

# Women on the Front Line

Healing the Earth, seeking justice



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## Terms used in this report

<b>Adaptation</b>	Adjustments in response to the impacts (current and future) of climate change.
<b>Climate hazards</b>	Extreme weather and other consequences of climate change, with the potential to cause disruption or damage to people and the environment.
<b>Historic emitters</b>	European countries and the United States, which together are responsible for most cumulative emissions since the industrial era began. These countries benefited from early industrialisation, in many cases based on colonial expansion and wealth extraction.
<b>Loss and damage</b>	The societal and financial costs of climate change. These are considered the 'residual effects' of climate change, which can no longer be avoided through mitigation and adaptation.
<b>Major economies</b>	These include historic emitters and other countries currently responsible for a significant share of current emissions.
<b>Mitigation</b>	Human efforts to reduce emissions and enhance carbon sinks to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases and limit global heating.
<b>Nature-based solutions</b>	Actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits.
<b>Resilience</b>	A process whereby people gain power and build their capacities to anticipate, organise and adapt to change.
<b>Risk</b>	The risk associated with climate change, which depends on the nature of, and exposure to, hazards and levels of vulnerability.

## Foreword

**Rev Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba, Lecturer, Bussey Ecumenical Institute; and Programme Executive, Ecumenical Theological Education at the World Council of Churches**

This report recognises that women are disproportionately affected by climate change; and – more importantly – that prioritising women’s strengths, knowledge and capabilities in constructing climate change responses is a condition for seeking justice for climate adaptation and loss and damage. It advocates support for women’s initiatives and addresses what lies at the heart of climate justice: namely, political power (or lack thereof). By focusing on the experiences and contributions of women, it highlights the key role that women play in natural resource management and protection. Giving women an equal voice in decision-making is the best way to harness the ecological wisdom that is embedded in women’s experiences.

From a Christian standpoint, we recognise that all of God’s creation is bound together in the hope and fulfilment of God’s purposes. Excluding women from decision-making takes away from God’s creation and salvation mandate, which binds together the destiny of humans and the rest of creation. It follows that excluding women’s experiences and participation does not stand up to a Christian theological critique.

This report highlights how women are at the heart of a just response to climate change and outlines concrete actions for gender-just climate interventions. It recognises the wisdom, experience and agency of women in poorer communities whose specific and collective experiences make them leaders in charting a course to justice, equity and sustainability. The collaborative approaches of women across sectors transform lives and livelihoods and increase the resilience and overall wellbeing of the human family.

May this report be a resource that invites a holistic relational reckoning with the greater risks and burdens that women bear from the impact of climate change. May it also serve as an awakening to the collective task of Earth-care (Gen. 1:26-30; Rom. 1:20), and a challenge to the structural injustices that deny power to the “least of these” (Mt. 25:40-45).



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kuzipa Nalwamba', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

## Executive summary

2021 is a critical year both for climate justice and for justice in the Covid-19 response. The world needs international solidarity to support a feminist and decolonial response that recognises the imperative to shift power and resources from the Global North to the Global South, and to the people most affected by climate change. Promoting locally led adaptation, getting renewable energy policy right and advancing genuinely nature-based solutions will mitigate climate impacts and ensure that climate financing is more effectively used. Women on the front line of the climate emergency are making important contributions, including as environmental defenders, food producers, care givers, entrepreneurs and educators. Transformative policies are required to support their initiatives and leadership.

People who are vulnerable to climate change know best what is needed in their specific contexts. Therefore, more locally led adaptation initiatives should be promoted and supported, especially those run by women-led organisations. These should address the practical and strategic needs of women and girls living in poverty. In Kenya, the decentralisation of climate finance and decision-making is supporting this, enabling pastoralist women to advance their influence, innovation and agency in climate adaptation.

More widely, we must get renewable energy policy right. We need a gender-just transition to renewable energy that avoids adverse social and environmental impacts; enables community oversight and ownership; and reduces unpaid care and domestic work. Decentralised renewable energy solutions are often the fastest, most effective way to meet the energy needs of the most climate-vulnerable people. In Honduras, these are also providing opportunities for women-led organisations to benefit from energy value chains and promote locally appropriate solutions for agriculture and risk reduction. More centralised approaches to the energy transition have their place; but it is essential that their planning and implementation involve local communities and are informed by comprehensive environmental impact assessments and human rights due diligence, including with respect to land rights.

Genuinely nature-based solutions that protect ecosystems are also essential to mitigate climate risks and restore the resources and natural processes on which all life depends. If

## Policy priorities

### Achieving co-benefits for gender, climate and environmental justice

- **Put women at the forefront of climate change decision-making at all levels**, and support women-led responses.
- **Meet women's strategic and practical adaptation needs**, including by challenging norms that constrain their voice, agency and access to resources.
- **Provide adequate and long-term finance for locally led adaptation through decentralised and flexible mechanisms**. Support solutions championed by women and marginalised communities.
- **Prioritise marginalised communities and household needs in a just transition to renewable energy**. Avoid adverse environmental impacts and respect land rights.
- **Embed ecosystem protection and restoration, in partnership with local communities**, in all climate responses. Support agroecological approaches for climate-resilient food systems.
- **Redirect subsidies for fossil fuels and industrial agriculture to measures for gender equity and sustainability**, such as decentralised renewable energy, public services, sustainable agriculture and social protection.
- **Fulfil existing climate finance commitments and make additional resources available**, including to address the impacts of loss and damage on people living in poverty.

implemented with and by local communities, these will support their adaptation and resilience. In the Philippines, women in communities recovering from devastating typhoons are coming together to restore protective mangrove forests and marine habitats. Nature-based solutions are particularly important in food systems. Agroecological approaches especially have multiple co-benefits for mitigation, adaptation and climate resilience, as well as for gender equality.

Women's collective action is central to a gender-transformative, community-based response to climate risks. In Bangladesh, women-led organisations are overcoming patriarchal norms that exclude women from decision-making and restrict their agency, to better contribute to disaster preparedness and response, and help others manage the risks they face.

These gender-transformative responses to climate change need more – and more effective – climate finance, additional to mainstream development assistance. To facilitate more effective and sustainable responses, financing for adaptation must be increased and more funds made available through decentralised, accessible mechanisms for climate solutions championed by women and marginalised communities. The gap in meeting climate finance commitments contributes to the growing costs of loss and damage – a huge injustice that risks further entrenching inequalities both within and between countries. International solidarity actions are also needed to put an end to unsustainable debt, keep global warming below 1.5° C and eliminate patterns of growth that are destroying ecosystems, concentrating wealth and widening power inequalities.

