

Women's Vulnerability and Policy Framework for Climate Change Adaptation – Viet Nam

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People in Vietnam and climate change

- Around 70% of the population lives in lowland or delta areas or along the 3,200 km-long coastline
- Vietnam is one of the most prone countries to natural disasters and climate change
- There are about 700 deaths/year as a result of typhoons, floods and rainfall induced landslides
- So far no sex-disaggregated data is available on injury or death in Viet Nam, but poor women are more likely to become direct victims (mortality, injury, lack of food) as they place family members' safety first and they are often not warned, or not taught to swim...

The likely impact of climate change on..

- Women's productive role in agriculture, forestry..
 - Women's access to resources: land, water...
 - Women's reproductive role: taking care of others
 - And women's voice in the household and community
- ➔ Gender analysis gives us an understanding of how the identities of women and men determine different vulnerabilities and capacities to deal with climate change (UNDP 2008)

Dependence on land and natural resources



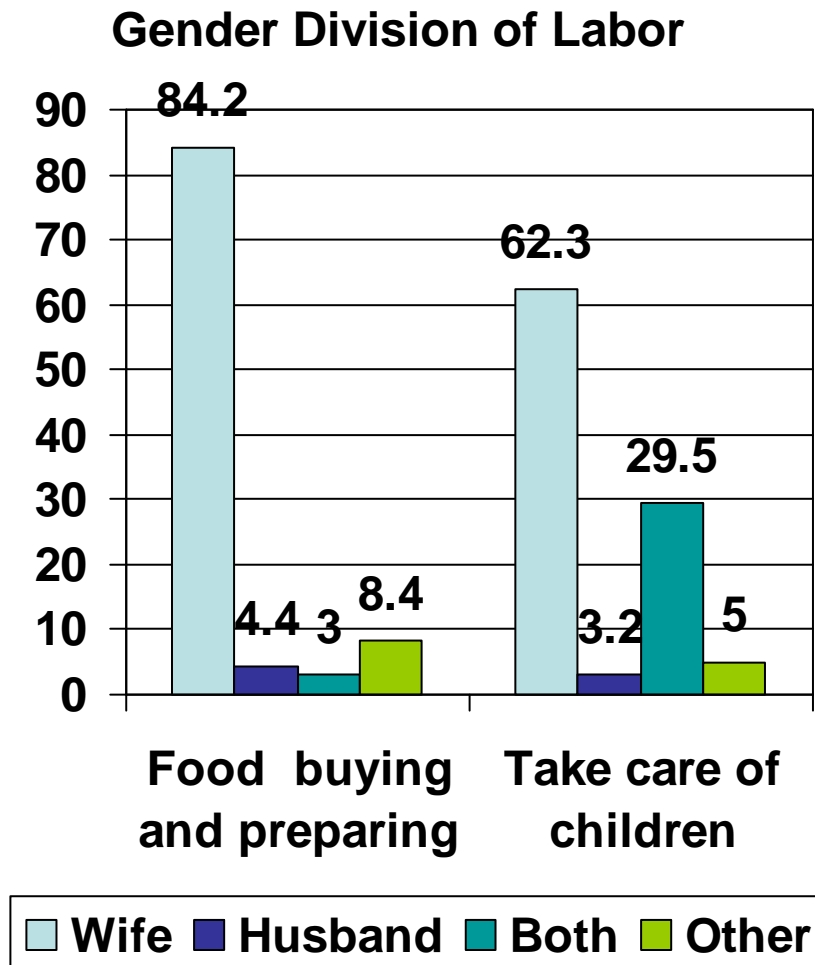
Source: WB 2008 based on 2006 VHLSS

- In rural areas, 62% of women vs. 52% of men are engaged in agricultural production - facing high risks of loss from drought and uncertain rainfall
 - Climate change adds to water insecurity which increases the work level of women involved in subsistence farming, as they spend more time & effort on land preparation, crop watering and protection from disease
- ➔ High dependency on land & natural resources for livelihood generation makes women more vulnerable

Income generation

- More women than men work in household/micro and small enterprises, they are often worst hit and least able to recover as a result of disasters.
- Natural hazards cause women to lose jobs and work longer and their conditions of work often deteriorate
- ➔ Concentration in informal sector also makes women more vulnerable

