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**WOMEN'S AUTONOMY AND GENDER EQUALITY AT THE CENTRE
OF CLIMATE ACTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Regional Consultation prior to the Sixty-sixth Session of the Commission on the Status of
Women (CSW 66) within the framework of the 62nd Meeting of the Presiding Officers of
the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean



This document constitutes a reference document for the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Special Consultation Session prior to the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) in the framework of the 62nd Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which takes place on the 26th and the 27th of January 2022. The consultation is organized by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

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The views expressed in this document, which has not undergone formal editing, are exclusively of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ECLAC, UN Women, or UN Member States.

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INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared as part of the preparatory process for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), which will take place in March 2022 and its main topic is *“Achieving gender equality and autonomy of all women and girls in the context of policies and programs related to climate change, the environment and the disaster risk reduction.”*

Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world in which, for more than four decades, governments, the United Nations system, international organizations, and civil society organizations, particularly women’s and feminist organizations, have met at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result of this coordinated work, an in-depth, ambitious, and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda has been promoted as a roadmap for achieving sustainable development by 2030, closing the gaps in the implementation of gender policies and advancing toward substantive equality and the full guarantee of women’s rights.

The governments gathered at the Regional Conference on Women have recognized that gender inequality has historically been a structural feature in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is at the root of the unsustainability of the dominant development style in the region. This is associated with decades of concentration of wealth, environmental deterioration, and deterioration of women’s living conditions. Gender inequality in the region is manifested in four structural challenges: socioeconomic inequality and poverty in the context of exclusionary growth; patriarchal, discriminatory, and violent cultural patterns; the sexual division of labor and the unjust social organization of care; and the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere. These challenges reinforce each other and generate complex socioeconomic, cultural and belief systems that hinder and reduce the scope of policies for gender equality and women’s autonomy (ECLAC, 2017).¹

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic is occurring at a time of intensification of human actions that deteriorate the environment and contribute to accelerating climate change. These actions are linked to an unsustainable development style, in which environmental costs and the value of care work are excluded. In this context, women have been doubly excluded: on the one hand, the care that requires greater attention in times of the pandemic falls disproportionately on women; on the other hand, the effects of climate change have differentiated impacts on women due to the sexual division of labor, as elaborated below.

Given the need for transformative responses to address the many sides of the COVID-19 crisis, among which the care crisis and the pre-existing climate crisis are made visible, and taking up the contributions of feminist economics and women’s and feminist movements in the region, as well as those of indigenous, Afro-Latin and Caribbean peoples, ECLAC argues that it is necessary to move toward a care society that cares for people and those who care for them, that considers inter-care and self-care, as well as care for the planet.² In line with this theme, the agreement of the Sixty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean approved as the central theme

¹ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2017). Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda in the Framework of Sustainable Development Towards 2030. <https://www.ECLAC.org/es/publicaciones/41011-estrategia-montevideo-la-implementacion-la-agenda-regional-genero-marco>.

² ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). Towards a care society: the contributions of the Regional Gender Agenda to sustainable development (LC/MDM.61/3), Santiago, 2021.

of the discussion of the XV Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: “The care society: a horizon for sustainable recovery with gender equality.”³

However, both in the approach to the relationship between human beings and the environment, and in the issue of climate change in particular, the gender perspective has been marginally considered and its incorporation into the different areas of response to climate change has been relatively recent.

Under the international human rights normative framework, States have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to ethnicity, sex, gender, language, religion, political opinion (or other types of opinions), national or social origin, property, birth, disability, or other status. 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, establish obligations for States to guarantee substantive equality and women’s rights and to adopt measures to put an end to all forms of discrimination. The obligations are binding on States that are part of and apply to all their actions, including environmental actions.

The evolution of environmental policy from 1992 to the present includes the recognition of the relevance of human rights and gender equality in sustainable development frameworks. This is the result of the consensus achieved within the United Nations and other multilateral arenas⁴, added to the efforts and contributions of women’s and feminist organizations, national and regional human rights and environmental defenders, public officials, civil society, and research institutions, who work to ensure that the challenges of development and the promotion of human rights and equality in environmental policies are addressed.

Other factors that have influenced this evolution include: the increasingly obvious impacts of a changing climate on communities around the world and the differentiated impacts between women and men—of a planetary imbalance and an everchanging climate—; the interconnected global political, environmental and economic challenges of recent years and more recently, exacerbated by the crisis associated with 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, the progressive production of and attention to research linked to issues of inequality, gender equality, rights, poverty, economics, and the environment.

³ ECLAC (2021). Agreements. Sixty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/21-00652_mdm.61_agreements.pdf.

⁴ 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 (BRS), as well as the main environmental financial mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular strategic objective K.

At the regional level, within the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC member States have agreed on a progressive, innovative, and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda to guarantee all the rights of women in their diversity, including collective and environmental rights, and to move toward sustainable development styles that contribute to the achievement of physical, economic, and decision-making autonomy for women in the region (the Brasilia Consensus (2010), the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda in the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (2016), and the Santiago Commitment (2020) stand out on the subject).

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 first binding regional treaty on the environment (known as the Escazú Agreement). The main objective of the Agreement is to advance toward the full implementation of the rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters and decisions.

As the global demand for natural resources grows, the environment is becoming a new front for human rights and our future for humanity and the planet. Around the world, various communities and activists have raised their voices to prevent irreversible damage to our environment, and to promote alternatives through more sustainable development. (Forst, 2016)⁵ But despite their human rights work, environmental defenders face increasing violence and violations of their own rights.

In an effort to protect the security of human rights defenders, the United Nation's General Assembly, in its seventieth session approved resolution 70/161⁶. It advanced the formal recognition of the vital work of human rights defenders and reaffirmed "*the urgent need to respect, protect, facilitate and promote the work of those promoting and defending economic, social and cultural rights, as a vital factor contributing towards the realization of those rights, including as they relate to environmental and land issues as well as development.*"

According to data from Global Witness (2021), 7 of the 10 countries with the greatest number of recorded attacks against defenders are in Latin America.⁷ In this regard, the Escazú Agreement contains the first binding provision in the world on human rights defenders in environmental matters and calls upon its signatories to take the necessary measures "to prevent, investigate and punish attacks, threats or intimidations that human rights defenders in environmental matters may suffer" (ECLAC, 2018).⁸ The Agreement, which entered into force on April 2021 has 24 signatories and 12 ratifications as of the beginning of 2022.⁹

⁵ Forst, M. (2016). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders* (A/71/281). <https://undocs.org/A/71/281>

⁶ A/RES/70/161. "Human rights defenders in the context of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: resolution. Recovered from: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/821191?ln=en>.

⁷ Global Witness (2021). Last line of defence. The industries causing the climate crisis and attacks against land and environmental defenders.

⁸ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/PUB.2018/8), Santiago, 2018.

⁹ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2021). Observatory on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online]. Recovered from <https://observatoriop10.ECLAC.org/en/treaties/regional-agreement-access-information-public-participation-and-justice-environmental>.

Without significant change, the threat to land and environmental defenders is likely to worsen as the prioritization of profit through land grabbing and forest clearance continues to increase. According to Global Witness' last report, the structural reasons for this violence reflect the same problems seen in analyzing the climate crisis itself: impacts are uneven, extractivist companies are largely responsible, and governments have failed to prevent such problems.¹⁰

Notwithstanding this international and regional framework, many efforts to incorporate gender equality into climate change responses are limited to interventions that in their implementation have failed to break down unequal power structures or have a structural impact on closing gender gaps or promoting the enjoyment of their rights. As a result, gender inequalities continue to hinder sustainable development and are manifested in different areas and sectors: initiatives related to adaptation and mitigation associated with climate change are no exception.

Even more so, as Picard (2021)¹¹ puts it, the “SDG 5 lens on climate change, disaster and environmental risk allows us to see that gender inequalities in access to socio-economic resources and marginalization of women in national and local governance are socially constructed drivers of risk. It changes the narrative on how to address gender unequal outcomes, from the old story of helping the vulnerable, to the new one of addressing gender inequality as an underlying driver of risk and empowering women through increased presence, voice, agency, and resources in the policy-making process and implementing institutions.”

Thus, climate change action can either reinforce, exacerbate, or even generate new inequalities, or intentionally aim to overcome them and accelerate the move toward gender equality. As countries and communities examine their policy, physical, economic, and socio-cultural structures in response to climate change, long-standing gender inequalities can be identified and addressed.

I. THE STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE¹²

Latin America and the Caribbean continues being the region in the world with more inequality and has been the region whose development has been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (ECLAC, 2021a)¹³. In this context, where poverty and inequality have deepened, the differentiated impact of climate change between men and women make clear the structural challenges of gender inequality.

