



Gender and Protected Areas:

Exploring National Reporting to the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention

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Key Findings

Gender inequality in biodiversity conservation and management restricts women's access to benefits at all levels, perpetuating poverty and undermining sustainable resource use and management. However, gender equality in this field is neither widely written into policy nor widely measured. In this study, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Global Gender Office (GGO) investigates reporting on women's participation in the conservation and management of protected areas. Using national reports to the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention, two widely ratified treaties that govern management of thousands of protected areas worldwide, this study defines the frequency, context, and tenor of discussions of gender and women's participation in conservation. Keyword searches showed that frequency of gender-related keywords was extremely low in reports to both conventions, decreasing by approximately 90% in reports to the Ramsar Convention during the last two decades. Gender keyword mentions most frequently characterized women as stakeholders on management committees, as grouped with other communities often excluded from access to decision-making arenas, and as beneficiaries of sustainable development programmes. Despite these findings, most reports' discussions of women lacked sufficient detail for understanding cumulative progress toward gender equality in environmental conservation. This study suggests that greater detail in reporting and establishment of mechanisms that measure cumulative progress toward equal participation of women could help improve our understanding of gender equality in protected areas conservation and management.

Acronyms

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CMA | Catchment Management Authority |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| EGI | Environment and Gender Information platform |
| GBV | Gender-Based Violence |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| IUCN GGO | IUCN Global Gender Office |
| IWRM | Integrated Water Resources Management |
| LAC | Latin America and the Caribbean |
| LRA | Lord's Resistance Army |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SOC | State of Conservation |
| SSA | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| WWD | World Wetlands Day |

Introduction

Gender inequality undermines sustainable resource use, management and conservation and restricts women's access to the benefits of biodiversity conservation at all levels—from formal employment in natural resource sectors to participation in policy- and decision-making processes.^{i,ii} National and global policies governing wise use¹ of biodiversity and natural resources have historically not prioritized the needs of women, marginalizing them from participation in the planning, implementation, and benefits of such policies.^{iii,iv,v} In the past decade, though, institutions influencing global biodiversity conservation and development have included meeting women's needs in strategic plans like the Aichi Biodiversity Targets established in 2010 and the Sustainable Development Goals finalized in 2015. Global conservation treaties have also begun to embrace the goal of gender equality, recognizing that men and women should have equal access to resources and decision-making spheres and that costs and benefits of conserving resources should be equally distributed.^{vi}

The acknowledgement that gender equality is paramount to effective conservation is growing; yet gender equality in biodiversity conservation is neither widely written into policy nor often measured, and evidence of how gender equality is being incorporated into environmental management is lacking. Overall, this amounts to an inadequate understanding of whether environmental policy, programs, and financing of sustainable development actually contribute to women's empowerment.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND GENDER INFORMATION (EGI) PLATFORM

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Environment and Gender Information (EGI) platform aims to convey the value of gender equality data and information through and for the benefit of environmental conservation and sustainable development. By providing new evidence-based information and knowledge products, the EGI platform guides action toward a more just world.

¹ According to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, wise use is defined as the maintenance of ecosystems' ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development, for the benefit of people and nature.

Originally launched in its 2013 pilot phase as a composite index, the EGI has evolved into a source for new knowledge creation and dissemination—and for revealing progress and challenges in meeting commitments to women’s empowerment and gender equality in environmental spheres. Most recent datasets include information on women in leadership positions of key environmental decision-making spheres, inclusion of gender issues in mitigation action, and women’s leadership in climate finance mechanisms and processes.

Protected areas management has a long history of being driven by international environmental priorities that are traditionally considered separate from women’s rights and human rights legal frameworks. The EGI aims to close the gap between these two sets of priorities by illustrating their overlap and identifying opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.

This study uses indicators measuring national reporting on women’s participation in the conservation and management of protected areas to examine gender equality in two widely ratified international environmental protection treaties: the Ramsar Convention, which protects more than 2,000 wetlands worldwide, and the World Heritage Convention, which protects more than 1,000 natural, cultural, and mixed heritage sites worldwide.

National reports to these two conventions were analyzed to define the frequency, context, and tenor of discussions of gender and women’s participation in conservation of some of the world’s most treasured natural resources. The Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention were chosen because they represent some of the most established and universal international efforts to conserve the world’s biodiversity— especially the crucial ecosystems that support communities’ livelihoods, that contribute to climate change resilience, and that may be in danger of over-exploitation without conservation measures. The integration of gender equality within these conventions would signify international recognition of the important work of both women and men in conservation, as well as improve our understanding of the ways women and men rely on natural resources.

Background on the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention, and Reporting Mechanisms

THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

The Ramsar Convention was adopted in 1971 to support “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.”^{vii} The Ramsar Convention has 169 Contracting Parties (“countries”) and has more than 2,000 sites on its List of Wetlands of International Importance. Sites must meet one of nine criteria based on a) wetland representativeness, rarity, or uniqueness, or b) the importance of biodiversity conservation.^{viii}

The text of the Ramsar Convention focuses on ecological conservation of wetlands and does not require implementation strategies to consider gender equality or women’s empowerment. However, the objectives, actions, and targets of the Convention’s four successive strategic plans implemented since 1997 have offered some attention to gender issues. While the first (1997-2002) and second (2003-2008) strategic plans recommended that countries prioritize women’s participation and implement conservation policies that account for women’s needs, the convention’s two most recent strategic plans did not discuss women’s involvement.^{ix} Figure 1 shows attention to women’s involvement in the objectives of the first two strategic plans and the removal of these objectives in 2009.

National-level implementation of the Ramsar Convention is monitored through National Reports, which countries submit every three or four years. These reports follow a standardized format and often require simple “yes,” “no,” or “somewhat” responses for tracking of completed and planned conservation, education, and evaluation activities. Countries submitted the first National Reports in 1999, so a

series of six National Reports (1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, and 2015) exist for many countries.² National Reports' content varies according to the evolution of the strategic plans' objectives and actions (see Figure 1). National Reports provide detailed information on planned and implemented wetlands conservation policies and programmes in each country, including community groups currently participating in management and those targeted for increased participation in the future. These reports provide clear and consistent insight into each country's attention to gender equality in the conservation of their protected wetlands.

However, the Strategic Plans are not the Ramsar Convention Secretariat's only important policy frameworks. Ramsar situates its work in a broader policy framework including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and Ramsar resolutions. Within this framework, Ramsar recognizes the importance of SDG 5 that aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and Aichi Target 14 that takes into account the needs of women when safeguarding ecosystems. In addition, two Ramsar resolutions (Resolution VIII.19 and Resolution XI.13) focus on recognizing the importance of including gender considerations within wetlands protection and management strategies.³ The Ramsar Culture Network will discuss gender and other societal and cultural concerns at the upcoming Ramsar Standing Committee meeting. In an informational report submitted in advance of this meeting, the Ramsar Culture Network has highlighted the inter-connectedness of "functioning water environments and the cohesion of human societies", recognizing the roles of women in the wise use of water resources.^x

Even so, the targets and indicators listed within Strategic Plans most directly impact how countries report on their wetlands managements plans in accordance to the Ramsar Convention, as National Reports are based on these targets. The current Strategic Plan will undergo a midterm review in 2020.

2 National Reports for some years are unavailable from countries that signed the Ramsar Convention after 1999 or chose not to submit National Reports regularly.

3 The authors would like to acknowledge and thank Ania Grobicki, Acting Secretary General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat, for providing feedback and context to this review.

Figure 1: Discussion of women in the Ramsar Convention’s four strategic plans between 1997 and the present.



THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

The World Heritage Convention was adopted in 1972 to promote international cooperation for the protection of cultural and natural heritage around the world. This convention has 191 States Parties (“countries”) and governs the establishment and continued protection of more than 1,000 properties in 163 countries. States Parties that do not nominate their own World Heritage Sites express general concern for and cooperation in preserving the world’s natural and cultural heritage. These countries may help protect World Heritage Sites located in other countries by financing specific projects or contributing to the World Heritage Fund, which meets the most urgent financial needs at threatened sites.^{xi}

To be included on the World Heritage List, properties must be of outstanding universal value and meet one of 10 criteria that include, among others, containing “the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity.”^{xii} For example, the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia is a mixed (natural and cultural) World Heritage Site. It is a living cultural landscape that has been inhabited by Aboriginal people for 50,000 years, contains a large variety of different ecosystems— including Ramsar-listed wetlands— and

is home to flora and fauna listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This World Heritage Site meets five of the 10 criteria: its ancient rock art depicting human figures and animal species, some of which are now extinct, represents a masterpiece of creative genius; its archaeological record provides evidence of ancient traditions and ways of life; its various landscapes and ecosystems are areas of exceptional natural beauty; it is an outstanding example of on-going ecological and evolutionary processes; and Kakadu National Park contains natural habitats home to an extraordinary number of plant and animal species.^{xiii}

While a focus on communities was added to the World Heritage Convention's strategic objectives in 2007 — alongside credibility, conservation, capacity building, and communication — the convention itself does not address gender issues.^{xiv} The convention's current operational guidelines address gender only in the context of recommending that government agencies use gender-neutral language in statements nominating new World Heritage Sites.^{xv}

State of Conservation (SOC) Reports are used to monitor conservation activities at World Heritage Sites. Countries submit State Party Reports and other material when an issue arises that may impact a World Heritage Site. The UNESCO Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee, including IUCN World Heritage (IUCN WH), use this information to develop SOC Reports detailing specific conservation activities, successes, and management difficulties at each individual site. Unlike the Ramsar Convention's scheduled system of National Reports, SOC Reports are not submitted regularly. Countries submit State Party Reports following requests from the World Heritage Committee; however, the reports are only required when a significant threatening circumstance, such as construction or new conservation challenges or activities, may impact the site's state of conservation.^{xvi,xvii} This case-by-case reporting mechanism has resulted in a collection of 3,417 SOC Reports for 512 sites in 136 countries, submitted since 1979.

SOC Reports have a fairly limited scope, focusing on the issues discussed in the State Party Reports and those raised by the World Heritage Committee; they also have restrictions on format and word count. SOC Reports are not required to contain information on gender dynamics or women's involvement in site conservation and management. However, some SOC Reports mention women's associations as evidence for a World Heritage Site's strengthening of community-based conservation activities.^{4, 5}

The Ramsar Convention's National Reports and the World Heritage Convention's SOC Reports provide a wealth of information on the conservation and management of some of the world's most significant protected areas. For this reason, they were chosen as strong representations of the development and implementation of conservation policies and programmes at international and national levels;^{xviii} however, it is important to note that SOC Reports are threat-driven reports based on State Party Reports submitted when an issue arises potentially impacting a site.

Other environmental conventions and legal frameworks within the United Nations (UN) have very strong gender equality mandates: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has nearly 60 such decisions, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has over 45 mandates^{xix} on gender across multiple decisions, programmes and human rights and sustainable development frameworks. The World Heritage Convention recently joined this list by including gender considerations and a goal of achieving gender equality in its Sustainable Development Policy, developed in November 2015.

Importantly, the World Heritage Centre is currently developing a new policy to ensure gender equality in implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Thus, this analysis serves as a baseline from which secretariats and government agencies could measure gender equality in protected areas conservation and management.

4 As noted, SOC Reports are technical summary reports developed by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, such as IUCN; as such, these reports focus narrowly on threats to and progress in improving the conservation of threatened properties. Analyzing these documents provides insight into the most pressing conservation concerns facing World Heritage sites. Based on feedback from IUCN WH and the World Heritage Centre, a future EGI study should analyze States Parties' reports and/or national Periodic Reports to provide more information on the nexus of gender and the management of World Heritage sites.

5 The authors would like to acknowledge and thank Tim Badman, Director, IUCN World Heritage Programme, and Mechtild Rössler, Director, World Heritage Centre, for providing support, feedback, and context to this review.

Objectives

This study analyzed the extent and context of national reporting in relation to gender equality and women's participation in conservation and management of areas protected by the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention. The objectives were:

- 1.** Define the frequency with which gender equality and women's participation in conservation and management of Ramsar sites and World Heritage Sites is discussed. Determine whether this frequency changes over time.
- 2.** Identify and describe major themes in how reports' discourse characterizes women and their participation in the conservation and management of protected areas.

Methods

SAMPLING

Due to resource limitations, the sample of Ramsar Convention National Reports and World Heritage Convention SOC Reports⁶ analyzed was determined as follows:

- The study included only Ramsar Convention National Reports from countries with wetlands classified as *marine and coastal*, restricting the sample to 553 National Reports from 119 countries over 17 years, since 1999.
- Because of the EGI's interest in environmental conservation and management, World Heritage Convention SOC Reports for sites classified as *cultural* were excluded. The study included only SOC Reports for sites classified as *natural* and *mixed*.⁷ This restriction resulted in a sample of 1,290 SOC Reports from 83 countries over 33 years, since 1982.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This study determined whether and how often reports discussed gender equality and women's participation in protected areas conservation and management by counting mentions of gender-related keywords in each report. IUCN GGO's gender keyword dictionary was used to define a set of 68 unique English, Spanish, and French terms grouped into eight broad categories: *gender*, *sex*, *female*, *woman*, *women*, *girl*, *equity*, and *equality*.^{8,xx} The gender keyword dictionary included multiple forms of keywords in these categories to ensure counting of every mention; for example, the terms *gender*, *genders*, *gendered*, and *gender-based* were included in the search, among others, to capture all instances of discussion related to gender.

6 Ramsar Convention National Reports were gathered from the Ramsar online library (ramsar.org/library), and World Heritage Convention SOC Reports were gathered from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre SOC database (whc.unesco.org/en/soc). Reports submitted in multiple documents or with annexes were considered to be one report.

7 Each World Heritage Site is classified according to the Convention's operational guidelines: *natural* sites are natural formations and may provide habitat for threatened species; *cultural* sites are monuments, architectural works, or other works of man; and *mixed* sites have elements of both natural and cultural sites.

8 This report excludes analysis of 26 additional gender keywords grouped into four additional categories: *male*, *men*, *man*, and *boy*. The results reported only reflect analysis of the 68 keywords and eight categories listed above.

MaxQDA qualitative data analysis software was used to identify keyword mentions in all 553 Ramsar Convention National Reports and 1,290 World Heritage Convention SOC Reports.^{xxi} Each keyword mention was then reviewed, and mentions not relevant to this study’s discussion of gender equality in protected areas conservation and management were excluded.⁹ Final keyword counts were tabulated to determine the overall frequency of keyword mentions and identify changes over time and by region.

Using a context analysis framework,¹⁰ the study also analyzed how reports’ discourse characterized women. Each keyword mention was categorized into one or more themes according to criteria listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1: FOUR THEMES AND KEYWORD MENTION CATEGORIZATION CRITERIA OF THE IUCN GGO CONTEXT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK.

| | KEYWORDS WERE CATEGORIZED AS: | WHEN: |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| HOW ARE WOMEN VIEWED? | 1 Vulnerable | They discussed women’s vulnerability to gender-based discrimination. |
| | 2 Beneficiaries | They discussed programmes or policies that included women as recipients of economic, social, or other benefits, including educational and capacity-building opportunities. |
| | 3 Stakeholders | They discussed women as decision makers or as a group targeted for participation in decision making. |
| | 4 Agents of Change | They described women as driving conservation activities or having a voice in policy change. |

The IUCN gender analysis framework’s four themes on characterization of women were present in all reports containing gender keywords, and a new theme not initially included in the framework also emerged: **women characterized as grouped with other marginalized communities**. This theme refers to the acknowledgement of women occurring primarily in conjunction with reference to other commonly marginalized subgroups, such as indigenous people or the poor.

