



Gender Equality to solve the Climate Emergency

Climate emergencies are never gender neutral.

In fact, the degradation of the planet's natural systems has a disproportionate effect on women and girls. It is estimated that 158 million women and girls are pushed into poverty as a direct result of climate change. As many as 80 per cent of those displaced by climate change and natural disasters are women and girls. They are also 14 times more likely to die in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

Climate extremes exacerbate existing inequalities

and power dynamics reinforcing harmful gender norms and stereotypes. Women's unequal access to land and natural resources, finance, technology, decent work, social protection, and infrastructure constrains their resilience. Climate crises magnify the threat of sexual and gender-based violence including against women environmental human rights defenders, indigenous women as well as those displaced. Furthermore, the polarization and urgency created by the climate crisis, accompanied by disinformation and misinformation, have led to a decline in trust in science and the media. This has exacerbated harassment and violence experienced by women scientists and journalists.

Women and girls must be at the center of the solutions

because they have the potential to offer unique knowledge and experiences that can help solve climate and ecosystem crises. Indigenous women especially possess an important understanding of sustainable land and natural resource management practices. In addition, research has shown that women's leadership is associated with improved sustainability, resource management, and climate resilience. Ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership of women at all levels of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction governance not only saves lives but can also help to transform gender dynamics within communities.

For **International Day of Women in Multilateralism 2024**, UNESCO brought together experts from around the world to ensure that gender equality is at the center of multilateral responses to the climate crises. This global dialogue produced substantive recommendations to meaningfully include the gender perspective in the outcomes of the UN Ocean Decade Conferences (2024, 2025), the World Press Freedom Day Conference (May 2024), the UN Summit of the Future (September 2024) and the World Science Forum (November 2024).

CALL FOR ACTION

To advance the multilateral agenda for gender equality and climate justice, UNESCO and its partners call for decisive actions to:

1 Empower women as leaders and improve their meaningful participation in multilateral forum to address the climate crisis and realize the Sustainable Development Goals, notably by increasing the number of women leading delegations to the UN Climate Change Conferences and other relevant multilateral fora where the climate agenda is negotiated, as well as at the national, local and community levels where decisions are implemented.

2 Close the gender gaps in science to propel women to the frontlines of the global response to the climate crisis. This involves dismantling gender stereotypes and biases in science, improving access for girls to STEM education, creating mentorship schemes to support the next generation of women scientists in leadership or decision-making positions, creating workplace environments that attract, retain and advance women scientists through policies and actions that promote inclusion, diversity and equity.

3 Leverage the participation and influence of women in managing the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, including indigenous women, as first responders in climate emergencies and holders of local knowledge and traditional practices at the forefront of environmental conservation and solutions to climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

4 Significantly increase investments in gender responsive climate financing and funds, including official development assistance (ODA) which currently represents only 2.4 per cent of all related ODA and facilitate access for women and women-led organizations to these public and private funds as well as other grants and sponsorship schemes for their innovations.

5 Eliminate multiple forms of gender-based violence and threats that are the result of, or exacerbated by, the climate crisis including targeted measures to promote the safety of women scientists researching climate and environmental emergencies and women journalists who report on them as they find themselves increasingly harassed and intimidated, both online and offline.

CALL FOR ACTION

6 Special Focus on Oceans to:

- **Reduce the gender gap among ocean science researchers and personnel**, providing access to leadership positions in research laboratories, science councils and in political fora where decisions are taken and actions are formulated on future solutions to the climate crisis.

- **Provide girls and young female ocean scientists with quality educational opportunities**, scholarships, mentorship programs, networking and funding opportunities for their research and action projects. This will help equip the next generation of women to be environmental and social justice leaders able to make decisions to protect the health of the oceans while ensuring equitable and sustainable access to their resources.

- **Recognize and make visible the scientific work and results** produced by women to preserve oceans as well as in the conservation of marine sites, including those inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

■ **Undertake advocacy efforts to raise global public awareness** of the knowledge and experience ocean women possess to solve the climate and ecosystem crisis involving networks of ocean women athletes, artists, scientists, educators, activists who are mobilizing a growing number of communities worldwide.

■ **Address the root causes of gender inequalities** that prevent women from advancing in academic and professional ocean science careers as well as in the maritime industry and working with men and boys to deconstruct stereotypes and create conducive environments for women-led initiatives.

It's alarming. Global climate related disasters have almost doubled over the past 20 years. Women's leadership as agents of change to address the climate crisis is the only way for us to save the planet before it's too late

Michelle Bachelet

President of Chile (2006-2010 and 2014-2018)

“While women are excluded from leading the global climate agenda, they are the ones who suffer the most from the climate crisis”

Audrey Azoulay

Director-General, UNESCO