¹⁰ Global Witness (2021). Last line of defence. The industries causing the climate crisis and attacks against land and environmental defenders.

¹¹ Picard, M. (2021). *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, Discussion draft paper Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the priority theme of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66)*. Recovered from https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/66/EGM/Background%20Papers/Mary%20PICARD_CS66%20Background%20Paper.pdf.

¹² This section has been prepared based on the documents ECLAC. (2019). “Women’s autonomy in changing economic scenarios” (LC/CRM.14/3); Aguilar Revelo, L., “La igualdad de género ante el cambio climático: ¿qué pueden hacer los mecanismos para el adelanto de las mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe?”, *Asuntos de Género series*, No. XXXX (LC/XXX), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021.

¹³ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2021a). Fiscal panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean 2021: Fiscal policy challenges for transformative recovery post-COVID-19. (LC/PUB.2021/5-P), Santiago, 2021.

The planetary imbalance and climate crisis has accelerated as a result of the dominant development style. Facing the complexity of this phenomenon is a challenge for the entire world, and particularly for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is urgent to address its effects and formulate adaptation and mitigation strategies in accordance with regional realities.

The discussion on climate change has focused on economic and environmental aspects without necessarily considering human rights, the situation of women, and gender inequalities. This absence in the debate leaves out the integration of gender analysis as a method for analyzing the environmental situation, the actions that accelerate climate change and its impact on people/populations in a differentiated manner.

The economic activities on which the world economy is based require forms of energy, transportation and land use that generate Greenhouse Gases (GHG),¹⁴ which accumulate in the atmosphere and increase the planet's temperature, thus causing changes in the climate. From an economic point of view, climate change has been described as an externality: those countries that emit GHGs do not assume the full costs of its consequences (Stern, 2008).¹⁵ These costs are passed on and experienced unequally by different countries and also by men and women. Although the effects of climate change affect the entire world population, it is the most developed countries—which have certainly reaped the fruits of their current development style—that produce the most GHG emissions and, at the same time, have the most resources to adapt to its effects. On the other hand, those countries that generate the least emissions are the ones that are most exposed to the negative consequences of climate change and have the least resources for adaptation and mitigation.

This unfair dynamic impacts Latin America and the Caribbean, which, being responsible for less than 10% of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, is highly sensitive, especially the Caribbean and Central America, to the effects of climate change. This particular vulnerability is caused by factors such as its geographical and climatic situation, its socioeconomic, demographic, and institutional conditions, and the high climate sensitivity of its natural assets. (Bárcena et al., 2018).¹⁶ Faced with this reality and the imminent effects of climate change, the region has expressed the importance of giving greater attention to resilience¹⁷ and adaptation measures.

While mitigation efforts aim to reduce the causes of climate change (e.g., by addressing deforestation and promoting the use of renewable energy), adaptation measures attempt to address the impacts of climate change, such as droughts, floods, sea level rise, and intensified natural disasters, on people, structures, and ecosystems. As the climate continues to change rapidly in unprecedented ways, adaptation measures become increasingly critical, and identifying strategies is especially important for

¹⁴ Carbon dioxide is one of the main greenhouse gases.

¹⁵ Stern, N. (2008). *The Stern Report: the truth about climate change*. Barcelona: Paidós.

¹⁶ Bárcena, A., Samaniego, J., Galindo, L. M., Ferrer, J., Alatorre, J. E., Stockins, P., Reyes, O., Sánchez, L., & Mostacedo, J. (2018). *The economics of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean: a graphic overview (LC/TS.2017/84/Rev.1)*. Santiago: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

¹⁷ The IPCC defines resilience as: “The capacity of social, economic and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation.” Source: IPCC, 2018: Annex I: Glossary [Matthews J.B.R. (ed.)]. In: *1.5 °C global warming, IPCC Special Report on the impacts of 1.5 °C global warming relative to pre-industrial levels and corresponding trajectories that global greenhouse gas emissions should follow, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts* [Masson-Delmotte V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)].

those living in areas susceptible to climate change impacts (e.g., low-lying coastal areas) and for vulnerable groups, including women who are often less resilient, and often lack access to adaptive capacity measures. At the same time, adaptation interventions can be much more efficient and effective for society as a whole if they consider gender aspects, involve women, and consider their needs and capacities. Failure to do so risks exacerbating inequalities and inequities.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if the current trajectory continues, the global average temperature increase is likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2030. In its 2018 special report on global warming, the IPCC examined the effects of this increase in global temperature, which broadly include changes in weather patterns, intensification of natural disasters and loss of ecosystems, which would diminish the chances of overcoming poverty and inequality and achieving sustainable development. The effects of rising temperatures will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations through food insecurity, higher food prices, loss of food production, loss of income, loss of livelihood activities, health impacts and displacement. The greatest impacts are expected to affect those dependent on agricultural and coastal activities, indigenous populations, children and the elderly, people living in poverty, and populations and ecosystems in island countries such as Caribbean countries (Roy, J. et al., 2018).¹⁸

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).¹⁹

Therefore, the unequal impacts of climate change from a gender perspective are strongly linked to socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty in the context of growth that is exclusionary and unsustainable. Prior to the health crisis, women were already overrepresented in the population in conditions of poverty. In 2019, according to data from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OIG), for every 100 men living in poor households, 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 sharp drop in economic activity in key sectors for female employment, such as tourism, manufacturing, commerce and paid domestic work. This has resulted in a sharp exit of women from the labor force with a drop in the female labor participation rate that represents an 18-year setback and an increase in the number of Latin American women projected to live in poverty (ECLAC, 2021b).²⁰

¹⁸ Roy, J., Tschakert, P., & Waisman, H. (2018). "Sustainable development, poverty eradication and reducing inequalities", Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty, V. Masson-Delmotte et al. (eds.).

¹⁹ IPCC. (2014). Climate change 2014: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Summary for policymakers. [online], Recovered from https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ar5_wgII_spm_en.pdf

²⁰ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2021b). Special Report COVID-19 No 9: Women's economic autonomy in sustainable recovery with equality. February 2021.

Reinforcing this analysis, results from high frequency telephone surveys in LAC conducted by UNDP and the World Bank found that gender gaps in terms of job loss widened since the onset of the pandemic, especially for mothers with younger children (0-5 years old). Since 2021, women in the region are twice as likely as men to have lost their pre-pandemic jobs. On the one hand, this is partly explained by the weak recovery of female-dominated sectors. On the other hand, high levels of job losses are related to increased domestic responsibilities, particularly the supervision of the educational activities of minors (World Bank and UNDP, 2021).²¹

The crisis caused by the pandemic has further highlighted the exhaustion of the region's development style, based on the extraction of natural resources and fossil fuels, which have been exploited without environmental and social sustainability criteria and where there is 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 accessing productive resources such as credit, land, water, training, technologies, and time (ECLAC, 2021b).

In this context, the effects of climate change may deepen existing gender inequalities. Poor and marginalized people, including women, are generally less able to buffer even moderate climate risks and are the first to experience asset erosion, poverty cycles and limits to their adaptive capacity. Climate change is then, an additional burden and can push them into chronic poverty by directly and severely impacting access to livelihoods (Olsson, 2014).²²

In Latin America and the Caribbean, time-use surveys conducted in various countries confirm the persistent and unbalanced sexual division of labor and the unjust social organization of care. According to the data from these surveys, women devote more time to unpaid work, with an average of two-thirds of their time to this activity and one-third to paid work, while for men, the trend is reversed, with one-third of their time devoted to unpaid work and two-thirds to paid work.²³

Climate change has direct impacts on natural resources that are essential for daily life, such as water, fishery resources, availability of energy sources, and biodiversity. The scarcity or difficulty in accessing these resources can have serious implications from a gender and time-use perspective. Women, especially rural, indigenous and peasant women, are mainly responsible for feeding their families, as well as for collecting basic resources for household subsistence, such as water and firewood.

As recognized by the expert group convened by UN Women at the CSW66, the disproportionate burden of women and girls in unpaid domestic and care work, rooted in the sexual division of labor and the highly unequal gender distribution of domestic work and the distribution of domestic and care work responsibilities within the household, and between the household and the State, is intensified in climate and environmental crises and disasters, resulting in the deepening of structural challenges of inequality²⁴.

²¹ World Bank and UNDP. (2021) "An uneven recovery: Taking the pulse of the Latin America and Caribbean Region following the pandemic." Recovered from https://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/an-uneven-recovery--taking-the-pulse-of-the-latin-america-and-ca.html.