⁹ For example, mentions of female were excluded from analysis when they referred to animals rather than to women. Keyword counts were also adjusted to correct for keywords that appeared within the reports’ questions rather than in the countries’ answers.

¹⁰ This study’s use of the IUCN context analysis framework is discussed further in Appendix 1.

LIMITATIONS

As previously noted, the content of reports to the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention varied among countries and over time according to the objectives and actions of the conventions' strategic plans and operational guidelines. Further, reports may not have accurately reflected ground-level implementation of policies involving women. Some reports discussed planned activities that were not implemented or omitted description of relevant policies, so the reports alone did not provide a complete understanding of gender equality in implementation of the conventions. Finally, women's mere presence in decision-making arenas cannot be assumed to ensure equality in decision making itself. Considering these limitations, understanding the extent and context of reporting on women's participation still provided insight into the level of gender equality in conservation and management of these protected areas.

Findings

FREQUENCY OF KEYWORD MENTIONS

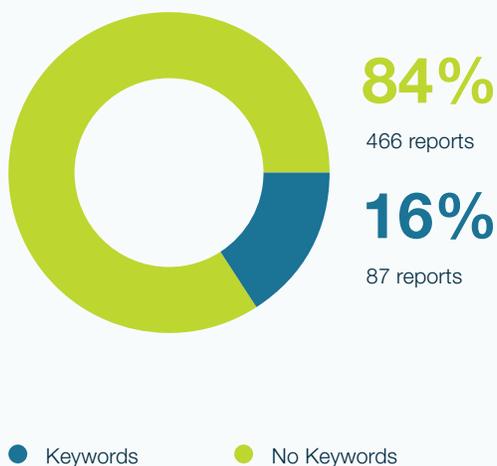
Frequency of keyword mentions was extremely low in national reports to both conventions. Keywords were mentioned in 15.8% of Ramsar Convention National Reports and in less than 0.7% of World Heritage Convention SOC Reports analyzed. This section describes temporal and regional trends in keyword mentions for each convention's reports.

Ramsar Convention National Reports

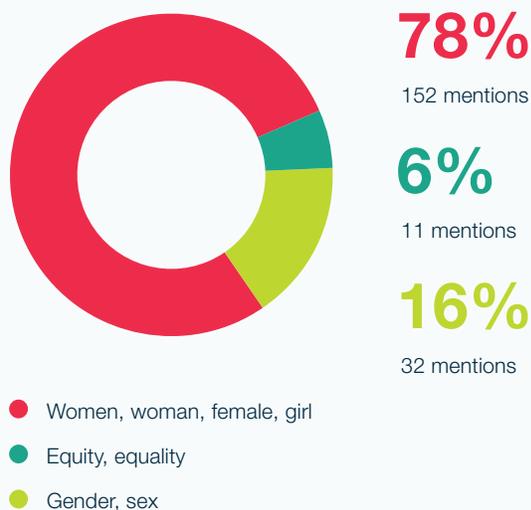
Of the 553 National Reports studied, only 87 reports (15.8%) contained keyword mentions (Figure 2a). These 87 reports were from 50 of the 119 countries that submitted National Reports, indicating that most countries did not include gender keywords in their reports. With respect to the distribution of the keywords mentioned in the National Reports, nearly 80% of the 195 total keyword mentions were of the terms *women*, *woman*, *female*, and *girl*; there were fewer mentions of the keywords *gender*, *sex*, *equity*, and *equality* (Figure 2b).

Figure 2: a) Presence of gender keyword mentions in 553 Ramsar Convention National Reports and b) Distribution of 195 gender keywords mentioned in Ramsar Convention National Reports.

a) Presence of Gender Keyword Mentions in Ramsar Convention National Reports

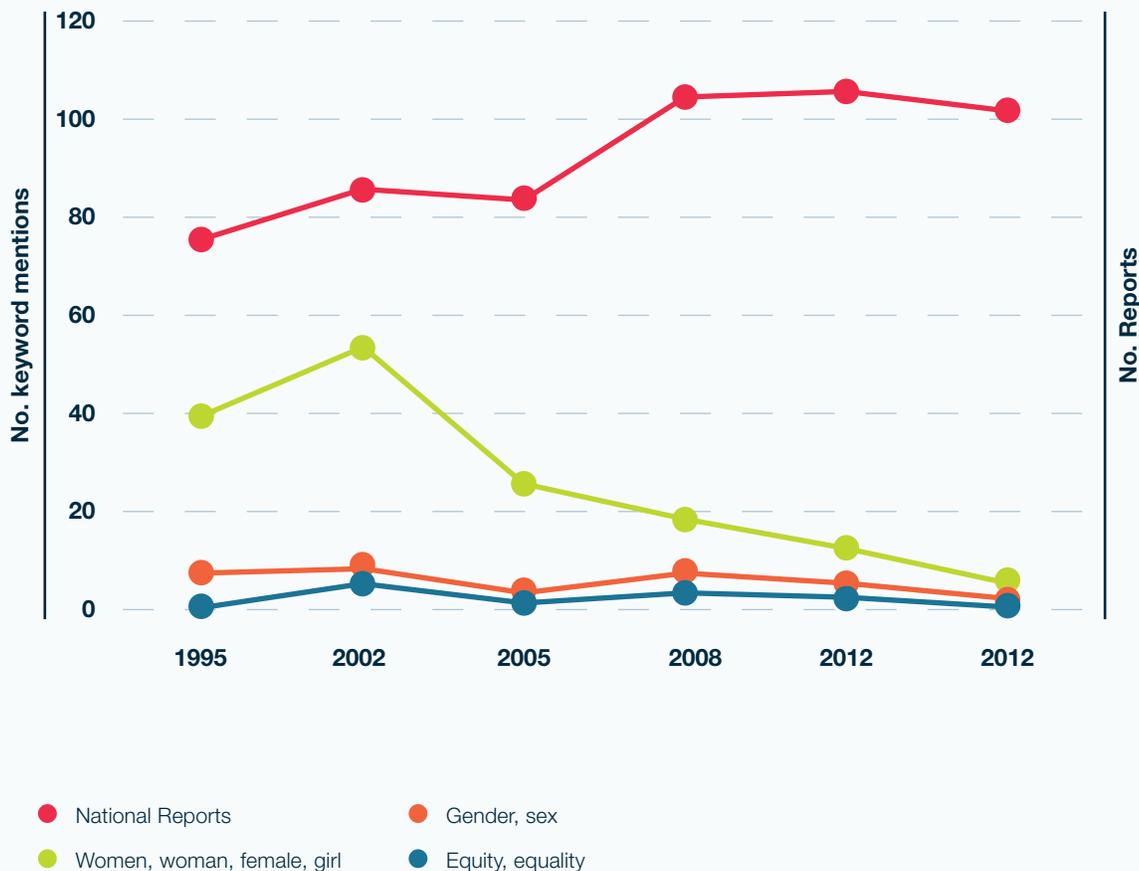


b) Distribution of Gender Keywords Mentioned in Ramsar Convention National Reports



Considering temporal trends, the number of keyword mentions in National Reports decreased sharply between 1999 and 2015. While the number of National Reports submitted increased, keyword mentions peaked in 2002 at 66 mentions and decreased by approximately 90% to only seven mentions in 2015 (Figure 3). The 2009 removal of women-centered objectives from the Ramsar Convention strategic plans (Figure 1) likely contributed to this trend. This overall decrease in keyword mentions was mirrored by a decrease in keyword mentions for each region; that is, no individual region’s reports showed an increase in keyword mentions between 1999 and 2015.^{11,12}

Figure 3: Decrease in gender keyword mentions in Ramsar Convention National Reports submitted at three- or four-year intervals between 1999 and 2015.



11 This study grouped countries into six regions: 1) Asia and Pacific, 2) Latin America and the Caribbean, 3) the Middle East and North Africa, 4) Non-OECD Eurasia, 5) OECD Members, and 6) Sub-Saharan Africa. See Appendix 2 for the list of countries in each region.

