

Gender equality in the midst of climate change

What can the region's
machineries for the
advancement of
women do?

Lorena Aguilar Revelo



UNITED NATIONS

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DE LA FRANCE AUPRÈS DE
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This document was prepared by Lorena Aguilar Revelo, consultant with the Division for Gender Affairs of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), under the supervision of Diana Rodríguez Wong, Associate Economic Affairs Officer in the Division for Gender Affairs, and Ana Güzmes García, Chief of that Division.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund
AILAC	Asociación Independiente de Latinoamérica y el Caribe (Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean)
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BRSC	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
CDB	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRMC	Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
CSO	Civil society organization
DGA	Division for Gender Affairs
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GAP	Gender action plan
GCCFP	Gender and climate change focal point
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFP	Gender focal point
GGCA	Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance
GHG	Greenhouse gases
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
NAMA	Nationally appropriate mitigation actions
NDCC	Nationally determined contribution
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIE	National implementing entity
NGCCFP	National gender and climate change focal point
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RIE	Regional implementing entity

SBI	Subsidiary body for implementation
SBSTA	Subsidiary body for scientific and technological advice
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Summary

This publication recommends actions to enable the machineries for the advancement of women to strengthen gender mainstreaming in public policy instruments and implementation actions in relation to climate change. This would enable the lead agencies and managers responsible for the implementation of public policies on behalf of gender equality and women's autonomy to become more actively involved, and to play a transformative leadership role in the climate change response, both nationally and internationally. The objectives are to ensure that gender equality and the autonomy of all women and girls, in their diversity, are prioritized and comprehensively addressed in the climate change actions deployed both nationally and regionwide; and to enable women to participate fully as climate actors, bolstering their resilience and that of their communities to fulfil the 2030 Agenda and achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The document is also addressed to the institutions that form the gender architecture in the different branches and levels of government, along with civil society entities, especially feminist organizations, academic sectors, and, in general, all sectors interested and involved in promoting public policies in response to climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and in nurturing a transformative recovery marked by gender equality and sustainability.

Introduction

Under the international normative framework on human rights, States have an obligation to respect, protect and uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms —without distinction on the grounds of ethnic origin, sex, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic status, birth, disability or other condition. Human rights instruments, and specifically the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which has been ratified by all Latin American and Caribbean States, oblige governments to guarantee substantive equality and women’s rights, and to adopt measures to put an end to all forms of discrimination. These obligations are binding on States Parties and apply to all their actions, including those concerning the environment.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a roadmap for upholding human rights for all people and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. This is considered a goal in its own right (SDG 5) and also a way to achieve the other goals. The Agenda also points to the means for their implementation, monitoring and review; and it highlights global partnerships for their financing. Gender inequalities, and their expression through violence and discrimination against women and girls, remain among the most persistent and egregious symptoms of human rights violations in the world. It is therefore necessary to reduce inequalities in order to achieve the other SDGs, along with other internationally agreed-upon objectives for sustainable development and peace.

In terms of environmental agreements, the legal instruments and decisions emanating from the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and other intergovernmental processes over the last few decades have started to include language that recognizes and promotes gender equality and human rights, including in the outcomes of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The latter include the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions —as well as the main environmental financing mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and the Adaptation Fund (AF), among others.

Ranging from preambles offering guidance on gender equality, women's empowerment and expressions of shared vision, to language for programming and finance, these are vital components of MEAs. More importantly, they are crucial for maximizing the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of initiatives, programmes and projects to address climate change and achieve sustainable development with no one left behind.

Numerous interrelated forces have driven this evolution in environmental policy since 1992. They include recognition of the centrality and relevance of human rights and gender equality in sustainable development frameworks during this same period; the consensus forged within the United Nations and other multilateral arenas, together with the endeavours and contributions of women's and feminist organizations, national and regional human rights and environmental defenders, public officials, civil society, United Nations international organizations and research institutions, all of which are working to ensure that environmental policies address the challenges of development and promote human rights and equality.

Other influential factors in this evolution include the following: the increasingly obvious impacts of a changing climate on communities around the world, with their differentiated impacts on women and men; the interconnected global political, environmental and economic challenges of the last few years and, most recently, the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic; the growing realization that gender equality and human rights are essential for sustainable development and the well-being of all people in their diversity; and, also, increasing research on issues of inequality, gender equality, rights, poverty, economics and the environment, and the attention being paid to it.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world where, for more than four decades, governments, international bodies and civil society organizations, particularly women's and feminist organizations, have met periodically under the auspices of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean to identify the regional and subregional situation with respect to women's autonomy and rights, put forward recommendations on public policies for gender equality, and make periodic assessments of the activities undertaken in compliance with regional and international agreements on women's rights and gender equality.

In the sessions of this subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), member States have agreed on a progressive, innovative and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda to guarantee all rights of women, in their diversity, including collective and environmental rights. They have also agreed to move towards sustainable styles of development that contribute towards physical, economic and decision-making autonomy for women in the region. On climate change, the Brasilia Consensus, adopted at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2010, recognizes that climate change and disasters can disrupt production development, women's use of time, particularly in rural areas, and their access to employment (ECLAC, 2017a). In addition, the [Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030](#), which was agreed upon in 2016, identifies four structural challenges that need to be addressed to achieve gender equality in the region: socioeconomic inequality and poverty; patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns and the predominance of a culture of privilege; the sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care; and the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere. Each of these structural challenges is also manifested in the problem of climate change. Lastly, at the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Chile in 2020, ECLAC member States approved the [Santiago Commitment](#), which establishes specific commitments to mainstream gender in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Of vital importance for the region is the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the [Escazú Agreement](#)),¹ which is the region's first binding environmental treaty. The main objective of the Agreement is to move towards the full implementation of the rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters and decisions (see box 1).

¹ So-named because it was adopted in the eponymous Costa Rican city.

Despite this international and regional framework, many attempts to incorporate gender equality in climate change responses have been confined to simplistic, specific and short-term technical interventions. When these have been applied, they have failed to dismantle unequal power structures or to exert a structural impact on closing gender gaps. As a result, gender inequalities hinder sustainable development. These inequalities are manifested in different areas and sectors, with climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives being no exception.

Action on climate change can thus either reinforce or exacerbate inequalities; or else they may intentionally aim to overcome them and hasten progress towards gender equality. Long-standing gender inequalities can be identified and addressed as countries and communities review their normative, physical, economic and sociocultural structures in response to climate change.

Moreover, as climate change mitigation and adaptation actions become increasingly necessary, the distribution of funding and the potential disparity in access to, and control of, resources between men and women under the prevailing systems and mechanisms, will increase. The biases that exist in current financial structures mean that the financial resources available to help mitigate and adapt to climate change are often less for women than for men. While progress has been made in setting up gender-responsive climate finance mechanisms, more needs to be done to guarantee women's participation in decision-making on all aspects of climate financing, and to ensure that women's groups and organizations have direct access to funding.

The parties to UNFCCC have agreed that gender equality considerations and women's participation are essential to climate solutions. To date, over 81 decisions under the auspices of UNFCCC include gender mandates; implementing these commitments is now crucial. While significant progress has been made, there is still a long way to go to ensure that gender is mainstreamed both in public policy instruments and in actions to implement climate change response.

In addition, in October during the [thirty-eighth session of ECLAC](#), the high-level authorities of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean signed a political declaration for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery. This declaration made an urgent call to intensify solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation at all levels, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships, to contain, mitigate and overcome the pandemic and its consequences through people-centred, gender-sensitive responses that fully respect human rights and fundamental freedoms (ECLAC, 2020a).

At their sixtieth meeting, in February 2021, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean recognized "that the pandemic caused by coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has had unprecedented effects on sustainable development in its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental), leading to the sharpest contraction of economic activity in the region's history, with a disproportionately heavy impact on women and girls that deepens the structural obstacles of gender inequality". They also called for "COVID-19 response and recovery policies to incorporate a gender perspective, to include participation by women in their design and implementation and to help to overcome the multiple and intersecting forms of violence, discrimination, exclusion and inequality that disproportionately affect women in all their diversity" (ECLAC, 2020a).

This document is intended to support governments in implementing the agreements reached in the framework of the Santiago Commitment during the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,² in conjunction with international agreements related to climate change and gender equality.

This publication recommends actions to enable the machineries for the advancement of women to strengthen gender mainstreaming in public policy instruments and implementation actions in relation to climate change. This would enable the lead agencies and managers responsible for the

² See agreements 32, 33 and 34 of the [Santiago Commitment](#) (ECLAC, 2020b).

implementation of public policies on behalf of gender equality and women's autonomy to become more actively involved, and to play a transformative leadership role in the response to climate change, both nationally and internationally. The objectives are to ensure that gender equality and the autonomy of all women and girls, in their diversity, are prioritized and comprehensively addressed in climate change actions deployed both nationally and regionwide; and to enable women to participate fully as climate actors, enhancing their resilience and that of their communities to fulfil the 2030 Agenda and achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement'.

The document is also addressed to the institutions that form the gender architecture in the different branches and levels of government, along with civil society entities, especially feminist organizations, academic sectors, and, in general, all sectors interested and involved in promoting public policies in response to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, and in nurturing a transformative recovery marked by gender equality and sustainability.

The document has been produced with support from the Government of France, co-chair of the [Generation Equality Forum](#), five years after the historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change.³ This cooperation, in conjunction with the machineries for the advancement of women, civil society organizations and the international community, seeks to activate the commitment to make gender equality an essential and binding component of achieving sustainable development and a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability.

³ The Generation Equality Forum is a global gathering for gender equality, convened by UN Women and organized jointly by the Governments of Mexico and France, with active civil society participation. As an international public dialogue for urgent action and accountability on gender equality, the Forum will celebrate the power of women's rights activism, feminist solidarity and youth leadership for transformative change.

I. Gender (in)equality and climate change⁴

The increasing pace of climate change is the result of the dominant style of development around the world. Addressing the complexity of this phenomenon is a challenge for the entire world; and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean urgently need to address its effects and formulate adaptation and mitigation strategies that take account of the regional reality. While the climate change debate has focused on economic and social issues, the situation of women and the gender inequalities that are reproduced and strengthened by this global phenomenon have been treated as a side issue.