²² Olsson, L., et al. (2014), "Livelihoods and poverty." In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Field, C.B. et al. (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, pp. 793-832.

²³ See https://oig.ECLAC.org/sites/default/files/c2100059_web.pdf.

²⁴ Virtual meeting of experts in the framework of the CSW66 convened by UN Women from 11 to 14 October 2021.

In this context, it is worth noting, as stated at the Sixty-first Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean²⁵, “the importance of care for countries’ development and the need to foster greater redistribution of care, and calls for the elimination of legal, institutional and policy barriers for the benefit of the human rights of women and girls, particularly to guarantee their full and effective participation in the economic sphere.”

On the other hand, patriarchal, discriminatory, and violent cultural patterns, and the predominance of the culture of privilege continue in Latin America and the Caribbean and are also manifested in the issue of climate change. Although women have been the guardians of biodiversity and possess specific and valuable knowledge that can provide sustainable solutions to climate change, patriarchal cultural patterns tend to exclude and ignore the knowledge of women, especially rural, indigenous, and Afro-descendant women (ECLAC, 2017a).²⁶ These patterns also exclude women in technical and scientific sectors in which many mitigation and adaptation solutions are laid out.

Similarly, and reflecting the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere, institutional decision-making structures in the area 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 organizations and civil society have succeeded in increasing women’s participation in various spheres of representation through parity representation mandates, however, there are still spaces where women’s representation is very low.

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

II. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY FRAMEWORK ²⁷

It was in 1992, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, that the full and equal participation of women in environmental issues and decisions was recognized as a fundamental requirement for sustainable development.

The previous mobilization of the international feminist movement was historic in relation to the environmental issue, who met in 1991 at the Women’s World Congress for a Healthy Planet in Miami, with the presence of 1,500 women from 83 countries. The result was the “Women’s Action Agenda 21” policy document, used as the basis for negotiations at the UNCED preparatory meetings and at the Earth Summit itself (WEDO, 2011).²⁸ Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 “Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and

²⁵ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2021), Sixty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, https://www.ECLAC.org/sites/default/files/events/files/21-00652_mdm.61_agreements.pdf.

²⁶ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2017a). *40 years of the Regional Gender Agenda* (LC/G.2682/Rev.1), Santiago.

²⁷ This section is based on L. Aguilar Revelo, "Prácticas promisorias que promueven la igualdad de género y la autonomía de las mujeres en la respuesta al cambio climático en América Latina y el Caribe", *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2021/110), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021.

²⁸ WEDO (Women Environment and Development Organization). (2011). "WEDO HerStory. WEDO History" [online], <https://wedo.org/bella-abzug/>.

Equitable Development” was built on the approaches of this process, and within its objectives includes: increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in environmental fields; assessing the implementation and implications for women of environmental policies and programs; formulating and implementing official policies and national guidelines, strategies and plans to achieve equality; and adopting, strengthening and enforcing legislation prohibiting violence against women.

Three MEAs emerged from UNCED: the CBD, the UNCCD and the UNFCCC. The UNCCD, from its inception, contains a strong mandate on the importance of involving women in all its fields of action. In fact, it is the first environmental convention to have a gender focal point that provides support to countries to mainstream the issue in their national plans to combat desertification, in 2011 it develops its policy framework and. in September 2017. it approves its first gender action plan (GAP) at COP13.

The CBD in its founding text, in preambular paragraph 13, 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 GAP was approved in 2015 with a 5-year extension. It is currently developing its third GAP.

Unlike its “sister” conventions, the UNFCCC is the only one without a mandate or mention of women’s rights and gender equality in its origins. This phenomenon is mostly due to the fact that at its inception the UNFCCC was a vertically organized technocratic space with policies focused solely on greenhouse gas reduction.

Otro hito importante en esta materia fue la Declaración y Plataforma de Acción de Beijing, producto de la Cuarta Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer realizada en Beijing en 1995. La Plataforma, en el objetivo estratégico K, aborda el ámbito de las mujeres y el ambiente. Bajo este objetivo se exhorta a los gobiernos a: “integrar a las mujeres, incluidas las mujeres indígenas, sus perspectivas y conocimientos, en igualdad de condiciones con los hombres, en la adopción de decisiones sobre la gestión sostenible de los recursos y el desarrollo de políticas y programas para el desarrollo sostenible, incluidos en particular los diseñados para abordar y prevenir la *“degradación ambiental de la tierra; y a desarrollar una estrategia de cambio para eliminar todos los obstáculos a la participación plena y equitativa de la mujer en el desarrollo sostenible y al acceso igualitario a los recursos y al control de los mismos”* (Naciones Unidas, 1995).²⁹

Another important milestone in this area was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a product of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The Platform, in strategic objective K, addresses the area of women and the environment. Under this objective, governments are urged to: “integrate women, including 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; evaluate policies and programmes in terms of environmental impact and women’s equal access to and use of natural resources.” (United Nations, 1995).³⁰

In addition to these agreements, in 1979, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted CEDAW, the first specific international treaty on the rights of women and girls. Although CEDAW

²⁹ Naciones Unidas (1995), “Plataforma de Acción de Beijing”, UN Women, [en línea], <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/environ.htm>.

³⁰ United Nations. (1995). "Beijing Platform for Action." UNWomen [online], Recovered from https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/PFA_E_Final_WEB.pdf.

does not contain specific references to the environmental sector, Article 14 obliges 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 rural development and its benefits and to ensure that women participate at all levels of development planning” (CEDAW, 1979).³¹ In October 2016 CEDAW adopts Recommendation CEDAW/C/GC/37, on “The gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate” and General Recommendation CEDAW/C/GC34 on the rights of rural women.

It will take more than 16 years since the creation of the UNFCCC to see progress in the Convention’s recognition of gender equality. Since 2008, the UNFCCC has witnessed a paradigm shift, beginning to substantially address gender equality and women’s empowerment, largely as a result of an advocacy strategy developed and implemented by the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance (GGCA).³² In addition, since the creation of the GGCA, to date, all Conferences of the Parties have incorporated a gender equality perspective in almost all thematic areas of the UNFCCC.

The complexity of the causes and impacts of climate change has gradually been accepted, which requires a multidimensional and systemic approach that goes beyond technical measurements of GHG emissions or concentrations. This was strengthened with the approval of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, based on the need to achieve the construction of a more just, equitable, safe, sustainable, and socially inclusive world, leaving no one behind.

As of early November 2021, the UNFCCC has 87 mandates on gender in twelve topics:

Table 1
UNFCCC gender decisions by topic

Topics	Number
Adaptation	17
Gender balance and women’s participation	6
Compliance	6
Capacity building	13
Financing	20
Response measures	1
Mitigation - including REDD+	6
Losses and damages	4
Technology transfer	7
Transparency	1
Article 6	3
Shared vision	3
Total	87

Source: Author’s database and WEDO Gender Climate Tracker.

³¹ CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women). (1979). "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women." OHCHR, [online]. Recovered from <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>.

³² In 2007, at the 13th UNFCCC COP in Bali, four organizations, led by the Office of the Global Advisor to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Women, Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) founded the GGCA. This Alliance develops an advocacy strategy that promotes, in an articulated manner, the recognition of gender equality in the climate change debate. The Alliance has brought together more than 140 organizations ranging from UN agencies to grassroots groups.

There are six of these mandates/decisions, all of which are noteworthy because they are turning points:

1. At COP 16 (2010), through the *Cancun Agreements*, text related to gender considerations was adopted for the first time in one of the mechanisms associated with mitigation—Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), constituting a qualitative leap since most of the previous decisions focused on the issue of adaptation. Additionally, 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 is agreed that these systems must respect gender considerations. These decisions led to the development of the first six global Gender and REDD+ Action Plans, three of them in Latin America (Ecuador, Mexico and Costa Rica).³³
2. At COP 17 (2011), Decision 3/CP.17 approved the creation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This decision contains a series of gender references in the rules and procedures, which establish that the fund must adopt a gender-sensitive approach. In this way, this fund is the first public financing mechanism that includes, since its creation, the promotion of gender equality.
3. At COP 18 (2012), through Decision 23/CP.18, the issue of “gender” became a permanent item on the COP Agenda, removing it from the “Other matters” section. This entails reporting to the COP on the status of implementation of decisions.
4. In the framework of COP 20 (2014), the Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWGP) is approved (UNFCCC, 2014). The original idea of several of the States was to develop the first GWP, unfortunately, it did not have the unanimous support of the Parties. An in-depth analysis of the LWGP reveals the presence of a series of actions in various thematic areas which lay the foundations for the delimitation of the five thematic areas of the first GAP in 2017.

