



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) submission to the UNFCCC on Gender and Climate Change

OHCHR is pleased to submit an Analytical study on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women as a contribution to UNFCCC's Gender Action Plan (GAP). The study outlines some key impacts of climate change on women and describes gender-responsive, rights-based approaches to address these. It highlights several illustrative practices and concludes with recommendations for a gender-responsive approach to climate action. The study specifically addresses the GAP in the subchapter on "Key legal and policy instruments," (paragraphs 37 through 39 and paragraph 57) and in its recommendations to States (paragraph 61).

Summary of findings: Climate change affects women, men, boys and girls in different ways. Entrenched and systemic discrimination can lead to gender-differentiated impacts of climate change with respect to health, food security, livelihoods and human mobility, among other things. Intersectional forms of discrimination can further increase the vulnerability of some women and girls to climate change, while the exclusion of women from climate action inhibits its effectiveness and further exacerbates climate harms. The meaningful, informed and effective participation of women with diverse backgrounds in relevant decision-making processes lies at the heart of a rights-based, gender-responsive approach to climate action. This inclusive approach is not only a legal, ethical and moral obligation; it will also make climate action more effective.

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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Analytical study on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present analytical study on the integration of a gender-responsive approach into climate action at the local, national, regional and international levels for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 38/4. In the study, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights examines the impacts of climate change on women, identifies human rights obligations and responsibilities of States and other actors to implement gender-responsive approaches, shares illustrative practices, and issues conclusions and recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present study is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 38/4, in which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was requested to conduct an analytical study, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, on the integration of a gender-responsive approach into climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women.
2. On 27 August 2018, OHCHR circulated a note verbale and a questionnaire to Member States, requesting their inputs. OHCHR also contacted other stakeholders, including international organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society. The inputs received¹ and consultations with stakeholders informed the present study.
3. The study outlines some key impacts of climate change on women² and describes gender-responsive, rights-based approaches to address these. It highlights several illustrative practices and concludes with recommendations for a gender-responsive approach to climate action.

II. Gendered impacts of climate change

4. Diverse factors, such as social status, gender, poverty level, access to resources and discrimination affect one's capacity to adapt to climate change. International human rights law prohibits gender-based discrimination. Yet, women often face systemic discrimination, harmful stereotypes and social, economic and political barriers that limit their adaptive capacity. These include limited or inequitable access to financial assets and services, education, land, resources, and decision-making processes, as well as fewer opportunities and less autonomy. Persons of lower socioeconomic status and those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination may be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In general, women are more likely to experience the adverse effects of climate change than men, because women constitute most of the world's poor and are often directly dependent on threatened natural resources as their primary source of food and income.³
5. Although some individual women may be less vulnerable to climate change than some men, the global perpetuation of discrimination, inequality, patriarchal structures and systemic barriers, as well as the different views, experiences and needs of men and women, contribute to an overall higher risk of women experiencing harmful effects of climate change. In this way, climate change perpetuates gender inequality. Gender inequality and the violation of women's rights, in turn, hinder women's participation in climate action. Addressing climate change, including its gendered impacts (of which several are described below), is therefore essential to protecting the human rights of women.

A. Food security and access to land

6. Climate change negatively affects the availability, accessibility, consumption and production of food. Women are more frequently exposed to food insecurity and gender equality is an important determinant of food security. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as much as 55 per cent of the

¹ Inputs available at www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/HRAndClimateChange/Pages/GenderResponsiveClimateAction.aspx.

² In the present report, references to women are to be understood as referring to women and girls.

³ United Nations Environment Programme, "Gender equality and the environment: a guide to UNEP's work", available at www.unenvironment.org/resources/policy-brief/gender-policy-brief-and-success-stories-2016-guide-un-environments-work.

improvement in food security in developing countries between 1970 and 1995 came from women's empowerment.⁴

7. Many smallholder farmers are women whose livelihoods and food sources – as well as the food security of their families and communities – are at risk from climate change. Climate change-related food insecurity also affects women differently because of their nutritional needs during pregnancy, lactation and childbirth.⁵ Poor nutrition is a factor in the prevalence of anaemia among women, which has risen in women of reproductive age from 30.3 per cent in 2012 to 32.8 per cent in 2016, worldwide.⁶ Discriminatory food allocation within families can also affect nutrition, as women are often the first to skip meals or reduce consumption during times of scarcity.⁷ Rural women are among the most likely to suffer when food prices escalate.⁸

8. Male-dominated structures often govern land ownership,⁹ making it difficult for women to access fertile land and agricultural extension services, which limits their ability to practise climate-smart agriculture and increases their vulnerability to climate change.¹⁰ The unequitable distribution of domestic and care work can also impede women's adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change, by limiting the time available for other activities. When discriminatory laws and practices restrict women's ownership of, access to and use of land, women's vulnerability to climate change-related food price volatility may increase.¹¹ Even when women own land, inhibited access to financing, extension services, resources, tools, seeds, technology, information, fertilizer and water can limit the land's productivity.¹² According to FAO, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 per cent, potentially reducing global hunger by 12 to 17 per cent.¹³

B. Health

9. Climate change can disproportionately affect the physical and mental health of women.¹⁴ During extreme weather events, women are more likely to die than men, and women who survive have a decreased life expectancy.¹⁵ Climate change reduces the quantity and quality of available water, which can contribute to numerous health risks for women. Water scarcity increases the burden on women, who often have primary

⁴ *Gender Equality and Food Security: Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger* (2013), available at www.fao.org/gender/background/en/.

⁵ Charlotta Rylander, Jon Øyvind Odland and Torkjel Manning Sandanger, "Climate change and the potential effects on maternal and pregnancy outcomes: an assessment of the most vulnerable – the mother, fetus, and newborn child", *Global Health Action*, vol. 6 (2013).

⁶ See www.fao.org/3/I9553EN/i9553en.pdf.

⁷ Global Gender and Climate Alliance, *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence* (2016), available at <http://wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GGCA-RP-FINAL.pdf>.

