

Submission by UN-Women to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

as input to the preparation by OHCHR of

an **Analytical study on the integration of a gender-responsive approach into climate action**

**4 February 2019**

**Background**

The Human Rights Council, at its 39th session, adopted resolution A/HRC/RES/38/4 on ‘Human Rights and Climate Change’, which recognizes the need for a gender-responsive approach to climate action. This submission aims to contribute to the development of an analytical study on the integration of a gender-responsive approach to climate action, being developed by OHCHR in response to the request of the Human Rights Council in Resolution A/HRC/RES/38/4. The submission is organized as a response to the questionnaire provided by OHCHR as part of its consultation process for the study.

**1. Please describe the impacts of the adverse effects of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of women and girls. Where possible, please share specific examples and stories.**

UN-Women’s report, **‘Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’[[1]](#footnote-1)**, based on its examination of the climate-relevant SDGs - SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 14 on life below water and SDG 15 on life on land, highlights that statistics on the differentiated impact of climate change as well as management of natural resources on which women’s livelihoods heavily depend are largely missing. The report stresses that improved sex-disaggregated data on asset ownership and use of environmentally friendly technologies needs to be given high priority in monitoring efforts to better understand women’s needs and promote women’s agency in climate action. In addition, statistics on the frequency and intensity of natural resource extraction activities women are involved in, such as firewood and fodder collection, is also necessary to get a better understanding of the impact of climate change on the everyday lives of women and girls.

UN-Women’s study on the **‘Gender Dimensions of Vulnerability to Climate Change in China’[[2]](#footnote-2)** finds that women and girls are in a disadvantaged position in terms of obtaining the natural, social, physical, financial and human capital that are required to reduce their vulnerability to climate change. It noted that respondents to disasters are often unaware of these disadvantages. It also noted that in situations where women have greater reliance on agriculture as a livelihood and earn lower income compared to men, the negative impacts of climate change can exacerbate their vulnerability. The study concludes that the disadvantages women experience are, among other issues, related to traditional gender roles, education levels and the traditional marriage customs.

A paper on **‘Women on the move in a changing climate’**[[3]](#footnote-3) by Sierra Club with technical inputs from UN-Women points out gender-based differences which influences who is displaced in the event of climate-related disasters. The report observes that after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines women and children were disproportionately represented in the evacuation centers. Similarly, after Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh, women sought refuge in neighbors’ homes and evacuation centers for protracted periods, while men stayed in their damaged or structurally weakened homes to protect assets from potential looters.

**2. Please describe any relevant commitments, legislation and other measures that you have taken to promote a gender-responsive approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation at the local, national, regional and international level and to ensure the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of women and girls impacted by the adverse effects of climate change. Please include relevant mechanisms used to promote accountability and/or implementation.**

At the intergovernmental level, UN-Women has been providing technical expertise to Parties as requested in mainstreaming gender considerations in the negotiations and implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Along with women’s organizations and other stakeholders, UN-Women consistently advocated and provided support for the integration of a gender perspective in decisions adopted in the context of the UNFCCC process. UN-Women has organized activities aimed at building the capacity of Parties, National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points, UNFCCC secretariat staff and members of the different Constituted Bodies under the Convention, as part of its efforts in: supporting the implementation of decisions adopted under UNFCCC including the Lima Work Programme on Gender and Gender Action Plan; mainstreaming gender considerations within the Convention; and raising awareness on gender equality and women’s empowerment within the different work streams of the UNFCCC.

UN-Women has also co-developed and provided inputs to a range of knowledge products on gender and climate change, including: the two editions of the report **‘The Full View: Advancing the Goal of Gender Balance in Multilateral and Intergovernmental Processes’**[[4]](#footnote-4)**;** and **‘Full View, Second Edition: Ensuring a Comprehensive Approach to Achieve the Goal of Gender Balance in the UNFCCC Process’.** UN-Women also provided substantive support to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) in its work on the ‘General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change’.[[5]](#footnote-5) GR 37 emphasizes the urgency of climate change mitigation and outlines the measures to be taken to achieve gender equality to reinforce the climate and disaster resilience of individuals and communities globally.

Since 2018, UN-Women has been providing technical support to the Gender Equality Working Group of the For All Coalition, an alliance of Member States led by Costa Rica to advance gender equality and human rights in MEAs. At the twenty-forth Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (UNFCCC COP 24), UN-Women supported the development and launch of **a declaration on Gender Equality and Climate Change**. The declaration calls for gender mainstreaming at all levels of climate action. It was initiated by Peru, Costa Rica and Chile, and supported by Belgium, Finland, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and UK.