At the time of the LWGP, the last COP before Paris, it was expected that the LWGP would focus on the actions needed to ensure coherence between all the different bodies and structures within the negotiations and on promoting women’s participation and representation in the different decision-making spaces within the Convention.

It is necessary to highlight one element in the Work Program due to its transformative value, and that is the approval, for the first time, of the term *género-responsivo* (gender-responsive)³⁴ (unfortunately, due to an incorrect translation into Spanish,³⁵ it goes unnoticed by the Spanish-speaking world). Paragraph 4 of the LWGP preamble states “that it is necessary to further strengthen gender-responsive climate policy in all activities related to adaptation and mitigation, as well as in decision-making on the implementation of climate policies.” This implies identifying, understanding, and implementing actions to close gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions (Aguilar, Granat, & Owen, 2017).³⁶

³³ The other countries are Ghana, Uganda, and Cameroon. Recovered from <https://genderandenvironment.org/cameroon-ghana-ugandas-gender-redd-roadmaps-a-national-policy-level-initiative/>.

³⁴ The term *género-responsivo* is an Anglicism of “gender-responsive.” It involves identifying, understanding, and implementing actions to close gender gaps and overcome historical gender biases in policies and interventions. Being gender-responsive in its application means contributing proactively and intentionally to promote gender equality (Aguilar, Granat, & Owren, 2017).

³⁵ In the Spanish text it was translated as “sensible a las cuestiones de género.”

³⁶ Aguilar, L., Granat, M., & Owren, C. (eds.) (2017), *The roots of the future: current status and progress in gender and climate change*, Gland, Switzerland, International Union for Conservation of Nature; Washington, Global

Also relevant is the mandate given by the LWGP to the Secretariat to assign a gender focal point to advocate for greater attention to and integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in the Convention's policy and programming.

5. The Paris Agreement is signed at COP 21 (2015), where a guiding principle (Paragraph 11 preamble) is included in the text of the agreement, which raises an intersectionality approach, which calls on

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).³⁷

6. Approval of the First Gender Action Plan (COP 23-2017) and Second Gender Action Plan (COP 25-2019) under the UNFCCC. The main value of the GAPs is the operationalization of the mandates and decisions with concrete actions, responsibilities, and execution times.

They have also promoted a more comprehensive approach to gender, where it is no longer seen only as a guiding principle, but as a key element related to the design and implementation of climate agendas and a higher level of gender ambition. Both effects are visible in the new generation of NDCs.

As previously stated, it was expected that the first GAP would be limited to the negotiation space with thematic axes such as coherence, which aimed to strengthen the integration of gender considerations in the work carried out by the Convention bodies and ensure gender balance, participation, and women's leadership in the Convention processes.

The second GAP is designed in a global context where action and greater ambition are demanded, exemplified by the global youth, who are demanding practical responses to the climate emergency. During the negotiation process, there is an intense discussion among Parties, observers, the UNFCCC Secretariat, and interest groups about the need to move from a "negotiation mentality"—necessary at the beginning—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, 2019).³⁸

However, the second GAP responds timidly to that call. It includes five priority areas (see box 1). Of these priority areas only one (number four) refers to *gender-responsive* implementation. However, of the seven activities proposed under priority area 4, three are limited to facilitating the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in the UNFCCC negotiation forums through workshops, expert groups, or webinars.

Gender and Climate Change Alliance; Cuernavaca, Morelos, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias.

³⁷ UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). (2015). "Paris Agreement" (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1), UNFCCC, [online]. Recovered from https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf.

³⁸ Aguilar, L. (2019). "Género y cambio climático: retrospectiva y retos", *Cuadernos de Investigación UNED*, 11(1), Costa Rica, Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), March.

Box 1
Priority Areas Second Gender Action Plan

1. **Capacity building, knowledge management and communication.** Improve the systematic integration of gender considerations into climate policies and actions and the application of knowledge and experience to actions called for in the LWGP and its gender action plan, and facilitate dissemination, knowledge sharing, and communication of activities undertaken to enhance gender-responsive climate action and its impacts on advancing women's leadership, achieving gender equality, and ensuring effective climate action.
2. **Equilibrio de género, participación y liderazgo de la mujer.** Lograr y mantener la participación plena, igualitaria y significativa de las mujeres en el proceso de la CMNUCC. **Gender balance, women's participation, and leadership.** Achieve and maintain the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in the UNFCCC process.
3. **Coherence.** Strengthen the integration of gender considerations in the work of the UNFCCC constituted bodies, the Secretariat and other UN entities and stakeholders toward coherent implementation of gender-related mandates and activities.
4. **Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation.** Ensure respect, promotion and consideration of gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the Convention and the Paris Agreement.
5. **Monitoring and reporting.** Improve monitoring of implementation and reporting on gender-related mandates under the LWGP and its gender action plan.

Source: UNFCCC. Second Gender Action Plan - COP 25-2019: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2019_L03E.pdf.

In November of this year, during the COP 26 in Glasgow, two important mandates were adopted within the framework of the LWGP. The first mandate “invites Parties and observers to submit via the submission portal, by 31 March 2022, information on the progress of implementation of the activities contained in the gender action plan, areas for improvement and further work to be undertaken, including, as appropriate, information on the multidimensional impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic on progress, and consideration of other diverse challenges that may impact future implementation of the gender action plan at all levels.” Additionally, the International Labor Organization is invited to “to prepare a technical paper exploring linkages between gender-responsive climate action and just transition for promoting inclusive opportunities for all in a low-emission economy.”³⁹

In addition, in recent years there have been a number of efforts at the international level to address the link between building gender equality, environmental sustainability and responding to the effects of climate change. Within these, it is worth highlighting the United Nations Secretary General's Climate Action Summit in September 2019 where many countries committed to a climate action that contributes to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls⁴⁰. Countries by 2025 committed to:

³⁹ UNFCCC. (2021). Gender and climate change: Draft conclusions proposed by the chair (COP 26). Recovered from https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2021_L13S.pdf.

⁴⁰ The climate change and gender track were led by the Coalition of Social and Political Drivers for Climate Action (SPD), the governments of Peru and Spain, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The coalition's gender working group was supported by Costa Rica and Australia, as well as Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF).

1. Adopt and implement gender-responsive climate change action plans, policies, or strategies.
2. Improve the evidence base by supporting women's knowledge platforms and quantifying the benefits and effectiveness of engaging women and girls in climate action and other initiatives.
3. Track progress by including in its regular reporting to UN agencies and other related forums: i) efforts, actions, initiatives that support the implementation of gender-responsive climate policies and programs; ii) percentage of climate-related programs that incorporate gender considerations.
4. Promote and improve innovative tools that demonstrate and measure the transformative power of women's and girls' leadership in changing consumption patterns to reduce carbon emissions.
5. Support and promote initiatives that encourage the full participation and leadership of women and girls in mitigation and adaptation measures, including in science, technology, research and development.

Also noteworthy at the international level is the Generation Equality Forum, convened by UN Women and jointly organized by the Governments of Mexico and France, along with civil society organizations, through the Coalitions for Action which are mobilizing governments, feminist and women's organizations, youth-led organizations, international organizations, the private sector and UN Agencies to catalyze collective action; spark global and local intergenerational conversations; leverage greater public and private investment; and achieve concrete advances in gender equality for women and girls.

The Coalitions for Action addressed six specific themes: i) gender-based violence; ii) economic justice and rights; iii) bodily autonomy, 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.

The 2026 vision for the Feminist Action for Climate Justice (FACJ) axis is:

- FAJC will promote a transition to an inclusive and regenerative green economy that recognizes the interconnectedness of climate change with gender justice issues and protects and amplifies the voices of grassroots and indigenous communities, including frontline women advocates, in social and political spaces.
- Women and girls, in all their diversity, participate equitably and meaningfully in decision-making processes at all levels, including aligning key climate policy instruments with national development plans and developing climate responses that respect human rights.
- Financial institutions and the donor community reframe risk, prioritize women's organizations as priority partners, and are responsible for transferring capital to support resilient societies and transformative investments in gender-equitable climate and ecosystem approaches.
- Women and girls, in all their diversity, equitably access climate finance, technologies and knowledge, and access and control natural resources for their management and protection, including through secure land rights and ownership.

