

Gender and climate action

Our Work

- Gender and climate action
- Gender and nature action
- Gender and chemicals and pollution action
- Human Resource Development & Management

To promote gender equality and women empowerment UNEP has developed a comprehensive [Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment](#), which provides a complete gender mainstreaming policy statement and operational framework to guide the organization's work. The gender mainstreaming approach ensures that women's as well as men's concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of [climate action policies and programmes](#) so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.



Gendered vulnerabilities to climate change

Climate change impacts are different for men and women due to existing gender dynamics and inequalities and like most other challenges in humanitarian and developmental spheres, women are disproportionately negatively affected. The lower societal positions limit their access to resources and their ability to diversify their livelihoods in response to climate change. Discriminatory cultural norms and practices may create social, economic, and political barriers that limit women's ability to cope with and recover from the damage suffered as a result of sudden and slow-onset climate disasters.

Women's diverse reproductive and productive roles within the household and the community level, as agricultural producers, energy providers, managers of water and waste heighten the levels of their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. During extreme weather events, the labour burden of rural women exceeds that of men, women as primary producers and agricultural workers work harder to secure income forcing girls to leave school to help with chores. Further, women are often assigned responsibility for safeguarding the food security of their families, a task that is becoming increasingly difficult in drought-prone regions. During periods of food scarcity, women tend to eat last which has negative impacts on their health.



Additionally, scarcity of natural resources due to climate change, means that women and girls must walk longer distances to collect firewood and water and access new farmlands. This exposes them to a higher risk of suffering different forms of sexual violence and abuse, including being coerced into exchanging sex for food.

In our climate actions intersectionality is an important factor to consider as certain groups of women are more vulnerable than others, namely female-headed households, indigenous women, older women, and those with lower-levels of education, low socio-economic status, and different races.

Women as active and effective agents and promoters of climate change adaptation and mitigation

Women should not only be considered victims of climate change but also as agents of change. To promote gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the process, involving women in decision-making for climate action is essential, as it ensures the

integration of their knowledge and experiences regarding climate change. This enriches the discourse with diverse perspectives and talents.

Additionally, giving women increased access to resources can reduce vulnerability and create more resilient households and communities. Despite women contributing a third of the global workforce in agriculture, only 12.6 percent of landowners are women. This lack of resource control translates into women receiving a mere 10 percent of total aid for agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Moreover, they face reduced access to information about adaptation technologies, cropping patterns, and weather events.

Research underscores women's willingness to invest more than men in environmentally friendly transportation and their heightened focus on eco-friendly products. They exhibit greater awareness of energy conservation and natural resource preservation. Moreover, women leaders across industries are already demonstrating a commitment to sustainable business practices with positive societal impacts. This change can occur at all levels, spanning households, communities, businesses, and politics.

On a household level, women are more inclined to alter daily habits for environmental protection and family well-being. They hold sway in decisions that directly influence family habits, energy usage, and waste generation. This influence extends to grocery and clothing shopping, cooking, packaging reuse, clothing repair, waste separation, and more. Women's determination to positively influence family members, neighbors, and colleagues is also notable. This underscores the need for women involvement in climate action.

Resources

- [Why does gender equality matter when it comes to climate action? \(2023\)](#)
- [Explainer: How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected \(2022\)](#)
- [Overview of linkages between gender and climate change \(2016\)](#)
- [Global Gender and Environment Outlook \(2016\)](#)
- [Gender and UNFCCC Topics | UNFCCC](#)
- [Gender and the Environment – Geneva Environment Network](#)
- [Attitudes on issues related to the EU Transport Policy \(2007\)](#)
- [Adaptation Gap Report 2022 | page 13-18](#)
- [Emissions Gap Report 2022 | page 38,53,72](#)
- [Gender considerations in the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report \(2023\)](#)