Care industry



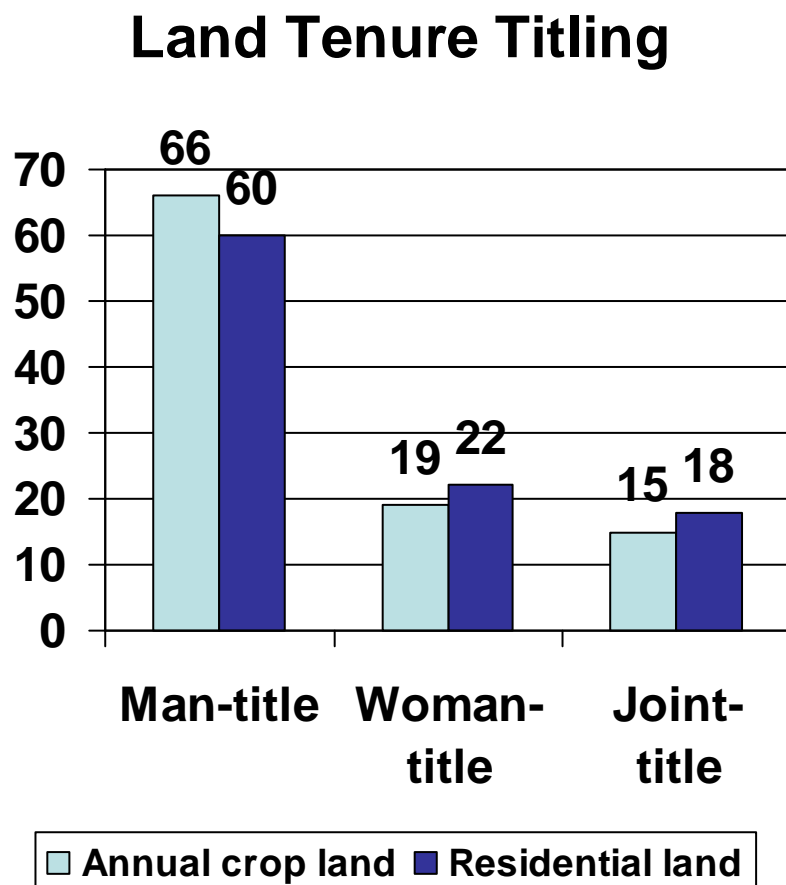
Source: VASS 2008:145

- Women face more difficulties in feeding and caring for others when resources are scarce
 - More time and effort is spent on collecting fuel wood & water and increased domestic care including care for the sick and injured
- ➔ Reduces girls' and women's opportunities to go to school, and to engage in income generating activities

Health impacts

- Women and children face high health risks as a result of increased vectors of disease such as dengue fever...
- Water shortages in drought and polluted water in flood time lead to hygiene-related problems due to lack of adequate sanitation and drinking water
- The proportion of women affected by gynaecological diseases increases in affected areas