III. PROGRESS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL ON GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Regional Gender Agenda: a progressive, innovative, and comprehensive roadmap

In reference to the normative framework at the regional level, and in particular in the Regional Gender Agenda, the issue of climate change is incorporated in the Brasilia Consensus, adopted at the Eleventh Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2010, recognizes that “climate change and disasters can negatively affect productive development, the use of time by women, particularly in rural areas, and their access to employment” (ECLAC, 2017a).⁴¹ On the other hand, the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030⁴² recognizes that the integration of women’s rights and autonomy in climate change adaptation and mitigation is not only essential and complements global commitments to women’s human rights and gender equality, but also maximizes the effectiveness of climate policies, programs and resources. The Strategy also calls for “harmonizing regulations at the regional level, taking into account the human rights of women, and assessing the extraterritorial effects of the legislation and policies adopted, in order to respond to transnational phenomena such as (...), climate change, (...) and the rights of indigenous, Afro-descendant, ethnically diverse and native women.”⁴³ In turn, the implementation axes (section C) related to financing, participation, capacity building, communication and technology constitute a tool to create synergies with the climate change issue.

Reinforcing this approach, the *Santiago Commitment*, a product of the Fourteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (2020), achieved three agreements (32, 33 and 34) on gender equality and climate change:

Advance in building a gender, intersectional, intercultural and rights perspective into national policies and budgeted programmes on sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction, especially in the most vulnerable territories, strengthening women’s participation and the inclusion of gender equality in needs assessments and response plans, as well as in the planning and execution of public investment for reconstruction;

Integrate the gender perspective into national policies on climate change adaptation and mitigation, recognizing its differentiated effects on women, adolescents and girls, as well as on other groups in vulnerable situations, promote climate action respecting, promoting and considering the respective obligations with regard to gender equality, through strengthened coordination between machineries for the advancement of women and the governing entities of policies on environment, climate change, planning, energy and human rights, among others;

Actively support the participation of women’s organizations and movements, including those of indigenous, Afrodescendent, grassroots and rural women, in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies on climate change mitigation and response and disaster risk management, and promote the

⁴¹ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2017a). *40 years of the Regional Gender Agenda* (LC/G.2682/Rev.1), Santiago.

⁴² The Montevideo Strategy aims to guide the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda and ensure its use 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.

⁴³ The Montevideo Strategy, measure 8.a.

protection of the traditional and ancestral knowledge of the indigenous and Afrodescendent women of Latin America and the Caribbean. (ECLAC, 2020).⁴⁴

The Escazú Agreement: its importance and implications from a gender perspective

Furthermore, the Escazú Agreement, which entered into force on April 22, 2021, promotes environmental democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Agreement is a pioneering and visionary instrument, considered one of the most important environmental and human rights agreements of the last 20 years. The Agreement embodies, in a binding treaty, the three rights of access or procedural rights enshrined 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 environmental decision-making processes, and access to justice in environmental matters*”.

Principle 10 and Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration, as well as the Escazú Agreement, are based on a fundamental premise: to ensure environmental protection, the fulfillment of human rights, the strengthening of democracy and the consolidation of a sustainable development model, States have the duty to ensure access to information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental matters.

These three pillars, rights *per se* and interdependent, constitute the irrevocable way to ensure the fulfillment of other human rights, be it the right to free association, to participate in the government of each country, but also the right to a healthy environment, to water, to health, to food and the right to live in peace and dignity.

It should be emphasized that all the substantive articles of this agreement, from articles 1 to 12, translate into obligations that are the principles of environmental law and human rights relating to: a) procedures, such as impact assessments, access rights, and the empowerment of people and communities; b) legal and institutional frameworks that protect and have the capacity to address environmental damage that interferes with the enjoyment of human rights; and c) with respect to people who are part of vulnerable groups. On this last point, the Escazú Agreement is also a precursor in that it is the first in the world to include a definition of persons or groups in vulnerable situations in Article 2.

Furthermore, Escazú is the first treaty in the world that seeks to guarantee in a particular way 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, as it is the region where environmental and human rights defenders are most at risk. According to Global Witness (2021),⁴⁵ in 2020, 227 land and environmental defenders were killed. Of the 227, 226 murders took place in countries in the Global South, and more than 70% of the murders took place in Latin America.

⁴⁴ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2020). "Santiago Commitment." January [online]. Recovered from https://conferenciamujer.ECLAC.org/14/sites/crm14/files/20-00087_crm.14_santiago_commitment.pdf.

⁴⁵ Global Witness. (2021). *Last Line of Defense: The Industries Causing the Climate Crisis and Attacks on Land and Environmental Defenders* [online]. Recovered from <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/last-line-defence/>.

The report also states that:

- It is possible that the records underestimate the real situation in the countries of the Global South, mainly because of restrictions on press freedom and the absence of independent records of attacks perpetrated. Moreover, the killings occur in the context of a much wider range of repeated threats that are underreported, such as intimidation, surveillance, sexual violence, and criminalization of environmental defenders.
- Information barriers also become relevant when analyzing the murders according to the economic sector with which they are associated. 49.3% of the killings could not be definitively linked to a specific economic motive, such as logging or agro-industry, reflecting the difficulty of investigating and reporting on these types of events, especially in remote areas, and even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In 2020, more than a third of all attacks targeted indigenous peoples, despite the fact that they represent only 5% of the world's population. Moreover, 5 of the 7 mass murders recorded in 2020 were perpetrated against indigenous peoples.
- Of the total number of cases classifiable by economic sector, most are linked to the resource exploitation sector (forestry, mining, and large-scale agro-industry), hydroelectric dams and the construction of other types of infrastructure with high environmental impact. In particular, in Latin America, logging was associated in 2020 with 20 murders that took place mainly in Brazil, Nicaragua and Peru. In contrast, fishing is positioned as the sector with the lowest number of victims associated with the defense of land and the environment.

Just as the effects of violence against environmental defenders are unequal across the world, with the Global South being the most affected area (Forst, 2016)⁴⁶, its impact is also unequal between men and women. This inequality is complex, because while in 2020 it was recorded that almost 9 out of 10 people killed were men (Global Witness, 2021)⁴⁷, women often face gender-specific forms of violence, such as sexual violence, physical assault, physical violence during pregnancy (OHCHR, 2018a)⁴⁸, and even slander, finger-pointing and smear campaigns (IM-Defensoras, 2017).⁴⁹

Women human rights defenders in general are more exposed to gender-based violence because they challenge patriarchal culture and gender stereotypes, which are deeply rooted in the role of women in society (OHCHR, 2016)⁵⁰. In that sense, for women, the risks of being environmental defenders are enhanced by misogyny, and the attacks committed against them are underestimated in formal records,

⁴⁶ Forst, M. (2016). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders (A/71/281)*. <https://undocs.org/A/71/281>.

⁴⁷ Global Witness. (2021). *Last Line of Defense: The Industries Causing the Climate Crisis and Attacks on Land and Environmental Defenders* [online]. Recovered from <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/last-line-defence/>.

⁴⁸ OHCHR (2018a). *End of mission statement by Michel Forst, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his visit to Honduras, 29 April to 12 May*. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23063&LangID=E>.

⁴⁹ IM-Defensoras, I. M. D. de D. H. (2017). "Bodies, Territories and Movements in Resistance in Mesoamerica": 2015-2016 Report on attacks against WHRD. <http://im-defensoras.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Informe-ejecutivo-2015-2016-english.pdf>

⁵⁰ OHCHR (2016). *Berta Cáceres' murder: UN experts renew call to Honduras to end impunity*. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19805>.

especially in those remote areas and rural sectors (Global Witness, 2021)⁵¹. For example, between 2015 and 2016 in Mesoamerica, there were 2,197 documented attacks against women human rights defenders, 37% of which had a gender-specific component.⁵²

Moreover, for women there is a double struggle, in the public and private spheres. Just as they speak out publicly to protect their land, water and environment, they must also defend in their own communities and families their right to speak out and be considered in discussions about the use and care of natural resources (Forst, 2016)⁵³. Many women defenders are isolated from their own communities and close environment (IM-Defensoras, 2017)⁵⁴, who slander them as “bad women”, or “bad mothers” (OHCHR, 2018a).⁵⁵

On the other hand, indigenous and Afro-descendant women are particularly vulnerable to violence, and in fact, in 2017 almost half of all women activists were killed for defending their communities and environmental rights (UNDP, 2018).⁵⁶

Faced with this reality, and based on the recommendations, mandates and observations of international law, the Agreement seeks on the one hand, to grant legal, fair, and deserved recognition to individuals, groups and organizations that defend human rights in environmental matters; and on the other, to consolidate a robust agreement that guarantees their rights of access and those of all persons. Paragraph 3 of Article 9 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.”

