



## US WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE UN

### UN Commission on the Status of Women 66

The US Women's Caucus at the UN deplores the multifaceted, disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls, especially in rural areas, and calls urgently for comprehensive mitigation. While world leaders reached agreement at COP 26 on cutting emissions and including women and youth in decision-making, expectations for bold outcomes from COP 26 were unmet.

The US Women's Caucus supports the grassroots aspirations of COP 26, the Generation Equality Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition, and the Sustainable Development Goals. We want to collaborate with the US Mission to the UN, US government agencies, and civil society in finding solutions to the unique problems women and girls face in the context of climate change.

#### Facts about the Impact of Climate Change on Women and Girls

- \* Women, girls, and boys are 14 times more likely than men to die during a disaster.<sup>1</sup>
- \* Climate disasters increase domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.<sup>2</sup>
- \* Women are responsible for 50-80% of world food production but own less than 20% of land.<sup>3</sup>
- \* 216 million people will be internal climate migrants by 2050, the World Bank estimates.<sup>4</sup>
- \* Eighty percent of those displaced by climate change are women.<sup>5</sup>
- \* Most of the world's 1.2 billion poor people, two-thirds of whom are women, live in water-scarce countries and do not have access to safe and reliable supplies of water.<sup>6</sup>
- \* Indigenous people are 6.2% of the global population, yet protect 80% of world's remaining biodiversity.<sup>7</sup>

#### Global Recommendations

The US Women's Caucus calls on all governments, especially the United States, to follow through on their commitments to increase gender-responsive climate capacity through Gender Action Plans as stipulated by COP 23, the UNFCCC, and the Beijing Platform for Action. At UN CSW 66, we urge governments to commit to:

1. Prioritize **gender parity in climate policy decision-making** at all levels, especially underrepresented groups such as rural, Indigenous, ethnic minority, and displaced women, and incorporate them into mitigation and adaptation planning and delegations of national and global climate change negotiators.
2. Collect, analyze, and report **data disaggregated by gender**, including rural, Indigenous, ethnic minority, and displaced women and girls, to better drive informed policies and effective interventions on gender and climate change such as disaster preparedness, environmental protections, agriculture, and health.
3. **Fund education and training** for women and girls in climate-related occupations including scholarships and internships in food security, water systems management, climate negotiations, renewable energy, and public awareness campaigns on climate change.
4. Increase **access to financing for women**, especially in the Global South, for mitigation and adaptation purposes such as dedicated funds for women, debt cancellation, extension services, research on the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, and climate solutions based on Indigenous perspectives and knowledge.
5. Improve **land ownership rights** for women, especially marginalized groups such as widows, rural women, ethnic minorities, and Indigenous women, including land titles and inheritance laws, to improve food and water security and climate change resilience.

<sup>1</sup> UNDP Gender and Disasters October 2010

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF Material Risks of Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Settings April 2020

<sup>3</sup> UNDP Gender and Climate Change: Gender, Climate Change and Food Security 2016

<sup>4</sup> World Bank Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration 2021

<sup>5</sup> UNDP Gender and Climate Change: Overview of Linkages between Gender and Climate Change 2016

<sup>6</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Gender and Water: Securing water for Improved Rural Livelihoods November 2012

<sup>7</sup> UNFCCC Indigenous Women Vital To Climate Action Sept. 3, 2021

## Specific Recommendations by Issue

**Disasters** - Climate disasters affect women and girls differently than men and boys due to pre-existing gender inequalities. The lower the socioeconomic group, the greater the vulnerability, particularly in the Global South. Caregiving responsibilities affect women's ability to evacuate and increase their work burden after disasters.

a) Provide financial and medical support during disasters and their aftermath to **prevent sexual and intimate partner violence, maintain access to sexual and reproductive services, and assist women with disabilities.**

b) After disasters, ensure clean energy options to **replace dangerous, polluting stoves** that disproportionately cause illness and premature death for women and girls.

**Agriculture and Food Security** - Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) that builds sustainable agriculture, improves farmer resiliency, and reduces greenhouse emissions can only succeed with intentional focus on gender equity.

a) Incorporate female farmers, including women of color, into **gender-responsive agricultural extension services** on an equal basis with men, including access to credit, to strengthen climate-resilient food security.

b) **Restore land rights and titles to women, particularly widows,** to secure ownership of family land and facilitate full engagement with climate change mitigation projects.

**Health** - Women are disproportionately harmed by increasing air and water pollution, disease, and mortality during climate changes and disasters. Pregnant, postpartum, elderly, and disabled women are at particular risk.

a) Define and set **concrete benchmarks on standards of women's health** as key markers of development, ensuring disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation are incorporated into future projects and policies.

b) Facilitate **women's full participation in decision-making** on climate-related problems in health care in order to address the special health needs of women.

**Indigenous Women** - Indigenous peoples are frontline communities in the climate crisis because of their customary reliance on nature for subsistence living, health, and economic livelihood. Indigenous women safeguard and transmit traditional knowledge about sustainable environmental management to the next generation.

a) Enhance or create laws to recognize the territorial property of Indigenous communities and **protect land titles for Indigenous women** to ensure their full control over critical economic resources.

b) Ensure that **Indigenous women have seats at the table** in the fight against climate change to engage their traditional leadership role of building solidarity across communities.

**Migration** - Climate change threatens our planet with erratic rainfall, rising sea levels, increased drought, and intensive fires that impact the livelihoods of the poorest and force them to migrate. Women and children form a substantial portion of climate refugees whose human rights must be safeguarded.

a) Reduce the scale of climate migration through **concerted action to cut global greenhouse gas emissions.**

b) Increase the **participation of displaced women in leadership and management structures of refugee agencies** as outlined in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

**Technology and Funding** - Women's active role as technology drivers is essential to accelerate development of advances in food production, soil conservation, reforestation, carbon sequestration, and renewable energy. Yet women continue to be marginalized, with woeful underrepresentation in the ICT arena. Climate change funding has largely ignored gender in funding allocations and decision-making.

a) Recognize that **women of all ages are powerful change agents with specific knowledge and skills** to contribute effectively to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and include them in all climate projects.

b) Provide women equal access to financial and technological resources and **mandate gender parity on climate change fund governing boards.**

**Water** - One-third of the world's population is currently experiencing physical or economic water scarcity. The worst effects of the climate crisis will be felt through water's impact on the lives of women and children. Yet women remain significantly under-represented at policy levels in environmental management.

a) Strengthen institutional commitment to **gender equality and inclusion in the water sector,** including sharing best practices and adopting meaningful participatory decision-making practices, particularly in rural communities.

b) Increase **scholarships and internships for women in water systems management** to build career pipelines.