Transformative, inclusive, rights-based responses to climate risks should be integrated across policy and practice, prioritising women, youth and marginalised communities, including through universal social protection; participatory governance; support for civil society, and particularly women's rights organisations; respect for land rights; and public investment in sustainable agriculture, energy and infrastructure that prioritises people living in poverty. All governments must take responsibility for ensuring that climate change action is coherent with gender justice, human rights and the 'leave no one behind' principle; and the major economies must ensure that climate-vulnerable countries have the necessary resources to do so.

**“Ambitious climate action does not only refer to emission reduction targets, but also to ensuring that through those targets, the transformation of economies and societies is achieved in a feminist way, leaving no one behind.”**

Hwai Mian Lim, *Women and Gender Constituency* of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## Introduction

**While the rich world wakes up to the climate emergency, people in climate-vulnerable countries have long experienced its life-and-death impacts. The success of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and this year's 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) hangs in the balance. Will member states – particularly the major economies – be willing to make the hard choices needed to save our planet, while recognising our common humanity and our duty to each other to build a safer, more sustainable world?**

The catastrophic impacts of climate change are undermining human rights;<sup>1</sup> causing loss and damage to health,<sup>2</sup> livelihoods and food security;<sup>3</sup> and triggering climate-induced migration,<sup>4</sup> conflict and fragility.<sup>5</sup> These risks are greatest for countries and people that lack the resources to respond adequately to them.<sup>6</sup> We urgently need increased international financing – particularly for adaptation measures – to minimise further irreversible and costly loss and damage. To be effective, this must prioritise the most marginalised individuals and communities, and enable them to adapt and mitigate risks.

Our focus is on how women's priorities and actions can inform a more effective climate response: one that challenges patriarchal and capitalist systems of exploitation, and is focused on care for each other and for nature. Climate change affects us all, but often women disproportionately.<sup>7</sup> In some contexts, deeply entrenched social norms and gendered division of labour mean that women are more likely to die in disasters and have less access to information to mitigate risks.<sup>8</sup> Women have specific health vulnerabilities<sup>9</sup> and fewer choices or resources, compared to men, to enable them to adapt to changing conditions; and many face increased unpaid care and domestic work because of climate-related shortages of food, fuel or water. Women in poverty – and particularly women from marginalised indigenous and caste communities – also face more risks, including gender-based violence, trafficking and forced labour, when they are forced to migrate because of climate change.<sup>10</sup> The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic,

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combined with the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather, now mean that many people are enduring catastrophic hunger. Yet even in the face of such challenges, women are at the forefront of the response – dealing with the consequences, delivering much-needed relief, addressing the structural causes and developing adaptation solutions. In turn, this is shifting power and challenging social norms.

The struggle for climate justice is inextricably bound to decolonisation and gender justice, and the need to shift power and resources from the Global North to the Global South. The histories of Kenya, the Philippines, Honduras, Brazil and Bangladesh – which are the focus of this report – are histories of colonial expansion and control, in which natural resources were plundered and women’s and indigenous knowledge marginalised, undermining resilience and adaptive capacity.<sup>11</sup> This situation is perpetuated in today’s global economic system, which is predicated on similar power imbalances, patterns of resource extraction and seemingly limitless growth.

Examining this picture through a feminist lens reveals the power imbalances that have led to the climate crisis and restricted the voice and agency of marginalised women; and enables us to suggest gender-transformative approaches to adaptation that will make a real difference to the communities on the front line of the fight against climate change. By focusing on the actions that women are already taking, this report highlights the need to promote policies and practices that allow communities to maintain control over their own resources, and women and girls to take their rightful place as leaders.

At the core of who we are at Christian Aid is the belief that we are all born with inherent dignity and the right to a full life. We strive to be agents of change by speaking out and acting for a just society, based on principles of equity. Our experience in addressing climate vulnerability and building resilience is that this is more a political challenge than a technical one: people on the front line need power to claim their rights and influence policies and practices, including those of the international community. The world must act now to keep global warming below 1.5° C to avoid the worst impacts of climate change on people living in poverty.<sup>12</sup> Simultaneously, it must address the structural root causes of vulnerability – including by prioritising support for grassroots and women-led organisations, and enabling people living in poverty to exert their influence in decision-making at all levels.

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## Women at the forefront of a gender-just climate response

Climate financing must reach those who need it most, respond to intersecting and gendered risks, and enable people to define their own paths to resilience and prosperity. However, approaches often fall short in addressing structural inequalities. To facilitate more gender-just responses to climate change, which are effective both in reducing the specific risks faced by women and marginalised communities and in enabling their self-empowerment, we need to put women and other people who are marginalised at the forefront of decision-making and address norms that limit their access to and control over resources.

Climate financing must reach those who need it most, respond to intersecting and gendered risks, and enable people to define their own paths to resilience and prosperity. However, approaches often fall short in addressing structural inequalities.

### Locally led adaptation

Those most affected by climate change often know best what is needed in their specific contexts. To be effective, therefore, adaptation efforts should be led or at least championed by marginalised communities, and should respond to the differential impacts of climate change on women and men.

Locally led adaptation,<sup>13</sup> when informed by women's knowledge, initiatives and priorities, should facilitate a more inclusive response and shape decisions on how climate finance can be more effectively used. This should not mean that only small, tokenistic projects are supported – financing must be adequate to meet the cost of managing the challenge. More decentralised approaches to climate finance are an important prerequisite, alongside structures for participatory decision-making. By putting the right mechanisms in place to enable locally led adaptation, governments can help to 'scale up' the benefits while allowing for a diversity of locally appropriate approaches in response to different contexts.

As our case study from Kenya illustrates, the right mechanisms need to be in place and conscious efforts made to amplify the voices of women and marginalised groups within them. In this way, adaptation efforts can go beyond 'technical fixes' to address underlying structural inequalities, including by transforming social norms which exclude women and marginalised communities from decision-making. To this end, promoting women's leadership and initiatives, challenging

discriminatory practices and supporting women's rights organisations are all important. Actions by governments should be informed by granular, gender-disaggregated data – including data generated by women themselves – and supported through gender-responsive and participatory budgeting. Key sectors such as agriculture should embrace people-centred approaches that involve women and address the challenges they face, particularly in research and development; and should move away from top-down approaches to better build on indigenous and local knowledge and innovations.

### **Getting money to the grassroots: financing women's priorities in Kenya**

**Pastoralist women in Kenya's drylands are influencing budget priorities for adaptation and natural resource management, helping to make devolved climate finance mechanisms more transparent and accountable.**

In Marsabit County in Northern Kenya – as in Kenya as a whole – traditional pastoralism is both a cultural identity and a hugely important part of the local economy.<sup>14</sup> However, environmental degradation, competition for land and scarcity of water and pasture mean that traditional methods are now less viable. Combined with political tensions and boundary issues, this has contributed to a protracted wave of inter-ethnic conflicts, affecting pastoralist communities especially.<sup>15</sup>

Gender roles in pastoralist communities are shaped and reinforced by power relations based on livestock ownership and gendered division of labour. Women contribute to the local economy in many ways, including by feeding and tending to animals kept close to homesteads, and making products such as sour milk and butter, which are important in local diets and sold at markets. Despite this, however, they do not themselves traditionally own animals (considered to be men's wealth) or make decisions about their management and disposal.