Access to land and services



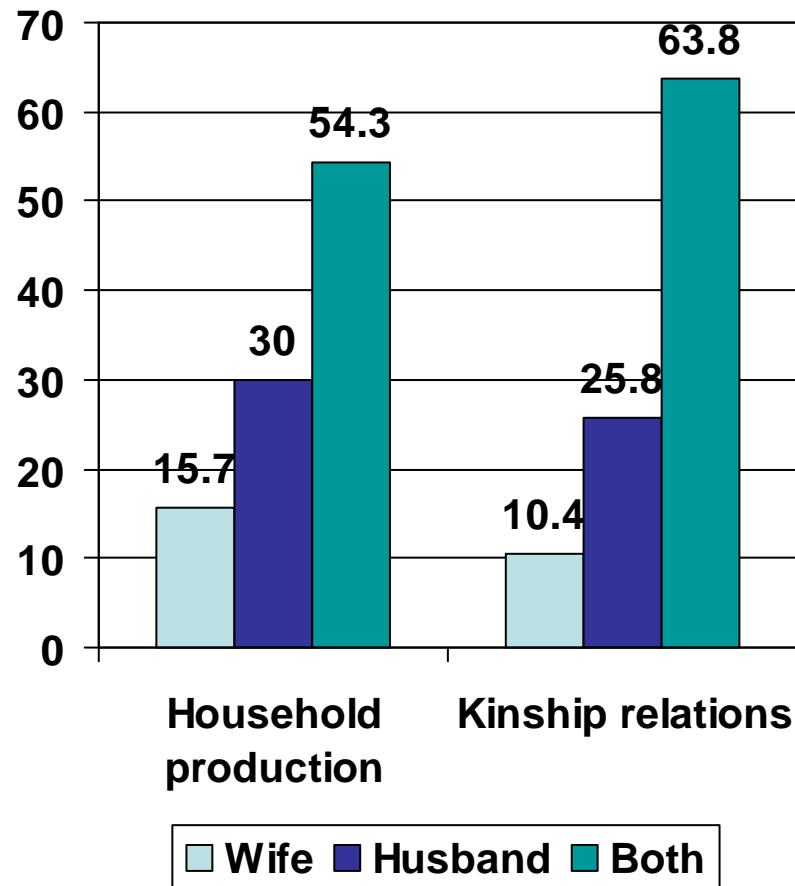
- Women hold title on 19% of Land Tenure Certificates (LTCs) vs 66% of men
- Less land rights limits women's access to credit for diversifying income sources and for recovery from loss
- Less access to market and extension services seriously disadvantages poor women and limits their coping strategies

Source: WB 2006

Coping strategies

- Different strategies are adopted by women and men in response to natural disasters: women are more likely to use income diversification while men are more likely to seek financial support as an adaptation strategy
- Migration is emerging as a key coping strategy for people facing hardship and environmental changes. Male migration often worsens the situation for women and children left behind. Women migrants often earn less than men and have less access to basic services
- ➔ Pre-existing vulnerability to natural disasters and slow-onset environmental problems means that women are among the most at risk and least able to cope

Power in the household



- Rural women have less decision making power regarding family businesses
- Attending village or commune meetings is commonly considered a man's task.
- Women only go to public meetings when men are busy

