



Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programs in Eastern European and neighboring countries¹

Key messages and recommendations

The upcoming Sixty-sixth session of United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), planned for 14 – 25 March 2022, provides a great opportunity to discuss experiences, challenges, and recommendations on the game-changing actions in the climate change, environment, and disaster risk reduction arena. This discussion is very crucial in a context of Eastern European and neighboring countries where gender inequalities together with climate and environment crises constitute the greatest sustainable development challenges of our time and demand coordinated responses.

We, civil society activists and organizations, feminists, and gender experts from the Eastern European and neighboring countries, share our joint position on the following:

- We fully support the CSW66 Agreed Conclusions ([Draft](#)).
- The adoption of strong legal frameworks on Gender Equality by the Governments in Eastern Europe and Neighboring countries, involve certain challenges in implementation for many countries that should be mentioned. Despite the progress on establishing national machinery on Gender Equality/ Women's rights, as well as in the field of environment / climate change, we find there is a lack of interaction between and coordination of these structures.
- Ensuring de facto gender equality in the context of climate and environmental crises and disasters is essential for sustainable development. The Governments should ensure implementation of gender-responsive climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies, and programmes, based on intersectionality and a human right-based approach.
- Climate change is already having negative impacts in Eastern Europe and neighboring countries, and more frequent and extreme weather events are expected over time, according to most National Communications from the region. International conventions provide guidelines and requirements for how to mainstream gender considerations into policies, such as the Gender Action Plan

¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria

within the Paris Agreement. Yet, climate and environmental policies in the region often are gender blind.

- As disasters continue to disrupt and threaten people's lives and well-being in Eastern Europe and Neighboring countries and undermine regional economic gains, it is evident that climate change associated risks disproportionately affect women and girls, who are key providers of food, water, and energy. Due to pre-existing inequalities as well as gender-based roles and expectations, women and girls across the region have fewer resources with which to adapt to changing conditions.
- Evidence based data shows how the economic and social fallout of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic affect women and men differently .² Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has compounded the impacts of the climate and environmental crisis and pushed people even further behind and into extreme poverty, and women and girls disproportionately so.³
- At the same time, the war in Ukraine has created a new context - along with the humanitarian catastrophe, the war affects the environment with consequences that are yet to be identified. The humanitarian support should be based on practical gender needs of the affected population.
- Women in the region have accumulated valuable experience in ensuring the resilience of their families and communities' day by day. Therefore, women and girls, as agents and beneficiaries of change, should be empowered socio-economically and politically at all levels in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies, and programmes.

Our recommendations:

Gender responsive and inclusive strategies, policies, and programs on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction:

- Governments should undertake to mainstream a gender perspective into the design, delivery and evaluation of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies, and programmes.
- To include sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the evidence-based actions on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction.
- To require mandatory gender analysis for all policy documents and programmes alongside developing gender-sensitive legislation.
- To ensure the connection of the national gender equality machineries with mechanisms on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction.
- To engender the systems and mechanisms of early warning and prevention, as well as disaster risk reduction.
- To strengthen the gender mainstreaming capacities of professionals working on climate and DRR?.

² UN Women, 2020. Assessment of COVID-19 impact on gender roles. UNW/ILO, 2021 Assessing the gendered employment impacts of COVID-19 and supporting a gender-responsive recovery etc.

³ Feminists want system change in Eastern Partnership Countries and the Russian Federation. © 2020. This policy brief is licensed under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

- To ensure the full application of CEDAW General Recommendations No.37 on the Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change (2018); full implementation of the UNFCCC's Gender Action Plan and Agenda 2030.
- To provide comprehensive results-oriented review of a progress of implementation of CSW66 agreed conclusions at the forthcoming climate/environment/disaster reduction related international/global conferences, including COP27, regular sessions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (including GP2022, May 2022), and also at B+30 progress review.

Enhancing gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex and other characteristics:

- To make evidence-based decisions on the climate crisis and disaster risk reduction, by ensuring inclusive gender and sex disaggregated data collection and analysis at all levels of response, as well as disaggregation based on other characteristics, such as age, rural/urban, disability, ethnicity etc. as detailed in the SDG indicator framework.
- To support research focused on contributions of women to crisis and disaster management and mitigation from household to national level. Feminist research should be supported in climate change and disaster risk reduction related fields.
- To organize regional study on Gender, Health, Well Being and Climate Change.

Promoting the participation and leadership of women

- To establish national, regional, and international platforms for women to take joint decisions and actions.
- To ensure real opportunities for women, including from vulnerable and marginalized groups, to meaningfully engage in climate policy decision-making processes and consultations. Engaging women grassroots groups in decision making and different consultations.
- To take measures on elimination, prevention, and response to all forms of gender-based discrimination related to access to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity (including the protection of women environmental human rights defenders);
- To connect feminist movement on local levels with those on regional and global level. – Increase the understanding on how the feminist movement is interconnected to environmental justice movement and how the feminist agenda can become integral to climate justice movement.

Building the resilience of women

- To strengthen women's role and awareness in climate justice work.
- To develop and implement education programmes focused on resilience to climate change and disaster risk reduction related fields addressed to girls/women and boys/men, taking into consideration the practical gender needs.
- To promote the protection of healthy ecosystems and support local communities in their traditional, ecosystem-based approaches in protecting ecological food systems and global ecosystems.
- To ensure connection of climate justice work to peacebuilding and peacemaking and women's involvement in the process.
- Specifically, in the context of the war in Ukraine, to ensure that women in all their diversity are included in the peace or truce talks.

- To conduct regional public awareness campaigns on gender and climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction.

Improving gender-responsive finance:

- To ensure that the national gender equality machineries with mechanisms on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction have adequate financial resources.
- To promote gender responsive budgeting for gender transformative interventions for disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and mitigation measures to succeed.
- To ensure the participation of women and girls, CSOs in all phases of budgeting gender responsive budgeting, as a valuable tool to mainstream gender into actions.
- Member states should invest in ecofeminist movements and organizations, as well as youth and adolescent-led movements, to manage the climate and environment crisis and disaster risk reduction and contribute to climate justice.
- Governments should support women's participation and influence in managing the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, ensuring the financing and provision of sustainable infrastructure and public services, social protection, and decent work for women, especially in rural areas.
- To provide accountable, transparent, and trust-based funding systems.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, those partners in other countries who demand an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and show support for those in need. This war must stop now. Give peace a chance.