In March 2021, a workshop on “The Escazú Agreement and the feminist environmental agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean” was held with the intention of building, from the feminist movement, an agenda that guarantees the rights of access to information, decision making and access to justice on environmental issues. Among the challenges identified are:

- *Women’s right of access to information.* The permanence of gender roles and stereotypes that produce inequality and discrimination, as well as illiteracy, digital illiteracy, the technical language of environmental information, poor access to calls and/or public policies related to agricultural, fishing, forestry and environmental activities, lack of access to electricity, internet and computers prevent women from fully exercising their right to access information on

⁵¹ Global Witness. (2021). *Last Line of Defense: The Industries Causing the Climate Crisis and Attacks on Land and Environmental Defenders* [online]. Recovered from <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/last-line-defence/>.

⁵² Castillo, O., et al, 2016, Informe de Agresiones a Defensoras 2015-2016, Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Humanos, [en línea], <http://im-defensoras.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/INFORME-DE-AGRESIONES-A-DEFENSORAS-2015-2016-FINAL-DEF.pdf>.

⁵³ Forst, M. (2016). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders* (A/71/281). <https://undocs.org/A/71/281>.

⁵⁴ IM-Defensoras, I. M. de M. D. de D. H. (2017). “Bodies, Territories and Movements in Resistance in Mesoamerica”: 2015-2016 Report on attacks against WHRD. <http://im-defensoras.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Informe-ejecutivo-2015-2016-english.pdf>

⁵⁵ OHCHR (2018a). *End of mission statement by Michel Forst, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his visit to Honduras, 29 April to 12 May*. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23063&LangID=E>.

⁵⁶ UNDP. (2018). *In defense of nature: Women at the forefront*. Recovered from <https://www.undp.org/blog/defense-nature-women-forefront>.

environmental issues. This situation is compounded by the limited time available to women due to their reproductive and care workload, geographic barriers, and mobility difficulties.

- *Women's decision-making in environmental issues.* Women are not considered in decision-making spheres. The percentage of women participating as decision-makers is very low. There is also an absence of institutional mechanisms to ensure women's effective participation.
- *Environmental defense and access to justice for women* faces barriers such as the lack of legal production from a gender perspective, the implementation of sentences and gaps in environmental terms within the environmental legal framework; the lack of access and costs associated with information and communication technologies (ICT), the lack of mechanisms for the anonymity of women who denounce, and the difficulty for indigenous communities to access information due to lack of internet connectivity. In addition to this, there is discrimination, finger-pointing, and violence against women in environmental conflicts. The overload of care work in the home and inequity in land tenure prevent women from fully exercising their right to defend their environment.
- *The protection of women defenders of territory and natural resources* is undermined by the lack of recognition and appreciation of the work of women defenders, as well as little or no protection by the State toward them, including the lack of protection mechanisms. Added to this is the gender-based violence that results in threats, aggressions, forced displacement and femicides, which is aggravated by the growing militarization of the territories in the region. Finally, the lack of land ownership and tenure makes it difficult for them to defend their territory.⁵⁷

It is important to highlight that it is essential that gender equality be seen as one of the guiding principles of the Agreement. Without promoting a gender-responsive implementation of the Agreement, it is difficult to imagine that the commitments of the Escazú Agreement can be implemented.

Gender mainstreaming in other regional and subregional environmental agreements

The Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), within the framework of the Central American Integration System, developed the Regional Strategy on Climate Change (RSCC)⁵⁸ with its respective Action Plan 2018-2022. Among the six principles of the RSCC, two address gender:

- Transversality, intersectorality and interculturality; one of the most important transversal axes is gender equity and equality.
- Coherence of governance and solidarity policies, equity, gender equality, and social justice.

In addition, section five recognizes that “gender inequalities intersect with the risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change. Women’s historical disadvantages, their limited access to resources, restrictions on their rights and their limited participation in decision-making spaces are determining factors that make them highly vulnerable and are likely to increase existing patterns of inequality.”

⁵⁷ Freidrich Ebert Stiftung, Comunicación y Educacion Ambiental, ECO MAXIE, Red Paz, Integración y Desarrollo, FES Transformación (2021), Taller regional ALC frente a Beijing + 25: El Acuerdo de Escazú y la agenda feminista ambiental en ALC, [online] https://fes-transformacion.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/atr_documentos/Actividades/PROYEC_1.PDF.

⁵⁸ CCAD and SICA. (2018). Estrategia Regional de Cambio Climático- Plan de Acción 2018-2022 SICA, El Salvador.

The RSCC also proposes the need to incorporate a gender perspective to guarantee the recognition of the existence of conditions of inequity and, therefore, inequality of different kinds faced by women in the face of the undesired effects of climate change, which aggravate their conditions in the face of the different elements generated by it. Hence, the importance of reducing the risks posed by the effects of climate change on this population sector in particular, in order to prevent the aggravation of pre-existing gender inequalities.

For its implementation, the RSCC is committed to integrate all those general and specific measures that allow women to actively participate in equal opportunities and conditions in the processes and actions defined in the different dimensions, areas, and levels of the RSCC.

Likewise, under the SICA under the Council of Energy Ministers, the Sustainable Energy Strategy of the SICA countries to 2030 was approved. This Strategy served as the basis for the development of regional energy sector goals (for mitigation and adaptation) and a regional energy pact. The strategy recognizes that “substantive gender equality is a strategic and high-priority issue that must be incorporated into national and regional development policies and plans and given the centrality it deserves.”⁵⁹

The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (2013) contains a chapter on gender equality (Chapter E). Likewise, the countries agreed in Chapter A on full integration of the population and its dynamics in sustainable development with equality and respect for human rights, “Guarantee sustainable production and consumption patterns and avoid exacerbating the undesirable climate change phenomena brought about by human activity.”

In addition, Chapter G on territorial inequality, spatial mobility and vulnerability takes into account the relationship between climate change and population mobility, calling for “Plan and manage territorial and urban development, from a human rights and gender perspective, by formulating mobility, population settlement and activity location policies that contemplate, among their objectives, avoiding the use of vulnerable and protected areas and preventing and mitigating the impact of socioenvironmental disasters and combating the environmental vulnerability of those living in poverty and ethnic and racial groups who are subject to discrimination, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation.” (ECLAC, 2013)⁶⁰

At the **Third Session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (2019)**, the countries approved the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, which includes a series of axes and lines of action to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

in the region. With regard to disasters, they emphasize in strengthening “comprehensive and universal social protection systems that, in their design and operation, and in the design and operation of their policies and intervention models, mainstream the rights-based, gender, ethnic and racial, life-cycle, territorial and disability approaches”, as well as “contribute to increasing the response capacity of public institutions and the resilience of populations affected by humanitarian crises and disasters, especially those living in

⁵⁹ ECLAC. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Estrategia Energética Sustentable 2030 de los países del SICA (LC/MEX/TS.2020/35), Ciudad de México, 2020.

⁶⁰ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) (2013). First session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Full integration of population dynamics into rights-based sustainable development with equality: key to the Cairo Programme of Action beyond 2014. Recovered from <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Montevideo%20Consensus-15Aug2013.pdf>.

poverty, also taking into account the heightened vulnerability and limited response capacity of children, women, older persons and persons with disabilities to adverse effects during and after crises.”

Likewise, the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway) recognizes the uniqueness of these States, considering the adverse effects of climate change that exacerbate existing problems and place an additional burden on their national budgets, hampering their efforts to achieve the SDGs with equality. Indeed, 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 (United Nations, 2014)⁶¹ that characterize the current situation in the world and in the region.

The XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (2021) called for the integration of the environmental dimension at the center of recovery plans from the COVID-19 pandemic and the promotion of a reactivation based on social inclusion, resilient and low-carbon economies, and conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. In one of the eight decisions in the framework of the *Bridgetown Declaration* (UNEP, 2021),⁶² the ministers committed to promote gender equality by urging “all countries of the region to develop affirmative actions within the framework of environmental public policies that recognize women’s contributions to sustainable development, as well as the existing gaps in access to natural resources and the negative impacts on women and girls derived from their unsustainable exploitation” listing a series of requirements to achieve the SDGs “generating information disaggregated by sex; integrating gender-sensitive approaches in public policies; achieving a gender balance in participation and decision-making mechanisms; and designing policies that support the elimination of any legal or social barrier to women’s rights.”⁶³

Climate change and gender equality in national-level instruments

At the national level, the countries of the region have been developing a series of actions at a regulatory level. Examples of this include gender equality plans, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national or sectoral gender action plans (GAPs) related to climate change. Countries have also been making efforts to mainstream gender in their environmental regulations. In 2020, UNDP documented the mandates and/or gender considerations that eight countries (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago) have incorporated in their national policies, plans, strategies, and communications related to the climate agenda (Quesada-Aguilar, 2021).⁶⁴

As for gender equality plans, they are instruments used by most of the countries in the region, and promoted by the MAWs, which allow guiding the actions of the State and planning and carrying out a process of joint work between the different sectors, enhancing the institutionalization and mainstreaming

⁶¹ See paragraph 40. United Nations. (2014). *Modalities for Accelerated Action for Small Island Developing States (Samoa Pathway)*, (A/RES/69/15). New York.