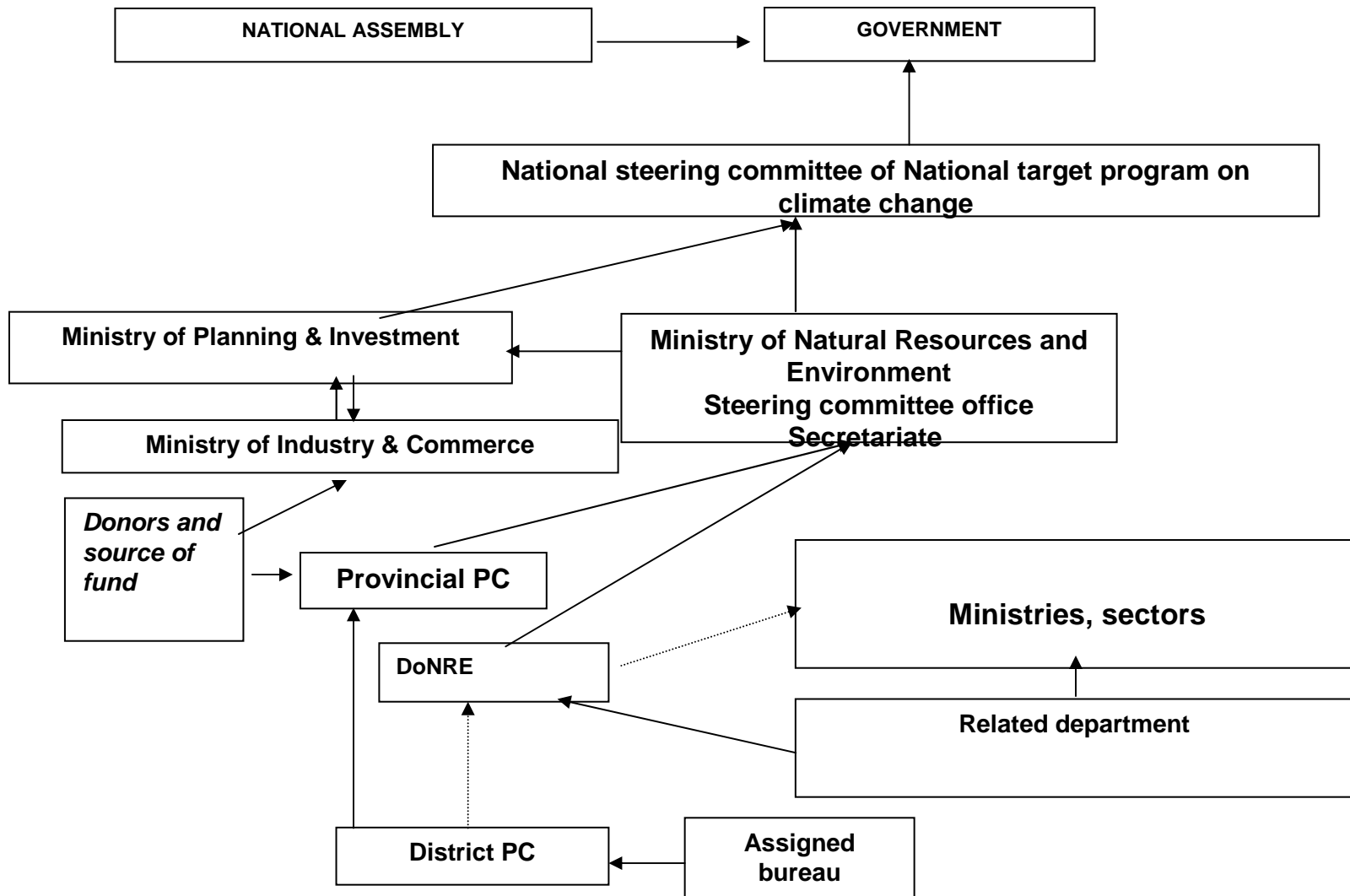
Voice in the community

- Women participating in local People's Council = 23.8% at provincial, 23.2% at district and 20% at commune level.
 - Women's involvement in local Committees for Flood and Storm Control is limited to child-care and food distribution, women tend not to be involved in decision-making
- ➔ Needs and views of women may be not taken into account in adaptation plans

National Target Programme: a new policy framework

- MONRE has prepared an NTP for climate change adaptation. This is an inclusive process with wide consultation with stakeholders and communities at different levels
- The NTP objective is to increase responsive capacities to climate change in particular periods of time
- Gender equality is emphasized as one of the guiding principles of the NTP (sustainable development, cross sectoral, gender and poverty reduction)
- Women are identified as one of the most vulnerable groups (among poor farmers, ethnic minority, elderly and children)
- NTP points to the potential impact of climate change and sea level rise on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality

Prime Minister chairs National Steering Committee of NTP and it's secretariat is based in MONRE



Gaps remaining

- Women's involvement in the discussions and consultations in the process of NTP development is limited
- None of the projects identified as priority in NTP relate to gender issues
- Women Union's action plan is assigned to focus on gender issues in adaptation activities, without mentioning of other agencies' involvement
- No mentioning of gender in other agencies' action plan
- General lack of information and knowledge on gender impacts in Vietnam. Most climate change studies have not addressed gender issues
- Climate change adaptation is seen as a technical and male competence

Government response

- Assess climate change impacts on different sectors and localities based on climate change scenarios and sea level rise for specific regions
- Carry out in-depth studies to assess the threats, vulnerability and adaptation at local level in specific regions, particularly those are sensitive and vulnerable
- A desk study initiated on gender & climate change (with UNDP support) will provide background and suggest future research as well as actions to be taken to integrate gender into NTP and its implementation

Future challenges

- Gender and climate change awareness raising
- Incorporation of gender and climate change considerations into political and administrative decision making
- Gender mainstreaming into action plans for climate change adaptation of ministries and provinces (guidelines needed)
- Allocation of resources (financial and human) for gender research and engendered actions in climate change adaptation activities

List of Reference

- VASS 2008. Gender Equality in Vietnam. Hanoi
- World Bank 2008. Gender Analysis of VHLSS 2006
- World Bank 2004. Vietnam Gender Assessment
- UNDP in Mexico 2008. Resource Guide on Gender and Climate Change (draft)