At the national level several Country Offices are engaged in the implementation of gender-responsive climate action. UN-Women programme office in Serbia has been working with the Government of Serbia to build the capacity of climate policy makers on gender and climate change. The office has produced the [Training Handbook: Gender and Climate Change](file:///C%3A/Users/hanna.paulose/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/EH3UHEJ7/ohttps%3A/na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http://rs.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/serbia/docs/Publications/Training%20Handbook_Web-ENG.pdf&amp;data=02|01||b59ee8c6776d48f7f24908d6564d5383|2bcd07449e18487d85c3c9a325220be8|0|0|636791287462014403&amp;sdata=SHGRloAMCWvXv5tHIrTGWBNheD9NpSB9WgW+AZT0eG0=&amp;reserved=0) as part of the exercise. With a similar objective, UN-Women Country Office in Cambodia has produced a pilot master class on gender and climate for policy makers and government officials working on climate-related programmes and initiatives. UN-Women Country Office in Viet Nam has been supporting local women to lead their communities in disaster preparedness and response, including early warning systems, long-term planning for harvesting crops and disaster-proof infrastructure. The programme targets the communities of Le Thuy district in the high-risk flood zone of central Viet Nam.

The UN-Women Multi-Country Office (MCO) in the Caribbean collaborated with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support governments in implementing aspects of the Sendai Framework, specifically around gender-responsive National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions. In 2018, the MCO Caribbean and IISD trained participants from Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean in gender responsive adaptation;[[6]](#footnote-6) collaborated with UNDP on a gender-responsive disaster risk response training with 20 representatives of National Disaster Offices in the Caribbean; and collaborated with the government of St. Lucia in integrating gender into their Nationally Determined Contributions.

**3. Please share a summary of any relevant data that captures how the adverse effects of climate change have affected women and girls, taking into account multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.**

The Special report on ‘Global Warming of 1.5 degree Celsius’,[[7]](#footnote-7) based on analysis of existing evidence highlights that “climate change is . . . already affecting poorer subsistence communities through decreases in crop production and quality, increases in crop pests and diseases, and disruption to culture. It disproportionally affects children and the elderly and can increase gender inequality.”

According to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World[[8]](#footnote-8) “climate variability and extremes are a key driver behind the recent rise in global hunger and one of the leading causes of severe food crises”. The report further quotes analysis of the data collected by FAO’s Food Insecurity Experience Scale in more than 140 countries which reveals that, “in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the prevalence of severe food insecurity is slightly higher among women, with the largest differences found in Latin America.” Additionally, the report cites existing research to demonstrate that climate shocks disproportionately affect women by increasing: their load of unpaid work such as collection of natural resources such as food and water; likelihood of domestic violence; and malnutrition among girls mainly arising from preferential feeding of boys.

**4. Please describe mechanisms and tools, which can be used to measure and monitor the impacts of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of women and girls.**

UN-Women’s Flagship Programme Initiative **‘Making Every Woman and Girl Count’[[9]](#footnote-9),** launched in 2016aims at building a solid foundation of evidence, including on climate change impacts on women and girls. The Programme aims to provide support at the international, regional and national levels to enhance the production, accessibility and use of gender statistics with a view to promote evidence-based policy-making. The 5-year programme is supported by the Governments of Australia, Ireland and the United States, as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The joint publication by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and UN-Women on **‘Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects’[[10]](#footnote-10)** provides specific recommendations for gender mainstreaming in project proposal development and in the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of climate change projects**.**  As gender-responsive guiding questions are necessary in organizing data collection and in the data collection tools, the report provides a number of recommendations on gender-sensitive monitoring of project level data, including to: 1) ensure that project indicators are gender-responsive and can track gender-related changes over time; 2) ensure that gender is a cross-cutting theme across project evaluations; 3) use gender-sensitive data collection techniques such as separate focus groups/interviews of men and women; 4) ensure that the evaluation team is gender-sensitive and gender-balanced.

The **‘Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit’**[[11]](#footnote-11) delineates the differing roles, responsibilities and needs of women and men in a range of areas which would be affected by climate change in the Pacific, such as agriculture, water, energy, disaster risk reduction, and climate policies and strategies. To facilitate gender-responsive action in these areas, one of the toolkit’s modules provides gender analysis checklists for various stages of the climate risk mainstreaming process. The checklists, specifically designed for the preparatory, problem analysis, programme design, and monitoring and evaluation phases of programme or policy development and implementation, prompt practitioners to think about the type and nature of data that is required to make effective policy decisions in their specific project context and conceive methods in which to collect the required data.