The economic activities that sustain the global economy require forms of energy, transportation and land use that generate greenhouse gases (GHG).⁵ These accumulate in the atmosphere and raise the temperature of the planet, thus causing climate change. From an economic perspective, climate change has been described as an externality, since the countries that emit GHGs do not fully absorb the costs of their consequences (Stern, 2008). These costs are passed on and experienced unequally between countries and between men and women. Although the consequences of climate change affect the entire population of the world, it is the most developed countries—which have certainly reaped the benefits of the current style of development—that produce the most GHG emissions and at the same time have the most resources available to adapt to its effects. In contrast, the countries that generate the least emissions are those most exposed to the adverse effects of climate change and have the least resources for adaptation and mitigation.

This unfair dynamic impacts the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; for while the region generates less than 10% of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, it is highly sensitive to the effects of climate change. Its particular vulnerability is caused by factors such as geographical position and climatic situation, its socioeconomic, demographic and institutional conditions, and the fact that its natural assets are particularly climate-sensitive (Bárcena and others, 2018).

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if the world continues on the current path, the global average temperature increase is likely to exceed 1.5° C by 2030. In its 2018 special report on global warming, IPCC analysed the effects of this rise in global temperature, which, in general terms, include changes in weather patterns, intensification of natural disasters and loss of ecosystems, which would diminish the chances of overcoming poverty and inequality and of achieving sustainable development.

⁴ This section is based on *Women's Autonomy in Changing Economic Scenarios* (ECLAC, 2019).

⁵ Carbon dioxide is one of the main greenhouse gases.

Rising temperatures will affect the most vulnerable populations disproportionately, through food insecurity, rising food prices, loss of incomes and livelihoods, and health and displacement impacts. The effects will be felt most by those who live from agriculture and coastal activities, indigenous populations, children and the elderly, people living in poverty, and populations and ecosystems in island countries, such as those of the Caribbean (Roy and others, 2018).

Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be the most unequal region in the world; and it is the developing region that has been affected most by the COVID-19 pandemic (ECLAC, 2021a). In this context, where poverty and inequality have deepened, the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change highlight the structural challenges of inequality identified in the Montevideo Strategy: socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty, the sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care, predominance of the culture of privilege and patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns, and the unequal concentration of power.

In this regard, the IPCC notes that "Differences in vulnerability and exposure arise from non-climatic factors and multidimensional inequalities often produced by unequal development processes. These differences shape differential risks from climate change People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalized are especially vulnerable to climate change and also to some adaptation and mitigation responses ... This increased vulnerability is rarely due to a single cause. Rather, it is the product of intersecting social processes that result in inequalities in socioeconomic status and income, as well as in exposure. Such social processes include, for example, discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, age, and (dis)ability" (IPCC, 2014, p. 6).

The gender imbalance in the impacts of climate change is thus closely related to socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty, in the context of an excluding and unsustainable form of growth. Prior to the health crisis, women were already over-represented in situations of poverty. According to data from the Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean, for every 100 men living in poor households in 2019, there were 112.7 women in a similar situation, thus evidencing their lack of economic autonomy. The health crisis and its economic consequences have deepened poverty and inequality; and women have been particularly affected by the slump in economic activity in sectors that are crucial for female employment, such as tourism, manufacturing, commerce and paid domestic work. This has resulted in a large-scale withdrawal of women from the labour force, etting the female labour participation rate back by 10 years, and increasing in the number of Latin American women estimated to be living in poverty (ECLAC, 2021b).

The crisis generated by the pandemic has further highlighted the exhaustion of the region's development style, based on the extraction of natural resources and fossil fuels. These have been exploited without consideration of environmental and social sustainability criteria and with little investment in activities focused on knowledge, technologies and the generation of quality employment, especially for women. At the same time, the structural nature of gender inequality means that women face persistent barriers in obtaining productive resources, such as credit, land, water, training, technologies and time (ECLAC, 2017b).

In this context, the effects of climate change could deepen existing gender inequalities. Poor and marginalized people, including women, are generally less able to absorb even the most moderate climate risks; and they are the first to experience asset erosion, poverty traps and limits to their adaptive capacity. Climate change is an additional burden that can push people into chronic poverty by directly and severely obstructing their access to livelihoods (Olsson andf others, 2014).

The impacts of climate change could deepen the sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care. In Latin America and the Caribbean, time-use surveys conducted in various countries confirm the persistent and unbalanced sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care. Survey data collected by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean show that women, on average, spend two-thirds of their time working unpaid and one-third doing paid work, whereas for men the distribution is exactly the reverse (ECLAC, 2021c).

Climate change has direct impacts on natural resources that are essential for daily life, such as water, fishery resources, available energy sources, and biodiversity. When these resources become scarce or hard to access, there can be serious gender and time-use implications. Women, especially rural, indigenous and campesino women, have the main responsibility for feeding their families and for collecting basic resources needed for household subsistence, such as water and firewood. These culturally assigned duties represent unpaid work done by girls and women; and the scarcity of these essential resources can mean it takes longer to gather them, thus deepening the structural challenges of inequality.

In addition, **patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns and the predominance of the culture of privilege** that persist in Latin America and the Caribbean are also manifested in the issue of climate change. Although women have been the custodians of biodiversity and possess specific and valuable knowledge that could provide sustainable solutions to climate change, patriarchal cultural patterns tend to exclude and ignore this knowledge, especially in the case of rural, indigenous and Afrodescendent women (ECLAC, 2017b).

Similarly, and reflecting **the concentration of power and hierarchical relations that prevail in the public domain**, institutional decision-making structures in the field of climate change demonstrate women's limited access to the exercise of power and decision-making processes. As described later in this document, concerted efforts by feminist and civil society organizations have succeeded in increasing women's participation in various spheres of representation, through parity representation mandates. Nonetheless, there are still situations in which women's representation is minimal.

Faced with these structural challenges of inequality and a scenario that threatens the sustainability of life itself, a key challenge is to ensure that response actions generate the conditions necessary for equality; and that women, in particular, are not excluded from the quest for solutions and from participation in the processes involved in responding to this global challenge.

II. Priority areas for action

The following paragraphs describe seven priority areas, with their respective recommendations for action. The proposal of areas is intentional and arises from an analysis of the following: the gender mandates of multilateral environmental agreements, and their gender policies and action plans; the gender policies and action plans of the key financing mechanisms in the environmental sector; discussions during the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the sixtieth meeting of the Presiding Officers; the Montevideo Strategy; the Generation Equality Forum under the aegis of Feminist Action for Climate Justice; and the experience of working with machineries for the advancement of women and with projects and initiatives on gender and climate change at the global, regional, national and local levels.

A. Normative framework: understanding the scope of international law on gender and climate change and its application at the national level

In 1992, at a historic event held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 172 governments, including 108 Heads of State and Government, gathered at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the Earth Summit, to adopt a development approach that would protect the environment while also fostering economic and social development (United Nations, 1997).

Also historic was the earlier mobilization around the environmental issue by the international feminist movement, which met in Miami in 1991 at the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, attended by 1,500 women from 83 countries. The outcome was the policy document *Women's Action Agenda 21*, which was used as the basis for negotiations at the UNCED preparatory meetings and at the Earth Summit itself (WEDO, 2011). Chapter 24 of Agenda 21, titled "Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development" was drawn on this process and includes the following objectives: increasing the number of women decision makers in environmental fields; assessing the implementation and implications for women of environmental policies and programmes; formulating and implementing official policies and national guidelines, strategies and plans to achieve equality; and adopting, strengthening and enforcing legislation prohibiting violence against women (United Nations, 1992a).

The international normative framework underpinning Chapter 24 included the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (United Nations, 1985), which emphasize women's participation in the management of national and international ecosystems and the control of environmental degradation. It also drew on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to end gender-based discrimination and ensure women access to land and other resources, education and decent and equal employment.

Three multilateral environmental agreements emerged from UNCED: CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC. The latter, since its inception, has contained a firm mandate on the importance of involving women in all its spheres of action. In fact, it was the first environmental convention to have a gender focal point that helps countries mainstream gender in their national plans to combat desertification. In 2011 it developed its policy framework; and, in September 2017, it approved its first gender action plan (GAP) at COP13.

In the case of CBD, paragraph 13 of the preamble to its basic text recognizes "the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirming the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy formulation and implementation for the conservation of biological diversity...". Its first GAP was signed in 2008; and a second was approved with a five-year extension in 2015. It is currently developing its third GAP.

Unlike its "sister" conventions, UNFCCC is the only one that did not have a mandate on, or make mention of, women's rights and gender equality at its inception. This mainly reflects the fact that it was conceived as a vertically organized technocratic mechanism with policies targeted solely on reducing greenhouse gases.

It would take more than 16 years from its creation for UNFCCC to make progress in recognizing gender equality. Since 2008, however, UNFCCC has undergone a paradigm shift and is starting to address gender equality and women's empowerment in a substantive manner. This is largely a result of an advocacy strategy developed and implemented by the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA).⁶ In addition, since the creation of GGCA, all COPs have included a gender equality perspective in nearly all UNFCCC thematic areas.

The complexity of the causes and repercussions of climate change has gradually been accepted as requiring a multifaceted approach that goes beyond technical measurements of GHG emissions or concentrations. This understanding was strengthened by approval of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, which are based on the need to construct a more just, equitable, safe, sustainable and socially inclusive world, with no one left behind.

⁶ At the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC held in Bali in 2007, four organizations, led by the Office of the Global Advisor to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) —the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)— founded the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA). This Alliance pursues an advocacy strategy that promotes, in a coordinated manner, the recognition of gender equality in the climate change debate. The Alliance brought together more than 140 organizations, ranging from UN agencies to grassroots groups.