⁸ See Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women.

⁹ Tzili Mor, "Towards a gender-responsive implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification" (UN-Women, 2018), available at www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-un-convention-to-combat-desertification-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3803.

¹⁰ *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

¹¹ Ibid., and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Gender, climate change and food security" (2012), available at: www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/PB4_Africa_Gender-ClimateChange-Food-Security.pdf.

¹² *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

¹³ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development* (2011).

¹⁴ See A/HRC/32/23.

¹⁵ UNDP, "Gender and disaster risk reduction" (2013), available at www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/PB3-AP-Gender-and-disaster-risk-reduction.pdf.

responsibility for collection.¹⁶ Longer walks to get water require greater physical effort and increase the potential for exposure to sexual and gender-based violence. The greater burden of water collection may contribute to psychological distress, and the time spent reduces time for activities such as education and income generation.¹⁷

10. Poor air quality caused by emissions from fossil fuel combustion contributes to millions of deaths and health complications each year. Indoor and outdoor air pollution combined cause an estimated 7 million deaths per year.¹⁸ Women are at an especially high risk of disease and death, owing to their higher exposure to indoor air pollution from inefficient and dirty fuels such as wood or dung being used for cooking and heating in homes.¹⁹ The lack of viable fuel alternatives contributes to a public health crisis and to climate change.

11. Climate change can also increase the spread of vector-borne diseases that women are particularly vulnerable to.²⁰ Mosquitoes are sensitive to climatic variations, and temperature rises can increase the prevalence of malaria. Combined with harmful gender stereotypes that impose unequal responsibilities on women for care of family and community members, an increased incidence of disease can deprive women of other opportunities.²¹

12. The effects of climate change can also affect women's mental health. When extreme weather events occur, there is generally an increased and disproportionate pressure on women to support their families.²² This can increase risks of poor mental health outcomes²³ including stress-related disorders and depression.²⁴ Exclusion of women from climate action and decision-making can further exacerbate the stress of dealing with climate change.

C. Sexual and reproductive health and rights

13. Climate change can limit women's access to sexual and reproductive health services. For example, climate change-related human mobility can lead to reduced access to these services.²⁵ Extreme weather events, which are increasing in frequency and intensity because of climate change, can destroy essential infrastructure and otherwise contribute to a decrease in the quality, availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services.²⁶ Such contexts may also exacerbate pre-existing forms of gender-based discrimination, creating additional barriers.²⁷ A lack of access to contraceptive services can lead to unplanned pregnancies; and when safe abortion services are denied, women may resort to unsafe and potentially life-threatening methods to terminate their pregnancies,

¹⁶ *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ World Health Organization (WHO), "7 million premature deaths annually linked to air pollution", available at www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/air-pollution/en/.

¹⁹ WHO, "Household air pollution and health" available at www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/household-air-pollution-and-health.

²⁰ Public Health Institute, and Center for Climate Change and Health, "Special focus: climate change and pregnant women" (2016), available at <http://climatehealthconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PregnantWomen.pdf>.

²¹ UN WomenWatch, "Women, gender equality and climate change" (fact sheet, 2009), available at www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf.

²² WHO, "Gender and disaster", available at www.searo.who.int/entity/gender/topics/disaster_women/en/.

²³ F.H. Norris, M.J. Friedman and P.J. Watson, "60,000 disaster victims speak: part II: summary and implications of the disaster mental health research", *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes* (2002), p. 247.

²⁴ *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

²⁵ Cecilia Sorensen et al., "Climate change and women's health: impacts and policy directions", available at <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1002603#sec003>.

²⁶ WHO, "Integrating sexual and reproductive health into health emergency and disaster risk management", available from www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/emergencies/rhr-12-32/en/.

²⁷ United Nations Population Fund, *State of World Population: Shelter from the Storm* (2015).

leading to maternal mortality and morbidity.²⁸ Use of unhygienic water and restricted mobility may also affect sexual and reproductive health rights.

14. Climate change can also directly affect pregnancy, heightening risks of maternal mortality and morbidity and threatening the enjoyment of women's rights to health and life.²⁹ Negative pregnancy and maternal health outcomes, such as reduced birth weight, may result from exposure to extreme temperatures.³⁰ Poor air quality from the combustion of fossil fuels can affect maternal and child health by causing intrauterine growth restriction and congenital defects.³¹ Salinization of drinking water sources as a result of sea-level rise may cause increased rates of adverse health outcomes, including preterm births and maternal and perinatal deaths.³²

15. Climate change may also increase risks of sexual and gender-based violence, which constitutes a grave violation of women's rights to health, and liberty and security of person, among others. Beyond immediate mental and physical trauma, sexual and gender-based violence can also contribute to the spread of sexually transmitted infections and impede economic productivity, which can lead to greater poverty, in turn exacerbating the effects of climate change-related disasters.³³

D. Sexual and gender-based violence, and discrimination

16. The adverse effects of climate change increase the risks of sexual and gender-based violence. There are clear links between poverty, which climate change deepens, and sexual and gender-based violence.³⁴ Child, early and forced marriages can occur as a harmful coping strategy among those who suffer from economic stress due to disasters and the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change.³⁵

17. Women are also at a higher risk of sexual and gender-based violence during and after extreme weather events.³⁶ Disaster displacement can push survivors into evacuation centres. Women in these centres, including relief workers, may feel unsafe, be subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination, and/or have limited access to reproductive and other health services.³⁷ After disasters, law enforcement may be less effective due to strained resources, and women subjected to sexual and gender-based violence may not report violence due to associated stigma.³⁸ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons are uniquely vulnerable, due to stigmatization and discrimination. They may be excluded from recovery, relief and response efforts and may lack access to emergency shelters that satisfy their needs.³⁹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ WHO, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2015* (2015).

³⁰ "Special focus: climate change and pregnant women".

³¹ Cecilia Sorensen et al., "Climate change and women's health: impacts and policy directions".

