



## 2023 ADB GENDER FORUM 2 Billion Changemakers

Women Leading on Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific 21–22 November 2023, ADB Headquarters

## **DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS**

# We reconvened with over 400 participants from 70 different countries!

Day 2 of the 2023 Gender Forum examined two themes: **Women in the Green Economy** and **Gender-Responsive Private Sector-led Climate Action**. The sessions showcased the transformative roles that women can occupy within the green economy and the unique contributions they can offer to climate action led by the private sector. The discussions examined how the development of green skills and leadership among women can propel sustainable practices across industries and how private enterprises can foster genderresponsive approaches to environmental challenges.

### **IN SUMMARY**

The day's sessions explored empowering women within the green economy, emphasizing the need for their active involvement and leadership in this sector's shift towards sustainability. The forum also looked into how the private sector's engagement in climate action can be made more gender-responsive. Participants shared strategies for leveraging women's entrepreneurship as a cornerstone for a climate-resilient economy.

For those who missed the live discussions, a recap of the key discussions and takeaways are below!



### THEME 3: WOMEN IN THE GREEN ECONOMY

### **Session 3.1: Skills for the Green Transition: Global Perspective**

**Malika Shagazatova,** ADB Senior Social Development Specialist (Gender and Development), welcomed participants to the discussion on ecosystems that support

women's participation in the green economy and the importance of gender-responsive policies to address barriers to their participation.

**Rebecca Razavi**, LinkedIn Asia-Pacific Regional Director and Head of Public Policy and Economic Graph, highlighted the importance of harnessing every aspect of the global economy in an environmentally sustainable way to transition to the green economy.

"The green economy must be inclusive. Women, who are the most vulnerable to climate change and who are most at risk of missing out on economic opportunities, will benefit from green skills."

### – Rebecca Razavi

Prior research has shown that green skills are in high and growing demand and that women are at risk of missing out on economic opportunities. Ahead of COP 28, LinkedIn conducted a special analysis to shine a light on women's representation in the green economy based on their data:

- Global demand for green skills has grown by 40% but only 13% of the labor force possesses green skills and 9 out of 10 women lack green skills.
- Women only make up one third of global green talent, and the green talent gender gap is growing.
- Women are 64% more likely to have skills related to sustainability education and 20% more likely to have skills related to sustainable development and the circular economy.
- Men are almost 3 times more likely to have "cross-functional" green skills as well as skills related to energy management and renewable energy generation.
- Women only make up 34% of the workforce in the renewable energy industry, 21% of leadership positions and 22% of founders. This has stagnated since 2018. Razavi shared that there is a significant drop-off coming into the senior management level, with family responsibilities as a major factor.

She wrapped up with a few key recommendations:

- Include explicit gender targets in national climate policies on green training and upskilling.
- Track sex-disaggregated green jobs data in national labor market insights.
- Invest in job retraining programs that focus on women-dominated jobs that are most vulnerable to climate change.

The dialogue between Razavi and **Albert Park**, ADB Chief Economist and Director General, Economic Research and Development Impact Department, discussed green skilling and training for women, reskilling of women who have been out of the workforce and second chance learning, and business interventions that provide women with more opportunities.

# Session 3.2: Green Jobs, Green Skills, and Green Entrepreneurship for Women

**Samantha Hung,** ADB Gender Equality Director, moderated a panel discussion that highlighted the importance of addressing barriers from social and gender norms, ensuring women-led SMEs have access to the technology and resources needed to participate in green entrepreneurship, and skilling of women for green jobs.

**Dimitra Xynou**, OECD Policy Analyst, Finance, Investment & Global Relations Division, Environment Directorate, gave an overview of OECD's integrated policy framework on the nexus of gender and environment and shared the application of this framework in Greece.

Despite standalone efforts in individual countries around the globe, gender considerations in general are not integrated into the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to the environment. One aspect of the framework focuses on mainstreaming gender in parliamentary policies at the national and local levels. This includes taxation, budgeting subsidies and sectoral policies in energy, infrastructure, urban development, and farming.

