smoke fish for their own use, but also and especially for merchants who export smoked fish to Europe, Africa, and the United States.

The Bonfi Cooperative of women fish smokers (COFUB) has 48 members (40 women and 8 men), who live in the fishermen's neighbourhood near the Bonfi port. This group has received much aid and many loans from NGOs and development agencies to improve their installations and the conditions for processing their products, and also to reduce the amount of wood used for the smoking.

Unlike the women from Bonfi, the 85 women in the two cooperatives in Boulbiny only use wood for fuel, and buy it by truckloads from resellers. According to Mr Kourouma Ben Fabely, a civil servant from the Ministry of Fisheries in charge of supervising, training and promotion of smoking processes: *“Each cooperative can smoke up to 35 tons of fish during the months of high season and use four times this amount in wood”*.





According to the heads of the Ministries of the Environment, Fisheries, and Women's condition, more than 90% of Guinean households depend on woody resources for domestic fuel, in the form of wood or coal. The women package and sell the coal while the men cut the trees. In the past, the wood came from the mangrove and the forests of Conakry. Today, the forests have been destroyed, and loggers are deforesting the islands near the capital.

According to Mrs Mariama Sylla, Director of the women's condition in the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Children:

"Due to their socio-economic lifestyle, Guinean women contribute decisively to the destruction of their environment. Every day, they cut the wood of the roots of mangrove trees to sell it, thus destroying the very environment on which they depend. However, they have not been given the means to manage and protect this environment nor to participate in restoring it. Zones are protec-

ted but without explaining the importance of these actions to the women. The women are neither trained on reforestation techniques, nor made aware of how to protect the environment. No alternative measures or mentoring are proposed. That is why the mangrove trees near Conakry continue to disappear. The women are not aware that the disappearance of the wood may cause the end of their subsistence activities. Unfortunately, they have no other alternatives".

Ecological ovens to fight against deforestation: An exchange trip to Ghana allowed the women in the COFUB to learn how to build "Chorkor" ovens, which, contrary to traditional "Bandaa" ovens, use very little or even



no wood at all. These ecological ovens are made of cooked clay bricks, which retain the heat much longer than the ovens made out of cinder blocks. The Chorkor ovens use the sawdust that the women buy in a joinery for much less than wood. The ashes that fall back into the oven are used to coat the inner walls so as to conserve the heat. During the mango season, the women use the dried pits as fuel, and they also use peanut and coconut shells, as well as fish guts and bones.

Thanks to these ecological ovens, they can take literacy classes: The use of these new types of fuel gives them much more free time, because they are not obliged to stoke the fire. They are no longer obliged to remain close to the oven, and admit that they are less dehydrated. They are given practical literacy classes, on site, on how to manage the profits; they receive micro-credits and are supported during their negotiations with the banks. Product hygiene has been improved thanks to a well that was dug for them: disinfected water permits clean processing.

In the Marine Protected Area of the Loos Islands in Guinea

The extremely dynamic woman conservation officer did not have the means to put into practice a management policy for the Protected Area's resources. Since the creation of Loos Islands⁵ Protected Area in 1992, no actions have been taken either in the domain of conservation or in the sustainable development of the local populations. It has only been since the nomination in 2006 of Mrs Ousmane Hawa Diallo to the position of conservation officer that the local populations have been informed that they are abusively exploiting a National Protected Area. Only the conservation officer goes out of her way to raise awareness among the populations concerning waste collection, hygiene and public health, and to arouse an environmental consciousness.

The Loos Islands Protected Area does not yet have either a management plan or a budget. According to the traditional authorities, it is the policy of survival of the fittest that dominates the exploitation of resources: Asian fishing boats, which have a licence in the name of a fishing company that belongs to a close relative of the president of the Republic, are the masters of the sea. Conflicts between the local populations and these fishing boats have created a tense situation, leading to accidents, which may or may not be intentional, that killed 4 fishermen.



However, we must remember that these populations are ready to become totally involved in the management of the Protected Area, and respect the conservation officer.

The Popenguine Natural Reserve (Senegal)

A successful experience and new challenges to be met: In Senegal, the situation of the women in the Natural Reserve of Popenguine (RNP), located 70 km south-east of Dakar in the province of Thiès, is unique in the subregion. This town, in which there are many hotels, has become touristic, and every year welcomes thousands of Catholic pilgrims from Senegal and neighbouring countries. It is also in Popenguine that the President of the Republic had his vacation home built.

⁵ : The Loos Islands are made up of three islands: Cabri islande (where the green marine turtles lay their eggs), Corail island (former religious sanctuary, famous for the sacrifices and rites made for the gods and protective ancestors), and Blanche island. In addition, marine birds lay eggs on these three islands, which are also resting areas for them.

Awareness and creation of the reserve by Presidential decree: In 1996, the management of this reserve⁶ was assigned exclusively to 116 women⁷ from the Popenguine Women's Group for the Protection of Nature. These women had become aware of the deterioration of their environment, and started reforestation and lagoon revalorisation operations. Well before the creation of the Popenguine Natural Reserve, the dynamism of these women had given impetus to the current Senegalese law on decentralisation and the transfer of skills to the local authorities, which was signed by the current President. Since then, the women have autonomously managed the reserve and the income they generate. They benefit from the advice and supervision of a team of conservation officers who live at the tourist camp.

Thanks to the support of many partners, both national and international, they have been trained in the field of conservation (reforestation, the fight against brush fires and erosion, environmental education, ornithology, the revalorisation and restoration of natural marine areas, training in MARP accelerated participative research methods) and sustainable development (hotel management, water and health, literacy, market gardening techniques, financial management and micro-credits, governance, hygiene and public health, recycling and garbage management).

