

GHACOF 50 report

Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum

Introduction

The 50th Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF) took place in Kigali, Rwanda from 27 to 28 August 2018. The WISER programme was represented at the event by members of the Met Office WISER fund management team.



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Participants

Participants at the event included:

- National meteorological services
- Regional climate centres
- Sector representatives e.g. agriculture & food security, disaster risk management, media
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID)
- WISER projects - TRANSFORM, DARAJA, W2-SIP, Rwanda national project, Weatherwise

Overview of event

WISER presence at the GHACOF 50 was planned jointly between the Met Office and ACPC, in order to ensure that both sides of the programme were represented.

Kirsty Richards & John Mungai attended the GHACOF 50 held in Kigali on behalf of the WISER fund managers. Rosalind West also attended on behalf of DFID and in her opening remarks gave an overview of the work WISER will be doing over the duration of the programme. Many of the projects were also represented including [W2-SIP](#), [DARAJA](#), [TRANSFORM](#), [Weatherwise](#) and the [Rwandan national project](#).

The theme of the GHACOF was Gender and Equity and there were a series of presentations and break out group discussions organised by the WMO, which were supported by WISER. It was interesting to hear that the 22% female attendance at this GHACOF was a record and there were discussions on how this percentage should be maintained and increased in future GHACOFs.

The presentations and subsequent discussions highlighted that the impacts of weather and climate are not gender neutral and provided an insight into the different ways in which women and men are impacted by weather and climate. For example, fewer women can swim and tend to be the ones who stay with children or the elderly in a disaster and these factors plus others mean female mortality rates can be higher. There are also issues with them accessing the services which provide information on weather and climate due to lower levels of literacy and having less access to

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technology. These factors need to be considered when looking at user needs. There were a number of good discussions and each sector looked at the impacts in their areas.

On the second day, John Mungai gave a presentation on WISER, which included a brief overview of the programme and projects. The presentation also highlighted the WISER knowledge management strategy and provided information on how to keep informed on WISER news through social media and an upcoming newsletter.

WISER side event

A WISER side event was held during the second day, which included a short session in which those projects in attendance were able to introduce themselves and give a brief overview of their projects.

The main purpose of the side event was to discuss how gender and equity considerations could be incorporated into weather and climate projects. This provoked discussion and ideas about whether this area should be a standalone objective or embedded into all objectives.

The session finished with a discussion on the barriers people saw to these ideas taking place. Topics brought up several times included: targeting STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects towards girls at school and university to increase the amount of female scientists in the sectors; empowering women by providing strong role models; and more women in senior or influential roles.

Awareness and engagement were thought to be key areas of focus and it was suggested that events such as the GHACOF should continue to be used as a platform so that delegates can use what they have discussed and learnt to promote inclusion and equity in their sectors of work.

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Summary of discussion points

The following themes and discussion points were raised during the WISER side event:

General points

- DFID shared how the organization embraces diversity with females in top management & have leadership roles.
- Inclusion and equity can be ensured by creating opportunity and space for men and women to contribute & ensure understanding of gender at all levels.
- Laws are required to recognise that gender balance is an economic issue.
- For future GHACOFs, there is need to check with organisations on women representation before nominations for participation are made. 22% female attendance should be a baseline going forward not just a one off.
- Participants need to influence gender equity when they get back to their institutions - the processes to achieve this are required to ensure that people who attend GHACOF promote inclusivity.
- Balanced communication of climate information, with gender dimensions should be considered.
- Gender and equity consideration should be a requirement for weather and climate projects.
- Promote gender thinking at early stages and promote gender balance training of climate experts – promote women early career researchers.

What ideas / suggestions could you bring to your work to better promote inclusion and equity?

- Consider better the information that women's groups need
- Journalists are mostly men. They try to include women and get them to volunteer - they try to be sensitive to women's needs - they can be less confident to speak, so for example radio is a good medium as they can still remain anonymous
- Encourage early career researchers (including young women graduates)
- Emphasize the importance of understanding the context on inequity issues first before making any decisions

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- Work with men on gender (it is not just a women's issue) - Initiatives to sensitise men to understand and appreciate gender inequality issues.
- Encourage women to take more senior and leadership roles in our organisations (even if there are many women, they are not those who take the final strategic decisions)
- Break down the jargon barriers that prevent the information on climate change to be easily understood and accessed by a wider audience than the technical specialists
- Develop briefs and information sheets that are jargon free
- Conduct gender analysis
- Shift the narrative language on gender (promoting equality is a necessity for better socio-economic development)
- Revitalise the GHACOF through seeking the participation of more diverse groups (this is the first time the GHACOF has opened up to a different topic and perspective like this one)
- Better monitor and manage who participates in meetings like the GHACOF. Delegates should be enabled and know how to promote inclusion and equity in their countries.
- Include gender considerations in the monitoring and evaluation plans for weather and climate projects. Make sure it is deliberately considered in projects from the start.
- More focus on engaging and educating women when it comes to promoting weather and climate services
- Engage more with experts/researchers from other sectors (like health) where women's perspectives might be better documented and acted upon
- Look at targeting schools/colleges and universities to promote and engage with students and teachers and change future generations perceptions and views.

Mainstreaming vs stand-alone objectives?

Mainstreaming:

Pros: Integration to hold everyone accountable to act more on this topic. This is the only way to ensure all sectors do act on inclusion. Everyone should have the same obligations or adhere to the same principles.

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Cons: risk of equity being diluted if no dedicated team is working and reporting on it and it is harder to obtain funding to support cross-cutting issues. There is also a need for guidance.

Solution: Equity and inclusion must be a focus for a certain period, championed by a leader with dedicated resources, and with the objective to mainstream these principles across all sectors/ teams. We therefore need both approaches.

Barriers?

- Lack of awareness of people on inequalities at every level
- Pressure/influence from deeply rooted social norms and culture/traditions that prevent changes in attitudes and behaviours
- Inequality remains an invisible issue, so it doesn't get challenged
- Lack of enforcements of existing policies due to lack of accountability
- Natural sciences remain gender-segregated disciplines in academia
- Lack of empowered role models for women and girls.
- Timescales- changes can't just happen overnight; they take time to implement and embed.

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