³² Aneire Ehmar Khan et al., "Drinking water salinity and maternal health in coastal Bangladesh: implications of climate change", *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 119, No. 9 (2011), pp. 1328–1332.

³³ Annkathryn Goodman, "In the aftermath of disasters: the impact on women's health", *Critical Care Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, vol. 2 (2016).

³⁴ See A/HRC/11/6.

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Marry before your house is swept away: child marriage in Bangladesh" (2015), available at www.hrw.org/report/2015/06/09/marry-your-house-swept-away/child-marriage-bangladesh.

³⁶ Annkathryn Goodman, "In the aftermath of disasters".

³⁷ UN-Women, "Climate change, disasters and gender-based violence in the Pacific", available at www.uncclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/unwomen701.pdf.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ J.C. Gaillard, Andrew Gorman-Murray and Maureen Fordham, "Sexual and gender minorities in disaster", *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol. 24 (2017).

E. Livelihoods and decent work

18. The adverse effects of climate change can deplete resources and devastate infrastructure, increasing unemployment and deepening gender inequalities in the world of work where women already face significant obstacles.⁴⁰ Climate action that excludes women can intensify these challenges. Intersecting dynamics, such as indigenous, tribal or ethnic identity, as well as migrant or disability status, may compound the socioeconomic vulnerability of some women, particularly when adequate social protection systems are lacking. Climate change can exacerbate these vulnerabilities, leaving some women with less time to engage in economic activities and/or less access to resources, including information and education, which are necessary for adaptation.⁴¹

19. Climate change directly and indirectly affects women's employment opportunities in a number of sectors. Over 60 per cent of all women at work in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in unpaid or poorly paid, time- and labour-intensive agricultural work.⁴² Climate-induced loss of livelihoods, reduction in incomes, or deterioration of working conditions in agriculture and related sectors can have particularly negative implications for women.⁴³ For example, climate change-causing sea level, temperature and acidity rises have caused resource depletion in fisheries⁴⁴ and changes in fish population distributions, which has compromised valuable livelihood activities for women involved in fish catching, processing and trading.⁴⁵

20. Infrastructural impacts of climate change can also decrease the number of jobs available in some sectors. After disasters, women generally have more difficulty finding work than men, as jobs may first return in male-dominated sectors such as construction. Women in areas affected by climate change often need to strengthen their skills, and in some cases learn new ones in order to access work in different sectors. However, the increased family demands caused by climate change impacts, ingrained gender stereotypes and structural discrimination may prevent many women from completing the necessary training and education. Female-headed households, for example, may have difficulty accessing humanitarian aid or post-disaster programmes, which are often targeted at a presumed male "head of the household".

F. Cultural impacts

21. The adverse effects of climate change can interact with and affect culture in complex ways. If a woman becomes widowed due to, for example, an extreme weather event, in some cultures it is taboo for the woman to remarry, and widows are not perceived as having dignity.⁴⁶ In other cultures, women may be forced to remarry. Climate change also affects livelihoods and access to traditional lands, resources and territories. This may prevent or inhibit related cultural, religious and customary practices.

22. For indigenous peoples, the adverse effects of climate change can cause spiritual and cultural loss. There are gendered impacts for women specifically. Women in many rural communities hold expert knowledge of their ecosystems and of sustainable land management practices. Indigenous women, for example, often play an essential role in protecting biodiversity, and are the keepers of seeds and of traditional knowledge about

⁴⁰ International Labour Organization (ILO), "Gender, labour and a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all" (2017).

⁴¹ See Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.

⁴² ILO, *Women at Work: Trends 2016* (Geneva, 2016).

⁴³ ILO, "Gender, labour and a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all".

⁴⁴ FAO, "Influence of climate change on fisheries resources in the Arab region", available at www.fao.org/in-action/globefish/fishery-information/resource-detail/en/c/338390/.

⁴⁵ *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

⁴⁶ See <http://wapp.hks.harvard.edu/files/wapp/files/095740497085783201.pdf?m=1408553548>.

their lands and territories, and about the nutritional and medicinal value of plants.⁴⁷ Rapid climate change-induced changes to ecosystems and their biodiversity can affect traditional knowledge and its application, negatively impacting on women's livelihoods and the cultural practices, health, prosperity and resilience of their communities.⁴⁸

G. Human mobility

23. Although many women may migrate into situations of greater empowerment or assume leadership roles in the response to climate change, human mobility poses unique risks to women. Women on the move are more likely to suffer from sexual and gender-based violence.⁴⁹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons displaced by climate change may also face elevated risks of violent abuse in the context of human mobility.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the economic impacts of climate change can contribute to increased human trafficking and child, early and forced marriages, both of which often involve migration.⁵¹

24. Both the sudden-onset and slow-onset adverse effects of climate change can drive human mobility and affect the habitability of homes, lands and territories.⁵² When climate change affects communities, gender influences who moves (and who stays), how decisions are made, an individual's circumstances in transit, and the outcomes of movement.⁵³ Movement can influence gender dynamics by entrenching traditional gender roles and existing inequalities, or by challenging and changing them.⁵⁴ For example, male out-migration, driven, at least in part, by climate change, can lead to increased roles and decision-making power for women in agriculture. However, if the income generated by agriculture lags behind the income generated in other sectors, women's growing role in the agricultural sector could exacerbate gender inequality.⁵⁵

H. Women environmental human rights defenders

25. The adverse effects of climate change intensify threats to land, water, species and livelihoods, affecting women who live in and rely upon ecosystems for their subsistence as well as that of their families and communities. Women defending these ecosystems often pay a high price. In common with all human rights defenders, women face risks, including assassination, criminalization, intimidation and assault. However, they also face the added threat of gender-specific violence, including sexual violence, which can have additional adverse social consequences such as stigmatization and discrimination. Efforts by States to mitigate or adapt to the impacts of climate change, if not properly carried out, can exacerbate the situation – threatening women's rights not only to development, food, water, land and culture but also to freedoms of expression, assembly, association and political participation.