As of early 2021, UNFCCC has 81 gender mandates in twelve themes:

Table 1
Gender decisions in UNFCCC by subject matter

Subject	Number
Adaptation	17
Gender balance and women's participation	6
Compliance	3
Capacity building	13
Financing	20
Response measures	1
Mitigation-including REDD+	6
Loss and damage	4
Technology transfer	7
Transparency	1
Shared vision	3
Total	81

Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of her own database and Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), "Gender Climate Tracker" [online] <https://www.genderclimatetracker.org/>.

Six of these mandates or decisions are noteworthy as turning points:

- (i) At COP 16 (2010), through the [Cancún Agreements](#), [gender-sensitive](#) text was adopted for the first time in one of the mitigation mechanisms—Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). This represented a qualitative leap, since most of the previous decisions had focused on adaptation. Then, at COP 17 (2011) ([Decision 12/CP.17](#)), as part of the guidelines on systems to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected, it was agreed that the systems in question must respect gender considerations. These decisions led to the development of the world's first five GAPs and REDD+, two of them in Latin America ([Mexico](#) and [Costa Rica](#)).⁷
- (ii) At COP 17 (2011), [Decision 3/CP.17](#) approved creation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This decision contains a series of gender references in the rules and procedures, which require the GCF to adopt a gender-sensitive approach. The fund thus became the first public financing mechanism to include the promotion of gender equality, from its inception.
- (iii) At COP 18 (2012), [Decision 23/CP.18](#) made the "gender" issue a permanent item on the COP agenda, upgrading it from the "Other business" category. This entails reporting to COP on the implementation status of decisions.
- (iv) At COP 20 (2014), the [Lima Work Programme on Gender](#) was approved (UNFCCC, 2014). The original idea of several of the Parties was to develop the first gender work programme, but it failed to gain the unanimous support of the Parties. An in-depth analysis of the Lima Work Programme on Gender reveals the presence of a series of actions in various thematic areas, which laid the foundations for specifying the five thematic areas of the first GAP in 2017.

When the Lima Work Programme on Gender was being prepared, at the last COP before the Paris Agreement, it was expected to focus on the actions needed to ensure consistency between all the different bodies and structures within the negotiations, and on promoting women's participation and representation in the Convention's various decision-making mechanisms.

⁷ The other countries are: Cameroon, Ghana and Uganda (IUCN, 2015).

One element in the Work Programme needs to be highlighted for its transformative value, namely the first-time approval of the term “gender-responsive” (unfortunately, this went unnoticed by the Spanish-speaking world, owing to an incorrect translation into Spanish).⁸ Paragraph 4 of the preamble to Lima Work Programme on Gender states that “gender-responsive climate policy still requires further strengthening in all activities related to adaptation and mitigation, as well as decision-making on the implementation of climate policies”. This involves identifying, understanding and implementing actions to close gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions. Being gender-responsive in its implementation means contributing pro-actively and intentionally to promoting gender equality (Aguilar, Granat and Owren, 2017).

The Work Programme also mandated the Secretariat to designate a gender focal point. This would advocate for greater attention to, and integration of, gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Convention’s policy and programming.

- (v) The twenty-first Conference of the Parties, held in 2015, saw the signing of the Paris Agreement, in which the eleventh paragraph of the preamble defines a guiding principle by proposing an intersectionality approach: “... Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity” (UNFCCC, 2015).
- (vi) Approval of the two gender action plans under the Convention. The main value of GAPS is that they make the mandates and decisions operational, by specifying concrete actions, responsibilities and implementation times. As noted above, the first GAP was expected to be confined to negotiations on thematic issues, such as consistency, which aimed to strengthen the integration of gender considerations in the work done by the Convention bodies and ensure gender balance, and women’s participation and leadership in the Convention’s processes.

The second GAP (COP 25) was designed in a global context that calls for action and greater ambition, as exemplified by global youth demanding practical responses to the climate emergency. The negotiation process generated intense discussion among Parties, observers, the UNFCCC Secretariat and interest groups on the need to move from a “mentality of negotiation” —necessary at the outset— to one of “action”. For most of the Parties that are suffering the devastating consequences of climate change, it was clear that the objective of the new GAP should be “implementation” and a call for ambition (Aguilar, 2019b).

Unfortunately, the 2019 GAP responded only timidly to that call,⁹ for two main reasons: First, the regional negotiating groups, and others such as the Group of 77 and China, should have developed a joint strategy months before arriving at the conference, to push for concerted action to ensure a gender action plan that responds to the needs and interests of women and men who face unequal conditions of climate change. To this end, delegations should have included gender experts with a clear mandate to negotiate a gender action plan that would move “from words to action”. Second, redirecting attention and prioritizing actions at the national and regional levels implied a potential reduction in the funding allocated to the thematic issues in the negotiation, thereby impacting the income of organizations that benefited a few years ago from the funding associated with the gender action plan.

⁸ In the Spanish text it was translated as “sensible a las cuestiones de género”.

⁹ Of the five priority areas identified in the gender action plan, only one refers to gender-responsive implementation. Unfortunately, of the seven activities proposed under this priority area, 43% are limited to facilitating the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in UNFCCC negotiation forums through workshops, expert groups or webinars.

With reference to the normative framework at the regional level, the [Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030](#)¹⁰ recognizes that integrating women's rights and autonomy into climate change adaptation and mitigation is not only essential in complementing global commitments to women's human rights and gender equality, but also maximizes the effectiveness of climate policies, programmes and resources. The Strategy also issues a call to "harmonize regional norms consistent with women's human rights, and evaluate the extraterritorial effects of the legislation and policies adopted, with respect to transnational issues, such as (...) climate change, (...) and the rights of Afrodescendent women and women of different indigenous and ethnic groups" (ECLAC, 2017b, measure 8.a).

Reinforcing this approach, the [Santiago Commitment](#), which was a product of the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (2020), reached three agreements on gender equality and climate change (ECLAC, 2020b, agreements 32, 33 and 34). Agreement 32 makes an ambitious and innovative call for progress on mainstreaming gender, intersectionality, interculturality and rights in policies and programmes with financing for sustainable development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction, especially in the most vulnerable territories. It also calls for greater participation by women and the inclusion of gender equality in the analysis of needs and response plans, and also in the planning and execution of public investment for reconstruction. In addition, it highlights the need to strengthen collaboration between the machineries for the advancement of women and the entities responsible for environmental, climate change and energy policies, among other issues (ECLAC, 2020a).

The Escazú Agreement, which entered into force on 22 April 2021, promotes environmental democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean. This pioneering and visionary instrument is considered one of the most important environmental and human rights agreements of the last 20 years. It enshrines in a binding treaty the three rights of access, or procedural rights, contained in [Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#). Its objective, therefore, is to "guarantee the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters".

Principles 10 and 20 of the Rio Declaration, along with the Escazú Agreement, are based on a fundamental premise: while ensuring environmental protection, the fulfilment of human rights, strengthening of democracy and the consolidation of a sustainable development model, States are duty-bound to ensure access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.

These three pillars, which are rights in themselves and mutually interdependent, constitute the irrevocable way to guarantee the fulfilment of other human rights, such as the right to free association or to participate in the government of each country, but also the right to a healthy environment, to water, to health, to food and to the right to live in peace and dignity.

¹⁰ The Montevideo Strategy aims to guide implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda and make sure it is used as a roadmap for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level, from the perspective of gender equality, autonomy and women's human rights.

Box 1

Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement)

The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement, entered into force on April 22, 2021. Its objective, as specified in article 1, is to “guarantee the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters, and the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation, contributing to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development” (ECLAC 2018a).

The Escazú Agreement is the first binding agreement in Latin America and the Caribbean that materializes the principles proclaimed in the Declaration on the Application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was signed in the framework of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. In addition to converting these principles into obligations for the States, the agreement sets a standard for building an environmental democracy, by contributing to the prevention of socioenvironmental conflicts, empowering communities, seeking channels for dialogue and strengthening institutions.

The Escazú Agreement is the **first treaty in the world that seeks to specifically guarantee a safe and enabling environment for individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, without threats, restrictions, and insecurity.**

This is particularly relevant in Latin America and the Caribbean—the region of the world in which environmental and human rights defenders are most at risk. According to the report “Defensores de derechos humanos ambientales: una crisis global” by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, of the 908 murders of environmental human rights defenders between 2002 and 2013, over 90% occurred in nine countries, and six of these are in Latin America and the Caribbean (Knox, 2017).

Given with this reality, and based on the recommendations, mandates and observations of international law, the agreement seeks, first, to grant legal, fair and deserved recognition to individuals, groups and organizations that defend human rights in environmental matters; and second, to consolidate a robust agreement that guarantees their rights of access and those of all persons. Article 9 (3) establishes that “Each Party shall also take appropriate, effective and timely measures to prevent, investigate and punish attacks, threats or intimidations that human rights defenders in environmental matters may suffer while exercising the rights set out in the present Agreement”.

All of the substantive articles of this agreement, from articles 1 to 12, make obligations of the principles of environmental law and human rights, relating to: (a) procedures, such as impact assessments, rights of access, and the empowerment of individuals and communities; (b) legal and institutional frameworks that protect and have the capacity to address environmental damage that hinders the enjoyment of human rights; and (c) with respect to people who are members of vulnerable groups.

On this last point, the Escazú Agreement is also pioneering as the first in the world to **include a definition of persons or groups in situations of vulnerability in article 2**. Also noteworthy are article 5 on access to information; article 6 on the generation and dissemination of environmental information; article 7 on public participation; article 8 on access to justice; articles 10, 11 and 12 on strengthening national capacities, cooperation and technical assistance between countries; and article 23, which prohibits any reservation in respect of its content, in keeping with the practice of human rights instruments.

The entry into force of the Escazú Agreement makes a valuable contribution towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals; and it sends an unequivocal signal from the region to the world to build and strengthen environmental democracy.

Source: L. Aguilar, opening remarks at the preparatory meeting of the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25), San José, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, 8–10 October (2019); J. Knox, Defensores de derechos humanos ambientales: una crisis global, Universal Rights Group (URG), 2017; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/PUB.2018/8), Santiago, 2018.

