



ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:

A snapshot summary on VAWG integration in climate policy – and key opportunities for action



In 2022, the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) established agreed language linking actions to address violence against women and girls (VAWG) in climate change policies and programmes.

This factsheet is a summary of IUCN and UN Women's brief on CSW66 agreed conclusions and ways forward for addressing VAWG and climate change linkages in policies, decision making and programming. It provides a focused overview of the existing international and national processes that recognize and advance these linkages. Please read the full brief for more details, suggested resources and examples of finance and research initiatives that align with CSW66 recommendations.

Read the full brief here:
<https://gender.pub/VAWG>



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VAWG IN NATIONAL CLIMATE POLICIES AND PLANS:

Around the globe, countries recognize and call for actions to address climatic impacts on VAWG as a part of gender-responsive climate policy



Albania Nationally Determined

Contribution: In 2015, Southeastern floods led to an “increase in violence against women, both domestic and outside the home, with women heads of households facing a greater risk” (p. 61).



Argentina Nationally Determined

Contribution: “...people are placed at the center as rights holders, under the principles of equality, non-violence and non-discrimination (...)” (p.26).



Bangladesh Climate Change Gender

Action Plan: “Sensitize men and harness them as champions in preventing violence and assaults” to “improve social security and protection of women, adolescents, and children pre, during and post-disaster and emergency situations” (p.45).



Comoros Nationally Determined

Contribution: “The National Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan has taken gender into account in the education and protection sector, which should result in the ‘establishment of mechanisms to monitor and raise awareness among displaced populations of the various forms of abuse, violence and sexual exploitation, the prevention of abuse violence and sexual exploitation of children and women (...)” (p.11).



Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Nationally Determined Contribution: An adaptation and resilience priority in relation to forest and biodiversity ecosystems is the “Sensitization of the different actors involved in forest exploitation on violence and human rights of men and women” (p.68).



Dominican Republic Climate Change

Gender Action Plan: “Sexual and domestic violence increases in disaster contexts. In addition, gender inequalities are aggravated, affecting women more, which requires the development of strategies designed with a gender approach” (p.99).

Nationally Determined Contribution:

“The Political Constitution of the Dominican Republic (2010) incorporates important elements for the advancement of gender equality (...) as well as to sanction domestic violence and violence against women (Article 42)” (p.75-76).



El Salvador Nationally Determined

Contribution: To meet sustainable transportation goals, there is a need for “Equal access for women and men to sustainable transportation infrastructure and technologies, in an environment free of violence against women” (p.93).



Fiji National Adaptation Plan:

Needs assessments can uncover an “increase in cases of sexual and gender-based violence during environmental and climate events” (p.103).



Guatemala National Adaptation Plan:

“...gender-based violence and sexual violence were present in 17 per cent of the care services provided” in three departments affected by 2005’s Tropical Storm Stan (p.68).



Guinea Nationally Determined

Contribution: “Reducing wood collection time also reduces exposure to the risk of violence against women” (p.28).



Haiti Climate Change Gender Action

Plan: Due to climate change, men experience “High risk of tension at the household level, loss of family welfare felt as an attack on men’s masculinity, which increases the risk of violence against women” (p.30).



Jordan Nationally Determined

Contribution: Acknowledging the need for socioeconomic development plans to integrate climate adaptation and resilience measures, Jordan identifies GBV survivors as a key group: “improving the existing social protection system to cope with climate change consequences and serve Jordanian segments of society including the poor, orphans, elderly, abused women and children among other vulnerable groups and individuals” (p.53).



Kiribati National Adaptation Plan:

“Ensure communications programmes include key gender-responsive messages to encourage attitudinal and behaviour change amongst: men to discourage gender-based violence (...)” (p.151).

“The public and the health system recognises gender-based violence (GBV) and mental health as a double burden of climate change on health of women” (p. 134).



Liberia Climate Change Gender Action

Plan: “Following the end of the conflict, rape and sexual violence remain an ongoing problem” (p.31).



Mexico, State of Sonora Climate

Change Gender Action Plan: “Train committees on human rights and non-violence against human rights and non-violence against women” (p.83).



Micronesia Nationally Determined

Contribution: Micronesia’s NDC highlights the National Gender Policy adopted in 2018 that has the elimination of gender-based violence as one of its five goals (p.10).



Mozambique Climate Change Gender

Action Plan: “Numerous studies show that rates of domestic violence escalate in the aftermath of disaster” (p.67).



Nepal Climate Change Gender Action

Plan: To avoid negative REDD and disaster impacts is “Orientation and training on gender & social violence, safe guard and conflict management” (p.55).



Pakistan Nationally Determined

Contribution: A disaster management action, “Sensitize men and mobilise them to serve as champions for preventing violence and assault” (p.57).

Climate Change Gender Action Plan:

“Identify key stakeholders for sensitisation and training on the links between disasters and gender-based violence. These stakeholders can then serve as allies to advocate for the protection of women and girls” (p.99).



Peru Climate Change Gender Action

Plan: “Design and development of research to fill the gaps in information and scientific evidence on the effects of climate change on the health of the entire population,” which includes “Analysis of gender-based violence in climate change scenarios” (p.111).