12 Tabulation of keyword mentions for each keyword category, year, and region is given in Appendix 3.

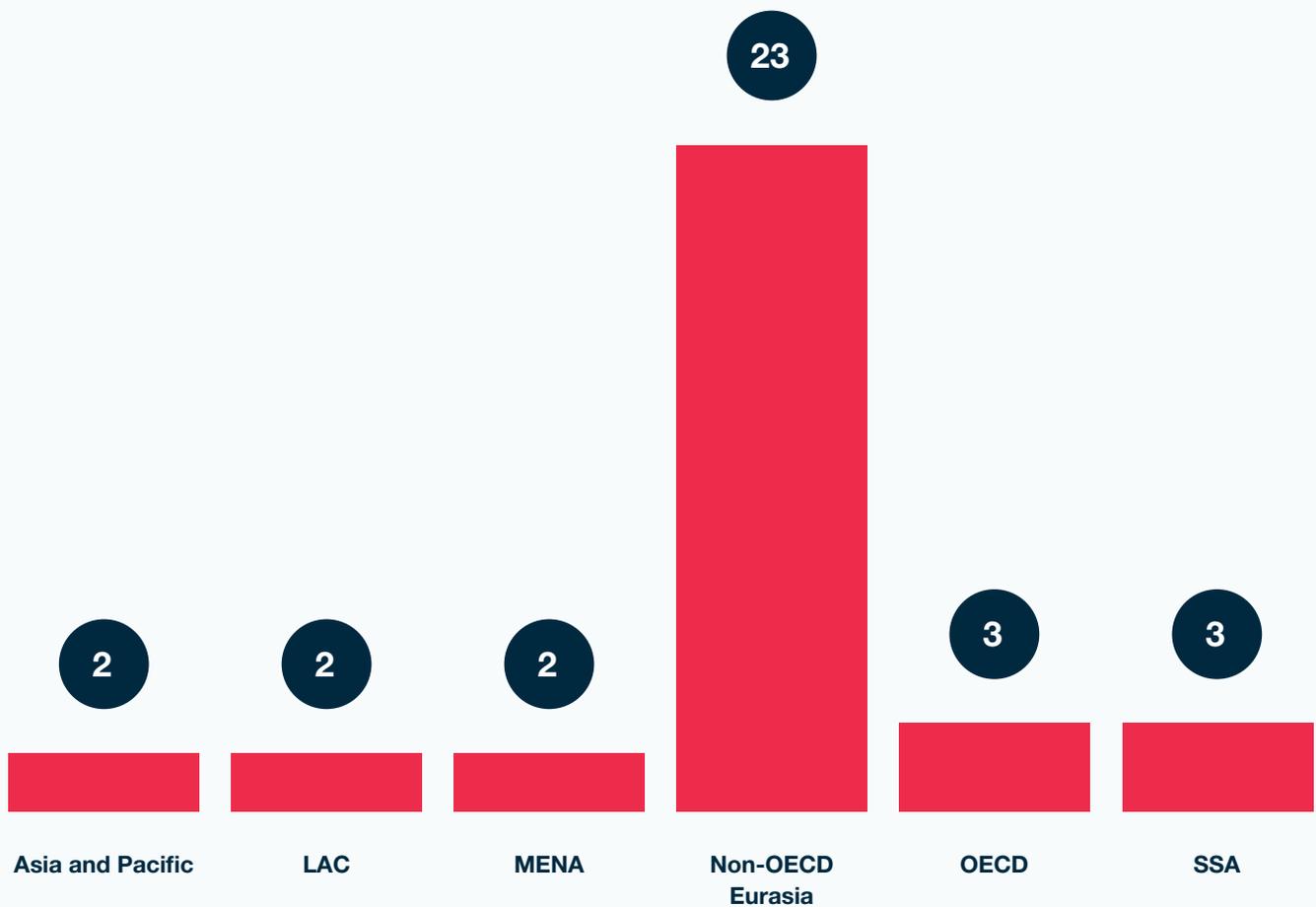
Regional differences in keyword mentions were not great enough to determine clear regional trends (Figure 4). OECD members and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) submitted the greatest number of reports to the dataset— 141 and 123 reports, respectively; however, reports from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and OECD members contained the most keyword mentions. Notably, reports from Egypt contributed 19 of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region’s 20 total keyword mentions, and reports from countries in LAC contributed nearly half— 13 of the total 32— mentions of gender and sex in the dataset.

Figure 4: Keyword mentions and Ramsar Convention National Reports submitted by region.



Comparing each region's number of reports to its number of keyword mentions also provides insight into regional differences. National Reports from countries in Asia and Pacific, LAC, and MENA contained keyword mentions with the greatest frequency—one keyword mention was present in approximately every two reports submitted from these regions. Reports from non-OECD Eurasian countries contained keyword mentions least frequently, with one keyword present in approximately every 23 reports submitted from the region. On average, no reports contained more than one keyword mention. Overall, reports from Asia and Pacific, LAC, and MENA contained keywords most frequently, while reports from other regions contained keywords less frequently (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Ratio of Ramsar Convention National Reports to one keyword mention for each region.



World Heritage Convention SOC Reports

Of the 1,290 World Heritage Convention SOC Reports studied, only nine reports—less than 0.7%— contained keyword mentions, and all nine mentions were of the keyword women. As discussed, there are many reasons gender would not be included in an SOC Report, including a narrow focus on the scope of State Party Reports and a uniform format with a tight word limit. SOC Reports containing these keyword mentions came from only five (6%) of the 83 countries submitting reports to the dataset. Finally, though SOC Reports submitted since 1982 were analyzed, the keyword women was mentioned only recently, between 2006 and 2014. Although the number of SOC Reports submitted increased between 1982 and 2015, there was no corresponding increase in the number of keyword mentions, which remained at zero for most years (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Incidence of keyword mentions in World Heritage Convention SOC Reports submitted between 1982 and 2015.

