



Position Paper on Women's Human Rights and Climate Change of the International Alliance of Women (IAW)

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Achieving gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, and has to be specifically recognized in the climate change and human rights frameworks. Climate change impacts exacerbate gender discrimination and increase violations against women's human rights.

*There will be no climate justice without true gender equality.*¹ Climate change policies risk having a negative impact on women's human rights, if they do not take into account gender discrimination in terms of income, access to financial assets, land ownership rights, political power, access to natural resources, water and food security, education, and household responsibilities.

*Women are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts, such as droughts, floods and other extreme weather events, but they also have a critical role in combating climate change.*² The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)³ established that climate change impacts vary according to gender, age, and class. Women, who constitute majority of the world's poorest people and dependent on natural resources, are likely to suffer most. There is strong evidence that the impacts of climate change on health vary by gender, such as high female mortality rate in natural disasters, malnutrition, anemia, and increased incidence of infectious diseases, such as malaria. Women are also more likely to be the unseen victims of violence and conflicts over resources amplified by climate change, including sexual and gender-based violence. At the same time, women demonstrate strength and resilience in coping with the effects of climate change every day; as the main suppliers and providers of fuel, food, and water in their homes. Facing crippling impacts of climate change, women overcome many challenges spanning from their economic and social situation. Women are on the front lines and often have a greater stake in leading climate change solutions that are sustainable and will benefit their children and the whole community.

¹ European Parliament resolution 2011/2197 (INI) on Women and Climate Change of 2012

² UNFCCC Gender and Climate Change of 2012

³ IPCC 4th Assessment Report of 2007

Recommendations:

1. Recognize that gender equality and protecting women's human rights are fundamental in combating climate change
2. Recognize that protecting and promoting women's rights is a responsibility of all states
3. Establish a Special Rapporteur on Climate Change and Human Rights
4. Ensure that climate change policy benefits both women and men, securing their economic and social rights, by including gender equality and gender justice objectives at every level of climate change decision-making
5. Ensure that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acts in accordance with human rights frameworks and with national and international agreements on gender equality and equity, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
6. Integrate gender equality in climate change financial mechanisms, to ensure that local communities and women benefit from adequate funding
7. Ensure property rights and access and control over community resources, as well as, maintain equal rights of women and their families in access to natural resources, land, ocean and water, deserts, and forests, in connection with climate change governance and tenure reforms
8. Ensure accountability for previous commitments on gender equality and women's human rights applicable to climate change:
 - Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
 - Articles 2 and 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)
 - European Parliament resolution 2011/2197 (INI) on Women and Climate Change of 20 April 2012
 - United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979
 - Beijing Platform for Action of 15 September 1995
 - UNFCCC Decision 23/CP.18 on Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol of 8 December 2012