The twenty-second Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (2021) called for the environmental dimension to be placed at the centre of plans for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, reactivation based on social inclusion, resilient and low-carbon economies, and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. In one of the eight decisions contained in the [Bridgetown Declaration](#) (UNEP, 2021), the ministers undertook to promote gender equality and urged *"all the countries of the region to develop affirmative actions within the framework of environmental public policies, that make it possible to make visible and value the women's contributions in sustainable development, as well as the existing gaps in access, use, control and benefit to natural resources and the negative impacts on women and girls, derived from the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources."* The decisions adopted by the meeting also listed a number of requirements for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: generation of information disaggregated by sex; integration of gender-sensitive approaches in public policies; achieve a gender balance in participation and decision-making mechanisms; and design policies to support the elimination of any legal or social barrier to women's rights."

Similarly, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway recognizes the uniqueness of these States, since the adverse effects of climate change exacerbate existing problems and place an additional burden on their national budgets, thus hampering their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with equality. The Samoa Pathway reaffirms the importance of gender equality and the effective participation of women, indigenous peoples, youth and persons with disabilities, for effective action on all aspects of climate change that characterize the current situation in the world and in the region (see United Nations, 2014, paragraph 40).

There is no established solution or formula for making international and regional agreements operational. At the national and regional levels, countries, along with the many inter-governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international development organizations that support them, have adopted various strategies to facilitate the incorporation of gender, intersectionality, interculturality and rights into laws, policies and programmes related to climate change. Examples include the following:

- Various sectors, such as forestry and renewable energies, have developed their own specific strategies.
- In the first round of nationally determined contributions (NDCs),¹¹ which were submitted prior to COP 21 in Paris, out of a total of 161 countries, 40% made some mention of gender or women, or both (Huyer, 2016). Thirteen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean mention the words "gender" or "women" (ECLAC, 2019).
- Globally, 26 countries or regions have developed gender and climate change action plans.¹² In Latin America and the Caribbean, six have been developed—in Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic Haiti, Panama and Peru. The methodology has also been adapted and used at the subnational and local levels, as exemplified by Mexico, where there is a gender and climate change action plan for a natural protected area in the State of Sonora and another for the Yucatán Peninsula.
- An analysis of the 36 documents compiled by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (which registers the equality plans of the countries of the region from 1997 to 2020) finds that 19 mention "climate change" (52.77% of the total).¹³

¹¹ Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are planned reductions in greenhouse gas emissions under the UNFCCC. NDCs are a series of measures and actions, which countries that are parties to the Paris Agreement plan to adopt to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

¹² The gender and climate change action plans were developed by the Office of the Global Gender Advisor of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in close consultation with local civil society organizations, academia and government representatives—including MEAs and government ministries relevant to climate change issues. The gender and climate change action plans identify the gender impacts of climate change in the respective countries, provide a roadmap for the inclusion of women's voices in policy development and implementation, create a space for women who are already working to combat, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, and to exchange experiences and solutions. The full list of gender and climate change action plans is available at: <https://genderandenvironment.org/agent/agent-tech-support/ccgaps/>.

¹³ This analysis was performed by the author using MAXQDA software.

This issue started to be incorporated in 2008 with the documents “National Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men 2008–2017” of the Republic of Paraguay and the “National Policy for the Advancement and Comprehensive Development of Women (PNEDIM) and the Equal Opportunities Plan 2008–2023” of the Republic of Guatemala.

Actions that the machineries for the advancement of women could promote to understand the scope of the international legal framework on gender equality and climate change and its implementation nationally include the following:

- Review and renew national equality plans to reflect and implement international, regional and national mandates and agreements on gender equality and climate change. Actions that can guide this process include the following:
 - Make an in-depth analysis of the gender mandates¹⁴ and the two GAPs¹⁵ developed under the UNFCCC framework.
 - Study the gender action plans of the other two “Rio Conventions” —CBD (CBD, 2017) and UNCCD (UNCCD, n/d)— to identify possible activities and initiatives that “mobilize” several of the mandates of the various conventions in relation to climate change. Other MEAs, such as the Ramsar Convention and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions also have approaches to promote gender equality.
 - Incorporate the commitments of the Regional Gender Agenda.
 - Learn about and adapt, to national needs, the actions, tactics and commitments assumed within the framework of the Generation Equality Forum in the Feminist Action for Climate Justice pillar (see box 2).
 - Study the country’s most recent NDC document to identify possible entry points to ensure the incorporation of gender considerations in its implementation.
 - Coordinate with the gender teams of organizations such as the Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership (NDC Partnership)¹⁶ and the ClimatePromise initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). For its part, ECLAC’s Division for Gender Affairs (DGA) can coordinate with both organizations to determine potential areas for collaboration and support to machineries for the advancement of women and women’s organizations at the national and subnational levels.
- Promote the development of new gender and climate change action plans —for countries that do not yet have them— and update existing plans, promoting better alignment with international and national agreements on gender and climate change. In addition, assess the feasibility of developing gender and climate change action plans at different territorial levels. One of the methodological elements of the gender and climate change action plans focuses on understanding of the political, governance, socioeconomic and environmental circumstances among representatives of various sectors, NGOs, academic institutions, community groups, women’s organizations and networks, among others. These entities assess the current gender and climate change situation of their territory, visualize a future scenario in which gender equality is taken into account in the relevant sectors and agree on measures and actions to attain that scenario. The actions are related to adaptation and mitigation and are aligned with national climate change planning processes (Aguilar, Granat and Owren, 2015).
- Harmonize national climate change policy frameworks with the gender mandates adopted under UNFCCC and other regional instruments, such as the Montevideo Strategy, the Regional Gender Agenda and the Escazú Agreement.

¹⁴ The [Gender Climate Tracker](#) tool is a platform where gender mandates under the UNFCCC can be accessed.

¹⁵ First Gender Action Plan. COP 23–2017 (United Nations, 2017b). Second Gender Action Plan COP 25–2019 (United Nations, 2019a)

¹⁶ The NDC Partnership is a global coalition of countries and institutions that are collaborating to drive transformative climate action through sustainable development. Members use the partnership to leverage their resources and expertise to make recommendations to countries. The partnership has an initiative to support its members in mainstreaming a gender approach.

- Endow machineries for the advancement of women with adequate human and financial resources to ensure that climate change policies, programmes and projects promote gender equality and women's autonomy, as well as the full participation of women in their diversity. For example, several donors have provided funding to support the strengthening of machineries for the advancement of women; and various financing mechanisms have readiness funds that aim to improve or strengthen the capacity of national institutions to participate effectively in climate change initiatives.

Box 2
The Generation Equality Forum

At the international level, the Generation Equality Forum, convened by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Autonomy of Women (UN-Women) and co-organized by the Governments of Mexico and France, are deploying the Generation Equality Coalitions for Action to mobilize governments, women, feminist and youth-led organizations, international organizations and the private sector to: catalyse collective action; spark global and local conversations among generations; drive increased public and private investment; and deliver concrete results on inter-generational gender equality for girls and women.

The Coalitions for Action are addressing six specific themes: (i) gender-based violence; (ii) economic justice and rights; (iii) bodily autonomy, and sexual and reproductive health and rights; (iv) feminist action for climate justice; (v) technology and innovation for gender equality; and (vi) feminist movements and leadership.

Feminist Action for Climate Justice (FACJ) has the following vision for 2026:

- FACJ will have initiated a transition to an inclusive and regenerative green economy that recognizes the interconnectedness of climate change with issues of gender justice; and which protects and amplifies the voices of grassroots and indigenous communities, including frontline defenders, across social and political arenas.
- Women and girls in their full diversity equitably and meaningfully participate in decision-making processes at all levels, including in aligning key climate policy instruments with national development plans and developing climate responses that respect human rights.
- Financing institutions and the donor community reframe risk, prioritize women's organizations as priority partners, and are held accountable to shift capital to support resilient societies and transformative investments in gender-just climate and ecosystem-based approaches.
- Women and girls in their full diversity equitably access climate finance, technologies and knowledge, and access and control natural resources for management and protection, including through securing land rights and ownership.

A catalogue of commitments that global actors can make to the chosen actions, or to FACJ in general, will further amplify the impact of the Action Coalition. Ultimately, a cross-sectoral partnership and coordination around a set of concrete goals is what will be required to achieve a collective vision for FACJ by 2026.

Source: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Autonomy of Women (UN-Women), "Acción feminista para la justicia climática", New York, Generation Equality Forum, 2021, unpublished.

B. Production of knowledge, data and statistics: strengthen the generation, availability and dissemination of knowledge, analysis and use of data, statistics and indicators on issues related to gender equality and climate change¹⁷

In the last decade, progress has been made in generating statistics disaggregated by sex in the social, economic and political spheres. However, environmental data are seldom broken down in this way at the national, regional and global levels.

¹⁷ This section draws on the discussions of the working group on the theme "Feminist Action for Climate Justice" as part of the Generation Equality Forum. January–February 2021.

There are huge challenges in relation to the generation and availability of gender statistics and indicators in the environmental sector, which hinder a more just, equitable and inclusive sustainable development, not only in Latin America and the Caribbean but worldwide. Shortcomings range from the lack of global standards, to the failure to institutionalize environmental statistics and, in the case of the link with gender, the lack of a multi-stakeholder dialogue (between the machineries for the advancement of women, national statistics offices and sectoral ministries) to identify information needs. Moreover, many systems or processes are not designed to capture the complexities of socioeconomic and environmental interactions in the territories; the data are of poor quality, as they are often not based on standards or may be inaccurate; and in cases where data are available, they are not used and their dissemination is limited.

Although the 2030 Agenda recognizes the centrality of gender equality for achieving sustainable development, and the global¹⁸ and regional¹⁹ mechanisms for defining follow-up indicators have tried to maintain this aspiration in the measurement instruments, gaps remain in important areas. In particular, insufficient attention has been paid to the link between gender equality and the environmental pillar of sustainable development. As this is also the pillar with the least amount of data available for SDG monitoring, the development of relevant gender-sensitive policies is hindered by: lack of information on women's consumption decisions and production patterns; their access to, use and protection of natural resources; their possibility of participating in mechanisms where the management of such policies is discussed; and their role in the processes of adaptation, mitigation and reduction of disasters related to extreme weather events, among other issues. Among the goals related to the environmental pillar (SDGs 12, 13, 14 and 15), only one explicitly states the importance of addressing climate change planning and management from a women's rights approach. Moreover, the indicator selected to monitor this goal still lacks an internationally agreed methodology.