Sadia Isacko, an activist who encourages women's groups in Marsabit to attend public forums to discuss the issues affecting them, explains how women's roles have been affected by climate change: *"During droughts, which now last longer,*

*"Marsabit County was not always like this; yes, it was dry, but not this bad. For women especially, the resources we need have moved further away. Basic resources like water, pasture for our livestock and firewood have diminished further; yet women need these things for their everyday life."*

Sadia Isacko, activist.

*husbands move further away, leaving us women at home. Every other responsibility is left for women. They don't have access to milk, because the herds are away; they have to take care of children; they have to look for food, as their husbands are hundreds of kilometres away herding livestock... Marsabit County was not always like this; yes, it was dry, but not this bad. For women especially, the resources we need have moved further away. Basic resources like water, pasture for our livestock and firewood have diminished further; yet women need these things for their everyday life."*

Kenya's devolution of governance to the county level presented an opportunity to empower local people to participate in climate adaptation and natural resource management. However, cultural norms mean that women and young people have very little say in issues relating to adaptation, risk reduction and natural resources management;<sup>16</sup> and ethnicity-based politics influence how power and resources are distributed within counties, further marginalising ethnic minorities and women.<sup>17</sup> Thus, pastoralist communities in Marsabit are often excluded from decisions on land use and natural resource management, despite their dependence on, and intimate knowledge of, the landscape.

One example of this is the location of the Lake Turkana wind farm in western Marsabit County, on 16,000 hectares of the ancestral lands of the Turkana, Rendille and Borana communities. The land was held in trust by authorities in accordance with the Community Land Act of 2016,<sup>18</sup> which recognises the rights of traditional pastoralists to decide how ancestral lands are used; but instead, communities were displaced without adequate consultation and are now marginalised from seasonal use of the land.<sup>19</sup> Local communities are yet to benefit from the electricity generated, which is geared towards urban and industrial usage.

Pastoralist Community Initiative and Development Assistance (PACIDA) is a Kenyan organisation implementing the Strengthening Pastoralist Communities Resilience to Climate Change project in Marsabit and Samburu Counties. With a focus on women and young people from different groups, it assists bodies and platforms, including ward climate change planning committees, through which communities can voice their concerns and lobby for policies, services and support. It also

## **Principles for locally led adaptation**

### **Eight principles for locally led adaptation to guide decision-making**

1. Devolve decision-making to the lowest appropriate level.
2. Address structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled and displaced people, indigenous peoples and marginalised ethnic groups.
3. Provide patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily.
4. Invest in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy.
5. Build a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty.
6. Facilitate flexible programming and learning.
7. Ensure transparency and accountability.
8. Promote collaborative action and investment across sectors.

works with communities – and particularly women’s groups – to diversify livelihoods, manage rangelands sustainably and promote climate information and services for livestock production.

The project builds on previous advocacy for the enactment of County Climate Change Fund legislation which provides for a devolved climate financing mechanism to help mainstream climate change in public investments, and engage women and socially marginalised groups in decision-making. This achieved some progress on priority-setting and decision-making, but also highlighted the need to continue to address structural barriers to women’s roles and leadership in the process.<sup>20</sup> PACIDA is now helping women and young people in Marsabit County to use participatory vulnerability and capacity assessment<sup>21</sup> to identify needs and develop community action plans, and to present these at ward-level meetings, which in turn influence county budget allocations. The county’s plans and budgets for 2020/21 now reflect most of the priorities thus identified, including allocations for water storage tanks, which have enabled women’s initiatives to adapt to changing conditions, including raising small livestock on homesteads for sale, which has helped women to earn their own income and challenge the traditional patriarchal systems of livestock ownership.

Pushing women’s issues up the agenda was not easy – some powerful interests had to be challenged, including contractors and cartels that wanted resources prioritised for roads and other construction projects. In previous years, the priorities of these stakeholders took precedence. Women’s groups have had to work hard to make their voices heard.

**Below:** The Jaldesa women’s group produces animal fodder locally to reduce pressure on pasturelands and generate income for members.



**Below:** “Whenever women go to public participation forums and present their grievances, they are mainly dominated by men... But we realised if we persist on the same, they will listen and take action” – Sadia Isacko addresses the members of the Usafi women’s group



## Gender-just transitions to renewable energy

A gender-just transition to sustainable renewable energy is needed which puts women and people living in poverty first. Energy planning and financing remain overwhelmingly focused on centralised, grid-based approaches that prioritise the needs of industry and urban centres over those of rural households.<sup>22</sup> In 2019, 759 million people still lacked access to electricity and a further 2.6 billion had no access to clean cooking (facilities that reduce emissions, improve fuel efficiency or enable greater use of electrical appliances).<sup>23</sup> Over 50% live in fragile and conflict-affected settings, and 84% in rural areas. This has important implications for economic development, and hence for climate adaptation and resilience among some of the most marginalised communities. It also has implications for gender justice. Energy access can be transformative for women. It creates economic and educational opportunities; reduces unpaid domestic and care work; and improves access to essential services.<sup>24</sup> It also helps to address the health problems associated with burning solid fuels indoors and the heavy workloads involved in sourcing them. Given the growing scarcity of natural resources, the distances covered and time taken to find biomass fuel are increasing (in South Asia, the latter is now estimated at approximately 20 hours per week). The transition must thus also support clean cooking – something which has so far received limited attention in the energy policy response.<sup>25</sup> Cooking, of course, should not be the exclusive preserve of women; and as our case study from Honduras shows, women’s energy priorities and their contributions to a just energy transition go well beyond the need for clean cooking.<sup>26</sup>

The need to transition to renewable energy for all is urgent; but centralised projects that have so far failed to connect remote communities to national grids may not be the best approach. These also overlook the potential for communities to harness solar and other sources of renewable energy themselves. The energy sector is a big recipient of climate funds, but just over 3% of international climate funds are directed towards decentralised energy access.<sup>27</sup> This needs to change, because decentralised renewable energy systems – including off-grid solar appliances, home systems and mini-grid systems (which can be integrated with national grids where feasible) – are frequently the best way to ensure fast and affordable access to areas that are excluded from or underserved by national grid

A gender-just transition to sustainable renewable energy is needed which puts women and people living in poverty first... Energy access can be transformative for women. It creates economic and educational opportunities; reduces unpaid domestic and care work; and improves access to essential services.