Dimitra shared the data and findings from the Global Gender Response Tracker analysis, which showed that green recovery was not gender-responsive. Most countries missed the opportunity to address the gender-environment nexus as only 3% of all green measures were gender sensitive.

**Alexander Tsironis**, ADB Education Specialist, defined green jobs as jobs in green industries regardless of whether they need green skills or not, and divided into technical jobs, office jobs, and agriculture and labor jobs. The first two account for 60% of jobs and women are usually more represented in low-quality service jobs. Without targeted measures, women will continue to be excluded from benefiting from green job opportunities. Three action areas to address this are hiring female TVET trainers, gendersensitive pre- and in-service teacher training and greening TVET school campuses. **Natavan Mammadova**, Azerbaijan National Confederation of Employers and Entrepreneurs Organizations Chief Executive Officer, shared Azerbaijan's National Strategy, which defines the five most important social and economic priorities for the development of the country. Three are focused on the green, competitive, and inclusive economy. Mammadova discussed how Azerbaijan is moving towards a green economy, with commitment from the government to include women and encouraging the private sector to follow suit. She recommended that the private sector support employees' learning opportunities, that the government strengthen national labor policies to enable women to participate and acquire green skills, and that financial institutions and development partners like ADB step in to support the government's green development agenda.

**Nalini Singh**, Fiji Women's Rights Movement Executive Director, stressed the importance of looking at the root causes of women's barriers related to green jobs, using feminist analysis to better understand that challenges to women's leadership and participation are entrenched in patriarchal norms.

### "If we want any of the solutions to be viable and sustainable, they need to be truly gender transformational."

### – Nalini Singh

Singh linked other women's issues to women's lack of access to green jobs. Pre-existing barriers in the Pacific and specifically in Fiji are extremely high rates of gender-based violence (GBV): two out of three women experience GBV. The majority of women are entrenched in the informal sector, earn low wages, and lack social security. There is a high rate of child marriage due to adolescent pregnancy. These issues hinder women and girls from pursuing STEM, joining the workforce, and accessing green jobs.

Singh shared solutions such as mentorship and capacity building for women and gender sensitization of employers. As an example, she discussed an ADB-supported technical assistance in Fiji that built the skills of women in green construction jobs, a male-dominated workspace. She mentioned the need to design processes that involve men separately so they can be part of the learning cycle.

"If we are moving women into economic empowerment programs, it works better if we don't just target women but if we take along their families and communities."

– Nalini Singh

### **Session 3.3: Stories from ADB's Developing Member Countries**

**Tsolmon Begzsuren**, ADB Social Development Specialist (Gender and Development), moderated the panel that featured women's equality in tea production, accelerating gender equality in East Asia for green recovery, and skills development for green entrepreneurship.

**Chen Chao**, Section Chief of Project Management Office, Fujian Farmland Sustainable Utilization and Demonstration Project, People's Republic of China, discussed targeted gender actions to strengthen women's skills for green jobs. Through the project, 13,620 women received comprehensive training in tea processing techniques, and were equipped with modern agricultural skills that promote the sustainability of the tea industry. A total of 6,248 jobs were created for women and during non-tea production season, women were encouraged to seek part-time employment in other plantations. Gender-responsive infrastructure was built, including paving of rough roads which cut women's travel time in half. While training information is disseminated through WeChat group to promote skills development through innovative ways, practical training in the field was found to be more effective than online training.

"Development partners should reach out to local communities, especially women living in remote and rural areas, and raise awareness of the labor opportunities in the green sector".

### – Chen Chao

One of the nine state-owned enterprises serving as the project implementation units established a training center to provide training programs on the tea industry for students from primary to high school, and for local communities, including women.