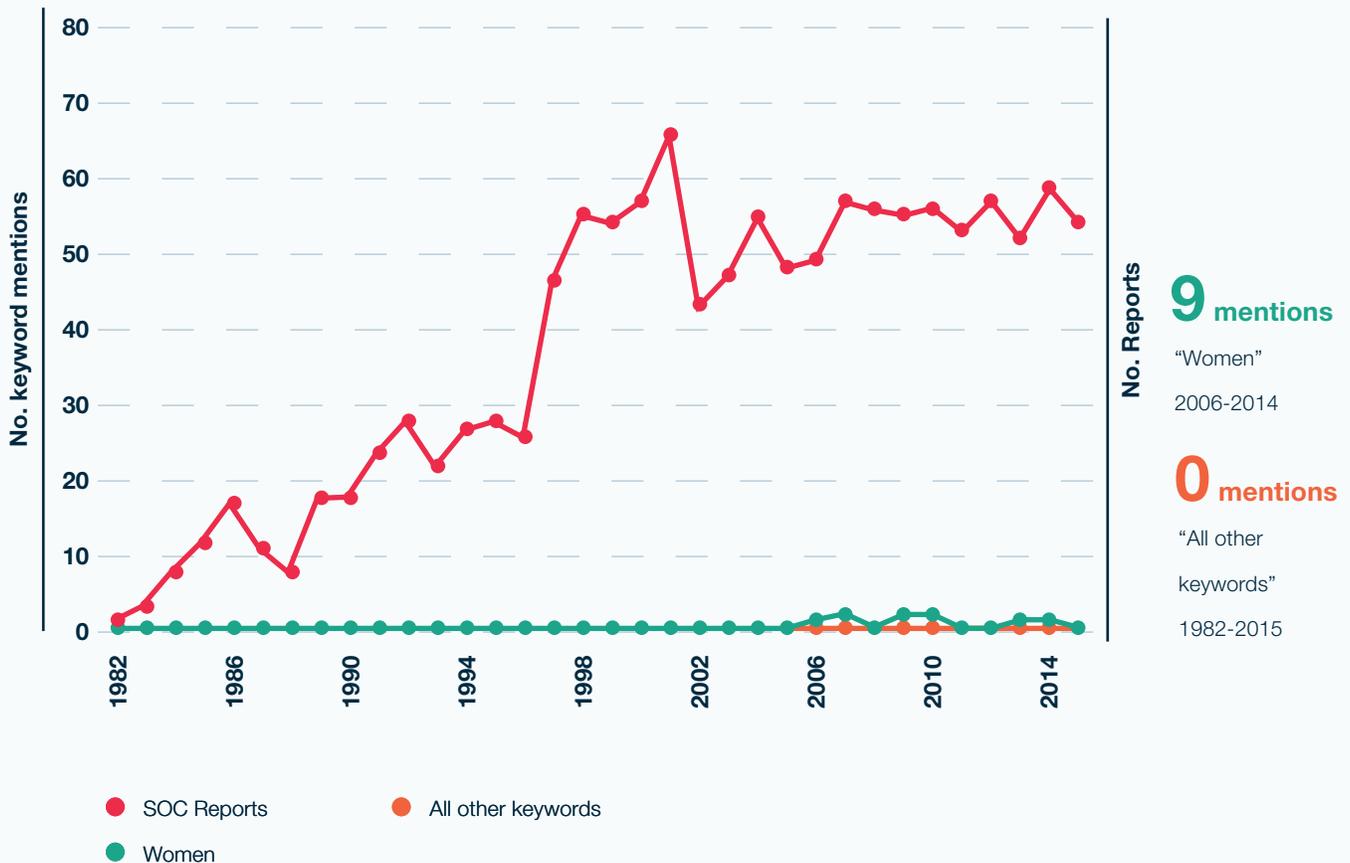
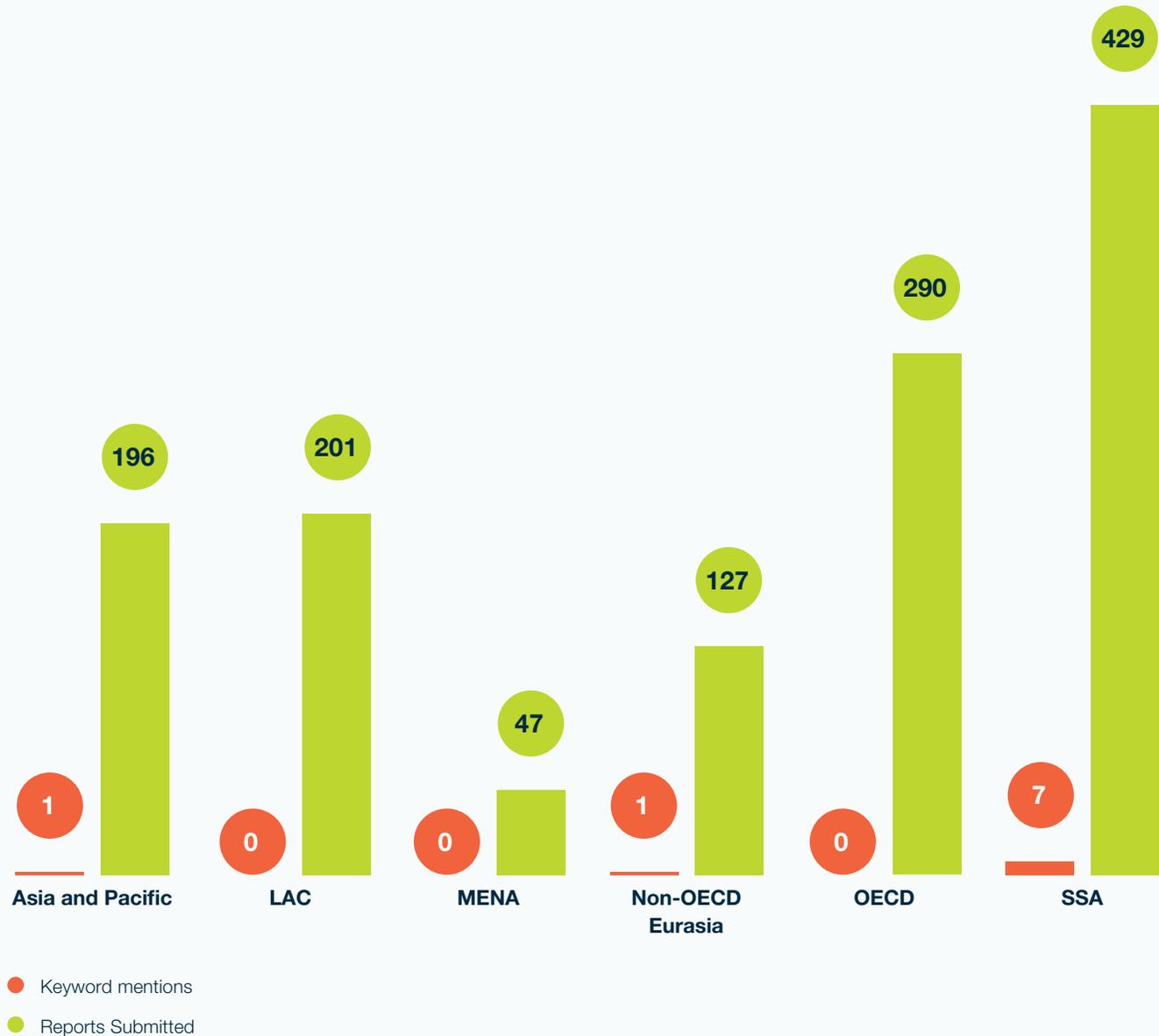


Figure 7 shows the total number of SOC Reports submitted and the total number of keyword mentions for each region. Most keyword mentions and most reports were submitted from SSA, though one keyword appeared in reports from Asia and Pacific and Non-OECD Eurasia. No reports from LAC, MENA, and OECD members contained keyword mentions. These regional relationships in keyword mentions differ from those found in the Ramsar Convention National Reports, in which reports from Asia and Pacific and MENA mentioned keywords most frequently.

Figure 7: Regional distribution of reports submitted and keyword mentions in World Heritage Convention SOC Reports.



Further, the nine SOC Reports that did contain gender keywords came from only five countries. Five keyword mentions were in reports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and two were in reports from Niger and Mali (Table 2). The remaining two keyword mentions were in reports from the Solomon Islands and the Russian Federation. Thus, most keyword mentions were found in SOC Reports for Kahuzi-Biega National Park and Garamba National Park in the DRC.¹³

TABLE 2: YEAR, REGION, COUNTRY, AND SITE OF WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION SOC REPORTS CONTAINING GENDER KEYWORD MENTIONS SUBMITTED BETWEEN 1982 AND 2015.