Many ideas and activities that generate revenues: In addition to the tourist camp, the women have developed many activities that generate revenues. Grain mills, the sale of necklaces in beads made of newspaper, wrapping paper, and scraps of cloth salvaged from tailors, dying cloth and the sale of clothes, the sale of market garden products and charcoal, paid guided visits of the RNP, processing fish products, renting tents, mats, and large pots for cooking for baptisms and marriages, consultations to teach about their experiences, seed



⁶ : Partly land, a 1009 ha protected forest, and partly sea, 0.5 marine miles.

⁷ : Today, there are 110 left, because 6 of them have died.

bank, etc. These activities provide them with significant income of which 50% are invested in the management of the tourist camp, 30% in wages, and 20% in social action and local development (funding vaccination campaigns, supplying the hospitals and dispensaries with drugs, donations of school materials for the most destitute families, organising a competition that gives an award to the cleanest neighbourhood in the village, etc.). They have received many prizes, including the Grand Prize from the President of Senegal.

The abundance has, however, created conflicts of interest: jealousies and problems of power, and strong tensions with the 8 neighbouring villages and the 9 Cooperatives. Mr Moussa Diatta, the deputy conservation officer also highlighted that: *“The Group is very closed. The members don't trust anyone, and have a hard time giving responsibility to others, even to the young volunteers who are very dynamic. They had been prepared for everything except to share. No volunteer earns a salary or is a member of the Group. No new members have been admitted since the creation of the Group about 20 years ago. In terms of business, they are really lacking confidence in their own capacities, and remain attached to traditional models. In spite of the President's insistence, they still do not have bank accounts, which has been creating problems because they have been receiving international funding from many sources: these funds must transit by another institution. They do not trust the banks and deposit their income in a mutual micro-credit bank, which does not have the capacity to manage such large amounts of money. This obliges them to keep some of the money at home. In 2006, their income was between 2.5 and 3 million FCFA.⁸ The demand for the tourist camp is overwhelming; it is attractive because it is run by women at a competitive rate. Although there is an additional unoccupied field available, they do not dare increase the number of accommodations because they would have to take out a loan. Yet without a bank account, no bank will trust them, despite their significant income and prestige. In terms of governance, they share the management of the RNP very little with the 8 nearby villages, which has been creating conflicts. They have been accused of creating a monopoly. The same is true for the activities generating income and profits: they could take turns for the touristic visits of the RNP, leaving from each of the villages in turn. They refuse to self-evaluate the work already done, and insist on working without an action plan”.*

According to Dr. Paul Ndiaye, from the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, one of the experts who accompanied the women from Popenguine: *“One of the objectives of creating the RNP was to reproduce the experience in another place. However, it has been impossible to capitalise on their experience, because the group is too closed, too sealed off from the world. The national management of the parks has no power over these women. Since it was created, only a single audit has been done to evaluate how the group functions, but it was not disseminated widely enough”.* At this stage, it would be judicious to organise a seminar for the purpose of self-evaluation, in order to draft a schedule of activities and define a vision for the future.

⁸ : 1Euro = 655 FCFA

3. Propositions for a real equity-based approach in West Africa and elsewhere





These practical propositions are at three levels of intervention:

- at the political and institutional level
- at the level of the governance of Protected Areas
- at stakeholder level

Perseverance and awareness-raising in the mentoring of the process remain, at every level, the fundamental tools for the promotion and integration of equity in protected areas.

3.1 At the political and institutional level

3.1.1 Achieve a very high level politico-institutional compromise

Now that the equity process is underway, and has been positively received both by the Protected Areas and Marine Protected Areas stakeholders and a group of political representatives, actions must be set in motion for reaching a compromise with the political and institutional governing bodies in each country of the sub-region. A process was begun in Cotonou on 17 April 2008 under the patronage of Mrs Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, the Minister of the Environment and Nature Protection of Benin, which resulted in the Cotonou Declaration (see Appendix 1).

This declaration was inspired by the process which took place in Latin America between 1998 and 2000. The presidents and the environment ministers of six countries (Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala) effectively changed the destiny of each of their countries by means of political declarations for the promotion and integration of equity between the sexes, together with legal texts aimed at the incorporation of equity into the Law. They thus promoted democracy, sustainable development and the participation of all citizens in the construction of an equitable future. The legal frameworks and management laws of the Protected Areas have been revised in favour of equity.

The process has not been easy, but it has been greatly facilitated by the political commitment of the government.

On 14 October 1998, the President of the Republic and the Minister of the Environment of Costa Rica published a decree incorporating the equity approach in all ministry activities, after having considered their country's international conventions for the promotion of equity and the protection and sustainable management of the environ-

ment. They also confirmed approval of the Political Declaration of equity between the sexes by a constitutional decree.

Lorena Aguilar et al, 1999: "The Unavoidable Current: Gender Policies in Mesoamerica's Environmental Sector. San José de Costa Rica, Absoluto, S.A.47.

Similar processes could be undertaken in all of the countries of West Africa.

3.1.2 Raise awareness and lobby political authorities in the environmental sector concerning the issue of equity

Given the general lack of awareness concerning equity, particularly in Protected Areas, the prerequisite for any action is to provide the political authorities with awareness-raising and popularisation tools on the theme of equity (workshops, conceptual tools, pamphlets, films, etc.). It is also essential to be involved in the diffusion of commitments undertaken by governments at the international level. These messages must be sent on to all the organisations supporting community development in the environmental sector. Finally, governments must be lobbied so that they honour their commitments. The long-term objective is to modify the laws governing protected areas to make them more equitable.