**Choikhand Janchivlamdan**, Coordinator, Regional Technical Assistance on Accelerating Gender Equality in East Asia for an Inclusive and Green Recovery, Mongolia, presented the project's lessons and experience. The project conducted studies on the circular economy and inclusive green finance to inform policymaking, trained 350 women entrepreneurs on business design for the circular economy and provided them with a specialized mentorship program. The project also seeks to potentially build the capacity of women in credit savings cooperatives, the majority (60%) of which are led by women.

**Shaunalee Katafono**, Traseable Solutions Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer, shared her personal experience as an entrepreneur. Her company works in the agriculture

and fishery space – a company she was motivated to start because of her personal work experience on the regulatory side of the fisheries sector in Samoa. After a study came out showing the impact of climate change on tuna fisheries, with some countries losing out on the critical resource, she wanted to help other SMEs to get more value out of fishery resources. Traseable looks at the seafood supply chain through traceability tracking from origin.

### "Creating impact and change is going to take a long time, but it is certainly possible. The entrepreneurship journey can be a sad and long journey, so seek out mentorship."

### – Shaunalee Katafono

Expanding to the agriculture sector, Traseable provides women-led businesses with capacity building training and basic internet and communications technology (ICT) programs. Having a global and regional perspective while acting locally helped Traseable scale its business. Recognizing the opportunities in the space, Traseable plans to further expand outside the Pacific region.

### "Think global, act local."

### – Shaunalee Katafono

Katafono stressed that families should be brought along with women during capacity building initiatives to ensure that women have access to support systems, such as childcare.

**Malika Shagazatova**, ADB Senior Social Development Specialist (Gender and Development), wrapped up the session by highlighting that gender-blind policies for the green transition will not work; continuous learning and skilling of women for green jobs is important; education systems need to address the specific skills women need; and addressing social and gender norms is critical to make policies work.

### THEME 4: GENDER-RESPONSIVE PRIVATE SECTOR-LED CLIMATE ACTION



# Session 4.1: Levers Driving Gender Inclusive Initiatives in the Green Economy

In **Breakout Room 1, Anne Valko Celestino,** ADB Senior Social Development Specialist (Gender and Development), moderated a session that unpacked gender equality initiatives for the green economy in the private sector. The discussion explored business practices and perspectives to make businesses sustainable and inclusive, and provided insights that can be integral to business planning and investments. The conversations with two leaders from climate companies highlighted the importance of gender inclusion and gender responsiveness in climate operations.

**Sabrina Tan,** Lhoopa Inc. Vice President of People and Impact, shared their experience in leveraging innovative technology and empowering local communities to solve the affordable housing backlog crisis in the Philippines and the region. Lhoopa challenges the status quo with proven and effective solutions, gaining them 2X eligible enterprise that reflect their commitment to women's advancement and EDGE certification for integrating green and sustainable design in their housing units.

"A lot of what we do is very non-traditional, but we always say why not? It's effective. It works. We've proven it. At the end of day, it's for the higher purpose of giving access and opportunities to those who need and deserve it the most."

– Sabrina Tan

Lhoopa's business network is predominantly women, including its internal team (72%), sellers (90%), and customers (53%). They help women take the lead as senior women managers receive coaching to lead in a male-dominated industry. Being woman-owned and women-led, Lhoopa is aware and intentional about being gender sensitive. Women in communities who have home-based businesses are provided income generating opportunities and knowledge on real estate and technology. Recognizing that women wear multiple hats with their care responsibilities, they provide company benefits that benefit women, including medical insurance for both for staff and children. In partnership with ADB, Lhoopa is working on green and sustainable solutions as well as incorporating gender-based designs. They ensure that when they provide housing to women, their homes are not just for shelter but homes that can accommodate their needs.

### "Women and children bear the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change. So it makes even more sense to infuse sustainable and gender-based design."

### – Sabrina Tan

Working in a new business space, regulation, policies, and access to capital are the main challenges for Lhoopa. Despite these, they remain excited as they seek to innovate and minimize environmental risks.