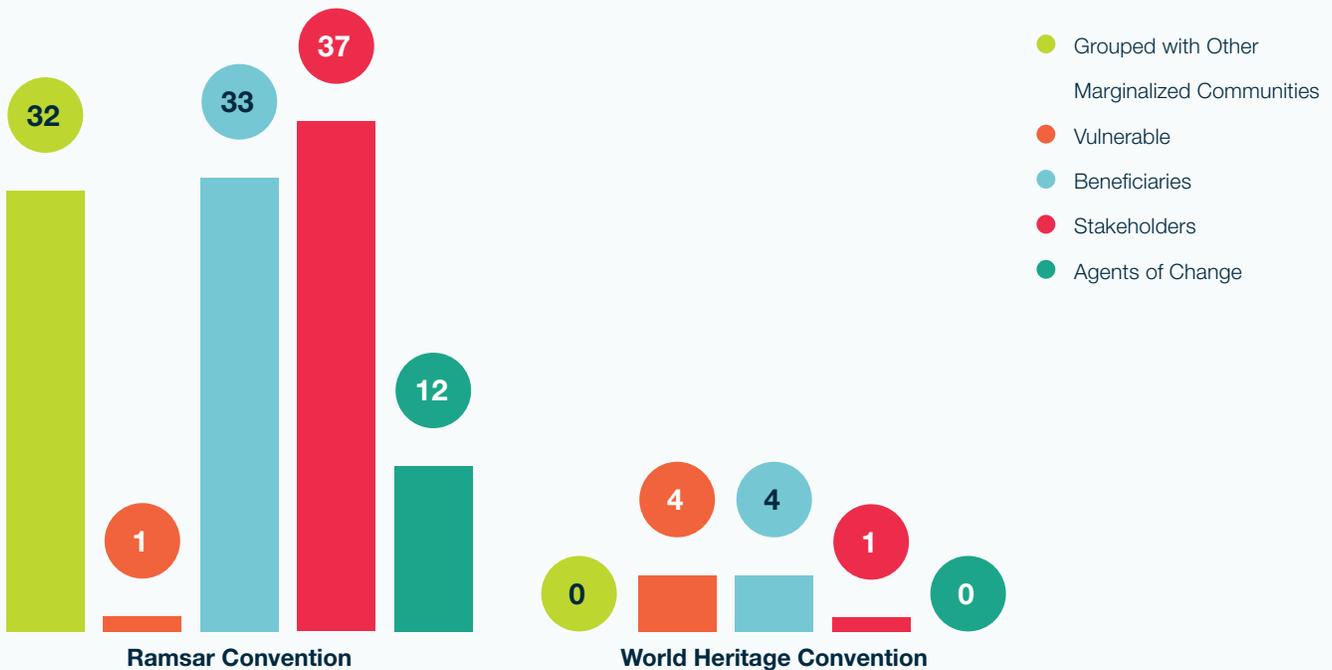
| | YEAR | REGION | COUNTRY | WORLD HERITAGE SITE |
|----------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 2006 | SSA | DRC | Kahuzi-Biega National Park |
| 2 | 2007 | Asia and the Pacific | Solomon Islands | East Rennell |
| 3 | 2007 | Non-OECD Eurasia | Russian Federation | Lake Baikal |
| 4 | 2009 | SSA | DRC | Garamba National Park |
| 5 | 2009 | SSA | DRC | Kahuzi-Biega National Park |
| 6 | 2010 | SSA | DRC | Garamba National Park |
| 7 | 2010 | SSA | Niger | Air and Ténéré Natural Reserves |
| 8 | 2013 | SSA | DRC | Garamba National Park |
| 9 | 2014 | SSA | Mali | Cliff of Bandiagara |

¹³ Keyword mentions in World Heritage SOC Reports for each keyword category, year, and region are given in Appendix 4.

CHARACTERIZATION OF WOMEN

This section will discuss discourse on women’s participation and gender dynamics in the reports studied. Figure 8 shows the number of Ramsar Convention National Reports and World Heritage SOC Reports in which each theme was present.

Figure 8: Number of Ramsar Convention National Reports and World Heritage Convention SOC Reports that contained each of five characterizations of women.



1. Women Grouped with Other Marginalized Communities

Thirty-two Ramsar Convention National Reports and zero World Heritage Convention SOC Reports included references that grouped women with other marginalized communities. Within Ramsar Convention National Reports, many keyword mentions referencing women were nested within discussions of broader “local communities” or “disadvantaged groups,” including youth and indigenous people. By discussing these subgroups in conjunction with one another, reports masked detail on participation of women as a distinct subgroup and obscured other communities’ unique roles and needs in protected areas conservation.

One possible explanation for this theme's emergence in Ramsar Convention National Reports could be the design of the questions that countries were asked; this would also explain why this theme was not present in World Heritage Convention SOC Reports. Because administrative agencies completing reports have a tendency to mirror the language of the reports' questions, the structure of one particular question in reports to the Ramsar Convention likely influenced the presence of this theme. The below example illustrates this question and the resulting characterization of women.

The Ramsar Convention National Report for 1999 asks countries to:

Describe what actions have been taken to encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

The response from Kenya's 1999 Ramsar Convention National Report reads:

Active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women is very crucial for effective wise use and conservation of wetlands. In Kenya these groups of people are encouraged to participate through a variety of strategies.

This example demonstrates reports' typical coupling of women with indigenous people, another community often excluded or marginalized from participation in conservation policy planning and management. Though the report mentions women "in particular," it provides no detail on how women are encouraged to participate, and, as with other themes explored by this study, no detail on cumulative effects or impacts of such participation. The presence of this theme in Ramsar Convention National Reports ultimately amounted to gender tokenism— a merely symbolic, rather than meaningful, display of acknowledgement of women— in reporting on these activities and policies.^{xxii}

2. Women as Vulnerable

Similarly, reports that discussed women as vulnerable to gender-based discrimination often did so without describing conservation policy or activity implementation that accounted for this vulnerability. Reports often mentioned that women were vulnerable but neither provided details on how this vulnerability would be addressed within programmes nor recognized women as having agency beyond vulnerability. One Ramsar Convention National Report and four World Heritage Convention SOC Reports mentioned women in this context. For World Heritage Convention SOC Reports, most keyword mentions in this theme referred to conflict-related gender-based violence (GBV) in the DRC.

Ramsar Convention National Report, India 1999:

Does the Contracting Party promote public participation in decision-making (with respect to wetlands), especially with local stakeholder involvement in the selection of new Ramsar sites and in Ramsar site management?

Resource information on local communities has been elaborately compiled in [the] case of Loktak and Chilika wetlands. The Atlas of Loktak provides a detailed assessment of community profile, community institutions, impacts of wetland degradation on communities, vulnerability context and participatory planning through involvement of local communities particularly economically disadvantaged groups and women.

This example is the Ramsar Convention National Reports' only reference to assessment of women's vulnerability. India's administrative authority responsible for implementing the convention, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, reports on participatory planning that promotes public participation in decision making and notes consideration of the vulnerability context of women, among other local subgroups. The report describes only the existence of the activity rather than its outcomes or impacts, avoiding commentary on the longer-term effects of promoting women's participation. This lack of depth is characteristic of keyword mentions.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) IN THE DRC

Four of the nine keyword mentions in the World Heritage Convention SOC Reports discussed women as vulnerable to conflict-related GBV within Garamba National Park and Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the DRC. These keyword mentions do not discuss women's participation in environmental conservation and management, but they do show how national conflict can prevent women's access to safe resource use and decision-making spheres and interfere with broader conservation goals. Ensuring that protected areas are safe for women may be a prerequisite for successful gender equality in protected areas conservation and management.

WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION SOC REPORT, DRC 2009:

LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] rebels resorted to guerrilla warfare directed against the local population and also targeting the road networks around the Park. These clashes with the LRA are the origin of a serious human crisis. Numerous civilians have been killed or taken hostage, women have been raped, houses ransacked and burnt and numerous people displaced.

3. Women as Beneficiaries of Policies or Programmes

The theme of women as beneficiaries of policies and programmes was present in 37 Ramsar Convention National Reports and four World Heritage Convention SOC Reports. These reports discussed women as recipients of economic aid or alternative livelihood training, or as targets of education programmes aimed at raising awareness about protected areas conservation, as illustrated in the examples below.

Ramsar Convention National Report, South Africa 2002:

Workers in rehabilitation projects implemented through the Working for Wetlands partnership are selected from communities adjacent to the wetlands to be rehabilitated. The policy of Working for Water (the parent organisation of Working for Wetlands) dictates that at least 60% of the contractors and workforce should be women. Through training and awareness programmes, the workers are trained to promote the wise use of the rehabilitated wetlands in their communities, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the rehabilitation actions.

World Heritage Convention SOC Report, Niger 2010:

[The co-management authority] has conducted studies on wood and thatch use, which led to the development of action plans for the management of these resources. [The co-management authority] has started to disseminate alternative stoves, which use less wood, and is planning to train local craftsmen and women associations to produce these stoves. In addition an agreement was signed with the coal trading organisation of Niger to disseminate and popularize stoves using mineral coal. As a result of this initiative, the State Party reports that wood consumption has decreased by 15%; from 97,000 tonnes in 2005 to 82,308 tonnes in 2009.