Nonetheless, the framework of indicators for regional monitoring of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development does include complementary indicators that recognize the region's multiple commitments to gender equality and include relevant indicators (ECLAC, 2018c) (see box 3).

Relevant issues relating to the situation of women, gender inequalities and climate change, which would benefit from having data and statistics to inform public policy, include the following:

- **Access to and use and control of natural resources and biodiversity.** Although it is recognized that women and men have differentiated roles in terms of their access to, and use and control of natural resources and biodiversity, there is insufficient research and statistical data on natural resources and the ownership of biodiversity and land, and on access rights in key sectors, such as forestry, coastal marine or wetlands.
- **Women's participation in environment-related management bodies and committees.** In Latin America, there is very little information on the participation and roles of women, in their diversity, in local management bodies and committees related to natural resources—such as communal land management bodies or water and forestry groups, among others.
- **Impacts of climate change and its repercussions on the use of time.** Time-use data can be compiled to create a baseline to measure the relationship between people's use of time and the depletion of natural resources, such as water, forests and land. It can also be used to identify the benefits of various initiatives in reducing the workload borne by women and girls. Information on time use has also shown that the distribution of time and access to productive and economic resources are very closely related. Although 19 countries in the region already have experience with time-use surveys, there is still little linkage between this information and issues related to climate change and natural disasters.
- **Differentiated disaster impacts.** While some countries have made progress in measuring the direct impacts of disasters, there is a lack of statistical data that relate gender to the indirect impacts of climate change (for example: biodiversity loss; declining agricultural productivity

¹⁸ For a complete list of global monitoring indicators see (United Nations, 2021).

¹⁹ For a complete list of indicator frameworks for regional monitoring of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development see (United Nations, 2019c).

owing to hydrometeorological changes; or an increase in maternal mortality as a result of preeclampsia related directly to the rise in sea level which causes salt water to penetrate freshwater sources (Aguilar and Rogers, 2013). Data are also lacking on the impacts of disasters on persons with disabilities, and their needs in such situations; and the same is true in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer (LGBTQ+) persons. This results in their exclusion from humanitarian relief efforts. Another entry point is the need to incorporate a gender approach in social information systems and social protection instruments in emergency situations, and in the framework of disaster prevention and response strategies.

- **Gender violence and climate change.** Recent studies highlight the likelihood of violence related to the use of, access to, and control over natural resources, which may increase particularly in the context of scarcity, environmental pressures and climate change threats. Gender-based violence against women acts as a barrier to rights-based conservation and equitable and effective sustainable development (Castañeda and others, 2020). In this regard, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean argues that compiling specific data on violence perpetrated against women and other gender-based violence in situations of disaster displacement and environmental migration, including in destination countries, remains a key priority. It is common for cases of violence against women to go unreported in Caribbean countries; and the problem becomes even more challenging in disaster situations (Bleker and others, 2021).

Box 3

Development of regional and national SDG monitoring indicators: progress on gender indicators

Through the Statistical Conference of the Americas, the countries of the region, in conjunction with ECLAC as Technical Secretariat, have consolidated cooperation, coordination and the harmonization of work in the field of official statistics. In this context, statistical monitoring has been performed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level; and the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean has been consolidated to define the region's representation in global forums, in order to coordinate activities supporting the definition of methodological aspects of the SDG indicators, and to design mechanisms to close the gaps in statistical output in the region's countries.

In recognition of the need to generate a regional implementation plan that would gradually cover the information requirements arising from the 2030 Agenda, taking into account realities, emphases and challenges that are common to the region's countries, Member States requested ECLAC, in its capacity as Technical Secretariat of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, to prepare and propose a framework of indicators for regional monitoring of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The regional indicators framework recognizes the regional accumulation of commitments to gender equality adopted by the Member States. The proposal thus includes ambitious indicators that reflect the conceptual advances that have been made in gender statistics in the region. Examples of indicators from the regional framework that could be useful for analysing the link between gender and the environment include the following:

- C-5.2 Rates of femicide or feminicide (homicides of women 15 years of age and older, killed for gender-related reasons, per 100,000 women).
- C-5.4c Average hours per week spent on unpaid and paid work combined (total workload), by sex.
- C-8.6 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, and not working exclusively in the home, by sex.
- P-6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services.
- P-6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, by sex, age and geographic location.
- C-10.3c Existence of legislation prohibiting discrimination (gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability).
- C-10.3d Existence of policies that promote equality of opportunity and treatment (by gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability).
- C-11.3 Proportion of urban and territorial development plans that incorporate a rights-based, gender and intercultural approach.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Report on the prioritization of indicators for regional statistical follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/CE.17/3), Santiago, 2018.

A reference that can be used to guide discussions for the development of gender statistics and indicators in the midst of climate change is the report prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (UNEP/IUCN, 2018). This report proposes 18 gender and environment indicators for inclusion in the broader set of gender indicators in the focal areas of land rights, natural resources and biodiversity; access to food, energy, water and sanitation; climate change, sustainable production and consumption, and health; and women in environmental decision-making at all levels.

The production, analysis and use of gender statistics are, and should be, part of gender equality policies in the region's countries; and they should be a priority among official statistics producers in the region's countries. This, for example, is reflected in implementation pillar 9 of the Montevideo Strategy (ECLAC, 2017b), which highlights the need to create information systems to transform data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into political decisions.

Measuring and compiling gender-sensitive data on climate change and sustainable development contributes to the formulation of more solid, evidence-based policies and allows policy effectiveness to be evaluated, thus facilitating better policy development (GBA/Data2X/MIF, 2016).

Without data disaggregated by sex, and with an intersectional approach to climate change, it will be impossible to know how much progress has been made and what remains to be done to achieve the objectives proposed in regional and international agreements, conventions and targets, or in actions and policies at the national and subnational levels.

Possible actions include:

- Create partnerships with think tanks, IPCC, NGOs and academia to:
 - Identify and address knowledge gaps in the interface between gender and climate change.
 - Strengthen the evidence base and enhance understanding of the differentiated impacts of climate change on men and women, and women's role as agents of change.
 - Undertake research on the connections between gender and environmental factors (GHG emissions, land degradation, forced evictions, biodiversity loss and violence, among others).
- Make the most of opportunities for dialogue and regional agreements, such as the Statistical Conference of the Americas and its coordination with the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and other ECLAC subsidiary bodies. These convene the region's top government authorities to identify and promote promising practices in terms of gender equality and climate change adaptation and mitigation at the regional level, and to advance an agenda to strengthen statistics for the production of indicators that make it possible to follow up on commitments.
- Contribute to the production of quality data on gender and climate change:
 - Prepare gender-relevant questions and include them in surveys on the environment and disasters.
 - Consistently record gender and other variables associated with intersectionality and interculturality in sources of administrative data related to the environment (for example, property registries, payment for environmental services, natural resource exploitation concessions, among others).
 - Harness new technologies and partnerships with academia, civil society organizations and the private sector to generate gender and environmental data through citizen science (for example, crowdsourcing)²⁰ and the use of big data.²¹

²⁰ Crowdsourcing involves obtaining information or opinions from a large group of people who submit their data via the Internet, social networks and smartphone applications.

²¹ Big data is a term used to describe the volume of structured and unstructured data that today forms part of human activities. The quantity of information available is less important than its quality, and how it should be managed to obtain relevant knowledge for better decision-making. Big data, in conjunction with digital technologies, are generating various impacts on the management and handling of data.

- Work within the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote the production and dissemination of gender-sensitive indicators on oceans and integrated coastal management, terrestrial ecosystems, water and sanitation, sustainable consumption, and energy.
- Leverage the work of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean and other regional coordination mechanisms, including the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, the SDG Gateway,²² to identify the needs for generating data, statistics and indicators on issues related to gender and climate change, for monitoring SDGs at the regional level and for the exchange of knowledge between countries, agencies of the United Nations System, and civil society.
- Use of data to inform gender-sensitive policies, strategies, measures and actions to counter climate change. Possible actions include:
 - Capacity building to enable policy makers to understand where to find and how to interpret and use data on the gender and climate change nexus.
 - Promote dialogues and other forms of collaboration between data production sources (on gender, environment, or gender-environment) and data users (environmental policy makers, advocates, journalists, etc.) to facilitate access to data and the interpretation and use thereof, and promote evidence-based decision making.

C. Capacity building and development: improve and develop skills and capacities related to gender equality and climate change at the national level (state and civil society), with a special focus on machineries for the advancement of women and women’s organizations

The transition to a development style that seeks a balance with the planet in a fairer world requires new knowledge and theoretical and methodological approaches. The generation of specialized knowledge on issues such as urban planning, nature-based solutions, decarbonization plans and emissions reduction is imperative for ensuring that responses to climate change not only leave no one behind, but also have an impact on reducing inequalities and contribute to achieving the SDGs in a synergistic way.

Although governments have shown interest in integrating gender equality and women’s autonomy in climate change processes, a major obstacle is the lack of skills and training in areas such as the design of public policies, the implementation of actions in projects, or the implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems with a gender perspective.

One of the central capacity building challenges facing policy makers is the wide range of sectors and issues that have links to climate change (energy, forestry, coastal management, disasters, transportation, urban planning, health, among many others). This means that processes to establish competencies and strengthen capacities must not only take into account the level of responsibility and participation in the design of an action or policy, but also consider the specifics of the sector and subsector in which the measure will be implemented. Although standardized learning modules on gender equality and climate change can be developed, “tailor-made” training processes are required that respond to the specific needs of the sector or subsector to be addressed.

²² In conjunction with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in the region and the Development Coordination Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC and the UNDP regional office have developed an online portal which will serve as the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (see [online] <https://agenda2030lac.org/en>).