3.1.3 Mobilise funding for actions in favour of equity

It is also essential to mobilise funding institutions and financial backers to endorse and support the process of integrating and promoting equity between the sexes in the protected areas of the sub-region.

Utilisation of the environmental services payment to promote equity: In 2001, the government of Costa Rica promoted a policy of compensation for carbon fixation with certain developed countries. The money collected for these environmental services was transferred to local communities on the basis of the surface area of the forests

conserved, planted or recovered. The environment minister has now decided that some of these funds will be allocated to the promotion of equity within the communities receiving them.

Rosario Zuñiga, 2001 in Lorena Aguilar, Itzá Castañeda, Hilda Salazar, 2002: 138

3.1.4 Ensure the monitoring and institutional mentoring of the process

It is also necessary to facilitate the training and/or capacity building of resource people. This could take the form of a group of regional experts working with the institutions of the sub-region and various stakeholders such as management committees. However, other options could also be envisaged.

3.1.5 Provide assistance to management structures during the creation of new Protectes Areas

Organisations committed to equity between the sexes and with a global vision of the Protected Marine Areas - Protected Areas creation process need to be able to help with the preparation up of management plans, not only applying an equity approach but also resolving governance problems, and to be available to support the process at least 18 months into implementation, helping the governing structure in its short, medium, and long term planning.



3.2 At the level of the governance of Protected Areas

3.2.1 Carry out participative diagnoses oriented towards equity between the sexes in Protected Areas

A participative diagnosis oriented towards equity between the sexes is a systematic process intended to recognise a specific situation and understand the reasons for its existence. This knowledge is compiled on the basis of the opinions of all of the people concerned. The starting point for the diagnosis is the principle that the people who manage protected areas are not a homogenous group: women and men have different needs and perceptions according to their gender, age, and social position. The process also emphasises the power relations within the community. It is made up of six fundamental elements:

- **Analysis of the situation and the local context:** the aim of this analysis, carried out prior to work in the field, is to gather productive, sociodemographic, politico-institutional (poverty, illiteracy, health), sanitary, cultural, and environmental information, broken down as much as possible according to gender.
- **Sexual division of work:** the division of work varies enormously over time and from one society to another in function of constant transformations of the household. The aim, as far as possible is to answer the following questions: Who does what? Who participates in the capture, hunting, collection or fishing of products, and in which ways? Who participates in the processing of these products and how? Who participates in their commercialisation and how? How are local populations involved in the production process? How much time does each person spend on these activities? How far away are their places of work? Do these activities generate an income? Do the women control the activities and the income from them? Are women or men culturally excluded from certain of these activities?
- **Use, access, and control of resources and distribution of costs and profits:** Women and men do not use natural resources in the same way. Use can vary in function of age, social class, and culture. How do the various stakeholders act on the environment? Who controls the resources? Who decides how they are used? Who benefits from the use of these resources and how? Are there conflicts concerning the use of natural resources? Do women have access to credit? Who does the work (girls, boys, parents, employees or others)? What are the land access rights?
- **Degradation of the environment and impact according to gender:** The degradation of natural resources such as a reduction in soil fertility of other resources (water, firewood, etc.) often leads to an increased workload for women. Moreover, in such a situation, the women of the household often sacrifice a part of their share to the men. What are the main environmental problems in the work zone? Does the degradation of the environment affect women and men differently? Do the populations living in the Protected Areas observe a reduction in resources? If so, which ones, and what could be the causes?
- **Cultural or traditional conceptions:** Are there traditional standard practices and legislation concerning the use and conservation of natural resources? If so, do they

affect gender relations? Do they limit possibilities of improving the sustainable and equitable management of resources? To what extent do communities depend on those resources for social customs and cultural or religious practices?

- **Level of participation:** How are women and men involved in decision-making and planning for the family and community? In which organisations do women participate and at what level? Are women and men generally well informed about their rights, particularly access to and utilisation of resources? Are there social networks of mutual aid that consolidate the community? How do women and men participate in these networks? What are their roles?



3.2.2 Assist in the drawing up of management plans incorporating an equity approach

Many Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas of the sub-region have not yet drawn up management plans. Their upcoming production is an opportunity for incorporating the equity issue. For protected areas that have already produced a management plan, such as the Banc d'Arguin National Park, it is perfectly possible to revise the plan and conservation projects so as to incorporate the equity approach, even if it was not initially included. Any action carried out for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is a continually revised process. The determining element is therefore the desire of the management teams to promote equity.

In 1999, as part of the regional process in Central America promoted by the IUCN, the Mexican Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources signed a political declaration committing it to the promotion of the equity approach in environmental policies. This document was taken up by a large number of NGOs so as to ensure that similar commitments could be undertaken by other regions. The declaration, signed by the wife of

the Governor of the State of Tabasco, served as a framework for the Director of the Marais de Centla Protected Area to agree to set up a workshop in order to revise its management plan.

Lorena Aguilar, Itzá Castañeda, Hilda Salazar et al, 2002: "En búsqueda del genero perdido", San José, UICN, Absoluta P. 57.