⁴⁷ See www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/documents/pdf/grand_council_of_the_creos_annex_comments_on_observer_participation.pdf and www.cbd.int/gender/doc/fs_uicn_biodiversity.pdf.

⁴⁸ FAO, "Women – users, preservers and managers of agrobiodiversity" (1999), available at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=2BB791DFD15ED4EF10EAE1AC83D930E3?doi=10.1.1.395.2601&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

⁴⁹ *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

⁵⁰ The New Humanitarian, "Lost in the chaos – LGBTI people in emergencies", available at www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/100489/lost-chaos-lgbti-people-emergencies.

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, "Marry before your house is swept away: child marriage in Bangladesh".

⁵² See A/HRC/38/21 and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR_slow_onset_of_Climate_Change_ENweb.pdf.

⁵³ See www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/uploads-wysiwig/Women%20On%20The%20Move%20In%20A%20Changing%20Climate%20report.pdf.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture: Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development* (2018), available at www.fao.org/3/I9549EN/i9549en.pdf.

III. Linkages between women’s agency and effective climate action

26. The full and equal participation and leadership of women in decision-making, planning and implementation as regards climate action is essential to protecting women’s rights and ensuring effective climate action. Participation is a human right, it enables the advancement of other human rights, and it is a core element of rights-based approaches to addressing discrimination and marginalization.⁵⁶ Projects and programming aimed at supporting communities affected by climate change become more effective when women are fully included,⁵⁷ leading to more efficient use of climate finance.⁵⁸ If women are not included in climate action, their needs are less likely to be addressed and inequalities are more likely to be perpetuated.⁵⁹ For effective climate action, decision makers must prioritize the meaningful and effective participation of women, recognizing that women are agents of change with unique perspectives, expertise, and problem-solving capabilities.⁶⁰

27. For example, women play a significant role in agricultural production,⁶¹ but are often excluded from consultation processes concerning agriculture.⁶² According to one estimate, if all women smallholders received equal access to productive resources, their farm yields would rise by 20 to 30 per cent, 100 to 150 million people would no longer go hungry, and carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced by 2.1 gigatons by 2050.⁶³ Climate action will also create new and non-traditional jobs. Failure to address gender gaps will prevent women from benefiting from these economic opportunities and inhibit the transition to a sustainable economy. Removing the barriers that prevent women from having equal access to energy and economic opportunities will unlock significant productivity gains and strengthen development outcomes.⁶⁴ Women’s participation at all levels of decision-making is critical for more effective climate action.⁶⁵ Women’s experiences in female-dominated workforces, or as the unpaid household workers that support industry, need to be included in discussions about a just transition and associated social protection systems.

28. Women’s unique knowledge and experience, particularly at the local level,⁶⁶ in areas such as agriculture, conservation and the management of natural resources means that the inclusion of women in climate action and decision-making processes is not simply a legal and moral imperative, but is also critical to effective and informed action.⁶⁷ One study has

⁵⁶ See A/HRC/39/28.

⁵⁷ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “Introduction to gender and climate change”, available at <https://unfccc.int/gender>.

⁵⁸ Liane Schalatek, “Gender and climate finance”, available at <https://climatefundsupdate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CFF10-2018-ENG-DIGITAL.pdf>.

⁵⁹ UN-Women, “Pacific gender and climate change toolkit: tools for practitioners”, available at www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/9/pacific-gender-and-climate-change-toolkit.

⁶⁰ UNDP, “Overview of linkages between gender and climate change” (2013), available at www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/PB1-AP-Overview-Gender-and-climate-change.pdf.

⁶¹ See www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/UNDP%20Gender,%20CC%20and%20Food%20Security%20Policy%20Brief%203-WEB.pdf.

⁶² Liane Schalatek, “Gender and climate finance”.

⁶³ See www.drawdown.org/solutions/women-and-girls/women-smallholders.

⁶⁴ United States Agency for International Development and International Union for Conservation of Nature, “Advancing gender in the environment: making the case for women in the energy sector” (2018), available at www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/IUCN-USAID-Making_case_women_energy_sector.pdf.

⁶⁵ Susannah Fisher and Clare Shakya, “Gendered voices for climate action: a theory of change for the meaningful inclusion of local experiences in decision-making”, available at <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10193IIED.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Bina Agarwal, “Gender and forest conservation: the impact of women’s participation in community forest governance”, *Ecological Economics*, vol. 68, No. 11, pp. 2785–2799.

⁶⁷ Mary Robinson Foundation, “Women’s participation: an enabler for climate justice”, available at www.mrfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MRFCJ-_Womens-Participation-An-Enabler-of-Climate-Justice_2015.pdf.

found that women, in general, are both more concerned and more knowledgeable about climate change.⁶⁸ Women’s perspectives often include not just their own experiences but also consideration and awareness of their immediate family and surrounding community. This means that women’s views and approaches can inform more holistic and effective climate action. When women are included in decisions relating to resource use and societal investment, they more often make decisions based on the best interests of children, family and community.⁶⁹

29. For example, studies have found correlations between women in positions of political authority and lower national carbon footprints, between parliaments with a greater proportion of female members and ratification of environmental treaties, and between higher percentages of women on corporate boards and disclosure of carbon emissions information.⁷⁰ This indicates both the importance of women’s participation in decision-making, and the need to change stereotyped gender roles for men to facilitate their equal responsibilities in the family and childcare, domestic chores, and community activities. With respect to climate change mitigation efforts, women’s education, and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights, are among the most effective means of reducing future emissions of carbon dioxide.

30. By ensuring that equality of opportunity and equal treatment of women and men is established as a goal from the outset, climate action has the potential to spur low-carbon development and economies for both men and women, promote inclusive societies, transform gender norms, enhance women’s participation in economic activities and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, for which women are fundamental actors.⁷¹

IV. Defining a gender-responsive, rights-based approach to climate action

31. States have legal obligations to implement gender-responsive climate policies that empower women, protect their rights, and address the gendered impacts of climate change. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women each explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. Other human rights instruments and environmental and climate-change laws and policies call for the protection of human rights and specifically women’s rights. This section describes several key legal and policy instruments that should inform gender-responsive climate action.