**Devendra Chawal**, Greencell Mobility Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, discussed how they deploy electric buses in India while ensuring a gender diverse and inclusive workforce as well as safe transport for commuters, especially women. They set a world record of women drivers, who are enabling mobility for 125,000 people. Greencell is not green transitioning – it was born green. Their mandate is not to use diesel; hence, they do not contribute to pollution. As an electric company funded by the Green Climate Fund, everything they do must be aligned with environmental, social, and corporate governance.

Chawal shared his personal experience as he was raised in a household where women and girls are empowered, only to realize later that it is not the case for everyone. In Greencell, their company has good female representation and they encourage women's participation in transport. Recognizing that it is not easy to find women with driving licenses, Greencell encourages women in the communities to apply for driving lessons. In collaboration with non-government organizations, they motivate women with driving license to work for Greencell.

# "The resistance to have women drivers is not from the companies – resistance from home is the real problem."

### – Devendra Chawal

Chawal underscores that women's participation in transport makes business sense. He is also hopeful about young people's engagement with companies that support green solutions and inclusivity.

# "The generation now is much more conscious about the climate."

### – Devendra Chawal

**Valko Celestino** facilitated a Q&A between speakers and participants, where the latter also shared their home country experience. In the Pacific, for example, policies and regulations are not conducive for the private sector to be gender diverse and gender sensitive. Tan and Chawal acknowledged their shared experience with the participants, and recommended strengthening the collective effort among the government, private sector, and civil society to develop green and gender solutions, particularly in the housing and transport sectors.

In **Breakout Room 2, Amanda Satterly**, ADB Principal Social Development Specialist (Gender and Development), introduced the discussion on gender and climate in the private sector, with a conversation with three private sector companies who are leading the way on gender equality in their sectors in different ways.

**Erdenedelger Bavlai**, Khan Bank First Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the largest bank in Mongolia, shared their journey of promoting green initiatives and gender equality. They raised \$60 million for the first green local bond and launched three types of gender-related products and 16 climate-related products. They faced challenges in finding good green assets as many SMEs were not strong enough in that realm, so the Bank trained 500 women on how to green their business and use digital technology solutions.

After the appointment of a female CEO and Deputy CEO, the company looked at its mission and core values to ensure policies and procedures supported diversity, inclusiveness, and equal opportunity for all. 12% of their employees are on maternity leave at a given time, so they understand the need for ongoing learning as well as childcare facilities. She encouraged private sector companies to also understand why they need to care about climate change and gender equality for long-term sustainability.

### "The CEO, first deputy CEO and chairperson of the Board are women – an all-female led bank!"

### – Erdenedelger Bavlai

**Bharat Joshi,** Chief Finance Officer, Cimory, a leading food and beverage company in Indonesia, shared that one of the biggest opportunities they saw was in the differentiation of products and channels to distinguish themselves from larger players. They started an all-female dairy distribution model in 2013 with only three female participants. Cimory

provided employment, training, and financial literacy to women, involving husbands to gain their buy-in. They now have 5,000 female agents, going door to door distributing their products. Over time their incomes have increased and had an impact on their households, including in children's schooling. 1,000 female farmers participated in skills trainings to increase the quality of yields and break through the male-dominated dairy industry. It's a success in terms of climate impact as well – the higher the yield, the smaller the herd needed.

Joshi emphasized the importance of recruiting graduates into entry-level opportunities and retaining them, as well as having women in senior leadership. In Cimory, four of seven senior leaders are female, and women in entry level and middle management are being training for future promotion.

### "I know it's difficult [to work on gender equality]: it's not a short-term win, it's a long-term gain. If it's difficult, just hang on! There will be light at the end of the tunnel."