These examples describe activities that were meant to link protected areas conservation with sustainable development and poverty alleviation. However, this theme's discourse of women as beneficiaries of policies and programmes developed and implemented by others for an audience of women—while not describing inclusion of women in the development and implementation processes—attributes less agency to women than other keyword mentions characterizing women as agents of change, discussed in a later section.

4. Women as Stakeholders

Thirty-seven Ramsar Convention National Reports and one World Heritage Convention SOC Report discussed women as stakeholders, often in the context of participation on protected areas management committees.

In 2002, the Ramsar Convention National Reports asked countries whether their wetland management committees involved local stakeholders and asked them to respond with a) how many management committees had representatives of women's groups, and b) details on this topic. This type of question is helpful for broadly understanding the extent of participation of women in decision-making spheres, providing insight into how many management committees include women representatives. However, the reports gave no insight into committee-level dynamics, such as women's level of inclusion and full participation, and no record of outcomes or impacts related to women's involvement. As with the other themes, effects of such participation are difficult to determine.

World Heritage Convention SOC Report, Solomon Islands 2007:

The State Party has given the East Rennell World Heritage Site Trust Board (ERWHTB) the role of administration and management of the property. The organisation is broadening its constitution to include support for income-generation programmes and has agreed to appoint women in positions of leadership to make the organisation more representative.

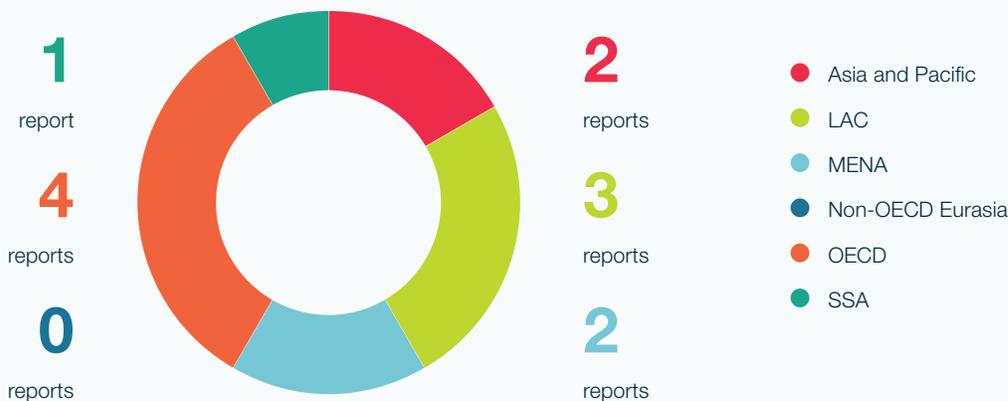
As seen in the above example from the Solomon Islands, in an attempt to include the perspectives of a wider range of stakeholder groups, the management organization was making a concerted effort to include women representatives. Appointing women to leadership positions indicates that they will have a meaningful level of participation— and might even become agents of change— although more detail is required for a full analysis. This example indicates that the management organization recognized the need to incorporate a more diverse array of stakeholders' voices. When considering women as a stakeholder group, organizations must recognize that women do not make up a homogenous group whose members all share the same priorities.

5. Women as Agents of Change

Finally, 12 Ramsar Convention National Reports and no World Heritage Convention SOC Reports discussed women as agents of change (Figure 9).¹⁴ Reports from OECD members and countries in LAC contained the most keyword mentions characterizing women as agents of change.

¹⁴ This study categorized keyword mentions as agents of change when they discussed women expressed agency through a) access to and control over resources or b) having a voice in society and influencing policy (Markham, S. 2012. Women as Agents of Change: Having Voice in Society and Policy. Online: The World Bank.).

Figure 9: Number of Ramsar Convention National Reports characterizing women as agents of change from each region.



This theme appeared in a wide variety of contexts, including descriptions of women organizing educational events, acknowledgement of women’s traditional knowledge, and descriptions of women initiating business enterprises. Keyword mentions characterizing women as agents of change, like those in the example below, illustrate women’s empowerment through administrations’ attribution of agency to women as a distinct subgroup.

Ramsar Convention National Report, Australia 2012:

Have World Wetlands Day (WWD) activities, either government and NGO-led or both, been carried out in the country [...]?
Each year WWD activities are undertaken throughout Victoria. For example in 2010, the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) invited local residents to take part in a field trip to the popular Margooya Lagoon in the Beggs Bend State Forest. Social research undertaken by Wimmera CMA in Victoria has revealed that women are often the driving force behind environmental conservation activities on farms. In response, Wimmera CMA has sought to harness this interest, build knowledge and capacity and empower farm wives to undertake wetland conservation by organising an annual WWD

“Chicks in the Sticks” event. The events, held each summer from 2008, bring local women together at a wetland to enjoy refreshments and learn more about wetland conservation.

Australia’s 2012 Ramsar Convention National Report gives perhaps the clearest description of outcomes resulting from women controlling use of natural resources and influencing policy through implementation of annual education activities. This quote demonstrates an instance in which a management agency observed women’s leadership, sought to learn from women’s knowledge, and facilitated continued education. Even with increased detail on women’s involvement, long-term impacts are not discussed.

Conclusions

FREQUENCY OF DISCUSSION OF WOMEN AND GENDER

This study highlights a worsening lack of reporting on gender dynamics and women's participation in protected areas conservation and management.

- Gender keywords were mentioned in under 16% of Ramsar Convention National Reports and under 0.7% of World Heritage Convention SOC Reports.
- Gender keyword mentions decreased by approximately 90% in Ramsar Convention reporting between 1999 and 2015.
- The decrease in discussion of women and gender issues between 1999 and 2015 may reflect removal of women's involvement from the objectives of the Ramsar Convention's strategic plans.

CHARACTERIZATION OF WOMEN

The IUCN context analysis framework revealed that nearly half of reports that contained keywords discussed women as beneficiaries of programmes or as stakeholders on management committees. Reports tended to discuss women not as independent agents and decision makers but as one of many subgroups at whom education, livelihood, and public participation programmes were targeted, or as a subgroup vulnerable to GBV.

- Only 10 countries reported on women's ability to drive environmental and policy change by characterizing them as agents of change.
- Detail on policies' involvement of and effects on women was masked when women were grouped together with other commonly marginalized communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This analysis of national reporting to two widely ratified environmental protection Conventions leads to the following recommendations to improve gender equality and women's empowerment in protected areas conservation.

- 1.** Gender equality policies and action plans should be developed and implemented for both Conventions with clear mandates and guiding principles for their programmes and processes, in concordance with international legal frameworks and UN internal mandates, including the implementation of the November 2015 World Heritage Convention Sustainable Development Policy.
- 2.** Mainstreaming gender in the plans and principles that guide implementation of these Conventions could be funded, supported, and monitored.
- 3.** Capacity building should be offered to Parties of both Conventions to enhance their understanding of how an analytical gender perspective does, consequently, help to understand an additional social differentiation that bears impact on environmental management and can help build equal and fair environmental administration and management processes whereby neither women nor men are excluded from the benefits obtained from sustainable environmental management practices.
- 4.** Mandatory reporting on women's involvement, allocation of resources to train national report writers, and promotion of involvement of women's organizations in national reporting should be supported. Often, questions about women's involvement were left unanswered, implying a lack of awareness or understanding of the importance of gender equality in environmental management by national officials.
- 5.** Reporting mechanisms should be modified to require more thorough descriptions of women's involvement in environmental management and policymaking. Keyword mentions were limited and generally vague, obscuring details such as reported activities' specific outcomes and impacts on the status of women in protected areas conservation and management.