A. Key legal and policy instruments

1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

32. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women protects the rights of women and prohibits all forms of discrimination against them, and aims to ensure women’s participation at an equal level to that of men in political, social, economic and cultural development. The Convention provides a comprehensive women-specific regime that covers the spectrum of human rights and lifespan of women; it defines the meaning of discrimination against women; and it establishes legal obligations for parties to end such discrimination. For example, article 2 of the Convention calls upon

⁶⁸ Aaron McCright, “The effects of gender on climate change knowledge and concern in the American public”, *Population and Environment* (2010).

⁶⁹ UN-Women, *Leveraging Co-Benefits Between Gender Equality and Climate Action for Sustainable Development: Mainstreaming Gender Considerations in Climate Change Projects* (2016), available at https://unfccc.int/files/gender_and_climate_change/application/pdf/leveraging_cobenefits.pdf.

⁷⁰ *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

⁷¹ ILO, “Gender, labour and a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all”.

States, public authorities and institutions to refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women. Article 7 guarantees women the right to vote, to hold public office and to participate in the formulation and implementation of government policies on equal terms with men. Article 14 calls upon parties to “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas” to ensure that they participate in and benefit from rural development and development planning at all levels.

33. These provisions have clear implications for climate action. In its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women highlights the importance of gender-responsive climate action. In general recommendation No. 37, the Committee notes the urgency of mitigating climate change, provides guidance to States on their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in relation to disaster risk reduction and climate change, and highlights steps needed to achieve gender equality and promote climate resilience. It emphasizes that climate change initiatives should provide for women’s full and effective participation, advancing substantive gender equality and women’s empowerment while ensuring progress towards sustainable development. According to the general recommendation, climate change and disaster risk reduction measures should be gender-responsive and “the right of women to participate at all levels of decision-making must be guaranteed in climate change policies and programmes”.⁷²

34. General recommendation No. 37 identifies general principles of the Convention related to disaster risk reduction and climate change: non-discrimination and substantive representation; participation and empowerment; and accountability and access to justice. For each general principle, specific recommendations are made to States. For example, to ensure participation and empowerment, States are recommended to allocate adequate resources to build women’s leadership capacities.⁷³ To promote accountability and access to justice, States should conduct “a gender impact analysis of current laws” to assess their effect on women as regards disaster risk and climate change, and should adopt, repeal or amend laws, norms and practices accordingly.⁷⁴

35. General recommendation No. 37 also describes specific areas of obligation related to disaster risk reduction and climate change: assessment and collection of disaggregated data; policy coherence; extraterritorial obligation; international cooperation and resource allocation; non-State actors’ obligations; and capacity-building and access to technology. For example, in the area of capacity-building and access to technology, States parties are called upon to institutionalize women’s leadership, at all levels, in disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery and in climate change mitigation and adaptation.⁷⁵

2. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

36. According to the preamble of the Paris Agreement, “parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights ... as well as gender equality” and the “empowerment of women”. Article 7 (5) of the Paris Agreement refers to the need for gender-responsive climate adaptation and article 11 (2) calls for gender-responsive capacity-building. In the guidelines for implementation of the Paris Agreement, adopted at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, States are invited to provide information about gender-responsive approaches and planning processes in the context of adaptation communications, nationally determined contributions and the transparency framework. Decisions of the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties also mandate that the new technology framework address gender equality. The decisions also incorporate the recommendations of the Warsaw International

⁷² See para. 8.

⁷³ See para. 36 (e).

⁷⁴ See para. 38 (a).

⁷⁵ See para. 54 (b).

Mechanism's Task Force on Displacement calling for an approach to climate displacement that takes into account international human rights standards and gender.

37. In total, there have been more than 60 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decisions addressing gender. At the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, in 2012, the parties adopted a decision on gender balance and the representation of women. Since 2012, gender and climate change has been a stand-alone agenda item of the Conference of the Parties, and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation.⁷⁶ At its twentieth session, the Conference of the Parties established the Lima Work Programme, which is aimed at advancing gender-responsive climate action throughout the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The work programme, initially lasting two years, has been extended on an ongoing basis. It includes a review of the implementation of gender-related mandates by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, and training, awareness-raising and capacity-building for delegates on gender-responsive climate action. At the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties, in 2016, the parties adopted a decision recognizing the value of the participation of grass-roots women in gender-responsive climate action at all levels. In 2017, the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Gender Action Plan, under the Lima Work Programme, to guide ongoing work on gender-responsive approaches to climate change.

38. The Gender Action Plan is aimed at ensuring that women can participate in and influence climate change decisions, and ensuring their equal representation in all of the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Gender Action Plan sets out five priority areas, as follows: capacity-building; knowledge-sharing and communication; gender balance, participation and women's leadership; coherence (creating consistent implementation of gender-related mandates and activities within the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change bodies, the secretariat and other United Nations entities and stakeholders); gender-responsive implementation; and improved monitoring and reporting on gender-related mandates under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

39. The Gender Action Plan identifies key steps to help achieve these priorities. For example, to support the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process, it calls for travel funds to support the participation of women in national delegations, and the development and implementation of climate education and training programmes targeted at women and youth at the regional, national and local levels.

3. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

40. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has human rights and the commitment to leave no one behind at its core. Because the Sustainable Development Goals are interdependent, achieving any of the Goals will require effective climate action under Goal 13. Goal 5 (gender equality) is cross-cutting, and specifically calls upon Member States to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" and to end all forms of discrimination against women. Goal 13 explicitly calls upon Member States to "promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management... including focusing on women". Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and Goal 17 (means of implementation) are critical enablers for progress towards all of the goals, including Goal 13. Goals 16 and 17 highlight respectively the need for inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, and for adequate finance.

⁷⁶ See <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/workstreams/gender-and-climate-change-unfccc-related-activities-2017>.

