

**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Climate Change (CC) Community of  
Practice (CoP)**

**In-Person Meeting**

**Convened by: Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD), with technical and financial  
support of SouthSouthNorth (SSN) under the CDKN programme**



**27 February 2026**

**Noora Resort, Bishoftu**



## Background

On 27 February 2026, the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Climate Change (GESI-CC) Community of Practice (CoP) convened its first in-person meeting of the year in Bishoftu town. The meeting took place at a pivotal moment, as 2026 represents the final year of the current CDKN project. CDKN has been supporting the CoP since its establishment in 2020, and the transition towards full national ownership of the platform. The February 2026 gathering, therefore, served both as a reflective milestone and a forward-looking strategic forum.

The meeting sought to meet the following objectives:

1. Creating a structured space for members to review the CoP's journey,
2. Assessing institutional progress in mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) into climate change policies, plans, and programs over the period 2023–2025,
3. openly discussing persistent gaps and systemic challenges
4. facilitating peer learning through the sharing of practical experiences from cascading GESI-CC Training of Trainers (ToT) initiatives
5. strengthening mutual accountability by reflecting on sector-level achievements and constraints.

In addition, the meeting intended to deepen understanding of [Ethiopia's Climate Change Gender Action Plan](#) and its monitoring framework, ensuring that sector institutions are aligned in their roles and responsibilities. Finally, the gathering aimed to build consensus on forward-looking priorities, including defining modalities for coordinated engagement in upcoming global climate processes such as COP 32, and identifying actionable steps to enhance the functionality, inclusiveness, and long-term sustainability of the CoP.

A total of 30 participants (17 female and 13 male) attended the meeting, representing sector ministries, youth groups, and civil society organisations. Participants included gender and climate focal persons, technical experts, and managers. Institutions represented included the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure, Ministry of Transport and Logistics, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Youth Council, Influencers, Ethiopian Women and Youth Climate Assembly (EWYCA), Africa Climate Messengers and Environmentalists for Sustainability, and the Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations (UEWCA). The Africa Climate Messengers and Environmentalists for Sustainability, and UEWCA joined the CoP as new civil society organisation members, marking an important step in expanding the platform's diversity and reach. Their inclusion strengthens the



CoP's capacity for cross-sectoral engagement and enhances its potential influence across a wider range of actors nationally.

## **Session I: Opening and Context Setting**

The meeting was formally opened by Hanna Abebe, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the Minister, MoPD, and Yehenew Abebe, Climate Change focal person, MoWSA. In her remark, Hanna acknowledged the evolution of the CoP since its establishment in 2020 and recognised the catalytic role of CDKN through SSN along with other NGOs such as GGGI, in strengthening institutional capacity for gender-responsive climate action in Ethiopia, through the GESI in CC CoP and beyond.

Yehenew Abebe echoed this reflection, underscoring the need to consolidate institutional gains and ensure sustainability beyond donor support.

Both speakers framed the meeting around three strategic priorities:

- Strengthening national ownership and sustainability
- Consolidating institutional progress achieved to date
- Positioning the CoP to contribute meaningfully to global climate processes, particularly COP 32

The tone of the meeting reflected both recognition of tangible progress and candid acknowledgment of structural constraints that require strategic attention.

## **Session II: Review of CoP Progress and Achievements**

The second session provided a comprehensive overview of the CoP journey from its establishment to date. Hanna reflected on the initial gender analyses that revealed fragmented integration of gender across climate initiatives and led to the subsequent establishment of the CoP as a coordinated response mechanism. She noted that over the past three years (2023–2025), the CoP has demonstrated tangible achievements including, but not limited to the revision of its Terms of Reference and action plan, the update and translation into a local language of six comprehensive GESI-CC training modules to improve accessibility, rollout of two rounds of national capacity-strengthening trainings, followed by an in-depth Training of Trainers (ToT) for selected members between May and August 2025. These efforts culminated in cascading trainings led independently by the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure and youth groups later in 2025.



Participants of the in-depth training noted that these training processes significantly enhanced institutional confidence and strengthened understanding of gender-responsive climate approaches. The participatory, adult learning focused training methodology was highlighted as particularly effective in fostering long-term learning and institutional ownership.

At the same time, several challenges were candidly acknowledged, and included that; The implementation of the CoP action plan has not been fully consistent, partly due to functionality gaps and institutional restructuring within the secretariat (climate change department within MoPD) Secondly, the documentation of sector-level GESI-CC actions remains limited, financial and technical sustainability beyond CDKN support is an ongoing concern, and Member turnover has also affected continuity within some institutions.

To address the technical sustainability of the CoP, MoPD assigned Rehima Mohammed the National UNFCCC Gender and Climate Change Focal Point, as the lead of the CoP secretariat which is housed within the climate change department of the Ministry.