A management plan incorporating the equity approach starts from the principle that the perspective of social equity runs through all phases of the project, from the selection of a Protected Area to monitoring and evaluation. It is based on the following points:

- **Identification of the participants:** The "social map" of the interest groups must be clearly identified and must take into consideration the fact that people do not all have the same capabilities. It needs to clearly distinguish between the different groups, be representative, ensure that women participate, and take into account the times at which women do reproductive activities.
- **Objectives:** The overall objective of the Protected Area should be to achieve a balance between ecological interests and sustainable development. The specific objectives concerning equity need to identify the changes in the relations between men and women that the project will cause, define the conditions for women's capacity building, fight against poverty and for economic autonomy, and promote and strengthen the participation of women and marginalised groups.
- **Zoning of the Protected Area:** The zoning criteria need to take into account the use of resources according to sex, age, and economic group. Sanctions and conditions of use need to be clearly identified, and alternative types of use for women must be taken into consideration. Not considering the needs and interests of women and men can lead to dramatic situations.

India's Forest Protection Resolution, adopted by 15 States as part of the "Joint Forest Management" programme, established severe sanctions (public flagellation) for anyone who gathered wood in the PA. 90% of the people sanctioned were women because on

average they would have had to walk 10 km further to gather wood in unrestricted access areas.

Sarin, 1995 in Lorena Aguilar et al, op. cit.: 129.

- **The conceptual framework:** It must emphasise the principles used to draw up the management plan, such as sustainability, equity, and participation so that people who were not involved in the designing of the document can nonetheless understand its founding principles.

- **Definition of programme and sub-programme:** The programmes need to incorporate the technical, methodological, administrative, and operational aspects, as well as the conditions required for executing the equity management plan. They must define the responsibilities and resources of all the personnel, identify the activities guaranteeing the recognition and participation of women, and use various gender analysis techniques and methodologies (indicators, data broken down according to gender, gender specialists, capacity building of personnel, and the provision and/or utilisation of technologies, working times and messages appropriate to women).



- **Resources and time planning:** There need to be sufficient human and financial resources to carry out the entire process. It is preferable to have mixed personnel, draw up an equitable recruitment policy, set up a continuous capacity building process, and provide for a budget to promote equity and sufficient resources for all of the activities.

By emphasising social equity while maintaining the conservation objectives of the Protected Areas, this approach helps to balance the interests of people, groups and local communities. It is very important of perform an survey of the initial situation using measurable equity indicators so as to be able to assess the progress accomplished, compare results, and measure the impact of the policies, programmes, and projects implemented.

3.2.3 Promote truly participative governance of Protected Areas - Marine Protected Areas

In West Africa, greater participation of local communities in the management of Protected Areas appears to be a prerequisite for any action. Moving towards truly participative governance presupposes carrying out the following steps:

- Generate trust between local communities and the management structures of the Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas.
- Ensure that management committees are made up of groups that are really interested in and committed to the sustainable management of Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas, and are aware of the interdependence of the various structures with their specific development: women's and young people's groups, NGOs, local radio stations, local political authorities, and prominent citizens in or from the region such as members of parliament, ministers, or university professors, in short all those who could work for the promotion of the Protected Area at various levels.
- Plan and progressively set up quotas regarding the representation of each party involved.
- Assess to what extent all the people involved in the management of the Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas draw equitable benefits from it, in order to plan for and deal with tensions and jealousies. For example, in Bamboung and Popenguine, roads for visitor trails could connect the camp to other neighbouring villages. This would create jobs and thus strengthen the feeling of responsibility in the other villages, and encourage their active participation in the sustainable management of the organisation.
- Enable women to participate in the definition of aims and objectives for the zone and actively involve them in management decisions, using methods to raise their interest and encourage their involvement. Support the setting up of gender/equity councils in all Protected Areas (national/regional).
- Preserve women's rights in the management of Protected Areas.
- Ensure that newly created Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas learn from others' mistakes, particularly regarding the prevention of conflicts. This can be done by means of experience sharing seminars such as the one held in the Banc d'Arguin National Park in November 2007 on participative governance within the RAMAO network.



3.2.4 Set up internal equity policies in management structures

Equity is not just a concept to be applied in the field: any institution that wants to encourage the consideration of gender relations among its partners must also apply such a policy on an internal basis.

It is essential that all personnel acquire the professional skills concerning gender: a "gender coordinator" could be designated, but all members of the team need to be made responsible in order to approach the issue transversally and ensure that everyone is aware of the existing tools.

Equity must be taken into account in planning and budgeting, particularly for the strategic and annual plans. If this has not been done in advance, it will be necessary to attribute a new budget and re-organise the expenditure. The objective is to succeed in creating a working environment sensitive to gender equity.

3.3 At the level of the stakeholders

3.3.1 Training the stakeholders and giving them technical support

- **Train and involve the women, men, and children in non-traditional activities:** For example, in the Marine Protected Areas, the training sessions may focus on knowledge of and monitoring the avifauna, the techniques for capturing sick birds, or driving a motorised pirogue. In Bamboung, where driving a motorised pirogue is indispensable for harvesting oysters,⁹ an instructor must be assigned to the women; one who has the right practical educational skills corresponding to the women's levels and who would know how to make them more confident in themselves. In the Pendjari Park in Benin, two women control each of the entry gates.



⁹ : Up until now, to go to work they are dependent on a man who drives the pirogue. Having observed the technician attentively, one of them says she knows how to drive and six others say they can do it. But they admit that they do not dare, because they have not been given the technical training.

When asked if the men would accept that the women learn to drive a motorised pirogue, the village chief of Medina Sangako in the Bamboung Protected Marine Area answered: "The women are 'lionesses'. If

they have created a mutual micro-credit bank that works and helps all of us, what is it that they could not do to help build our region"?