4. Addis Ababa Action Agenda

41. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development calls for transparent methodologies, policy coherence, and climate finance, as well as gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels. Specifically, it calls for reporting of resource allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment, highlights the role of the private sector and development banks in safeguarding or expanding upon systems to uphold human rights and gender equality, and calls for integrated policies and plans for resource efficiency and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda calls for gender mainstreaming in "the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies".

5. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

42. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action aims to "ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms".⁷⁷ It states that the "eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice requires the involvement of women in economic and social development, equal opportunities and the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people-centred sustainable development".⁷⁸ The Platform for Action provides a blueprint for women's empowerment, identifying the environment as a critical area. It calls for involving women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, integrating gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development, and strengthening or establishing mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

6. Commission on the Status of Women

43. The Commission on the Status of Women has issued a number of conclusions on environmental management, the mitigation of natural disasters and climate change. At its fifty-second session, citing the often disproportionate impacts of climate change on women, combined with women's unequal access to resources and decision-making processes, the Commission stressed that a gender perspective was critical in all aspects of climate change. At its fifty-fifth session, the Commission adopted a resolution entitled "Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies".⁷⁹ The Commission has also consistently called for action with respect to the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, in its agreed conclusions.⁸⁰

7. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

44. According to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, a gender perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices and women's leadership should be promoted. The Sendai Framework recognizes the importance of women's participation, and encourages States to promote this participation and provide adequate capacity-building measures for women's empowerment. Regional commitments for disaster risk reduction build upon this global commitment. For instance, the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 encourages States to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making for disaster risk reduction, and to establish gender-responsive and participatory stakeholder and sectoral platforms.

⁷⁷ Beijing Declaration, para. 9.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 16.

⁷⁹ Resolution 55/1.

⁸⁰ Agreed conclusions from the Commission's sixty-second, sixty-first, sixtieth, fifty-eighth, fifty-seventh, fifty-fifth, fifty-third and fifty-second sessions.

B. Shaping a gender-responsive, rights-based approach to climate action

45. Sustainable climate action that benefits all people within a society requires knowledge and consideration of the different roles, responsibilities, priorities, capabilities and needs of all of its members.⁸¹ This must involve a rights-based, gender-responsive approach at the local, national and international levels that ensures that all people, including and especially women, are included, consulted, and empowered to participate in decision-making, planning, implementation and assessment, as regards climate action.⁸² Taking this approach means fully integrating human rights and gender in climate action, through:

(a) The integration of principles and standards derived from international human rights law, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other core human rights treaties, in all policies and programming;

(b) Improved understanding of the gendered impacts of climate change and climate action (e.g. mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer, finance and capacity-building) informed by the lived experiences of women;

(c) Women's meaningful, informed and effective participation in climate change-related decision-making, and climate change mitigation and adaptation, at all levels;

(d) Gender mainstreaming⁸³ as well as targeted gender strategies in legislation, policymaking, programming and other activities related to climate action;

(e) Clarification and implementation of the obligations and responsibilities of duty bearers such as States and private actors.

46. A gender-responsive approach should integrate gender perspectives at all levels of decision-making to ensure the full and meaningful participation of women and to achieve gender-equitable outcomes. This must involve consulting with women on climate action⁸⁴ regardless of their level of education or access to power, and ensuring a just transition to a low-carbon economy that does not perpetuate gender inequality. When developing rights-based, gender-responsive approaches to climate change, it is important to note that diverse factors such as human mobility can cause gender roles to shift within a society. This means that gender-responsive approaches will need frequent assessment, reframing and normative adjustments in order to fit shifting societal and climatic conditions.⁸⁵

47. Climate finance is an area where the application of a gender-responsive approach is critical. If project proponents fail to consider the gendered impacts of climate change and patterns of discrimination that women face more generally, expenditures for climate action may exacerbate gender inequality. Conversely, gender-responsive climate finance has the potential to enhance climate resilience, reduce emissions, and advance women's enjoyment of human rights and gender equality. It is also a key requirement for the long-term sustainability of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Climate finance should be channelled toward projects that directly benefit women and are designed, decided and implemented with their full and effective participation. This requires addressing underlying gender inequalities in legal and normative frameworks that act as barriers to women participating in climate action, which will in turn improve livelihoods and increase the resilience of communities affected by climate change.⁸⁶

⁸¹ UN-Women, "Pacific gender and climate change toolkit: tools for practitioners".

⁸² UN-Women, *Leveraging Co-Benefits*.

⁸³ Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. The goal is to achieve gender equality. See Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2.

⁸⁴ UNDP, "Overview of linkages between gender and climate change".

⁸⁵ Tanu Priya Uteng, "Gender and mobility in the developing world" (2011), available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/uteng.pdf>.

⁸⁶ See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/Session19/A_HRC_WG.2_19_CRP.4.pdf.

48. For example, in mitigation, sustainable mass transit systems designed with the specific needs of women in mind can increase the use of mass transit and women's access to employment, education and other services that facilitate the realization of their rights.⁸⁷ Likewise, renewable energy projects that improve women's access to energy also reduce emissions, have important health benefits, alleviate women's traditional care burdens, and open up economic, educational and social opportunities, including for women's civic engagement.⁸⁸ In adaptation, actively seeking to promote women's enjoyment of their rights is critical for increasing the food security and resilience of communities that depend on small-scale agricultural production for food and livelihoods.⁸⁹

V. Illustrative practices

49. The following analysis highlights some illustrative practices, identified through stakeholder inputs and through independent research by OHCHR, for the promotion of gender-responsive, rights-based climate action.

50. At the intergovernmental level, in 2018 the Government of Costa Rica launched the For All Coalition. The Coalition is a partnership between States which receives support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and OHCHR. The Coalition seeks to integrate human rights and gender equality in multilateral environmental agreements. It has organized events at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and at the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, supported a resolution on gender equality and women's rights at the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and prepared a strategy for engagement at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change also saw the launch of a Ministerial Declaration on Gender Equality and Climate Change by Peru with support from Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden.⁹⁰ Efforts such as these can play a critical role in shaping international processes, and related laws and policies at the domestic level.