**5. Please identify and share examples of good practices and challenges in the promotion, protection, and 'fulfilment of the human rights of women and girls in the context of the adverse effects of climate change. Please include examples that highlight multilateral cooperation, gender mainstreaming, gender responsive approaches, and the full, meaningful and effective participation of women and girls in relevant decision-making processes.**

The friends of Gender Equality Group, an informal group of Parties to the UNFCCC, has over the years, provided a platform for advancing gender equality in climate negotiations in a concerted manner. The For All Coalition further aims to have a coherent approach to addressing gender equality and human rights across the various multilateral environmental agreements. UN-Women has been providing substantive support to these groups in their engagement at and contribution to the intergovernmental processes. Additionally, UN-Women has been working to raise visibility of gender issues at the highest level of political discussions, by co-organizing UN joint system events at UNFCCC COP meetings; integrating gender perspectives in the UNSG’s Climate Summit in 2014; and co-organizing a high-level Women’s Leadership in Climate Action event with the Mary Robinson Foundation at the sidelines of the UNSG’s Climate Summit in 2014. UN-Women has also been providing financial support to Party delegates, NGOs and Civil Society representatives, Indigenous and women’s groups as well as youth organizations for their participation in inter-governmental meetings including at the COP and Subsidiary Body meetings to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders UNFCCC process.

UN-Women’s programmatic work on climate change is captured in three Flagship Programme Initiatives (FPIs). The FPIs were developed to ensure transformative results of UN-Women’s interventions on the ground. **‘Women’s Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy’,**[[12]](#footnote-12) a joint initiative by UN-Women and the UN Environment Programme, has developed an integrated approach to empower women to be active promoters, producers, and users of sustainable energy technologies, including decentralized renewable energy solutions. The Flagship Programme on’ **Women’s Empowerment through Climate-Smart Agriculture’**[[13]](#footnote-13) aims to improve climate-resilience of women farmers while addressing the structural barriers they face in the context of climate change. UN-Women, in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) has launched the global programme on ‘**Addressing the** **Gender Inequality of Risk in a Changing Climate’,[[14]](#footnote-14)** aims at reducing the loss of lives and livelihoods in disasters, and enhancing the resilience and recovery of communities facing natural hazards in a changing climate.

At the local level, **The African Women in Technology initiative**, a UN-Women programme in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, is an example of how a climate mitigation programme, by targeting women beneficiaries, realized gains not only for the women themselves but for their families and communities. By ensuring rural women’s access to productive resources (farming technology), the women beneficiaries experienced greater agricultural yield, earned more income and gained food security. Using farming technology means less manual labour for the concerned women and more time for leisure or to undertake other productive activities. This initiative is an example of an intervention built around empowering women as they contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation and represents a new and innovative approach for gender-responsive development.

UN-Women Multi Country Office in the Caribbean collaborated with ParlAmericas, an independent network composed of national legislatures of 35 states from North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean, to develop tools to train Parliamentarians on applying gender responsive budgeting tools to strengthen disaster resilience of Caribbean countries. As a result of this initiative, Women’s Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) collaborated with UN-Women at UNFCCC COP 24 and utilized the tools during a training for the newly established National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points.

1. UN-Women (2018). Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. [[Link](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/sdg-report-summary-gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018-en.pdf?la=en&vs=949)] [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UN-Women (2016). Gender Dimensions of Vulnerability to Climate Change in China. [[Link](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2017/01/gender-dimensions-english-r2.pdf?la=en&vs=4401)] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Detailed discussion on this topic can be found in the paper: Sierra Club. 2018. Women on the Move in a Changing Climate. [[Link](https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/uploads-wysiwig/Women%20On%20The%20Move%20In%20A%20Changing%20Climate%20report.pdf)] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. UN-Women & Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice (2013). The Full View: Advancing the Goal of Gender Balance in Multilateral and Intergovernmental Processes. [[Link](https://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/2013-06-13-The-Full-View.pdf)] [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change. [[Link](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_37_8642_E.pdf)] [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. More information can be found [here](http://napglobalnetwork.org/stories/is-there-a-gender-issue/). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. IPCC. 2018. Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degree Celsius. [[Link](https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/)] [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. FAO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world. [[Link](http://www.fao.org/3/I9553EN/i9553en.pdf)] [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. UN-Women Flagship Programme Initiative: Making Every Woman and Girl Count. [[Link](http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/flagship-programmes/making-every-woman-and-girl-count)] [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Green Climate Fund & UN-Women (2017). Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects. [[Link](https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/194568/Guidelines_-_GCF_Toolkit_Mainstreaming_Gender.pdf/860d1d03-877d-4c64-9a49-c0160c794ca7)] [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit. [[Link](https://genderinsite.net/sites/default/files/pacificgenderclimatechange.pdf)] [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. UN-Women Flagship Programme Initiative: Women’s Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy. [[Link](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/fpi%20briefenergy%20globalusv3.pdf?la=en&vs=5222)] [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. UN-Women Flagship Programme Initiative: Women’s Empowerment through Climate-Smart Agriculture. [[Link](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/fpi%20briefagriculture%20localusweb.pdf?la=en&vs=3547)] [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. UN-Women Flagship Programme Initiative: Addressing the Gender Inequality of Risk In a Changing Climate. [[Link](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/fpi%20brief-gir_v2.pdf?la=en&vs=2816)] [↑](#footnote-ref-14)