systems. Decentralised systems can also enhance opportunities for local agency in defining and delivering energy priorities. While the private sector has led technology development, governments and international financial institutions have a role to play in ensuring their uptake, affordability (including through appropriate subsidies) and financing.<sup>28</sup>

### **Tackling false solutions**

A just energy transition also means avoiding approaches which have a detrimental impact on people and the environment, while ensuring dignified, productive and ecologically sustainable livelihoods for all.<sup>29</sup> In recent decades, governments, the private sector and investors – including development banks – have promoted large-scale renewable energy models such as wind and solar farms, dams and biofuel plantations. While some of these models may play an important part in the rapid transition to renewable energy which is so urgently required, they are by no means a ‘silver bullet’. Exclusive reliance on carbon metrics as their justification, without a proper assessment of their economic, social and environmental sustainability, often means that the needs and priorities of local communities are side-lined or ignored. As we have seen in Kenya, land claimed by indigenous peoples is often wrongly identified as ‘unused’ and hence available for development;<sup>30</sup> and as our case study from the Amazon illustrates, the energy needs of big business are often prioritised over those of local communities. Of all large-scale approaches to renewable energy, hydropower dams across river basins have proved especially problematic, resulting in loss of productive riverine land and affecting downstream fisheries, hydrology and biodiversity.<sup>31</sup>

Displacing people from their homes and the resources on which they depend without their consent or due regard to their need for adequate compensation and long-term livelihood improvement is unjust, and contravenes several international legal human rights instruments.<sup>32</sup> Women and indigenous communities who are less likely to have formal land tenure rights are often disproportionately affected. It is essential that national renewable energy policies and nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for climate mitigation include safeguards that allow affected communities to participate in the planning of renewable energy systems. Approaches must respect territorial rights and take account of the existing use of land and other resources.

## **Breaking the barriers: women-led sustainable energy enterprises in Honduras**

**Women-led sustainable energy enterprises are creating jobs; reducing women's unpaid care and domestic work; supporting adaptation; and improving the societal and institutional environment for women entrepreneurs.**

In 2020, Honduras was devastated by Hurricanes Eta and Iota, which caused losses estimated at more than \$10 billion. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have further complicated disaster management.<sup>33</sup> Resources are still desperately needed for essential reconstruction work, illustrating the need for funding to address loss and damage, and to reach local-level actors. In the municipality of Lepaera – a small district in the Department of Lempira which is home to just 37,000 people – Mayor Edgar Antonio Murillo Cruz estimates that the total cost of repairing roads and housing from the damage caused by Eta and Iota could exceed \$503,000 – almost half of Lepaera's annual budget for 2021.<sup>34</sup> He also observes that the production of coffee, a major cash crop, will take time to recover, causing significant losses to the local economy and to jobs.

The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation have long been felt by Honduran small-scale farmers – particularly as most farm marginal lands in mountainous terrain, while more cultivable land is taken up by commercial plantations.<sup>35</sup> Landslides and flash floods in these areas have worsened as a result of deforestation and increasingly intense rainstorms; and an overall decrease in rainfall has increased the risk of drought and forest fires, and depleted water supplies.<sup>36</sup> Outmigration is a common response to food insecurity, but is challenging, especially for women, and can create problems for family members who are left behind.<sup>37</sup>

Women in Honduras play an important role in agriculture, including coffee production; but they have limited land, assets and access to technical assistance or finance to help them adapt to changing conditions.<sup>38</sup> Many households also lack, or cannot afford, adequate energy access. Just 38% of Hondurans (mostly in urban areas) have a reliable, affordable power supply, so many people incur additional household costs – for example, for charging mobile phones or purchasing kerosene –

“I know I am doing something different. Each action we do on a daily basis is reflected on the environment. It depends on us... When we all get together, we can do great things.”

Yadira Lemus, member of WLSEE IXIK Organic.



which is a barrier to economic development.<sup>39</sup> To address these problems, Christian Aid is collaborating with Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo Integral de Honduras on a Women-Led Sustainable Energy Enterprises (WLSEE) initiative in the Departments of Copan, Lempira and Santa Barbara, supported by the European Union. This has helped 120 women set up 39 enterprises to produce, market and install sustainable energy technologies in poor communities with limited energy access. Participants – many of whom belong to the Lenca indigenous community – are supported by a combination of grants and loans, including in collaboration with community finance organisations with which the women are affiliated.

The project works closely with local government and has proved particularly beneficial for local coffee producers, providing them with alternative technologies for coffee drying, which is essential to ensure a quality product. Solar driers have reduced workloads and have improved product quality and market prices. By minimising the use of firewood in the drying process and supporting the production of smaller quantities of higher-value coffee, they also help to reduce deforestation and clearance of land for coffee farming. Preserving upland forests reduces the risk of landslides when soils become saturated. Solar driers have also helped people to cope with climate uncertainty by preventing loss and damage to the final coffee product in the event of unseasonal rains.

**Below:** Marlen Lourdes Salguero Hernández, who leads the women and energy project in Belen, Honduras.



Participants in the WLSEE initiative suggest that while climate change is a problem for everyone, it presents specific challenges for women and poorer households. Yadira Lemus, a dedicated producer of quality coffee and member of WLSEE IXIK Organic, says: *"It affects housewives the most, because we have to keep an eye on water access. In some cases, maybe the water does not reach the house, so we are forced to bring it from the closest source. The same thing happens with family vegetable gardens, because women are the ones... producing what we are going to eat. But this is becoming more and more difficult."* Project participant and Lepaera resident Karen Melisa López, commenting on women and climate change, adds: *"The most affected are the people with low economic resources – those who live by the riverbanks or who live in high mountainous areas."*

These challenges have fostered a strong sense of solidarity among women and a commitment to work together to care for the environment. *"When we all get together, we can do great things,"* says Yadira. Responding to increasingly erratic rainfall, many are introducing new techniques including small-scale irrigation and water harvesting for homestead food production. With rising temperatures driving some farmers to clear higher grounds for coffee plantation, the need to sustainably manage watersheds has also come to the fore. *"Instead of taking measures to adapt their parcels to climatic change, people are deforesting higher zones, which are generally recharge zones for springs – which in the end are the water sources we take the supply from,"* explains Yadira. *"They are also contaminating them because they are not implementing good agricultural practices."* With this in mind, women appreciate the importance of reducing dependence on coffee and are diversifying their crops by planting lemongrass and commercially viable fruit trees.