- **Take advantage of the obvious enthusiasm of young people from both sexes to train them together to do these activities:** To accomplish this goal, it is important to create a feeling of confidence within the families, and ensure that the working conditions do not create too much promiscuity. In Bamboung, for example, a house could be built for the women conservation officers who would like to do active monitoring work at the surveyance tower in the Marine Protected Area.
- **Give French classes:** Except for the women from Popenguine, who have had literacy training in French, most of the women in the Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas in the subregion can neither read, nor write in French, which does not, however, take away from their dynamism. The many literacy programmes for the local languages (Serere, Wolof, Soussou, etc.), have given them the tools to communicate with those around them, but have also limited them. Today, the women are asking for French classes, in order to be able to communicate with the tourists, help in regional training seminars, read user's manuals equipment machines, and learn how to use a computer.
- **Organise concrete measures to compensate the disadvantaged groups:** In particular, what is needed is technical support to diversify the activities and sources of income: in certain Marine Protected Areas like Bamboung, the closure of areas for gathering food and shellfish has decreased the income of many women while increasing what the fishermen earn. Therefore, in Bamboung, mills could be installed, and the garden products could be processed into jams (watermelon, mango, guava) with an Marine Protected Area label and the sold in the ecotourism camp.
- **Ensure the conservation of the traditional knowledge of elderly people, in particular of the women** via studies and surveys, and include these people in the processes for



elaborating the management plan of the Protected Area. If the results are pertinent, involve these people in the biological monitoring activities in the Protected Area.

- **Improve the working conditions of the women:** In the Marine Protected Areas, for example, it is important to prevent accidents during the harvesting of fish products and to increase the efficiency: gloves, safety coveralls, hygienic structures for processing the fish products, electric generators for the -communities in the BANP must be used.
- **Make means available via micro-credits:** This can help valorise the women's knowledge and increase their income: in Bamboung, for example, the women have been trained in the technique for making Batik tissue, but they are looking for capital funds to be able to develop this activity.

3.3.2 Organise awareness-raising activities

- **Equity has many facets:** it also means raising awareness among the women, men, and children about basic personal hygiene, making the parents aware of the importance of education for the children, making the men aware of their responsibilities toward their families.

- **Provide the means and create programmes for improving the living conditions of the local populations**, in particular, of the women: access to water¹⁰ and drinking water, access to health care, the setting up of facilities to fight against bad personal hygiene (latrines and showers).
- **Raise awareness among the local populations about protecting the environment and managing it sustainably**: Create ecological awareness by informing them of the interdependence of men and women and the environment. In Guinea, for example, the women in Bonfi and Boulbiny must be made aware of their role in destroying the woody resources, and of the danger that the forests might disappear. They must be given the tools enabling them to change and be involved in the restoration and sustainable management of their environment.
- **Promote and support the actions of the existing community radio stations**: These radio stations have proven to be real tools for communicating and raising social awareness. They can be important vectors for raising awareness on the themes of equity, conservation, and sustainable development.

3.3.3 Participation

- **Take account of the level of understanding and assimilation of the different groups** in order to ensure their interest and motivation during the meetings of the committees on the management of the Protected Areas' future.
- **Create areas for exchanging between all of stakeholders.**
- **Set up structures for lightening the workload in terms of household tasks**: Create day-care nurseries and cafeterias for the children, equip the already existing day-care nurseries, install clothes washing places near the sources, mills, wells, etc., so that the women will have more time to be involved in the active management of the Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas.
- **Strengthen the groups of women** in terms of empowerment, etc.
- **Promote the integration of the girls and boys** and arouse their interest in the Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas through structures that create jobs. For example, the ice manufacturing factories in the Bamboing Marine Protected Area would not only create jobs for the young, they would also increase the income of those who process fish products (fresh products sell for a higher price, and they would not need to be processed by drying, which would give more free time to the women and children).

3.3.4 Capitalise on and inform others about positive experiences

- **Make the women in the Protected Areas-Marine Protected Areas more confident in themselves through exchanges about experiences and training seminars**: To that effect, the women from Popenguine should assume their roles as pioneers and get involved in activities that promote their action. They could train the communities on the

¹⁰ : For example, in the case of the BANP, analyse the possibility of setting up structures for capturing and channelling dew using nets, as is the case in a MPA in Cap Vert.

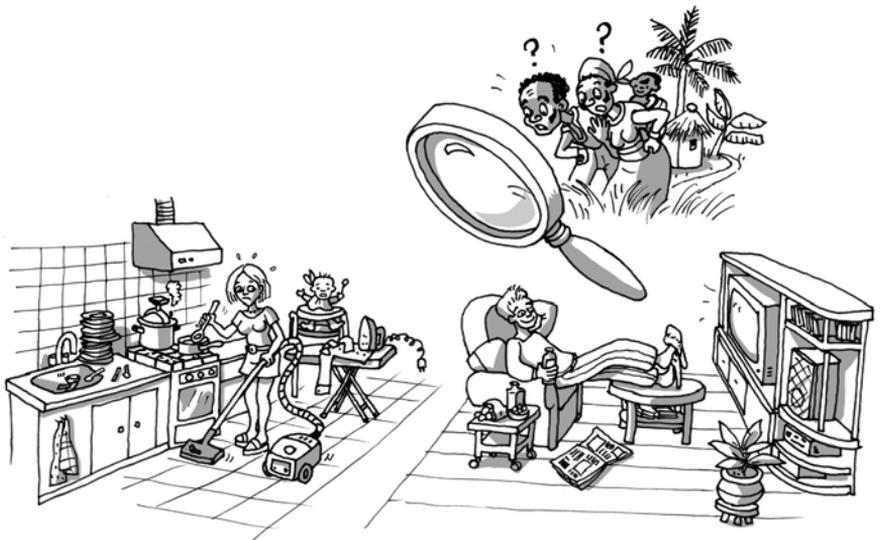
Loos Islands and the Tristao Islands in the reforestation of the mangrove and the management of community projects. In Guinea, structures for drying fish, based on the FAO model in Soukouta, could be progressively installed in other villages. The fish smokers in Bonfi could also transmit their know-how on the ecological ovens to the fish smokers in Boulbiny.