### – Bharat Joshi

**Enkhbold Khaliun**, E-Mart Chief Administration Officer, shared their experience building hypermarket branches, an opportunity to build energy and heat efficient buildings. They ensured disability accessibility through ramps and wheelchairs and nursing rooms were included for female customers. The management team is responsive to women's needs as 50% of C-level directors are women, as is the chief executive officer. The human resource policy is supportive of elderly employees and provides flexibility for women on maternity leave. Each checkout operator can choose which day they can work, a small difference that can enable women to manage their care responsibilities. In addition, they signed a partnership with an organization working against domestic violence to encourage the employees as well as bolster a civil society organization.

### "While globally only 1% of corporate procurement is from women-owned businesses, 36% of E-mart's suppliers are women."

### – Enkhbold Khaliun

In the Q&A, the speakers discussed the difficulty in defining criteria for women-owned businesses in the absence of government regulation, as well as the business case for gender equality. Participants agreed, saying that showing improved business outcomes is a key driver for advancing gender equality with a climate focus.

In Breakout Room 3, Xianshuang Zhang and Gisela Garzon De La Roza steered discussions on the importance of embedding gender perspectives in climate-focused investments and initiatives, setting the tone for an insightful exploration of gender inclusivity in the green economy.

**Nuka Mshvidobadze**, Georgian Renewable Power Holding Chief Financial Officer (CFO), shared her inspiring journey to the CFO position, highlighting her dedication to reshaping the opportunities for girls and women in technical fields, particularly in renewable energy. Mshvidobadze emphasized the need for cultural shifts to enable girls to see themselves in these emerging sectors. She spoke about the gender gap in her organization, noting that only 20% of the employees are women, mainly in administrative roles, and that she is the sole female board member. Her efforts to inspire young generations include conducting educational sessions in rural schools, aiming to bridge the gender gap in energy sector roles.

### "It's very important that there are female managers because girls need encouragement. They need to see that they can do anything and work anywhere."

### – Nuka Mshvidobadze

**Shami Nissan,** Actis Fund Partner and Head of Sustainability, recounted the challenging but rewarding process of integrating the ADB Gender Scorecard within Actis Fund's operations. She highlighted the difficulties faced and the success in securing board approval, underlining the Scorecard's role in fostering gender equality in investment and operational decisions; today, the Actis Fund board screens all its portfolio companies and potential investees for gender and inclusivity in its practices. Nissan elaborated on Actis' focus on sustainable infrastructure and energy transition in the global south, and the intertwining of climate and gender issues in their practices. She also discussed Actis' decade-long practice of measuring gender representation and the expansion of these metrics to include other diversity aspects, such as ethnicity. Nissan's strategy involved educating board members and staff about diversity and inclusivity, emphasizing the importance of allyship and proactive support for minorities.

### "You need to see her to be her. We want to use our platform to give women a platform."

#### – Shami Nissan

The moderators facilitated a deep dive into the practical measures these leaders implemented to combat gender disparities in the green economy. The conversation revolved around the significance of integrating gender considerations into climate initiatives, with a focus on successful strategies and learned lessons.

### "You have to be bold and courageous in order to break down structures that prevent women from working in renewable energy."

– Gisela Garzon De La Roza

During the Q&A session, audience members inquired about tips for encouraging other companies to embark on similar gender-inclusive journeys. Nissan and Mshvidobaze shared insights on the commercial benefits of diversity, the necessity of diverse teams for business success, and the importance of creating purposeful, impactful work environments to attract top talent, including women.



### Session 4.2: Spotlight on Gender-Inclusive Green Finance

**Suzanne Gaboury**, Director General, Private Sector Operations welcomed participants to the last session of the forum. She remarked on how there has never been a more opportune time for sustainable inclusive finance, a powerful and essential tool to achieve the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement. The private sector plays a central role in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. ADB is committed to climate financing through its investments and recognizes the importance of instituting a gender lens in its climate financing work. ADB has also invested in a private equity fund that directly supports forestry, including the upskilling of women farmers.