51. Climate finance also plays an important role in shaping gender-responsive climate action. Most international financial institutions that provide climate finance have gender policies in place. Dedicated climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund or the Adaptation Fund require project-specific gender action plans as a prerequisite for project approval.⁹¹ The Global Environment Facility has outlined gender mainstreaming steps that its projects should take, which include: conducting a gender analysis and a social assessment during project design; consulting with women as project stakeholders; including gender in the statement on the project's intended objective; developing project components with gender targets; collecting sex-disaggregated data; and creating a budget item for gender-related activities.⁹² A joint publication by the Green Climate Fund and UN-Women entitled *Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects* provides specific recommendations for gender mainstreaming in project development, monitoring and evaluation.

52. Individual governments have also committed to financing climate adaptation and mitigation efforts through foreign assistance. Ireland identified gender equality and climate action as interlinked priorities for international development cooperation. Irish programming in this area addresses gendered access to pro-poor renewable energy sources, gender and climate-resilient agriculture, adaptive social protection and greening the health

⁸⁷ See https://us.boell.org/sites/default/files/cff10_2018_eng-digital.pdf.

⁸⁸ See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/Session19/A_HRC_WG.2_19_CRP.4.pdf.

⁸⁹ Liane Schalatek, "Gender and climate finance".

⁹⁰ "Accelerating climate action with gender equality", available at https://www.klimaat.be/files/7715/4461/3639/Gender_Equality_Declaration.pdf.

⁹¹ Liane Schalatek, "Gender and climate finance".

⁹² *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look at Existing Evidence*.

sector.⁹³ In Mexico, the German Agency for International Cooperation funds several projects to foster women's participation in the fields of renewable energies and energy efficiency, including the Women's Network for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.⁹⁴ The Women Delegates Fund at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change enhances women's participation in climate negotiations through travel support, capacity-building, networking, outreach and advocacy. Effective implementation and financing of these gender-responsive policies and programmes can help ensure women's rights.

53. A number of stakeholder inputs highlighted specific examples of domestic laws and policies related to climate change and gender equality. Morocco had specific legislation on gender and environment, and tracked relevant indicators.⁹⁵ Guatemala had a fund for recognizing women's land rights, and a specific gender provision in its climate law.⁹⁶ In Mexico, the General Law on Climate Change guaranteed the right to a healthy environment and included a specific focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.⁹⁷ In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 9729 required "the State to incorporate a gender-sensitive, pro-children and pro-poor perspective in all climate change and renewable energy efforts, plans and programmes".⁹⁸

54. Other inputs received focused on policies, programmes and activities carried out with respect to gender-responsive climate action. France had conducted an exchange of good practices related to gender and climate change with several Balkan States and with Lebanon.⁹⁹ In Afghanistan, the Ministry of Rural Development had carried out consultations with women on the adverse effects of climate change in the context of community-based priority projects.¹⁰⁰ In Argentina, a review of gender-related aspects of the National Energy and Transport Action Plans had highlighted key gaps to address, and an international workshop on gender, information and communications technology and climate change had fed into development of the National Adaptation Plan.¹⁰¹ Mali highlighted its Renewable Energy Project for the Advancement of Women, baseline studies and indicators on gender, and a number of climate adaptation activities related to energy, water and sanitation, and other necessities.¹⁰² In Mexico, specific indicators for climate change and gender, along with a strong legal and policy framework, had informed a number of activities to integrate gender equality into climate action.¹⁰³

55. United Nations agencies, international organizations and civil society organizations also play a critical role in promoting gender-responsive climate action. A 2016 review by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of 161 intended nationally determined contributions found that 65 referenced either gender equality or women.¹⁰⁴ It was noted in the review that the quality, quantity and nature of these references was generally inadequate. The majority of references were to adaptation, many of them described women as vulnerable but only two described women as agents of change, and very few of them comprehensively integrated gender equality. Several good practices are highlighted in the UNDP review, which concludes with recommendations for improved integration of gender equality in nationally determined contributions.

⁹³ Input from Ireland.

⁹⁴ Input from Mexico.

⁹⁵ Input from Morocco.

⁹⁶ Input from Guatemala.

⁹⁷ Input from Mexico.

⁹⁸ Input from the national human rights institution of the Philippines.

⁹⁹ Input from France.

¹⁰⁰ Input from the national human rights institution of Afghanistan.

¹⁰¹ Input from the national human rights institution of Argentina.

¹⁰² Input from Mali.

¹⁰³ Input from Mexico and from the national human rights institution of Mexico.

¹⁰⁴ UNDP, *Gender Equality in National Climate Action: Planning for Gender-Responsive Nationally Determined Contributions* (2016), available at www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/Gender_Equality_in_National_Climate_Action.pdf.

56. UN-Women provides substantive support to the gender equality group of friends, an informal group of parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to the For All Coalition (mentioned in para. 50 above). UN-Women works to raise visibility of gender issues at the highest levels of political discussion and provides financial support to State party delegates, non-governmental organizations, indigenous and women's groups and youth organizations for their participation in intergovernmental meetings. The UN-Women programmatic work on climate change includes three flagship programme initiatives, namely Women's Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy,¹⁰⁵ Women's Empowerment through Climate-Smart Agriculture¹⁰⁶ and Addressing the Gender Inequality of Risk in a Changing Climate.¹⁰⁷ Through these and other programmes, UN-Women promotes gender-responsive climate action at the international, regional, national and local levels.¹⁰⁸

57. The Gender Action Plan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change constitutes a good practice. A recent call for submissions on the Gender Action Plan yielded numerous inputs that highlight additional good practices.¹⁰⁹ In 2014, the World Meteorological Organization convened a Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services that raised awareness of gendered impacts of weather and climate, and highlighted good practices for the empowerment of women and men through the provision and use of gender-sensitive weather and climate information. The conference report laid out actions and mechanisms for making weather and climate services more gender-sensitive so that women and men could make equally informed decisions in the areas of agriculture and food security, disaster risk reduction, water resources management and public health.¹¹⁰

58. The International Union for Conservation of Nature publication *Roots for the Future* highlights the policy landscape with respect to gender and climate change at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and identifies good practices in gender-responsive programming.¹¹¹ The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and partners engaged with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the Committee's reviews of Maldives and Tuvalu to highlight exclusion of women from formal decision-making on climate change and discrimination with respect to land rights.¹¹² In both cases, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women emphasized the importance of ensuring women's rights to participation in climate change policy, in disaster management and in natural resource governance.¹¹³ This type of engagement with human rights mechanisms can trigger recommendations and government action, and also supported the elaboration of the Committee's general recommendation No. 37.