As well as creating jobs, the project is challenging perceptions that women should not own assets, have independent incomes or undertake technical or building work. It has also given women more control over resources, including land. There is a strong sense among project participants that polluting industries and rich countries should be made to pay for climate mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage. Yadira agrees that more international financing should be made available for community efforts: *"In spite of the fact that Christian Aid has been an enormous support for all women's groups.... I think (it) can do more to tell rich countries that they could provide support to communities... because it is these communities that from the inside could generate the changes that we need."*

*"In spite of the fact that Christian Aid has been an enormous support for all women's groups.... I think (it) can do more to tell rich countries that they could provide support to communities... because it is these communities that from the inside could generate the changes that we need."*

Yadira Lemus

### **Perspectives from forest custodians: renewable energy in the Amazon**

**In the Brazilian Amazon, indigenous, riverine and Quilombola communities are leading a struggle to uphold land rights and preserve a precious environment.**

In 2020, the Brazilian government approved environmental studies for the construction of a 225-kilometre transmission line across one of the most protected regions of the Amazon, part of which are within Quilombola territories.<sup>40</sup> The energy is produced at the Tucuruí hydroelectric power plant, Brazil's second-largest plant, which itself has had severe social and environmental impacts.<sup>41</sup> The communities whose livelihoods will be affected by this latest project will see none of the benefits, as the transmission line will supply other municipalities – including two that host large bauxite mines which are causing further destruction of the rainforest.<sup>42</sup>

**Below:** A Quilombola girl in the window of a house that is very traditional and very characteristic of the region. Build on the margins of rivers, these houses are called *Casa de Palafita* (stilt houses) and have for centuries enabled the Quilombola to coexist harmoniously with the cycles of droughts and floods of the Amazon tributaries. But climate change, and the construction of mining dams along the river have greatly affected the river regime, and many Quilombola are now losing the homes they have lived in for generations.



If construction goes ahead, this would violate the constitutional rights of 259 Quilombola families to ancestral lands, as well as the Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention (1989),<sup>43</sup> which requires that people be consulted and invited to give (or deny) their free, prior and informed consent to projects that affect them. The communities claim that Elecnor, the Spanish registered company leading the project, obtained its environmental licences without any such consultation. The relevant studies were conducted and licences awarded in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, when affected communities (which have no internet or electricity) were isolating to prevent the spread of the virus in their territories. Exploiting their vulnerability, the government claimed that it was impossible to undertake adequate consultations.<sup>44</sup> The project now threatens to displace or restrict access to land and affect habitats along the path to be taken by 14 new transmission towers.

Christian Aid is working with Comissão Pró Índio de São Paulo to monitor the environmental licensing process, keep local communities informed and mobilise support for the Quilombola to be given the chance to exercise their rights. Forty women (among other community leaders) are implementing community strategies to protect their lands and increase their digital connectivity to foster stronger relationships both among themselves and with external stakeholders. Thanks to these efforts, in September 2020 the Brazilian authorities and Elecnor agreed to suspend the environmental licences until the affected communities have been properly consulted.

## **Gender-transformative, nature-based solutions**

The protection and restoration of ecosystems (necessary at the local, regional and global levels) have multiple co-benefits, especially for indigenous, forest, fisher and small island communities, pastoralists and small-scale farmers whose survival depends most directly on the natural processes that sustain us all. As our case study from the Philippines demonstrates, it is critical to build strong communities to enable people to work together to protect the environment, withstand hazards and reduce risks.

Nature-based solutions also depend on security of land tenure and respect for people's relationship with nature. Women's

individual ownership rights, the customary land rights of small-scale farmers and fishers, and the collective rights of indigenous peoples to ancestral lands must be recognised and upheld, to enable those with the greatest stake in local ecosystems to invest time and energy in their protection and restoration. Recent research in Latin America and the Caribbean reveals that deforestation rates are significantly lower in indigenous and tribal territories where governments have formally recognised collective land rights,<sup>45</sup> confirming the importance of shifting power to these communities and recognising their role as forest custodians. Collective access to lands is particularly important in times of climate stress, when people may need to go further afield to find water, wild food or fodder, or to seek safety for themselves or their animals. For women who cultivate, individual land rights are often a prerequisite to qualify for credit or other forms of support. Without this security, women are often marginalised from agricultural extension services, infrastructure and financing.

Nature-based solutions are particularly vital in agriculture. Most agricultural funding is still directed to damaging industrial models which are heavily dependent on fossil fuels and chemical inputs. These contribute to climate emissions, deplete the soil of natural micro-organisms and nutrients, and are often inappropriate and unprofitable for small-scale farmers. A shift to agroecology – which encompasses a wide variety of farming systems, with an emphasis on diversity, locally adapted approaches and resilience – would mitigate the contribution that food production makes to climate change by helping to retain carbon in soils; and would mitigate the impact of climate change on food production – for example, by enhancing natural fertility and moisture retention in soil.<sup>46</sup>

There is evidence that agroecology can also contribute to gender equality.<sup>47</sup> Agroecological approaches are tailored to local environments and circumstances, and build on local and indigenous knowledge and techniques (which may have been marginalised with the growth of industrial agriculture, but are often nurtured by women). They are thus often helpful for women and others who farm smaller parcels of often poor-quality land. They also avoid expensive and damaging inputs – including pesticides – which pose significant health risks, especially for women and children; and can increase crop diversity and productivity, and hence the availability and affordability of nutritious food, particularly benefiting women who are most at risk of malnutrition.<sup>48</sup>

## Principles of nature-based solutions

### Co-benefits for people and the planet

- They are not a substitute for the rapid phase-out of fossil fuels.
- They involve the protection, restoration and/or management of natural and semi-natural ecosystems on land and in the sea; the sustainable management of aquatic systems and working lands; and the creation of novel ecosystems in and around cities or across the wider landscape.
- They are designed, implemented, managed and monitored by, or in partnership with, indigenous peoples and local communities through a process that fully respects and champions local rights and knowledge, and that generates local benefits.
- They support and enhance biodiversity from the gene to the ecosystem.

Nature-based solutions should be people-centred and ecosystems-based, not solely 'quick fixes' to capture carbon through forest monocultures or similar initiatives, without due regard to the restoration of ecosystems or people's land rights.<sup>49</sup> Such approaches have detrimental impacts on the environment and people living in poverty, and cannot replace the urgent action needed to reduce fossil fuel emissions, which are reversing millions of years' worth of natural carbon capture.<sup>50</sup>

### **Small island resilience in the Philippines**

**Women in the Philippines are strengthening community-based organisations to reduce disaster risks and build resilient communities in the face of climate extremes.**

Small islands in the Philippines are often remote and fragile. People are very exposed to hazards, including landslides, rising temperatures, extreme rainfall and increasingly intense typhoons.<sup>51</sup> Very little stands between coastal communities and the full force of the Pacific Ocean. Mangrove ecosystems help to mitigate the impact of storm surges and stabilise soils; but due to deforestation, almost 50% of these have disappeared over the past century.<sup>52</sup> The combination of climate change and destructive commercial practices such as dynamite fishing has also had a devastating impact. In this context, community mobilisation to protect the environment and reduce risks is often the key to survival.