⁶² UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). (2021). "Bridgetown Declaration", XXII Meeting of the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, February 2021, [online]. Recovered from https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/34969/Bridgetown_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁶³ UNEP (2021). Press Release. Latin American, Caribbean ministers commit to build back better and greener. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/latin-american-caribbean-ministers-commit-build-back-better-and>.

⁶⁴ Quesada-Aguilar, A. (2021). Key elements to include gender equality and women’s empowerment in climate policies and nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Recovered from <https://www.ndcs.undp.org/content/ndc-support-programme/en/home/impact-and-learning/library/gender-checklist-2021.html>.

of gender (ECLAC, 2019)⁶⁵. Of a total of 37 gender equality plans of the countries of the region compiled by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OIG) from 1997 to 2021, 20 include the term “climate change”, which corresponds to 54% of the total. Of the 20 gender equality plans that contain mention of climate change, eight of them (i.e., 21.6% of the total) mention it as part of an axis or strategic objective in their programs (Aguilar & Aguilar, 2021)⁶⁶. Box 2 describes how the topic is addressed in these eight gender equality plans:

Box 2
Addressing climate change in eight gender equality plans

- 1) **Dominican Republic.** The National Gender Equality and Equity Plan (Plan Nacional de Igualdad y Equidad de Género, PLANEG III) of the Dominican Republic includes the topic “Environment, Risk Management and Climate Change.” This topic establishes component 5.3. “Ensure a gender equality approach in the implementation of the national sanitation strategy throughout the national territory” and the specific objective linked to this component establishes the following: “women’s rights are taken into account in all stages of planning programs and projects related to the environment, land management, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.”
- 2) **Grenada.** The Government of Grenada’s Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (GEPAP) establishes an axis in both the policy and action plan entitled “Gender, Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Natural Resource Management.” It states that the Government will recognize and integrate the distinctive and complementary roles of men and women in policies and programs related to disaster management, climate change and natural resource development to build a “green economy.” In addition, under the political commitments (Art. 280-iii) it is stated that the Government will guarantee the equitable participation of men and women in the development of strategies and mechanisms for adaptation to climate change.
- 3) **Panama (2012).** Panama’s Public Policy on Equal Opportunities for Women establishes two strategic objectives (1.7 and 1.8) of the thematic axis on the environment. These objectives aim to “promote strategies and incentives for women in environmental management, through the creation of microenterprises and markets for environmental services, development and promotion in the following sectors: fishing, maritime, ecotourism, and agroforestry; taking into consideration the phenomenon of climate change, conservation of biodiversity, and natural resources” and “incorporate the gender and human rights approach in programs and projects related to the civil protection system, humanitarian aid and prevention and care related to climate change, natural and technological disasters” respectively.
- 4) **Panama (2016-2019).** The subsequent Equal Opportunities for Women Action Plan takes up strategic objective 1.8 of the 2012 gender equality plan and establishes again as strategic objective (1.2) “Incorporate the gender and human rights approach in programs and projects related to the civil protection system, humanitarian aid and prevention and care related to climate change, natural and technological disasters.”
- 5) **Uruguay.** Uruguay’s National Strategy for Gender Equality establishes four strategic lines, corresponding to guideline XI. 3, where climate change is considered. Thus, it mentions “promoting measures for adaptation to climate change (...)”; “identifying adaptation capacities and promoting women’s resilience to climate change

⁶⁵ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2019). “Gender equality plans in Latin America and the Caribbean: Road maps for development”, *Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean*, No 1 (LC/PUB.2017/1-P/Rev.1). Recovered from <https://www.ECLAC.org/en/publications/41015-gender-equality-plans-latin-america-and-caribbean-road-maps-development>.

⁶⁶ Aguilar, L. & Aguilar, M. (2021), *Planes de igualdad de género y su vínculo con el cambio climático en América Latina y el Caribe*. Hojas Informativas, Costa Rica, Secretaria General Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). Recovered from <https://www.flacso.org/secretaria-general/planes-igualdad-g-nero-y-su-v-nculo-con-cambio-clim-tico-am-rica-latina-y-0>.

(...); “generating information systems with indicators for adaptation and mitigation to climate change with a gender perspective”; and “generating knowledge on climate change and resilient and low-carbon development.”

- 6) **El Salvador.** El Salvador’s National Equality Plan establishes two outcome indicators oriented to the management, use and control of natural resources and the environment, which indicate: “guaranteed the principle of equality and non-discrimination in policies, plans and projects on climate change and risk reduction” and “promoted the participation of women in decision-making in the development and implementation of policies, plans and projects on climate change and environmental risk reduction.”
- 7) **Honduras.** The II Gender Equality and Equity Plan of Honduras establishes two strategic objectives where climate change is mentioned. In the first case, the objective is to “promote the creation of mechanisms for monitoring and social auditing of the international commitments subscribed by the Honduran State in the areas of environmental conservation, natural resources, climate change and disaster prevention, ensuring the participation of women’s organizations.” Strategic objective 1.6, in turn, indicates “incorporating the approaches of equality, gender equity and interculturality in policies, programs and projects for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, ensuring the participation of women in all decision-making spaces at the municipal, regional/departmental, national, regional and global levels.” In the same document, it is stated that “The State guarantees the incorporation of the gender perspective in policies, plans, programs and projects for comprehensive disaster risk management, in coordination with strategies, mitigation and adaptation actions for climate change.”
- 8) **Mexico.** Finally, Mexico’s National Program for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination against Women establishes line 1.1.8, which states the need to “promote the harmonization of women’s rights with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.” The same document points out the need to “promote the participation of women and their role in the access, use, control and management of natural resources, and place them as protagonists in decision-making to improve their position with respect to the conservation, care and use of natural resources, environmental management and climate change”.

In summary, the eight gender equality plans can be divided into two groups: those that indicate the need to incorporate the gender and human rights approach in programs and policies on climate change and those that indicate that there is a governmental commitment to guarantee the participation of women in decision-making spaces on climate change adaptation.

Although the first mention of climate change was identified in 2008, it was not until 2010 with the II Gender Equality and Equity Plan of Honduras that it was given a significant place as a strategic axis or objective in one of the gender equality plans. Along the same lines, by 2016, two gender equality plans were approved (Panama and El Salvador) that consider climate change as part of an axis or strategic objective. Additionally, in 2018, four gender equality plans make at least one mention of climate change.

This analysis of gender equality plans shows that, although the first considerations on climate change were made at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, it is only a little less than a decade ago (in 2016) that the incorporation of this issue in gender equality plans as part of a strategic objective or guideline became frequent.

On the other hand, when delving deeper into the ways in which climate change is mentioned and considered in the gender equality plans under the responsibility of the MAWs, it becomes clear that political participation, mainstreaming of the gender equality approach and recognition of women and some age groups as the most vulnerable population in the face of climate change make up the spectrum of priorities of the region’s governments.

Undoubtedly, this group of gender equality plans is a promising step forward for the region. However, it is necessary as national equality plans are renewed to reflect and implement international, regional, and national mandates and agreements on gender equality and climate change. In addition, it is necessary to harmonize national regulatory frameworks related to climate change with the gender mandates adopted under the UNFCCC and other regional instruments such as the Montevideo Strategy, the Regional Gender Agenda, and the Escazú Agreement.

As for the NDCs, they are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its long-term goals. NDCs embody each country's efforts to reduce national emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Paris Agreement (Article 4, paragraph 2) requires each country to prepare, communicate and maintain the successive nationally determined contributions it intends to achieve.

As of 2020, countries have started to submit their new NDCs. In Latin America and the Caribbean, according to preliminary analysis, by October 2021, 22 countries have submitted their NDCs, 100% of which incorporate gender.

Other efforts include the development of Gender and Climate Change Action Plans (GCCAPs or ccGAPs). Six national ccGAPs have been developed in the region—Costa Rica, Cuba, Haiti, Panama, Peru, and the Dominican Republic—and at the subnational and local level, Mexico has developed two ccGAPs for a natural protected area in the State of Sonora and another for the Yucatan Peninsula.

The methodology is based on a participatory, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder process that brings together government and civil society to identify gender and climate change issues in the local context and develop innovative activities to improve the national climate change strategy or plan. One of the values of the cGCCPs is that they are an articulating instrument that guides coherence between different international and national instruments and regulations.