- **Make visible the different contributions of the men and women** in the sustainable management of the Protected Area by carrying out diagnoses based on a survey of the activities undertaken by women; surveys of the activities in which the actions of men and women are expected, on the different uses of non-woody natural resources by men and women, on the identification of the loss of income due to not respecting the principle of equity, and on the economic role of women in development.

4 - Conclusion



The issue of integrating gender equity in the processes of concertation and management of Protected Areas in West Africa confronts us with a major challenge. It makes us question our social constructions, reflect upon our relations to ourselves and to others, and especially think about men/women relations. Today, Protected Areas offer us a major opportunity to think about these unequal and inequitable relations, which have been constructed by our societies down through the generations, but also and especially represent a field of experimentation in which gender equity can be integrated. To succeed in this endeavour, we need courage, determination, and the good will of everyone involved, to break down the barriers and work together to build new societies that are fairer and more equitable.



Appendices



Appendix 1: THE COTONOU DECLARATION

We, representatives of Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal, Ministers, Members of Parliament, leaders of NGOs for the protection of the environment and sustainable development, Senior Civil Servants and Academics, gathered together in Cotonou, the 17th April 2008 in the high-level workshop “For a better consideration of the principle of equity in the management of protected areas in West Africa”:

- Considering the international conventions ratified by our countries for the promotion of equity and women’s rights, and on the conservation of biological diversity, and the political, legislative, and regulatory measures for their implementation;
- Convinced that the conservation of protected areas concerns all social groups, and must go hand in hand with sustainable development of local populations;
- Recognising the importance of the principle of equity which aims at equitable access of men and women to the development of their basic capacities, irrespective of their sex, gender, social class, religion, and age
- Recalling that equity between the sexes is related to the readjustment of the inequalities from which a group of people suffers whatever their sex, condition, religion, and status within a society;
- Recognising that we need to aim at eliminating the barriers that obstruct economic, legal, and political opportunities, and giving access to education and basic services to all;
- Aware of the socio-cultural differences between the countries of the sub-region and of the need to consider each specific context;
- Recalling the observations of the Dakar workshop of May 2007 reflecting on “the capacity building of women in the consultation and management processes of protected areas in West Africa”;
- Recognising the importance and crucial role of parliamentary networks and environmental journalists;
- Aware that civil society, local authorities and grassroots community organisations play an essential role in bringing about changes.
 - Demand the application of the recommendation of the PRCM forum at Praia in April 2007 on the creation and/or dynamisation of parliamentary networks for the environment in the countries of West Africa, and propose the interconnection of these networks.
 - Commit to approaching the environmental commissions and relevant parliamentary networks of our respective countries and of the CEDEAO in view of raising the awareness of parliamentarians concerning the question of equity at the sub-regional level.
 - Commit to undertaking the actions necessary for the integration of equity:
 - in environmental education strategies.
 - in the laws concerning the conservation of nature and natural resources of our respective countries.
 - Commit to ensuring that these actions are followed up.

Appendix 2: International and National Tools for promoting Women's Rights



BENIN

International Legal Instruments Ratified

- 23 June 1965, Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages;
- 16 May 1968, Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value;
- 20 January 1986, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- 12 March 1992, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- 12 March 1992, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- 22 March 1992, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- 30 September 2005, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women.

National Laws for the Promotion of Women's Rights

- The Bouvenet Penal Code of 6 May 1877;
- The law against the incitement to abortion and contraceptive propaganda of 31 July 1920;
- The Civil Code: legal duality in family law (application of texts since independence the traditional law (Coutumier du Dahomey) of 1931 and the Napoleonic Code of 1858);
- Code of Nationality (Law 65-17, 23 June 1965);
- Law 65-5 on the structure of the land tenure regime in Dahomey, 14 August 1965;
- Law 86-013 on the general status of state civil servants (Agents Permanents de l'Etat or APE), 26 February 1986;
- Law 86-014 on the civil and military retirement pension code, 26 September 1986;
- The Constitution of 11 December 1990, adopted by the Referendum of 2 December 1990, incorporating the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, advocates the principle of the equality of all citizens under the law without distinction according to gender (Article 26);
- The Labour Code adopted by Law 98-004, 27 February 1998;
- Law 2003-04, 3 March 2003, on sexual health and reproduction;
- Law 2003-03, 3 March 2003, on the outlawing of female genital mutilation practices;
- The General Collective Labour Agreement;
- Law 2002-07, 7 June 2004, on the Personal and Family Code;
- Bill 2006/19 on the outlawing of sexual harassment and the protection of victims.



BURKINA FASO

International Legal Instruments

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (OAU, 1981) ratified 6 July 1984, came into force on 21 October 1986, together with its additional draft protocol
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) came into force on 3 September 1981 and was ratified on 28 November 1984.