Christian Aid's programme in the Philippines closed in 2020; but the dedicated work of local organisations, activists and women's groups that contributed to it continues, and has led to sustained benefits. Over a period of 60 years, the focus expanded from disaster risk reduction to climate change adaptation and resilience, providing important lessons on community and nature-based solutions. Central to our approach was to share knowledge and build social capital by promoting community organisation and connecting scientific and policy institutions to communities.<sup>53</sup> An example of this was the work of CODE NGO (ICODE) in the province of Iloilo, which helped fishing communities to regenerate mangrove forests, build artificial reefs to create new spawning grounds for fish and prevent incursions by illegal fishing boats.

**"After Haiyan, we aimed to integrate renewable energy post disaster. Sulu-an was the most vulnerable island. They experienced isolation, so mobile phones were important. They rely on connectivity. We realised that the role of energy is not the men's role; it's the women's role. A new lesson learned is that when partnering with women, there is no loss."**

Maria Golda Paz Hilario, ICSC Associate for Programme Development.

In November 2018, the tiny island of Sulu-an in Guiuan Municipality, Eastern Samar Province, was the first to be hit by typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda. One of the strongest ever recorded, it killed 6,300 people and devastated coral reefs, homes and fishing boats. On some islands, a five to six-metre storm surge swept inland for up to two kilometres.<sup>54</sup> Since then, a movement of women, survivors and island protectors has been fighting back, restoring natural resources and driving the transition to renewable energy. Even before the disaster, climate change was affecting vegetation on Sulu-an; but the saline intrusion from Yolanda and the limited availability of fresh water now mean that fewer crops can be grown and islanders are more dependent on fishing. The damage that Yolanda did to coral reefs has been compounded by warmer seas and coral bleaching. Plastic pollution<sup>55</sup> and destructive fishing practices are also undermining marine ecosystems.

The Sulong Sulu-an women's group has been facilitating disaster recovery and promoting environmental awareness. It now markets renewable energy technologies introduced by the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), making possible new businesses such as baking, plastic recycling and ice production (essential to keep fish fresh), and reducing dependence on kerosene and firewood. Group members are also promoting sustainable fishing practices, such as the use of spears, small nets and hooks and lines; but they still face competition from fishers from other islands using dynamite and other destructive practices. Sulu-an has become an example for other islands, and the knowledge that women have gained continues to be passed on by women trained by the ICSC as 'solar scholars', who go on to train others.

**Below:** Corazon Loyola is a fisher and also sells 'halo halo' (a crushed ice dessert): "Before solar, I had to fix nets during the day, when I was busy with my family; so this is better."

**Below:** Virginia Badar is a fisher and women's group member who uses sustainable methods such as spear and small net fishing.



## **Women's collective action**

Patriarchal norms that marginalise women in decision-making and in access to information and resources increase women's exposure to climate risks; but around the world, women are collaborating on a remarkable range of initiatives – including community weather stations, savings and loan schemes and cooperative farming – that both mitigate risks and build power together. These need recognition and support as part of an effective and gender-just climate response. As our case study from Bangladesh shows, collective action can strengthen women's influence and leadership in critical disaster preparedness and response, and help to leverage women's knowledge of the vulnerabilities that exist in their communities. Very often, however, women's contributions to risk reduction and resilience still go largely unrecognised and unsupported.<sup>56</sup>

## **Organising to reduce risks: disaster preparedness and response in Bangladesh**

**In Bangladesh, women are coming together to overcome social barriers to their participation in risk reduction and, as individuals, challenging gender roles to fight for climate justice within their communities.**

Bangladesh is exposed to multiple climate hazards that affect land, livestock, fisheries, crops, homesteads and infrastructure. Losses to livelihoods and displacement are regularly experienced, and are often permanent, leaving people with no income and nowhere to go, and contributing to extreme poverty. Climate risks and gender inequalities tend to reinforce each other: for example, there is a strong link between the loss of lands and livelihoods and early, child or forced marriage and increased dowry demands. Poverty also contributes to high rates of infant and maternal mortality, and to negative coping strategies such as families taking children (mostly, but not exclusively, girls) out of school to be married.<sup>57</sup> Vulnerability is also exacerbated by intersecting discrimination faced by women and girls in minority indigenous, Dalit and religious groups, which restricts their access to land, housing and services, and can increase the risk of violence.

Women's safety is a crucial issue in disaster-affected areas. Women are vulnerable to violence and trafficking because they

Climate risks and gender inequalities tend to reinforce each other: for example, there is a strong link between the loss of lands and livelihoods and early, child or forced marriage and increased dowry demands.



lack secure housing and are frequently displaced to temporary shelters. Jannatul Mouwa – CEO of the Best Initiative National Development Unification non-governmental organisation (NGO), who has been advocating for women's safe stays in cyclone shelters – says: *“We work closely with the government authorities for emergency preparedness and Christian Aid supports our every movement. We are also working for women-friendly cyclone shelters because not all cyclone shelters are suitable for women, children and disabled community members. There are high risks of sexual abuse and violence for women, children and disabled during emergencies.”*

While women play a key role in risk reduction within their families – ensuring the availability of food and other supplies, tending to livestock and acting as primary caregivers – their participation and leadership in decision-making and in institutions for risk reduction and adaptation are often minimal, and their contributions frequently go unnoticed. For most women, social norms preclude engagement in community affairs, even in the event of disasters. There is also insufficient recognition of the contributions of local and national NGOs, and particularly women-led civil society organisations, to humanitarian response, disaster risk reduction and adaptation. The voices and influence of these women must be strengthened, as they are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of marginalised women and bring about long-lasting improvements.

With funding from UN Women, Christian Aid has been supporting 56 women-led local NGOs to strengthen their organisations and promote women's leadership in disaster risk reduction and resilience through partnerships with women-led and women's rights organisations. Related to this, Christian Aid has also contributed to Shifting the Power, a multi-agency initiative to empower local and national organisations to play a stronger role in humanitarian response.<sup>58</sup> In 2019, a process conducted to identify training and organisational strengthening needs was for some participants their first experience of a project focused exclusively on the capacities of women-led organisations to promote disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience.<sup>59</sup>

In the wake of recent cyclones<sup>60</sup> and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, participating organisations have distributed donor-

**“Not all cyclone shelters are suitable for women, children and disabled community members. There are high risks of sexual abuse and violence ... during emergencies”**

Jannatul Mouwa, CEO, Best Initiative National Development Unification

funded support, reaching out to some of the most vulnerable people in their communities, including women-headed families, sex workers, transgender individuals, people with disabilities and elderly people. In the process, two participating organisations – the Association for Alternative Development and Gonochetona – lobbied the local authorities to include transgender individuals and sex workers in the government's social safety net programme. Thanks to their joint efforts, the authorities are now taking steps to address the exclusion of the most vulnerable families from social protection.