While women entrepreneurs are more likely to start businesses with a sustainable focus, they also face significant challenges in accessing finance. It is imperative that we bridge that gap to support women in finding innovative solutions to climate risk. ADB works with other financial institutions to widen financial inclusion for women entrepreneurs. For example, ADB supported the first gender bond in Georgia. To strengthen gender equality targets in ADB projects, there is an ongoing pilot on using the gender equality support card.

In the interview by **Sabine Spohn**, ADB Principal Investment Specialist, **Joana Pedro**, Social and Human Rights Lead, shared the United Nations Environmental Program Finance Initiative's work with 500 financial institutions across the globe in gender inclusive green finance to ensure that men and women equally benefit from environmental projects. Pedro has seen a trend of more and more UNEP-FI members setting gender targets in their climate portfolio in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 5. One of the challenges is collecting sex-disaggregated data and diversifying financial institutions so they are able to create products that are for everyone. There are also internal changes occurring in institutions to be more gender-responsive. Finally, Pedro shared their climate insurance initiative to help women be more resilient.

### "How do we connect the dots between climate, finance and gender? There are still a lot of steps to take, but it is good that we are asking the question".

#### – Joana Pedro

In the interview by **Gema Perez**, ADB Senior Investment Specialist, **Maya Kobalia**, JSC MFO Crystal Environmental and Social Department Head, shared how her personal experience as an internally displaced refugee in Georgia motivated her to work on women's empowerment. She highlighted how the majority of Crystal's customers are women but they only account for 30% of volume. Crystal realized that women not only lack access to finance but also self-esteem which hinder them from pursuing finance; hence, they conduct awareness raising and capacity building activities for women. Kobalia also spoke about their experience issuing the first certified gender bond in the South Caucus and Central Asia.

### "What brought us here will not bring us there. We need to shape mindset and measure impact."

### – Maya Kobalia

In the interview by **Anshukant Taneja**, ADB Principal Investment Specialist, **Kamrul Tarafder**, ASA Philippines Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer, shared his entrepreneurial journey to building the largest MFI in the Philippines. ASA started with two loans to two women – today, they serve 2.2 million women across the country with a portfolio of \$739 million dollars. After Typhoon Haiyan, ASA pivoted to help their female clients build back their businesses through interest-free loans. Finally, Tarafder spoke on how microfinance improves communities' quality of life and builds their climate resilience.

In the interview by **Anne Valko Celestino**, ADB Senior Social Development Specialist, **Biao Huang**, ADB Principal Investment Specialist, highlighted two recent landmark deals that integrated gender and climate development. ADB worked with a company in China to introduce gender equality as a priority and the company embraced it enthusiastically. The company agreed to set a more ambitious growth target for the women led MSME portfolio in terms of annual disbursement and client numbers. ADB worked with the company to develop their gender action plan and build the capacity of staff on gender responsive financing. Huang also introduced the concept of "blue finance", a type of green finance promoting a sustainable marine economy and marine environmental protection. Gender is ADB's key value addition to multilateral development banks' joint blue finance.

### **Closing Ceremonies**

**Samantha Hung** wrapped up Day 1 and Day 2 sessions by highlighting the energy and passion amongst speakers and participants, thanking the organizing team, and sharing her hope that they left the forum with a renewed sense of urgency to act and build on the connections made.

**Fatima Yasmin,** ADB Vice-President (Sectors and Themes), concluded the 2023 ADB Gender Forum, stating that gender equality and climate action are inseparable, and that ADB is committed to working with stakeholders to apply well-tested approaches and innovative ideas to ensure the equal participation and leadership of women in climate-resilient development.

Though the event has come to a close, the discussion continues. Spread the insights, foster new connections, and keep pushing for progress on gender equality and climate action.

If you haven't yet, please share your feedback on the sessions through these <u>evaluation forms.</u> Don't forget to check out our <u>LinkedIn</u> and <u>Facebook</u>, and share the posts!

> Thank you for being part of the 2023 ADB Gender Forum —until our paths cross again.

> > #ADBGenderForum2023 #2BillionChangemakers

Sincerely, 2023 ADB Gender Forum Team