National Legal Tools and Laws

- The 1991 Constitution guarantees the equality of citizens at all levels, the right to property (Article 15), and freedom of enterprise without the express authorisation of the husband (Article 16), the right to instruction and education without discrimination according to gender, origin, race or religion (Article 19), equality of access to public sector jobs without discrimination according to gender (Law 13/98 AN, 28 April 1998), equal pay (Labour Code, Articles 82 to 88) and the right to health care for all (Article 26);
- Article 62 of Law 14/96/ADP, 23 May 1996, on agrarian and land reform, stipulates the right of attribution of urban or rural state lands (Domaine foncier national) without distinction according to gender or marital status;
- The 1996 Penal Code legislates against female genital mutilation (Article 380), punishable by 6 months' to 3 years' imprisonment and a fine of 150,000 francs for perpetrators and accomplices of female circumcision. The penalty is 5 to 10 years' imprisonment if the mutilation led to the death of the victim;
- Adoption of the 1994-2000 action plan for the promotion of the education of girls and the creation of the Office for the Promotion of Education (Direction de la Promotion de l'Éducation), with the elimination from school textbooks of all references to stereotypes perpetuating discrimination. The International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa, opened by UNESCO (Ouagadougou), whose aim is to reinforce the scientific training of women;
- The Labour Code prescribes equal pay between men and women for same-level jobs, while instituting working conditions appropriate to the situation of women (maternity), alongside the Social Security Code;
- The Personal and Family Code (CPF) stipulates that customary marriages have no official effect, only civil marriage is recognised. Forced marriages are forbidden. Marriage is based on equality of rights and duties between the spouses. Children are equal under the law whatever their origin and gender. The surviving spouse has the right to a share of the succession. The dissolution of marriage is the sole competence of the judge, thus forbidding arbitrary repudiation by the husband;
- The Electoral Code stipulates that every inhabitant of Burkina Faso, irrespective of gender, benefits from civic and political rights under the conditions prescribed by the law. It does not differentiate between men and women.



GUINEA

International Legal Instruments

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was signed on 17 July 1981 and ratified on 9 August 1982. The optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is under deliberation.

National Laws for the Promotion of Women's Rights

- The Civil Code, updated 1 January 1996;
- The Penal Code and Penal Procedure Code, revised in 1998, condemn any form of violence exerted against women;
- The Fishing Code;
- The Labour Code (Ordinance 003/PRG/SGG/88, 28 January 1998);
- The Social Security Code;
- The Mining Code;
- The fundamental law adopted by the 23 December 1990 Referendum and promulgated by Decree 250/PRG/SGG/90, 31 December 1990, revised by the 11 November 2001 Referendum and promulgated by Decree D/2002/49/PRG/SGG, 15 May 2002, stipulates in its preamble that "The People de Guinea proclaims the equality and solidarity of all nationals without distinction of race, ethnic group, sex, origin, religion or opinion". Article 8 specifies that: "All human beings are equal before the law. Men and women have the same rights". According to Article 18, the right to work is recognised for everyone. The State creates the necessary conditions for exercising this right. No one can be prejudiced in his or her work because of his or her gender. This law enshrines the mandatory nature of primary schooling and the equality of all without discrimination with regard to educational services. It promotes the creation of equity committees within the Guinean education system and the setting up of a national fund to support the education of girls (Fond national de soutien à l'éducation des filles, FONSEF);
- Electoral Code;
- Economic Activities Code;
- General Statute of Public Service;
- National Land Use Code (Code Foncier domanial);
- Law L/2000/010/AN, 10 July 2000, on reproductive health;
- Revised Draft of the Civil Code (in the process of being adopted);
- Bill on the Promotion and Protection of Handicapped People (pending).



GUINEA-BISSAU

The situation of women in Guinea-Bissau is characterised by an absence of data at every level. The issue has not yet been addressed at the national level. Guinea-Bissau has not yet ratified the CEDAW, and the situation regarding women's rights is little known. According to the UNDP, there is no national strategy for ensuring sexual equality. In terms of equity and human development, the UNDP is seeking to ensure that the national institutions apply action programmes aimed at encouraging sexual equality and enabling the most vulnerable individuals to access

basic social services¹¹. However, there is an Institute for Women and Children within the Ministry of Social Solidarity, together with the national network of women parliamentarians and the network of activists working to combat violence towards women.



International Legal Instruments

- 22 September 1960, signing and ratification of Convention 41 on women's night work, which was adopted in 1934 and came into force in 1936;
- 19 August 1964, signing of the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages, which came into force in 1964;
- 12 July 1968, signing and ratification of Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, which was adopted in 1951 and came into force in 1953;
- 2 February 1973, signing of the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, which was adopted in 1957 and came into force in 1958;
- 16 July 1974, signing of the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, which was adopted in 1950 and came into force in 1951;
- 16 July 1974, signing of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which was adopted in 1965 and came into force in 1969;
- 16 July 1974, signing, by means of Ordinance 26, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was adopted in 1966 and came into force in 1976;
- 16 July 1974, signing of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which was adopted in 1966 and came into force in 1976 ;
- 10 September 1985, signing, by means of Ordinance 85-13 PR of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979 came into force in 1981;
- 26 February 1999, signing of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which was adopted in 1984 and came into force in 1987;
- 9 July 2000, signing, by means of Ordinance 1, of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- 5 December 2000, signing of the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW, which was adopted in 1999, and came into force in 2000.

