



GENDER AND SCIENCE

UNESCO » Natural Sciences » Priority Areas » Gender and Science » Cross-cutting issues » Climate Change and Gender Equality » Context

A- A+

Gender and Science

Supporting women scientists

Improving measurement of Gender Equality in STEM

Women's participation in policy-making processes

Cross-cutting issues

► Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction

► **Climate Change and Gender Equality**

► The gender dimensions of biodiversity

► Women and Local Knowledge

► Gender mainstreaming in marine science

Climate Change and Gender Equality



© UN Photo/UNICEF/ZAK
A mother gives her child a bowl of clean water in Charsarda District, an area severely affected by monsoon floods.

As women suffer disproportionately from poverty, they will also suffer most when erratic weather brings droughts or floods to marginal lands or crowded urban areas where poverty is most felt. While existing evidence underscores the vulnerability of women to climate change, there is as well a wealth of evidence which underlines that women play an important role in supporting households and communities to mitigate the effects and adapt to climate change. In fact, women have led – and continue to lead – many of the most innovative responses to environmental challenges all over the world.

Climate change affects all countries, all around the globe. But its impacts are not equally distributed among regions, generations, age classes, income groups, occupations and genders. In fact, the poor are disproportionately affected, and women account for the majority of the world's poor.

However, it is very important to keep in mind that the reason why women and girls are more vulnerable to climate change is often socially constructed: women face specific and greater vulnerabilities due to their different social status and the roles traditionally attributed to them within societies. For example, in many developing countries, women are predominantly responsible for food production, household water supply and energy supply for heating and cooking. As climate change impacts increase, these tasks are becoming more and more difficult and time-consuming. Climate change therefore tends to place a larger burden on women and girls. Additionally, women all over the world encounter greater difficulties and barriers than men when it comes to spatial mobility, basic access to education, healthcare, resources (e.g. land, financial resources, etc.), information and technologies, as well as to decision-making processes at all levels: this often stands in the way of women's empowerment in general and of their potential contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation in particular.

Because climate change affects women and men differently, it is critical to adopt a gender equality perspective when discussing policy development, decision-making, and strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation at all levels of action. Nevertheless, women should not be presented as victims – they are powerful agents of change, and their leadership is essential. This is partly due to their often deeper understanding of their immediate environment because of their experience in managing natural resources (water, forests, biodiversity and soil) as well as their involvement in climate-sensitive activities (such as farming) in most developing countries. The complementarity of men's and women's knowledge, skills and capabilities is particularly important to design and implement effective and sustainable adaptation and mitigation initiatives, answering to their specific needs and ensuring that both will benefit and contribute equally to the development process.

- [Facts and figures](#)

▲ [Back to top](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Climate Change and Gender Equality

- [Context](#)
- [Facts and figures](#)
- [Advocacy for women in climate science, information and diplomacy](#)
- [Capacity building](#)
- [Supporting role models and fellowship opportunities](#)
- [Providing networking opportunities](#)
- [Resources and publications](#)

Strategic documents

- [UNESCO's Promise: Gender Equality – a Global Priority \(pdf\)](#)
- [Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021 \(pdf\)](#)
- [Is the gender gap narrowing in science and engineering? \(pdf\)](#)
From: *UNESCO Science Report, Towards 2030*

Highlights



...in UNESCO

- [Gender Equality](#)
- [UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in the field of Gender and Women Issues](#)
- [World Water Assessment Programme – Water and Gender Equality](#)



General Information

[About us](#) | [General Conference](#) | [Executive Board](#) | [Secretariat](#) | [Field Offices](#) | [Communities](#) | [Events](#) | [Join us](#)

Popular topics

[World Heritage](#) | [Water](#) | [Climate Change](#) | [Post-Crisis](#) | [Youth](#)

Resources

[Conventions & Recommendations](#) | [Documents](#) | [Statistics](#) | [Bookshop](#) | [Media](#) | [Name and Logo](#) | [Human rights violation](#)