### **Session III: Ethiopia's Climate Change Gender Action Plan**

A dedicated session on Ethiopia's Climate Change Gender Action Plan (GAP) was facilitated by Rehima Mohammed, Senior Expert for Environment and Climate Change Agreements and Partnerships at MoPD and National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point.

Rehima Mohammed emphasised that integration of GESI into climate action is grounded in evidence that women and other vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by climate change, while playing essential roles in adaptation and mitigation. She outlined how the Government of Ethiopia has progressively embedded gender considerations within climate-related policies, culminating in the development of the [Climate Change Gender Action Plan](#), which was recently launched during the second African Climate Week.

The GAP introduces indicators across 13 sectors and clarifies institutional roles and responsibilities. The active involvement of sector ministries including the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs in its development process was highlighted as a strength likely to enhance ownership. Some members of the CoP including from Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Transport and Logistics, Ministry of Planning and Development and Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure have been involved in the development representing their sectors in various capacities.



Presentation of Ethiopia's Climate Change Gender Action Plan. Credit: Jeba Studio

Participants highlighted a key challenge related to the institutionalisation of the GAP. While the long-term goal is to integrate GAP indicators into sector planning and reporting systems, the recent adoption of the framework means that awareness among leadership and technical staff remains limited. This was evident during the session, where some personnel from the climate divisions of certain ministries were unaware of the existence of the GAP, despite their ministries having participated in its development. To address this, participants recommended that MoPD develop a comprehensive strategy to institutionalise the GAP. This strategy should include initial awareness sessions for all relevant ministry staff and the integration of GAP indicators into existing reporting systems. Such an approach would help avoid duplication, strengthen sector-level understanding, and ensure that leadership and key personnel are aware of the GAP, its relevance, and their roles in its rollout.

This discussion underscored a broader insight: Policy adoption alone does not guarantee mainstreaming. Institutional embedding within budgeting, planning, and performance systems is essential for transformative impact.

## Session IV: Cascading Training Experiences and Institutional Learning

Practical experiences from cascading the GESI–CC ToT were presented by Rukia Seid, Director of the Urban Sanitation and Greenery Management Desk at the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure (MoUI), alongside Ilham Mohamed and Jodahi Bezabeh from Enfluencers.



Presentation of ToT experience by youth groups. Credit: Jeba Studio

Rukia Seid described how the in-depth ToT, led by MoPD and CDKN, equipped her with both technical knowledge and facilitation skills, enabling the Ministry to independently cascade the six GESI–CC modules. She emphasised that the training strengthened internal discussions on integrating gender considerations into urban climate and infrastructure planning.

Ilham Mohamed and Jodahi Bezabeh shared Enfluencers' experience of cascading the training within youth networks. They presented a [short video](#) featuring participant testimonials, demonstrating how the training enhanced understanding of GESI dimensions in climate change and motivated participants to integrate these considerations into daily practice.



A particularly notable example was the collaboration between MoUI and Influencers, where a youth representative served as resource persons during the ministry-led sessions. This collaboration illustrated an emerging model of cross-sector and intergenerational partnership.

Despite positive outcomes, presenters highlighted financial constraints as a major barrier to scaling up cascading efforts, even where institutional demand exists.

### **Session V: Ministry of Women and Social Affairs' (MoWSA) Mandate and Accountability Framework**

In the next session, MoWSA provided an overview of its legal mandate to oversee and support gender mainstreaming across sectors. The presentation referenced national proclamation frameworks that require all ministries to integrate gender considerations into their policies and programs. The presentation also mentioned GESI leveling tools used to assess sectoral performance on GESI. These tools categorise institutions along a continuum ranging from GESI blind to GESI transformative, helping to track progress and identify gaps.

In addition, MoWSA shared several best practices related to supporting women's and youth groups engaged in climate change related initiatives. These included capacity-strengthening support for women's associations and active involvement of women and youth groups in the implementation of the National Green Legacy Initiative, including annual tree planting and crop diversification activities.

Further, participants engaged in a discussion on the draft gender equality policy, status and how it entertains climate change.

### **Session VI: Lessons from Gender Cluster Coordination at the Africa Climate Summit**

The session on gender cluster coordination at the Africa Climate Summit provided practical insights into coalition building and advocacy. Azeb Kelemework, Executive Director of Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations (UEWCA) presented the union's experience in coordinating the ACSII National Civil Society Organisations Gender Cluster and advancing gender-responsive climate action. UEWCA facilitated unified advocacy among women-led and women's rights organisations to strengthen participation in climate decision-making and financing processes. The coordination contributed to influencing climate-related frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Declaration and the Gender Action Plan, while amplifying the voices of women and girls affected by climate change.