59. Partnerships can play a critical role in shaping gender-responsive climate policies. The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women highlighted its work with the University of Health Sciences to support the integration of gender in the National Climate Change Health Adaptation Strategy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.¹¹⁴ Ultimately, the strategy called for improved health-care services for women during and after climate change-related disasters, for awareness-raising regarding the health impacts of climate

¹⁰⁵ See www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/fpi%20briefenergy%20globalusv3.pdf?la=en&vs=5222.

¹⁰⁶ See www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/fpi%20briefagriculture%20localusweb.pdf?la=en&vs=3547.

¹⁰⁷ See www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/fpi%20brief-gir_v2.pdf?la=en&vs=2816.

¹⁰⁸ Input from UN-Women.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, inputs from the European Union and UN-Women with respect to decision 3/CP.23 (establishment of a gender action plan, activity E.1) on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change submissions portal.

¹¹⁰ Input from the World Meteorological Organization.

¹¹¹ See <http://genderandenvironment.org/roots-for-the-future/>.

¹¹² Input from the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

¹¹³ See CEDAW/C/MDV/CO/4-5 and CEDAW/C/TUV/CO/3-4.

¹¹⁴ Input from the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women.

change on women, and for multi-stakeholder collaboration following extreme weather events.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

60. Climate change affects women, men, boys and girls in different ways. Entrenched and systemic discrimination can lead to gender-differentiated impacts of climate change with respect to health, food security, livelihoods and human mobility, among other things. Intersectional forms of discrimination can further increase the vulnerability of some women and girls to climate change, while the exclusion of women from climate action inhibits its effectiveness and further exacerbates climate harms. The meaningful, informed and effective participation of women with diverse backgrounds in relevant decision-making processes lies at the heart of a rights-based, gender-responsive approach to climate action. This inclusive approach is not only a legal, ethical and moral obligation; it will also make climate action more effective.

61. The adverse effects of climate change on the effective enjoyment of the rights of women require urgent, rights-based, gender-responsive climate action that will respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women and ensure their empowerment as agents of change. States should:

- Take more ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation action to limit the impacts of climate change on all persons, particularly women.
- Be guided by the multi-dimensional and intersectional experience of women to incorporate a broad range of human rights and gender considerations in mitigating climate change and building climate resilience, such as:
 - Women's rights to land, natural and financial resources, services, and income;
 - Climate-induced displacement and migration;
 - Sexual and gender-based violence;
 - A gendered focus on health and well-being, including sexual and reproductive health and rights;
 - Social protection systems.
- Ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women with diverse backgrounds in climate change mitigation and adaptation at all levels. Potential mechanisms for promoting women's participation can include:
 - Protection of all women environmental human rights defenders who exercise their rights, including the rights to participation and access to information and justice;
 - Quotas for including women on local climate change-related committees;
 - Women-only consultation meetings;
 - The provision of safe transportation and childcare for women attending meetings.
- Take measures within relevant bodies and processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to:
 - Ensure gender-responsive mitigation and adaptation;
 - Integrate human rights and gender equality into nationally determined contributions;
 - Implement, strengthen and renew the Gender Action Plan under the Lima Work Programme;
 - Ensure gender balance in the composition of bodies under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its constituent agreements;

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- **Enforce gender balance and diversity in the composition of national delegations to processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;**
 - **Support capacity-building for women from diverse backgrounds to maximize their voice, confidence and negotiation skills.**
 - **Empower women, as economic and climate actors, and workers and employers, to help shape the just transition to a low-carbon economy that benefits all, including through:**
 - **Promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women in agriculture;**
 - **Strengthening women's land rights;**
 - **Ensuring women's access to finance, technology and other inputs;**
 - **Improving working conditions.**
 - **Ensure that climate funds benefit countries and people most affected by climate change and systematically integrate women's human rights and gender equality into governance structures, project approval, implementation processes, and public participation mechanisms, including through:**
 - **Ex ante and ex post gender and human rights impact assessments;**
 - **Regular reporting on implementation of gender policies, based on quantitative and qualitative indicators; gender-disaggregated data collected throughout the project cycle; and active engagement of local women in participatory project monitoring;**
 - **Developing guidance for gender-responsive stakeholder consultation and facilitating the participation of national and local women's organizations, including through increased funding to support grass-roots women's organizations working on local climate responses;**
 - **Mandatory gender-budgeting and gender financial audits.**
 - **Increase the effectiveness of climate action by funding and developing an improved understanding of the differentiated human rights impacts of climate change on women, including through:**
 - **Disaggregated data collection that pays particular attention to gender and its intersections with characteristics such as age, disability and ethnicity;**
 - **Development of gender-specific indicators;**
 - **Mapping the effects of climate change upon the poor, women, and girls;**
 - **Identifying priority areas of action to support women, and enhance access to benefits.**
 - **Take effective measures to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence in the context of climate change, including through women's meaningful and effective participation in the design and implementation of humanitarian, migration and disaster risk reduction plans and policies.**
 - **Engage with ministries of women's affairs, or their equivalent, when designing climate change policies and actions.**
 - **Continue to emphasize the need to respect and fulfil women's rights as a precondition for effective climate action at the Human Rights Council, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and other relevant forums, such as the upcoming Climate Action Summit being hosted in 2019 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.**
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