6. Mechanisms for measurement of cumulative or long-term progress should be built into the reporting process to allow agencies to concretely assess progress over time. The reports analyzed provided no insight into long-term or cumulative effects of increased participation of women in management and decision-making, where applicable.
7. Finally, greater care should be taken to craft national reporting mechanisms that elicit differentiated knowledge about various target communities to prevent the tendency for countries to group them together, as the wording of the Ramsar Convention National Reports' questions seems to have influenced this pattern.

Achieving the recommended actions above would allow for a better understanding of both how women are participating in protected areas management and whether this participation has an effect on policy implementation and conservation goals.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1. IUCN GGO CONTEXT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

This exploratory analysis of Ramsar Convention National Reports and World Heritage Convention SOC Reports focused on one part of the IUCN GGO context analysis framework. The framework also provides insight into the kinds of activities reported; whether reported activities were planned or implemented; whether reports discussed monitoring of gender-related activities; and whether reports described activities' contribution to gender equality or women's empowerment. This data exists but is not analyzed in this report.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| A. How are women viewed? | Vulnerable | Are women characterized as vulnerable? |
| | Beneficiaries | Are women characterized as beneficiaries of policies or programmes? |
| | Stakeholders | Are women characterized as key stakeholders? |
| | Agents of Change | Are women characterized as agents of change? |
| B. Reporting of Activities | Specific Activities | Are activities related to gender or women described? |
| | Kind of Activity | What kind of activity was reported? |
| | Planned or Implemented | Is the activity planned or already implemented? |
| | Future Improvement | Does the report mention the need for more involvement of women or more actions to involve women in the future? |
| C. Gender Analysis | Gender Analysis | Is a gender analysis included? |
| | Monitoring and Evaluation | Is assessment, monitoring, or evaluation of gender-specific activities mentioned? |
| | Implementing Agencies | Are women's rights or gender-specialized institutions acknowledged as implementing partners? |
| D. Contribution to Equality | Does the report explain how the action will contribute to gender equality or the empowerment of women? | |

APPENDIX 2. REGIONAL CATEGORIES

| Asia and Pacific | LAC | MENA | Non-OECD Eurasia | OECD | SSA |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh • Cambodia • China • India • Indonesia • Iran • Kiribati • Kiribati • Marshall Islands • Nepal • Pakistan • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Solomon Islands • Sri Lanka • Thailand • Vietnam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antigua and Barbuda • Argentina • Bahamas • Bahamas • Belize • Brazil • Colombia • Costa Rica • Cuba • Dominica • Dominican Republic • Ecuador • El Salvador • Grenada • Guatemala • Honduras • Jamaica • Nicaragua • Panama • Peru • Saint Lucia • Suriname • Trinidad and Tobago • Uruguay • Venezuela | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algeria • Bahrain • Egypt • Jordan • Lebanon • Libya • Mauritania • Morocco • Oman • Tunisia • United Arab Emirates • Yemen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albania • Azerbaijan • Belarus • Bulgaria • Croatia • Georgia • Kazakhstan • Latvia • Lithuania • Macedonia • Malta • Monaco • Montenegro • Romania • Russian Federation • Turkmenistan • Ukraine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia • Belgium • Canada • Chile • Denmark • Estonia • Finland • France • Germany • Greece • Hungary • Iceland • Ireland • Italy • Japan • Mexico • Netherlands • New Zealand • Norway • Poland • Portugal • Republic of Korea • Slovakia • Spain • Sweden • Turkey • United Kingdom • United States of America | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benin • Cabo Verde • Cameroon • Central African Republic • Chad • Congo (Republic of) • Cote d'Ivoire • DRC • Djibouti • Equatorial Guinea • Ethiopia • Gabon • Gambia • Ghana • Guinea • Guinea-Bissau • Kenya • Lesotho • Liberia • Madagascar • Malawi • Mali • Mauritius • Mozambique • Namibia • Niger • Nigeria • Senegal • Seychelles • Sierra Leone • South Africa • Sudan • Tanzania (Republic of) • Togo • Uganda • Zambia • Zimbabwe |

APPENDIX 3. GENDER KEYWORDS IN RAMSAR CONVENTION NATIONAL REPORTS

Regional incidence of gender keywords in Ramsar Convention National Reports, submitted at three- or four-year intervals between 1999 and 2015.

| YEAR | KEYWORD CATEGORY | ASIA AND PACIFIC | LAC | MENA | NON-OECD EURASIA | OECD | SSA | TOTALS |
|------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1999 | Gender/Sex | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| | Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 8 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 12 | 39 |
| | Equity/Equality | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Keywords | 8 | 13 | 1 | 0 | 11 | 13 | 46 |
| | Total Reports | 12 | 14 | 4 | 11 | 25 | 9 | 75 |
| 2002 | Gender/Sex | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| | Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 7 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 21 | 11 | 53 |
| | Equity/Equality | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| | Total Keywords | 8 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 26 | 13 | 66 |
| | Total Reports | 12 | 17 | 7 | 10 | 23 | 16 | 85 |
| 2005 | Gender/Sex | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 5 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 25 |
| | Equity/Equality | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Total Keywords | 9 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 29 |
| | Total Reports | 10 | 17 | 5 | 10 | 22 | 19 | 83 |

| YEAR | KEYWORD CATEGORY | ASIA AND PACIFIC | LAC | MENA | NON-OECD EURASIA | OECD | SSA | TOTALS |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 2008 | Gender/Sex | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| | Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 5 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 18 |
| | Equity/Equality | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| | Total Keywords | 10 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 28 |
| | Total Reports | 13 | 21 | 7 | 13 | 25 | 25 | 104 |
| 2012 | Gender/Sex | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| | Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 12 |
| | Equity/Equality | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Total Keywords | 4 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 19 |
| | Total Reports | 14 | 19 | 8 | 13 | 23 | 28 | 105 |
| 2015 | Gender/Sex | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| | Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| | Equity/Equality | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total Keywords | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| | Total Reports | 12 | 19 | 8 | 13 | 23 | 26 | 101 |
| Region Totals, All Years | Gender/Sex | 9 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 32 |
| | Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 27 | 31 | 20 | 2 | 38 | 34 | 152 |
| | Equity/Equality | 3 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 11 |
| | Total Keywords | 39 | 48 | 20 | 3 | 47 | 38 | 195 |
| | Total Reports | 73 | 107 | 39 | 70 | 141 | 123 | 553 |
| | Ratio: Reports to One Keyword | 1.9 | 2.2 | 2 | 23.3 | 3 | 3.2 | 2.8 |

APPENDIX 4. GENDER KEYWORDS IN WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION SOC REPORTS

Regional incidence of gender keywords in World Heritage Convention SOC Reports, submitted between 1982 and 2015.

| KEYWORD MENTIONS | ASIA AND PACIFIC | LAC | MENA | NON-OECD EURASIA | OECD | SSA | TOTALS |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Gender/Sex | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Women/Woman/Female/Girl | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 9 |
| Equity/Equality | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Keywords | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 9 |
| Total Reports | 196 | 201 | 47 | 127 | 290 | 429 | 1,290 |

APPENDIX 5. CHARACTERIZATIONS OF WOMEN

Keyword mentions' characterizations of women in Ramsar Convention National Reports and World Heritage Convention SOC Reports.

| | | No. Reports (% of Reports Mentioning Keywords) | |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| | | Ramsar Convention National Reports (553 Total Reports, 87 Reports Mention Keywords) | World Heritage Convention SOC Reports (1,290 Total Reports, 9 Reports Mention Keywords) |
| HOW ARE WOMEN VIEWED? | GROUPED WITH OTHER MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS | 32 (38%) | 0 (0%) |
| | VULNERABLE | 1 (1%) | 4 (44%) |
| | BENEFICIARIES OF POLICIES OR PROGRAMMES | 33 (38%) | 4 (44%) |
| | STAKEHOLDERS | 37 (43%) | 1 (11%) |
| | AGENTS OF CHANGE | 12 (14%) | 0 (0%) |