Discussion on UEWCA's experience during ASCII. Credit: Jeba Studio

The presentation emphasised strategic partnerships with government, CSOs, grassroots women's groups, and global networks, alongside capacity-strengthening, community engagement, and evidence generation to address systemic barriers and harmful social norms. Key issues raised included women's limited access to land, finance, technology, and climate information, and the need for meaningful participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in climate governance.

Major learnings highlighted the shared challenges faced by women in least developed countries, the importance of strengthening women negotiators' capacity, and the need to mobilise resources to enhance African women's participation in global climate platforms.

Future priorities include advancing gender-responsive adaptation and mitigation policies (including NDCs and GAP implementation), strengthening accountability in climate financing and budgeting, expanding civic space, and addressing coordination, resource, and communication gaps.

## **Session VII: Institutional Reflection and Forward Planning**

A structured reflection session enabled participants to assess institutional progress over the period 2023–2025. The questionnaire responses (by 25 participants) indicated that the CoP is largely composed of technical specialists (64%) working on gender equality, social inclusion, and climate change programs, with a smaller proportion of respondents holding leadership or management roles (32%). Most members joined the CoP in recent years, particularly since 2023 (36%), followed by 2025 (28%) and 2026 (24%), indicating most of the founding members of the CoP are no longer part of the CoP.

Respondents reported that the most significant institutional progress as a result of the CoP engagement has been in strengthening staff capacity through training and awareness-raising (68%), as well as integrating GESI considerations into planning and budgeting (48%) and climate-related project design (44%). Improvements in implementation practices were also reported (40%). However, progress at the policy level remains more limited, with fewer institutions integrating GESI into policies or strategies (36%) and only a small proportion reporting the development of dedicated GESI-CC policies or strategies (16%).

Despite these achievements, respondents identified several challenges affecting effective integration of GESI in climate initiatives of institutions. These include:

1. limited financial resources as the main barrier (60%)
2. weak coordination across teams (32%),
3. insufficient data and analysis (24%),
4. competing institutional priorities (24%).
5. Member ability to influence institutional change is constrained by limited decision-making authority (44%)
6. limited access to tools or guidance (40%).



CoP members assessing institutional progress. Credit: Jeba Studio.

Collaboration among CoP members appears to be increasing, with 40% reporting some form of collaboration, mainly through training and capacity-strengthening (32%), knowledge exchange (20%), and joint projects or activities (16%). Overall, the CoP is viewed positively, with most respondents rating it as effective (48%) or very effective (20%). Participants emphasised that the CoP has increased their confidence in applying GESI approaches (68%), strengthened technical knowledge (64%), and improved networking and collaboration opportunities (60%).

Respondents recommended strengthening the platform by supporting joint initiatives (68%), increasing leadership engagement (60%), improving coordination and communication (56%), and providing more practical tools and guidance (56%) to further advance GESI-responsive climate action.

It is to be noted that some questions were not applicable to those who have recently joined.



## **Agreed Way Forward**

The meeting concluded with the need to strengthen the government ownership of the CoP. Suggested actions include but not limited to engaging the CoP in the preparation of CoP 32, making it as a leading institution for GESI related issues; having the remaining two meetings as planned and carry out virtual webinar when needed; to establish small working groups dedicated to resource mobilisation; and nudging all members to be active in the CoP initiatives. To realise these, it was suggested to revise and simplify the CoP action plan, strengthen secretariat functionality, formalising MoWSA's co-chair role with a designated focal person, and providing targeted support to two to three institutions to cascade internal GESI-CC trainings. Improving documentation of sector-level achievements and diversifying CoP membership were also identified as priorities.

Importantly, participants committed to developing a coordinated strategy for engagement in COP 32, ensuring that gender equality and social inclusion are integrated into Ethiopia's climate discourse both individually at sector level and collectively as a unified platform. Members also advised/encouraged to use the Telegram group created for the CoP to share information on GESI and CC related developments including meetings, tools, studies, and so on. It has been agreed the chair and co-chair in collaboration with few members will draft an action plan for FY 2026 for the CoP and share with members for their feedback and endorsement.

## **Conclusion**

The first in-person meeting of 2026 marked a transition moment for the GESI-CC CoP. The platform is increasingly shifting from externally facilitated support towards government leadership. Foundational tools are in place, core capacities have been strengthened, and early signs of institutional change are beginning to emerge.

The central challenge to be addressed is sustainability: embedding GESI integration into systems, budgets, and accountability mechanisms so that progress is not dependent on individual champions or external funding cycles.

If successfully navigated, the CoP is positioned to evolve from a capacity strengthening platform into a nationally owned coordination mechanism capable of influencing both domestic climate governance and Ethiopia's positioning in global climate processes.