Seychelles Nationally Determined

Contribution: “ensuring that climate-related vulnerability assessments and actions take into account sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence risks and protective measures and are informed by disaggregated population data” (p.36).



Sierra Leone Nationally Determined

Contribution: “...the passage of the three ‘gender justice’ laws’, which respectively address domestic violence, improve women’s access to land through inheritance, and strengthen women’s rights” (p.16).



Somalia Nationally Determined

Contribution: “reports indicate that 70-80% of those in IDPs and refugee camps are women, who are exposed to gender based violence” (p.12).



Suriname Climate Change Gender Action

Plan: “After disasters, the threat of physical and sexual violence often increases; this threat is being increased in shelter camps. One way of combatting this is to include gender awareness training for volunteers working in disaster areas including crisis management and sexual and gender-based violence” (p.26).



Tanzania Climate Change Gender Action

Plan: “Families who don’t have money for water have no choice but to send their daughters out to collect water, despite the possibility of being subject to episodes of violence” (p.33).



Tunisia Nationally Determined

Contribution: “Improve women’s health services and delivery through prevention, educational promotion, empowerment of professionals involved in the organization of awareness campaigns for women’s productive and reproductive health, as well as to prevent and support women against domestic and gender-based violence” (p.66).



Vanuatu Nationally Determined

Contribution: “The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and ally (LGBTQIA+) community is one such group, which, because of its social vulnerability, is a hidden victim of climate change to a wide extent. LGBTQIA+ individuals are uniquely vulnerable to exclusion, violence and exploitation because of the cumulative impacts of social stigma, discrimination and hatred. The social stigma around the LGBTQIA+ community also makes several social opportunities and infrastructure unavailable to them. The roots of climate change are tied with the roots of multiple oppressions” (p.22).



Zambia Climate Change Gender Action

Plan: Changes in water availability and rainfall “has led many women to move into ‘commercial sex work as a ‘coping strategy’ to sustain their families” (p.24).

INTERNATIONALLY NEGOTIATED AND AGREED CONCLUSIONS AND CONVENTIONS DRAW LINKAGES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND VAWG:

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women



The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is ratified by 189 states. Its General Recommendation 37 states:

“Women and girls also face a heightened risk of gender-based violence during and following disasters. (...) women and girls are often exposed to sexual violence and exploitation (...). Domestic violence, early and/or forced marriage, trafficking in persons and forced prostitution are also more likely to occur during and following disasters.”

The Commission on the Status of Women



The Commission on the Status of Women is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 2022, at its 66th session (CSW66),

the Commission focused on climate change and made many links to VAWG in its conclusions and recommendations, a few examples:

“The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, (...). It recognizes that the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental challenges increase and exacerbate the vulnerability of women and girls to discrimination and all forms of violence.”

“Support and fund research and analysis to better understand the impacts of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters on women and girls, including in relation to child, early and forced marriage, trafficking in persons, (...) violence against women and girls (...) in order to inform policies and programmes.”

“Eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against all women and girls (...), which are exacerbated in contexts of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence and end impunity, and take appropriate measures to create a safe, enabling and violence-free working environment for women (...).”

Other environmental processes

Multilateral agreements are currently reviewing similar connections through various processes and commissioned studies:



Convention on Biological Diversity

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Draft Post-2020 Gender Plan of Action, Objective 1.5:

“Identify and eliminate, prevent and respond, to all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence related to control, ownership and access to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, including protecting women environmental human rights defenders.”



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat commissioned study:

Drought-related migration places women at risk, as “female migrants are particularly at risk from sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence.”



Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 6th Assessment Report (AR6):

“Extreme weather and climate impacts are associated with increased violence against women, girls and vulnerable groups (high agreement, medium evidence).”

WHAT CAN I DO?

Opportunities to accelerate action

Recommendations from CSW66 can inform national governments, observer organizations and civil society gathering at COP27 to consider integrating VAWG prevention and response in climate actions.

Review below a summary of key entry points and opportunities to address VAW and climate in alignment with CSW66 recommendations from IUCN and UN Women's policy brief:

Strengthen normative, legal and regulatory frameworks:

- National and international framework processes that recognise VAWG and climate change linkages can inform and support other governmental and international policy spheres to recognize the linkages.

Integrate gender perspectives into climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes:

- Context-specific concerns and drivers of VAWG in relation to climate change, environmental degradation and disasters can be identified as part of a comprehensive gender analysis.
- Cross-sectoral knowledge sharing and collaboration across areas of expertise on addressing VAWG and climate change can build and enhance capacities to address interlinkages.

Expand gender-responsive finance:

- Invest in cross-sectoral partnerships building among climate change and VAWG grassroots organisations, advocacy groups, institutions and practitioners
- Increase specific attention to VAWG and climate linkages within environmental and climate-related finance – drawing inspiration from environmental finance mechanisms like the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) that include policies relating to gender-based violence.

Enhance gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex:

- Generate data and information on VAWG and climate change linkages to uncover potential mitigation, prevention and response strategies.

Foster a gender-responsive, just transition:

- Protect and promote safe and inclusive working environments free of violence and discrimination against women and girls in climate change-related sectors in the context of a just transition.



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