The diversity of the “target group” to be trained implies a level of specialization among those who impart knowledge and facilitate learning processes or accompany technical assistance work. Expertise on gender issues is therefore not enough; it is also necessary to address the intersection between the gender approach and the climate change challenges.

Actions to strengthen capacities related to gender equality and climate change at the national level (state and civil society), paying special attention to machineries for the advancement of women and women’s organizations, include the following:

- Foster better understanding of the implications of a gender perspective on climate change policy among staff in the machineries for the advancement of women. For example, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the GEF Small Grants Programme team have developed an online course on gender and environment consisting of five main topics: introduction, climate change, biodiversity, waste and chemicals, and drylands.²³
- Develop virtual spaces, for example, on government websites (machineries for the advancement of women, ministries of the environment, offices of the president, interior ministries), for the exchange of knowledge on gender equality and climate change for specific topics. Materials, such as methodological handbooks, case studies and training manuals developed by organizations and groups such as: [C40 Cities](#) on urbanism and cities, the [International Renewable Energy Agency \(IRENA\)](#) on energy and renewable energy, and the [Centre for International Forestry Research \(CIFOR\)](#) for the forestry sector. Multilateral environmental agreements, such as CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and others, have specialized sections on the gender perspective.
- Maintain a roster of experts in gender studies and areas associated with climate change in the region, in order to support information exchange, provide technical assistance and strengthen capabilities for the analysis and design of government actions.
- Invest in specific training mechanisms for the different sectors and subsectors that deal with climate change mitigation and adaptation issues, co-opting personnel from these sectors and from machineries for the advancement of women.
- Promote the development of training materials and competencies for women’s and feminist organizations, indigenous and Afrodescendent women, as well as LGTBQ+ communities, understanding that the effects of climate change have differentiated impacts on these groups.
- Undertake a campaign to disseminate the country’s UNFCCC mandates on gender and climate change to the relevant public entities, at both the national and the subnational levels.
- Strengthen the capacities of national and subnational governments and other stakeholders for gender mainstreaming in the formulation, implementation and monitoring, as the case may be, of national climate change policies, plans, strategies and measures, including NDCs, national adaptation plans and national communications.
- Provide incentives for research and academic training through partnerships with universities and think tanks, and promote diploma courses or certifications on gender equality and climate change with different emphases (rural women, indigenous women, LGTBQ+ persons) and for different sectors and subsectors (forestry, maritime-coastal, agriculture, energy, among others).

²³ Courses available in English, Spanish and French are presented in GEF (n/d).

D. Representation and parity participation: promote gender parity and encourage the participation and representation of women, in all their diversity, in negotiations and decision-making related to climate change at the subnational, national, and international levels

In 1992 following the Earth Summit (UNCED), and thanks to the efforts made by women around the world, full and equal participation by women in environmental issues and decisions was recognized as a fundamental requirement for sustainable development. Agenda 21 is one of the first documents emanating from a United Nations conference to contain a systematic reference (Chapter 24) on the position and roles of women. Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 (United Nations, 1992) urges governments to:

- Ensure women's participation in national ecosystem management and control of environment degradation.
- Increase the proportion of women decision makers, planners, technical advisers, managers and extension workers in environment and development fields;
- Develop a strategy of changes necessary to eliminate constitutional, legal, administrative, cultural, behavioural, social and economic obstacles to women's full participation in sustainable development;
- Adopt review policies and establish plans to increase the proportion of women involved as decision makers, planners, managers, scientists and technical advisers in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development.

In the 2000 decade, several sustainable development conferences were held in follow-up to the Earth Summit. These include the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in 2002, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or "Rio+20") in 2012. All of them reiterate the importance of promoting and ensuring women's participation.

Another key milestone was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action resulting from the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (1995). In the Beijing Platform for Action, strategic objective K addresses women and the environment. Under this objective, governments are urged to: include indigenous women, their perspectives and knowledge, on an equal basis with men, in decision-making regarding sustainable resource management and the development of policies and programmes for sustainable development, including in particular those designed to address and prevent environmental degradation of the land; and develop a strategy for change to eliminate all obstacles to women's full and equal participation in sustainable development and equal access to and control over resources (United Nations, 1995).

By 2000, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had objectives that included: "to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable" (United Nations, 2000).

In 2005, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction; and this was updated at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan. The guiding principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction include the following: "Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted." (United Nations, 2015).

A decade later, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals reinforce the importance of participation by women', in all their diversity, to eliminate poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. This is confirmed in the [Follow-up Report](#) during the

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development regarding progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It identifies climate change and inequality as two of the most urgent issues for achieving the Goals and states that: “the compounded effects will be catastrophic and irreversible: increasing ocean acidification, coastal erosion, extreme weather conditions, the frequency and severity of natural disasters, continuing land degradation, loss of vital species and the collapse of ecosystems. These effects, which will render many parts of the globe uninhabitable, will affect the poor the most. They will put food production at risk, leading to widespread food shortages and hunger, and potentially displace up to 140 million people by 2050” (United Nations, 2019b, p.3).

In addition to these agreements, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women became the first international charter of women’s rights when it was adopted in 1979. Although the Convention does not contain specific references to the environmental sector, article 14 obliges the Parties to “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels” (CEDAW, 1979).²⁴

By the middle of the 2000 decade, these international commitments and agreements were instrumental in incorporating the right to full and equal participation by women in the policies and action plans of the three Rio Conventions: CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC as well as other MEAs, such as the Ramsar Convention and the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

In the case of UNFCCC, although the Convention did not include gender equality at its inception, there has been a gradual increase in the participation of women in its global processes since 2008:

- In 2008 the total share of women in delegations was 32% (WEDO, 2018), and, by 2020, this had risen to 40% (UNFCCC, 2020a).
- Women made up 42.4% of the region’s COP 25 delegations in 2019 (UNFCCC, 2020a).
- At COP 15 (2009), only 19 out of 193 (10%) heads of delegation were women. By COP 25 (2019) there had been a significant increase, with women leading the delegations of 41 countries out of 196 (21%) (WEDO, 2019).

This progress can be attributed to decisions taken within COP to adopt a gender parity objective in the Convention’s bodies with the aim of improving women’s participation (UNFCCC, 2020b, paragraph 7, and 2013), together with civil society initiatives to promote their leadership in the negotiations, the emergence of research on the link between gender and climate change, and the development of national gender and climate change policies and plans.

Regarding the gender composition of the constituted bodies,²⁵ “The trend towards more gender-balanced bodies that was reported in 2018 has reversed in 2019 and 2020. In 2020, only two constituted bodies reported having close to a balance in gender (50 and 56 per cent female representation) compared with three in 2018, and 6 constituted bodies out of 16 had female representation of 40 per cent or more in 2020 compared with 5 out of 15 in 2019. On average, female members of constituted bodies occupy 33 per cent of all the positions in a body in 2020” (UNFCCC, 2020a).

²⁴ In October 2016 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change (CEDAW/C/GC/37).

²⁵ The constituted bodies are the limited membership subsidiary technical bodies. Examples include: the Adaptation Committee, the Adaptation Fund Board, the Facilitation Group of the Compliance Committee, the Advisory Board of the Climate Technology Centre and Network, the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, among others.

In the case of women's participation in these technical bodies by regional grouping, Latin America and the Caribbean, along with the Asia-Pacific states, are the regions with the fewest women appointed. In comparison, female representation in regions such as Africa are twice as large (see table 2).²⁶

Another important element among the COP mandates is paragraph 11 of decision 3/CP.25 which "Encourages Parties to appoint and provide support for a national gender and climate change focal point for climate negotiations, implementation and monitoring." At present, only 16 countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region have fulfilled this mandate.²⁷

In Latin America and the Caribbean, two instruments recognize the existence of barriers to women's participation and propose actions to overcome them. A safe and enabling environment is a necessary condition for the full and effective participation of women without discrimination. The Montevideo Strategy devotes a specific implementation pillar to participation by women's and feminist organizations and movements in the design, implementation and monitoring of gender equality, women's rights and sustainable development policies. The measures agreed upon in the Montevideo Strategy include the establishment of effective, institutionalized and representative participation mechanisms for women in their diversity—especially in sustainable development policies, and policies for mitigation and response to the effects of adverse climatic phenomena, disaster risk management and the strengthening of resilience at the regional, national, subnational and local levels. It is also agreed to create and maintain mechanisms for free, prior and informed consultation, particularly with rural communities and indigenous peoples, and to guarantee access to public information so that civil society can play its part in monitoring public policies (ECLAC 2017b, measure 3.c). For its part, the Escazú Agreement provides in article 7 (10), that "Each Party shall establish conditions that are favourable to public participation in environmental decision-making processes and that are adapted to the social, economic, cultural, geographical and gender characteristics of the public" (ECLAC, 2018a).

There are no data or statistics available to analyse women's participation in national and subnational decision-making mechanisms on climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean. While some countries are making efforts in this direction, the data are still fragmented; they are relevant for one territory only—usually associated with a single project—and quality is lacking.

Young women in Latin America are participating extensively by forming youth groups related to the climate emergency, stimulated by the [FridaysForFuture](#) movement led by Greta Thunberg. Examples include youth organizations such as Engajamundo (Brazil) and Tejiendo Pensamientos (Colombia), which in turn participate in international mechanisms, such as the Generation Equality Forum and in the context of the UNFCCC COPs. Evidence of this situation can be seen in the equiproportional representation at UNFCCC of male and female delegates aged between 26 and 35 years (UNFCCC, 2020a).

²⁶ Author's analysis based on Annex 1-table 1.1. of the *Gender Composition: Report by the Secretariat* (UNFCCC, 2020a).

²⁷ The list of countries that have designated national gender and climate change focal points can be accessed [online] <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/resources/list-of-gender-focal-points-under-the-unfccc>.