### **Gender-transformative social protection**

When consulted on what would increase their resilience and adaptive capacity, women in Bangladesh's vulnerable coastal zones prioritised support for employment, public services, assistance during periods of food insecurity and support to ensure that children can continue their education in times of crisis.<sup>61</sup> In Bangladesh, as elsewhere, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to strengthen formal social protection systems to address the gendered impacts of crises, including on economic and food security, access to essential services, care and domestic work, and exposure to risks.<sup>62</sup> In relation to the climate crisis, risk insurance is often discussed as a way to address loss and damage; but this cannot replace adequate social protection and other measures to support resilience and effective disaster response, particularly for people living in poverty.<sup>63</sup> Adequate and universal social protection is central to the climate response and an essential component of the just transition.<sup>64</sup>

While social protection can be integrated with disaster management<sup>65</sup> or scaled up during disasters, adequate systems to safeguard people's rights to social security throughout their lives, as well as in times of crisis, should be in place before disasters occur. Consideration of climate change loss and damage should inform approaches to social protection, to ensure that climate hazards do not have disastrous consequences for those affected.

The mechanisms used to deliver social protection are important in determining outcomes for women. For example, employment-based contributory schemes usually exclude informal workers, among whom women are strongly represented; and transfers to households or families rather

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to strengthen formal social protection systems to address the gendered impacts of crises, including on economic and food security, access to essential services, care and domestic work, and exposure risks.

than individuals can reinforce gender inequalities and prevent women from making choices about how funds are used. Done well, social protection can help to transform gender power inequalities – for example, by reducing or valuing unpaid care and domestic work, improving access to and scope of ‘essential’ services to include services essential for gender equality (such as support for survivors of gender-based violence) or providing alternatives to exploitative employment.

Richer countries were able to increase social protection to address some of the gaps revealed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but poorer countries struggled to do so. There is an opportunity now to make progress towards universal, gender-transformative social protection, in order to protect against future shocks as well as lifecycle risks.<sup>66</sup> This would help to safeguard the 132 million people who might otherwise be pushed into extreme poverty as a result of climate change by 2030.<sup>67</sup>

## **Conclusion: a transformative response to climate change**

From the local to the global, the fight against climate change is inextricably intertwined with the fight against poverty and inequality. As Olufemi Taiwo, among others, has observed, the countries of the Global North are disproportionately responsible for climate change, as well as the underdevelopment that has made colonised peoples susceptible to its effects.<sup>68</sup> Hence, the fight against climate change is part and parcel of the feminist and decolonisation movements. We must overcome patriarchal barriers to women’s agency, influence and self-empowerment. Alongside this, we must challenge the systems and structures that have contributed to climate change and made countries and people vulnerable to its impacts (and continue to do so). These include unsustainable patterns of consumption and extraction of wealth and resources from the Global South; and the marginalisation of the Global South in international decision-making. This will demand policy, political will and persuasion to think and do differently.

“Now is the time to renew the social contract between governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. People need to see results reflected in their daily lives. This must include the active and equal participation of women and girls, without whom no meaningful social contract is possible.”

António Guterres, *Our Common Agenda*, Report of the UN Secretary General

## Global solidarity and climate finance

The world must act now in solidarity to deliver on our common agenda for sustainability and equity, including the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Greenhouse gas emissions – a form of pollution affecting the global commons, but with a disproportionate impact on the Global South – are pushing our planet to the brink. Major economies must take the lead in cutting emissions; and the UK and other rich countries that have built their wealth on fossil fuels must fulfil their legal<sup>69</sup> and moral duty to provide adequate climate financing. One measure of success for COP26 will be whether it can at minimum deliver on the \$500 billion promise for new funding for the period 2020–2024. We will also need a new and more ambitious collective target to be set in 2025.<sup>70</sup> The Climate Vulnerable Forum is calling for COP26 to deliver a Climate Emergency Pact to rebuild confidence in international climate cooperation, accelerate adaptation and keep global warming below 1.5° C.<sup>71</sup>

International climate financing should be directed towards building the resilience and adaptive capacity of women, youth and marginalised communities, in line with SDG target 13b.<sup>72</sup> This principle should be heeded in both adaptation and mitigation, including the planning of renewable energy projects which, without proper accountability for human rights, can undermine the resilience and adaptive capacity of marginalised people. Climate finance must also be allocated evenly between adaptation and mitigation. Most countries have national adaptation plans or instruments in place; but international financing for their implementation remains low, putting more pressure on domestic resources. At present, adaptation funding represents only about 20% of total climate finance and is not keeping pace with rapidly increasing need, which is conservatively estimated to reach \$140–300 billion per year by 2030.<sup>73</sup>

Financing must also be provided in the form of grants. A growing share of international climate finance – estimated at 74%<sup>74</sup> – is provided as loans, contributing to indebtedness. International solidarity must extend to action which ensures that lower-income countries have the fiscal space they need to progress sustainable development and the human rights of vulnerable citizens. Debt cancellation is essential to address the unsustainable burden of debt servicing on lower-income countries, which in 2020 alone amounted to \$372 billion.<sup>75</sup>

International climate financing for climate-vulnerable countries should be directed towards building the resilience and adaptive capacity of women, youth and marginalised communities.

Unless international climate finance for adaptation is sufficient to fill the gap facing low-income, climate-vulnerable countries, irreparable loss and damage will result,<sup>76</sup> hitting women and people in poverty hardest. The more that is invested now, the less the future will cost. The quality of adaptation efforts is critical. Adaptation must reduce the risks faced by the most vulnerable communities; but at present, there is very limited evidence that efforts financed through the multilateral funds serving the Paris Agreement (eg, the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility) are effectively reducing risks in the communities in which they are being implemented.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, opportunities for grassroots women, women's organisations and gender experts to engage in climate finance flows remain limited.<sup>78</sup> More needs to be done to address these issues to enhance sustainability and effectiveness, including by financing more locally led adaptation. Funding flows to local-level actions should comprise at least 70% of total climate finance, in line with the Least Developed Countries Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience.<sup>79</sup>

Adequate and effective adaptation, alongside ambition in mitigation, will help to avert some loss and damage; but loss and damage are already a reality for many. Climate-vulnerable countries<sup>80</sup> and civil society organisations<sup>81</sup> in the Global South are therefore calling on historic emitters to deliver on their promises to avert and address loss and damage caused by climate change – which, as our case studies have illustrated, disproportionately affect the safety, livelihoods, food security, health and way of life of women and marginalised communities. The lack of additional financing and technical support to enable governments to address these impacts, prioritising their most vulnerable citizens, remains a glaring gap in progress towards climate justice. Until the loss and damage agenda is progressed, richer countries will continue to evade their historic responsibilities to meaningfully shift resources from Global North to South. The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage<sup>82</sup> was established in 2013 in response to protests by climate-vulnerable countries, but is still dominated by more industrialised Annex 1 parties. The Santiago Network for Loss and Damage<sup>83</sup> – established in 2019 to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to avert, minimise and address loss and damage – has yet to be fully operationalised.