National Tools and Laws concerning Women's Rights

- The French Civil Code (1803): partially applicable to Mali, in certain areas concerning property, obligations, civil society, and matrimonial regimes.
- 25 February 1992, the Constitution of Mali, adopted by referendum on 12 January 1992 and promulgated by Decree 92-073/P-CTSP;
- Code of Civil, Commercial and Social Procedure: Decree 99-254/P-RM, 15 September 1999, concerning the Code of Civil, Commercial and Social Procedure;
- Penal Code: Law 01-080, 20 August 2001;
- Code of Penal Procedure: Law 01-080, 20 August 2001;
- Electoral Code: Law 00-058, 30 August 2000, modified by Law 01-065, 13 July

¹¹ : Source: UNDP Country Programme for Guinea-Bissau (2008-2012). www.undp.org/africa/programedocs/guinea

2001: Ordinance 91-075/P-CTSP, 10 October 1991, concerning the Charter for Political Parties;

- Nationality Code: Law 72-18 AN- RM, 3 February 1962, concerning the Nationality Code, amended by Law 95-70, 25 August 1995;
- Labour Code: Law 92-020, 23 September 1992, concerning the Labour Code: Implementation Decree 96-178/P-RM, 16 June 1996 ;
- Social Welfare Code: Law 99-041, 12 August 1999, concerning the Social Welfare Code;
- Land Tenure Code (Code domanial et foncier): Ordinance 27/P-RM, 22 March 2000, concerning the Land Tenure Code;
- Marriage and Guardianship Code (Code du mariage et de la tutelle): Law 62-17 AN-RM, 3 February 1962, concerning the Marriage and Guardianship Code, amended by Ordinance 26, 10 August 1975;
- Kinship code (Code de la parenté): Ordinance 36 CMLN, 31 July 1973, concerning the Kinship Code; Law 89-06/AN-RM, 18 January 1989, relative to the changing of family names.



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

International Instruments

- 1999, ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- 1989, ratification of the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child);
- 2001, adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and a Personal Status Code providing women with numerous opportunities for emancipation, together with the emergence of a civil society in rapid development in which women occupy a significant position;
- 1994, adoption and implementation of the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994);
- Participation in international meetings concerning women.

National Tools

- The 20 July 1991 Constitution, which re-established the fundamental freedoms for all citizens;
- The State Secretariat on the Condition of Women (Secrétariat d'État à la condition féminine), created in 1992;
- The National Strategy for the Promotion of Women, formulated in 1995 and updated in 2002;
- 2002, adoption by the National Assembly of a law making the schooling of children obligatory, including that of girls from 6 to 14 years old;
- 2001, setting up of a multi-sector gender monitoring group (Groupe de Suivi Genre, GSG) ;
- 2004, launching of an official campaign against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Official recognition by the National Assembly of the existence of the phenomenon of violence against women and the need to combat it;
- Adoption of a family and childhood policy;
- The Labour Code and the law concerning the Civil Service General Statute are non-discriminatory and recognise the rights of women during maternity;
- Since 2005, setting up of a process of ratification of international conventions pertaining to the protection of human rights.



SENEGAL

International Tools

- 3 August 1968, International Labour Organisation Conventions 111 (1961) and 156 (1981) pertaining to equal remuneration for work of equal value;
- 1983, signing and ratification of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women;
- 5 February 1985, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- 1990, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 2 of which forbids discrimination founded on gender;
- 1981, signing of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and of the additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights concerning women's rights.
- Senegal has participated in all the international conferences concerning women (Mexico City 1975; Copenhagen 1980; Nairobi 1985; Beijing 1995).

National Laws concerning Women's Rights

- The Constitution recognises equality between the sexes, as it clearly states in the preamble and in Articles 1 and 7;
- The principle of equality between men and women was reaffirmed in the latest fundamental law (sanctioned by the 7 January 2001 Referendum);
- The Penal Code: 24 January 1999, Law modifying the penal code, formally condemning violence against women in the home and in society;
- Articles 108 and 111 of the 1972 Family Code, particularly recognised for the protection and recognition of women's rights, formally forbids and punishes child or forced marriage;
- The civil service statute, the application of which forbids discrimination founded on gender;
- The Penal Code: the 24 January 1999 Law more severely condemns violence against women, and defines and prescribes the suppression of additional offences long criticised by women such as incest, rape, sexual harassment, female circumcision, paedophilia, and conjugal violence;
- The preamble to the new Constitution mentions that the CEDAW is an integral part of it;
- The right to land ownership is henceforward guaranteed for both men and women. The largely customary restrictions to women's access to land are forbidden;
- The wife, like the husband, has the right to her own patrimony. She also has the right to manage her property on a personal basis;
- Lobbying for the defence and promotion of women in the law;
- Lobbying of human rights organisations to represent plaintiffs in cases of violation of women's rights;
- Lobbying for the ratification and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights concerning the rights of African women.

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Gender and equity in the Protected Areas of West Africa

Protected Areas in West Africa are rarely managed in ways that fully recognise the principle of equity between men and women. The participation of all sectors of the population in decision-making processes is often illusory, and, when it exists, “equity considerations” generally translate into actions based on the traditional models of task distribution according to gender.

Yet the principle of equity, which aims at “equitable access of men and women to the development of their capacities, irrespective of their sex, gender, social class, religion, and age” is fundamental to the current perspective of sustainable development. Equity is often an indicator of social well-being, as well as the guarantor of greater sustainability in the management of natural resources.

This aim of this guide is to elucidate the multiple dimensions of the process of taking into consideration the principle of equity in the management of West African Protected Areas: above all equity between the sexes, but also between young and old, rich and poor etc. Based on a diagnosis carried out in several Protected Areas (Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal), this work proposes tools for managers of protected areas, and all those committed to an “equity policy”, at various intervention levels (politico-institutional, governance, and stakeholders).

Julienne N. Anoko