Table 2
Gender composition of bodies constituted under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, by regional grouping

Body	Number of members	Ratio women/men 2020	Number of women in each regional grouping											
			Africa		Asia Pacific		Eastern Europe		Latin America and the Caribbean		Western Europe		Other ^a	
			2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Adaptation Committee	16	9–7	2	2	1	1	1	1			1	2	6	3
Adaptation Fund Board	16	7–9		1			1	2		1	2	2	1	1
Clean Development Mechanism Executive Board	10	1–9					1	1						
Expert Advisory Group(s) ^b	21	7–12	2	2	2	3				1			2	1
Compliance Committee Execution Committee ^b	10	2–7					1	1			1	1		
Facilitation Committee of the Compliance Committee ^b	10	3–6	1	1					1	1	1			1
Climate Technology Centre and Network	16	4–11											6	4
Facilitating Working Group	7	1–6							1	1				
Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee ^b	10	3–5											3	3
Katowice Committee of Experts on the Impacts of the Implementation of Response Measures	12	2–10					1	1			1	1		
Least Developed Countries Expert Group	13	4–9	2	2									3	2
Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee ^b	12	5–5		1				2				1		1
Paris Committee on Capacity-Building	12	6–6	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2		
Standing Committee on Finance ^b	20	6–11											6	6
Technology Executive Committee	20	4–16											6	4
Warsaw International Executive Committee	20	9–11											6	9
Total	225	73–140	8	10	4	5	6	9	4	5	8	9	39	35

Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), "Annex I, table I.1: Gender composition of constituted bodies established under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement by regional group and other Party grouping", *Gender Composition: Report by the Secretariat* (FCCC/CP/2020/3), 2020 [online] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2020_o3E.pdf.

^a Includes parts of Annex I, II, parts of Annex 1, among other items.

^b There were members still to be confirmed at the time of the analysis.

The recommendations under this section are subdivided into international, national and subnational actions.

Actions at the international level

- Designate a UNFCCC country focal point on gender and climate change, and officially notify the UNFCCC Secretariat's Gender Focal Point (GFP). The latter notifies the official list of country focal points of gender-related meetings and events in the context of the negotiations.
- Maintain a close relationship with the country's gender and climate change focal point.
- Request the government entity that represents the country at UNFCCC (this could be the Ministry of the Environment or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example) to ensure that the official delegation includes representatives from the machinery for the advancement of women and women's groups of various types (feminist, indigenous, Afrodescendent, rural and urban, among others).
- Lobby the government representative to the Convention to ensure parity in the delegations and a greater representation of women in the heads of delegations.
- Apply for travel funds for women delegates. These are administered by the UNFCCC country focal points or by civil society organizations. One possibility worth considering is to apply directly to donors for the creation of a women delegate fund for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Request the UNFCCC country focal point to incorporate the country's female delegates in the formal and non-formal education and training programmes carried out in the context of the negotiations.
- Study the topics on the negotiation agenda for the meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) as well as for COP, in order to formulate a country position on gender and climate change issues.
- Ensure that the country position considers the differentiated impacts and needs of indigenous and Afrodescendent women and men with respect to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Coordinate the development of a negotiating strategy for countries that are members of a regional negotiating group (for example, the Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Group of 77 and China).
- Establish contact with the "Gender Friendly States" group and indicate the country's interest in joining this group.²⁸
- Follow up on the periodic notifications sent to the Parties for the submission of nominations to UNFCCC bodies to ensure women are included on the list of nominations.

Actions at the regional, national and subnational levels

- Establish a regional network of national gender and climate change focal points assigned to UNFCCC, in order to coordinate actions and develop proposals for regional initiatives.
- Establish a network of subregional gender and climate change focal points facilitated by UNFCCC.
- Organize meetings with the women who participated in the national delegation to UNFCCC, for the purpose of sharing the status of the negotiations with subnational and national organizations, and to identify actions to be implemented.

²⁸ Several Parties to UNFCCC have created the of Friends of Gender Equality group. This group usually meets between and during COPs to agree on a joint advocacy strategy to support gender mainstreaming in the negotiations. Parties occasionally invite observer organizations and UN agencies to provide technical support.

- Facilitate participation by women, in all their diversity, in climate change decision-making mechanisms (for example, the development and implementation of NDCs).
- Set up gender and climate change study groups on topics such as: renewable energies, landscape management, consumption and emissions reduction, social co-responsibility for care, among others.
- Develop specific innovative and transformative projects on gender and climate change (see implementation section), designed by and for women, which contribute to closing gender gaps and enhance the autonomy of women in their diversity.

E. Financing and resource mobilization: ensure access to climate change-related funding sources for machineries for the advancement of women and other national and subnational women's organizations

Most public multilateral climate finance mechanisms did not have a mandate for gender equality and women's empowerment when they were established, nor did they understand the importance of incorporating gender considerations. However, in recent years, most of them have made substantial efforts and achieved considerable progress in mainstreaming gender in their policies, programmes or allocation practices. Gender considerations were included partly thanks to the advocacy strategies pursued by women in the environment sector and by women's organizations and donors. It also reflects the funds' internal recognition that "gender-blind" projects and programmes are not inclusive and often perform less well than their gender-responsive counterparts.

Today, for the first time, all major climate change financing mechanisms have mandates in the form of gender policies or action plans. This represents considerable progress and sends a signal for the rest of the global climate finance architecture to follow suit. The incorporation of gender equality principles underscores the importance of allocating inclusive and equitable resources, engaging women and increasing their access to resources, as these factors are key to effective and efficient implementation at all levels (Aguilar, Granat and Owren, 2015). However, one of the major challenges is to make sure the gender policies of international financial instruments are fulfilled and implemented, both nationally and regionwide.

Despite the foregoing, the climate finance architecture has not been designed to involve small grassroots organizations. Funds generally channel resources through "implementing agencies," which are mostly large international environmental organizations or United Nations agencies. These then distribute the funding to other entities; and women's organizations are often at the end of this line (Prospera/WEDO, n/d).

Under the auspices of Feminist Action for Climate Justice, the Generation Equality Forum is discussing the possibility of creating a fund devoted to climate solutions with a gender equality perspective. The usual practice has been to incorporate gender into initiatives or projects that others are developing. While this is a necessary procedure, it is crucial to increase the number of projects developed by and for women.

Similarly, measure 8.c of the Montevideo Strategy also calls for increased resources and technical support to build resilience in small island developing and coastal States that are susceptible to the impacts of climate change, disasters and extreme weather events.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the Latin American and the Caribbean region will need to achieve a sustainable recovery based on equality and environmental sustainability. As noted by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, the current crisis challenges the orthodox model and a new one is needed, one that is "centred on equality and sustainability, and a new social compact to move towards a less fragmented and more egalitarian, more democratic and participatory world" (ECLAC, 2020b). This paradigm shift is already serving as a reference for the definition of new financing mechanisms. During the thirtieth

session of ECLAC, the foreign ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean stressed the need to increase access to concessional financing, especially in the context of the global pandemic. This would include the creation of new financial instruments or funds to support countries facing fiscal pressures. They also raised the possibility of low-interest loans being offered to open up fiscal space. In this regard, they welcomed regional and global proposals, such as the creation of the Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics (FACE).²⁹

In this context, ECLAC has made a number of proposals, such as: special treatment for Caribbean countries to access concessional financing, debt relief and an enhanced Debt Service Suspension Initiative; the issuance and reallocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs); negotiation with bilateral creditors; the establishment of a resilience fund for the Caribbean; and participation by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in the ECLAC initiative on debt-for-climate adaptation swaps (ECLAC, 2021d).

Suggestions to ensure machineries for the advancement of women and other national and local women's groups have access to climate change-related funding sources include the following:

- In-depth knowledge of the gender policies and action plans of the main public financing mechanisms associated with climate change:
 - *Green Climate Fund* (GCF): this is a global climate fund established under UNFCCC to help developing countries respond to the multiple challenges of climate change. It is considered the central instrument in efforts to raise the level of climate finance to US\$ 100 billion per year. The fund seeks to provide equal amounts for mitigation and adaptation activities while being guided by the principles and provisions of the Convention. Its activities are aligned with the priorities of developing countries through the national ownership principle. The Fund has established a direct access modality so that national and subnational organizations (Designated National Authorities) can receive funding directly and not just through international implementing agencies. The gender policy and its GAP can be accessed at: [Gender Policy](#) and [Gender Action Plan](#).
 - *Global Environment Facility* (GEF): this fund was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help address the planet's most pressing environmental problems. The GEF embraces 184 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society and the private sector to address global environmental problems, while supporting national sustainable development initiatives. It provides grants for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, persistent organic pollutants, mercury pollution, sustainable forest management, food security and sustainable cities. Its policy and GAP are found at: [Policy on Gender Equality](#) and [Gender Equality Action Plan](#).
 - *Adaptation Fund* (AF): this is an international fund that finances projects and programmes to help developing countries adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. It is established under the UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol. A unique feature of the Adaptation Fund is its direct access mechanism, which enables accredited national implementing entities (NIEs) and regional implementing entities (RIEs) in developing countries to access climate adaptation funding directly. Since COP 25, AF has included a new funding window involving grants of up to US\$ 250,000 to non-accredited entities ([Innovation Grants](#)). UNEP and UNDP are overseeing the delivery of these funds. The AF gender policy and GAP can be found at: [Gender Policy and Action Plan of the Adaptation Fund](#).
 - The US\$ 8 billion strong *Climate Investment Funds* (CIF): this aims to speed up climate action by enhancing transformations in clean technologies, energy access, climate resilience and sustainable forests in developing and middle-income countries. The World Bank is the administrator of CIF. Its gender policy and GAP can be found at: [CIF Gender Policy, Action Plan and Progress Reports](#).

²⁹ See paragraph 22 of the Political Declaration on a Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://periododesesiones.cepal.org/38/en/documents/political-declaration-sustainable-inclusive-and-resilient-recovery-latin-america->.