## Systems change

We need to transform the systems and structures that perpetuate power inequalities and put justice at the heart of the fight against climate change. New economic models are needed that value and recognise women's work and initiatives; prioritise resources for investing in care and progressing rights; and support wealth redistribution rather than concentration. Progressive tax and fiscal policies are important elements of this. Tax incentives and subsidies that continue to support the production and consumption of fossil fuels should be redirected to priorities for sustainable development, such as sustainable agriculture, public transport, social protection and renewable energy access for all. At the international level, measures are needed to stem illicit financial flows that drain climate-vulnerable countries of much-needed revenues.<sup>84</sup> We must also end unsustainable patterns of trade and consumption that are destroying ecosystems. To reduce demand for energy and scarce resources, governments of major economies must lead a shift away from endless economic growth towards the fairer distribution of economic resources (within and among countries) and a greater focus on public goods.<sup>85</sup> They should also lead a global transformation in food systems to deliver mitigation, adaptation and sequestration co-benefits.

Within the UNFCCC, we need a stronger voice for climate-vulnerable countries and women. The Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender recognises the full, meaningful and equal participation and leadership of women in all aspects of the UNFCCC process, and in national and local-level climate policy and action, as vital to achieve long-term climate goals.<sup>86</sup> Its five-year Gender Action Plan<sup>87</sup> (adopted at COP25 after forceful interventions by women's groups) still needs adequate funding and implementation. Women's organisations are calling for gender-transformative and intersectional approaches.<sup>88</sup> To achieve this, we need significantly increased investment in leadership of grassroots and indigenous women and their climate solutions.

We need a shift to economies and societies that value and recognise women's work and initiatives, and that prioritise resources for investing in care and progressing rights.

## Recommendations

<b>UK COP26 presidency</b> COP26 offers the UK government the opportunity to show leadership in galvanising international action. Specifically, the UK should pursue the following objectives:	<b>UNFCCC</b> In addition to stepping up ambition on mitigation, the UNFCCC should focus attention on addressing the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable people. It should pursue the following objectives:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propose an ambitious new climate finance deal for the world's poorest countries and persuade richer countries to support it. Rich countries must meet their obligations to provide <b>at a minimum</b> the promised \$500 billion for the period 2020–2024. Considering the shortfall to date, \$600 billion should be provided over the six years from 2020 to 2025.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide adequate and transparent climate finance through accessible mechanisms that reach the most marginalised communities <b>in the form of grants</b>, to address mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage. The 2025 climate finance goal should provide only grant-based finance, at least 70% of which should support local-level actions, based on a scientific assessment of need and incorporating increased adaption finance which is gender responsive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call for an international solidarity facility to be established as soon as possible to provide financial support to communities that are severely affected by loss and damage, ensuring that this is financed from <b>new and additional sources</b>; and call for the appointment of a UN special envoy on loss and damage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish loss and damage as a <b>permanent standalone agenda item</b> and call for the provision of adequate loss and damage financing, which is new and additional. Provide operational technical assistance to climate-vulnerable countries through the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press for at least 50% of the promised \$100 billion per year to be dedicated to adaptation, with a focus on least developed countries, small island and developing states, and fragile and conflict-affected states. Adaptation financing should be provided through <b>decentralised and flexible mechanisms</b> that are accessible to grassroots women's organisations; and should take the form of grants, not loans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a comprehensive, targeted and resourced gender action plan and a renewed and long-term Lima Work Programme to facilitate a <b>gender-transformative, human rights-based response</b> to climate change.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a <b>global climate damages tax</b> on the fossil fuel industry, based on amounts extracted, to finance an international facility for loss and damage, scale up a just transition and deliver green jobs, energy and transport.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>National governments</b></p> <p>Governments should implement nationally appropriate responses to climate change that support gender-transformative actions, uphold rights, and protect and restore ecosystems. Key actions include the following:</p>	<p><b>Bilateral and multilateral donors</b></p> <p>Donors have a responsibility to ensure both the quality and quantity of climate financing, including alignment with wider sustainable development and poverty reduction goals and targets, and accountability for human rights. Key actions include the following:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Integrate gender-transformative actions</b> into NDC processes, sectoral action plans and national adaptation plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support <b>decentralisation of climate finance</b> through increased funding for local authorities, women-led organisations and marginalised communities. Ensure transparent reporting and assess the quality of interventions from a gender transformation perspective.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support <b>locally led adaptation</b> through decentralised mechanisms for accessing climate finance, participatory planning and development, and the funding of solutions championed by women’s organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>End any direct or indirect public funding of fossil fuel-related infrastructure</b> and invest in decentralised renewable energy, public services and sustainable agriculture.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Support women’s participation and leadership</b> in climate change decision-making and disaster preparedness and response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify sources of financing for the development of <b>national social protection systems</b> to respond to current and future risks.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support a <b>gender-just transition to sustainable renewable energy</b> by prioritising the energy needs of marginalised women through decentralised solutions under the control of local communities where possible.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Development banks</b></p> <p>Development banks should end all support – direct and indirect – for fossil fuels and related infrastructure across the supply chain, and redirect this funding to <b>community-led, nature-based solutions for a just transition</b>. Key objectives include the following:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Redirect subsidies</b> provided for fossil fuels and industrial models of agriculture to measures that support the resilience of marginalised communities, including social protection, public services and sustainable agriculture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rapidly scale up investment and policy support for clean energy, energy efficiency, just transition plans and energy access.</li> <li>▪ Support <b>locally led responses that strengthen civil society and benefit women and climate-vulnerable communities</b>, including decentralised renewable energy, ecosystem restoration and sustainable and climate-resilient housing, and transport.</li> </ul>



## End notes

- 1 *Human Rights and Climate Change*, Human Rights Council, 47<sup>th</sup> Session, 2021 <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/L.19>
- 2 *Gender, Climate Change and Health*, World Health Organisation, 2014 [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/144781/9789241508186\\_eng.pdf;jsessionid=663C9A5434478B092ECBCA8DE6A0A84A?sequence=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/144781/9789241508186_eng.pdf;jsessionid=663C9A5434478B092ECBCA8DE6A0A84A?sequence=1)
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