- To understand the financial intricacies of climate change at the national level.
 - Establish contact with the gender focal points of international funds to identify opportunities and areas of collaboration at the national level.
 - Identify the national liaisons and the implementing entities of the different funds in the country, to learn in detail how they are fulfilling the gender policies of the various financial mechanisms, and to design measures to support their implementation.
- Design procedures that make it possible to fulfil the mandates of the funds for the formulation of national gender-responsive projects or initiatives.
 - Ensure that machineries for the advancement of women and representatives of women's organizations participate in decision-making on the prioritization and development of initiatives and projects (for example, National Climate Change Committee, Ministry of Planning, among others).
 - Design and formally set up a system that enables machineries for the advancement of women to review or approve the various projects that are developed, to ensure compliance with the gender equality guidelines and requirements of the different financing mechanisms.
 - Allocate funds in the project budget to monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender considerations.
 - Provide technical assistance to the NIEs of the various funds in the country. To support the implementation of their gender policy, several of the financial mechanisms offer specific grants to NIEs with a view strengthening their institutional capacity to address gender considerations in projects and programmes. Machineries for the advancement of women and women's organizations can communicate directly with NIEs to identify technical assistance grants.
- Guarantee direct access to financial resources.
 - Consider recognizing machineries for the advancement of women as implementing entities, to enable them to access funds directly.
 - Develop outreach campaigns to enable women's organizations, and grassroots and rural organizations led by women, to learn about mechanisms for accessing national and international climate funds.
 - Organize exchange arrangements for women's organizations and financial mechanisms to share knowledge, strategies and skills, to enable women and their national and subnational organizations to obtain funding. An example would be local financial fairs where women can learn about the various sources of climate change financing and their requirements.
 - Lobby for gender equality and the Paris Agreement principles to be included in COVID-19 pandemic recovery plans and economic stimulus packages. This can be done by prioritizing investment in the care economy—recognizing it as a growth-inducing sector that can provide multiplier effects on well-being, redistribution of time and income, labour market participation, growth with sustainability, and tax revenue. It also implies identifying and removing obstacles for women to obtain decent jobs in sectors that promote a just transition, such as the clean energy sector. This also means recognizing as a structural barrier the excess burden of unpaid work that falls on women, actively encouraging women's participation in these sectors, and promoting their training in areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) that are related to efforts to respond to climate change.

F. Implementation: undertake national climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives that enhance gender equality and women's autonomy

As noted above, in the last decade significant progress has been made in terms of the international, regional and national regulatory framework and in the development of knowledge on gender equality and climate change. For the first time in their history, the main financing mechanisms now have policies or action plans containing guidelines for the development of gender-responsive projects.

Despite these achievements, and mindful that major challenges still remain to ensure that gender, intersectionality, interculturality and rights are all incorporated into climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes and projects, the main challenge is to move from commitments and words to implementation.

The fact that climate change compounds the inequality suffered by women in Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be remedied. Women face historical gender gaps and obstacles to the full exercise of their human rights, which leave them more exposed to the effects of climate change. However, women are also agents of change with valuable knowledge and skills, and are therefore powerful leaders in actions to combat climate change.

Climate change is currently one of the world's most complex challenges; but the transformation it calls for could represent a great opportunity to advance gender equality and women's autonomy. Many programmes and projects in different parts of the world have demonstrated how climate change responses offer an opportunity to overcome the prevailing barriers to the enjoyment and exercise of women's rights.

Moreover, the responses to the global situation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic recovery plans, and the global commitment to a fair transition towards an environmentally sustainable economy, open up possibilities for building a new future, based on the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), in which gender equality is the bedrock for progressive structural change.

In this context, national and regional climate change projects and initiatives not only have to address gender inequalities in their processes; they must also create synergies between these and the transformative response and reactivation to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

To this end, various gender-responsive climate change projects around the world are guided by at least six principles, which are related to the implementation pillars of the Montevideo Strategy. Accordingly, this document, together with the agreements that make up the Regional Gender Agenda, are instruments that could potentially generate an enabling environment for initiatives that observe these principles. The six principles can be characterized as follows:

- (i) **They promote inclusion and participation**, by guaranteeing the participation of women in their diversity; and they include the voices of all people, whatever their socioeconomic status, stage in the life cycle, ethnic-racial status, territory, disability and migration status.
- (ii) **They seek to uphold human rights**, endeavouring to ensure equitable access, use and control of natural resources (such as water) between men and women; and they recognize and value the traditional and ancestral knowledge held by rural, indigenous and Afrodescendent women for responses to climate change.
- (iii) **They foster innovation**, in their purpose and in their process, by proposing solutions that discover new and inspiring tools and techniques, while expanding the capacities of the most marginalized people to strengthen a holistic approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- (iv) **They contribute to environmental sustainability**, by promoting strategies that ensure solutions respect planetary boundaries and, more importantly, do not foster irrational use and exploitation of local and national natural resources.

- (v) **They drive transformations to address climate change and promote** gender equality and women's autonomy in a synergistic way: for example through affirmative actions to ensure women's full participation in both adaptation projects (for example, parity in disaster management committees) and mitigation projects (for example, a fair transition in renewable energy).
- (vi) **They reduce anthropogenic emissions**, and therefore make a positive contribution to achieving the global climate change objective.

Machineries for the advancement of women have an essential role to play in articulating public policy on behalf of gender equality, to ensure gender-responsive execution of national climate change initiatives and projects. Possible actions include the following:

- Strengthen the interaction between the machinery for the advancement of women and the Ministry of Environment and other State actors; and make sure the machinery for the advancement of women participates in the means or processes of response to climate change and disasters.
- Maintain or set up a mapping system for projects currently under way and others that are being developed in the different public agencies. This activity can be carried out through a "national roundtable" on gender and climate change, comprising donors together with representatives of sectoral ministries and decentralized agencies responsible for implementing climate change policy and programmes (marine-coastal, energy, agriculture, forestry, water, disaster risk management, among others).
- Design and formally set up a system that allows the machinery for the advancement of women to review or approve the different projects that are developed, to make sure that international, regional and national mandates in the initiatives and projects in the country are fulfilled and made operational. Actions related to the system include the following:
 - Ensure the **full, equitable and effective participation of women, in their diversity, in the design**, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives and projects.
 - Check that gender equality and women's autonomy is a priority in the development of projects and initiatives.
 - Make sure that project results frameworks are gender-responsive and include indicators to measure changes in terms of gender equality, equity and the autonomy of women in their diversity.
- Use machineries for the advancement of women, to provide or facilitate technical assistance to government institutions involved in the development and implementation of climate change initiatives. A "gender help desk" could be set up for this purpose, in partnership with national or regional organizations or consultancies. The service would be designed to provide technical support for gender mainstreaming in the way projects and initiatives are managed. Inputs could include the following:
 - **Gender-responsive analysis of project concept notes or proposals:** the analysis will provide recommendations on how to incorporate or reinforce gender issues.
 - **Development of a gender analysis:** this includes activities such as responding to questions on gender analysis, assisting in the design of methodologies, reviewing data collection tools, and steering the research.
 - **Review and guide supplementary evaluation materials:** this technical support includes the review of questionnaires, progress reports, trainer-training materials and work plans.
 - **Provide a list of available resources on gender and climate change:** these would be posted on the website of the mechanism for the advancement of women.

- Promote innovative projects or actions in initiatives that:³⁰
 - Expand women's and girls' access to productive resources, such as climate finance, technologies and knowledge.
 - Enhance and harness the capacity of all women and girls, in their full diversity, to develop resilience to climate and disaster risks, mitigate climate change, and cope with loss and damage.
 - Enable all women and girls, in their full diversity, to lead a just transition to an environmentally sustainable, inclusive, circular and regenerative economy.
 - Respond to rising unemployment, poverty and the increased burden of unpaid domestic and care work resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change (for example, emissions, environmental degradation, exposure to chemicals and waste).
- Monitor the impact of projects on gender equality and women's autonomy.

G. Accountability: strengthen information on gender and climate change in country reports to the United Nations system

Countries that ratify the various international conventions or treaties, and thus become States Parties, are legally bound to put the respective provisions into practice. They are also required to submit national reports on the measures they have adopted to fulfil their obligations. The dates for the submission of these country reports vary according to the periodicity of the obligation; and their format and content are also specific to each convention or treaty.

There are other reporting mechanisms within the United Nations system, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, in which countries also report their progress and flag areas in which new measures are needed to ensure that no one is left behind.

In general, country reports are produced by the government agencies in charge of the issue in question (for example, Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity Institutes, Ministry of Women's Affairs) and are officially submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the United Nations.

In the case of UNFCCC, countries prepare national communications and NDC progress reports. The Parties also submit other reports on a voluntary basis, such as national adaptation plans and nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs).

Countries are also often asked to make voluntary submissions on specific issues.³¹ In the last decade this mechanism has been used extensively for positions on gender. Unfortunately, Latin American and Caribbean countries rarely send comments. These submissions are valuable, however, because they form the basis for the documents that guide the discussions.

It is also necessary to make sure the issue of climate change is included or strengthened in reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). For example, CSW resolution (jj) on agreed conclusions on financing for gender equality and the autonomy of women calls on governments to: "Integrate a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national environmental policies, strengthen mechanisms and provide adequate resources to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies related to the impact of climate change on the lives of women and girls"(United Nations, 2008).

³⁰ These topics are based on the main lines of action of the Generation Equality Forum under the heading "Feminist Action for Climate Justice".

³¹ See Submission Portal [online] <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx>.

Actions to strengthen country reporting to the UN system on gender and climate change, by machineries for the advancement of women and government, include the following:

- Prepare a calendar with dates and deadlines for country reports on climate change commitments, and put institutional mechanisms in place to strengthen participation by machineries for the advancement of women in producing these documents.
- Analyse different databases and research on the extent of gender mainstreaming in climate change in NDCs (for example, EUROCLIMA+, NDC Partnership and UNDP) as a source or input for reporting.
- Gather information from various stakeholders on national progress, needs and gaps in gender and climate change. The “gender roundtable” proposed in priority area F of this document can serve as a primary information source.
- Check the UNFCCC submissions portal to keep abreast of submission dates and topics. Machineries for the advancement of women can coordinate with each other to prepare these submissions.
- Report progress on CSW resolution (jj) on financing for gender equality and the autonomy of women (United Nations, 2008).
- Ensure that the topic of climate change is included in reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform.
- Develop and share messages and country positions on gender and climate change that can be used by the various authorities in their presentations and speeches with the heads of climate bureaus.

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