It is instrumental to mention that other countries have also developed national planning instruments (i.e., gender and climate change plans, strategies, roadmaps) that have used other methodologies. Such is the case of Uruguay, which developed a Gender and Climate Change Strategy (2020-2025) and Paraguay, which has a National Gender Strategy on Climate Change (2017). In the case of the Caribbean, Dominica, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Saint Lucia developed gender and climate change roadmaps. Trinidad and Tobago developed the Gender Action Plan with support from UNDP's NDC Support Programme.

In the last decade, several countries in the region have been developing strategic documents that seek to guide the actions of an entire sector in relation to the promotion of gender equality and women's autonomy. These include Mexico and Costa Rica, which have developed GAPs related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; Nicaragua, with GAPs on gender-equitable rights and rights of access to forests, forest resources, and their benefits; and the initiatives "Disaster recovery with a gender perspective, climate and environmental resilience in the Caribbean (EnGenDer)," which are being implemented in eight Caribbean countries.

IV. PRIORITY AREAS FOR REGIONAL ACTION FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Aware of the above and faced with the need to address gender inequality in the region in the context of climate change, the Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean, within the framework of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), proposes a series of recommendations in five priority areas. The recommendations highlight the role of the feminist movement and the relevance of the machineries for the advancement of women (MAWs) to advance in the integration of the gender perspective in public policy instruments, as well as in implementation actions in the face of climate change, so that, as governing bodies and/or managers of the implementation of public policies in favor of gender equality and women's autonomy, they can become more actively involved and exercise a transformative leadership role in the response processes related to climate change at both the national and international levels.

- (a) **Coherence between regulatory frameworks and other related initiatives:** international agreements on climate change, their harmonization and operationalization at the regional and national levels.

There are many overlaps and correspondences between the range of agreements, conventions, treaties, commitments, and guidelines produced in recent years at the international, regional, and national levels on the link between gender, environment, and climate change. Improving coherence and coordination is becoming increasingly necessary as the region seeks to address gender equality more systemically in areas and frameworks relevant to the sustainability of life, such as climate.

Based on the above, the recommendations under this section are subdivided into regional and national actions:

At a regional level

- Conduct an analysis on coherence, interrelationships, and correspondences between the range of agreements, conventions, treaties, commitments, and guidelines produced in recent years at both the international and regional level on the issue of gender and climate change. This study will inform and strategically delimit actions on this issue for the region.
- Design an advocacy strategy, based on what is proposed in this reference document, so that the needs and priorities identified in the regional agenda of women in Latin America and the Caribbean are reflected in decision-making spaces at the international level. The next two years are of vital importance as the process to identify the impact of the second GAP and to define the third UNFCCC GAP will begin. Some actions are:
 - Establish a working group with the national gender focal points of the region before the UNFCCC to present a joint position before spaces such as: the consultation workshops under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI)⁶⁷ of the UNFCCC and the voluntary presentations⁶⁸ related to the gender approach.

⁶⁷ The SBI is the subsidiary body in which gender issues are addressed in the UNFCCC.

⁶⁸ See the voluntary presentation portal on <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx>.

- Study the negotiation agenda items for the meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the SBI as well as for the COP, in order to build a regional position on gender equality and climate change issues.

At a national level

- Incorporate international, regional, and national mandates and agreements on gender equality and climate change in the process of renewing gender equality plans. Some actions that can guide this process are:
 - Analyze in depth the decisions of the COPs in relation to gender considerations⁶⁹ and the two gender action plans (GAP)⁷⁰ developed within the framework of the UNFCCC.
 - Study the gender action plans of the other two “Rio Conventions”, the CBD⁷¹ and the UNCCD⁷², with the aim of identifying possible activities and initiatives that will enhance the mandates of the various conventions in relation to climate change.
 - Incorporate the commitments emanating from the Regional Gender Agenda, particularly the Santiago Commitment.
 - Study the country’s most recent NDC document to identify possible entry points to ensure that gender considerations are incorporated into its implementation.
 - Promote the development of new gender and climate change planning instruments (i.e. plans, strategies, roadmaps) —for those 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 planning instruments at different territorial levels. This type of planning instruments should be aligned with the commitments and implementation of the NDCs, in order to prevent them from remaining as ambitious documents that are never implemented.
 - Support resilience and promote the autonomy of women and girls to respond to and recover from the impact of climate change, disasters and extreme weather events, through the provision of essential infrastructure and services ensuring, among others, universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and promoting the full exercise of sexual and reproductive rights, as well as access to comprehensive services for prevention and attention to gender-based violence, social protection and decent work for women;
 - Promote national institutional arrangements (involving MAM and other institutions/ministries involved in the implementation of the climate agenda) in order to facilitate that climate change policies, programs and projects articulate gender in a consistent, systematic and comprehensive manner.
 - Harmonize national policy frameworks related to climate change with the gender mandates adopted under the UNFCCC and other regional instruments such as the Regional Gender Agenda, in particular the Montevideo Strategy, the Santiago Commitment and the Escazú Agreement.

⁶⁹ The Gender Climate Tracker is a platform where UNFCC gender mandates can be accessed.

⁷⁰ First Gender Action Plan COP23-2017. Available at <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/sbi/eng/129.pdf> ; Second Action Plan COP25-2019. Available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/204536>.

⁷¹ CBD Gender Plan of Action. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/gender/action-plan/>.

⁷² UNCCD Gender Action Plan. Available at: <https://www.unccd.int/actions/gender-action-plan>.

- Develop a calendar with dates and deadlines for country reports related to climate change commitments and establish institutional mechanisms to strengthen the participation of the MAWs in the preparation of these documents.

(b) Capacity building and development. Improve and develop competencies and capacities related to gender equality and climate change at the national level with special attention to MAWs 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 topics such as resilience, urban planning, nature-based solutions, decarbonization plans and emissions reduction is imperative if we want to ensure 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 manner.

One of the central challenges for capacity building among those responsible for policy design is the diversity of sectors and issues related 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 should not only consider the level of responsibility and participation in the design of the action or policy but should also consider the specificity 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 transformed.

This 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. Therefore, expertise in gender issues is not enough; it is also necessary to address the intersection between the gender approach and the challenges related to climate change. This involves taking into account the interconnected nature of social identities such as age, ethnicity, gender and class, as they are overlapping and interdependent systems of experience, discrimination or disadvantage. Rather than separating identity categories from each other and from points of marginalization or privilege, intersectionality highlights how an individual’s different identities (e.g., gender and ethnicity) intersect and influence each other to create unique experiences and biases.

Some recommendations for strengthening capacities related to gender equality and climate change at the national level (State and civil society) with special attention to MAWs and women’s organizations are:

- Promote the improvement of knowledge about the implications of the gender perspective in the field of climate change policies among MAW staff.
- Develop virtual spaces, for example, on governmental websites (MAW, ministries of environment, Presidency, Secretaries of the Interior), for the exchange of knowledge on gender equality and climate change for specific topics.⁷³

⁷³ Materials such as methodological guides, case studies and training manuals developed by organizations and groups such as: C40 Cities on urban planning and cities, IRENA on energy and renewable energy, and CIFOR for the forestry sector. The CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC, as well as other MEA’s have specialized sections on the gender perspective.

- To have a list (roster) of experts in gender studies and areas associated with climate change in the region, in order to support the exchange of information, provide technical assistance and strengthen capacities for the analysis and design of actions from the State.
 - Invest in specific training instances for the different sectors and subsectors that deal with climate change mitigation and adaptation issues, integrating personnel from these sectors and from the MAWs.
 - Promote the development of training materials and competencies, as well as training strategies for women's and feminist organizations, indigenous women, and Afro-descendant women, as well as LGBTBIQ+ communities, women with disabilities or women in processes of human mobility, understanding that the effects of climate change have a differentiated impact on these groups and for the organizations they work with and in which they are organized.⁷⁴
 - Undertake a campaign to disseminate the country's UNFCCC mandates related to gender and climate change to the relevant public entities, both at the national and subnational levels.
 - Strengthen the capacities of governments at national and subnational levels and other stakeholders for gender mainstreaming in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring, as appropriate, of national climate change policies, plans, strategies, and measures, including NDCs, national adaptation plans and national communications.
 - Encourage 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, LGBTBIQ+) and for different sectors and subsectors (forestry, maritime-coastal, agriculture, energy, among others).
 - Encourage the participation of indigenous, native and Afro-descendant women, both to strengthen their capacities and to promote the exchange of their ancestral knowledge on adaptation and mitigation measures.
- (c) **Equal representation and participation.** Promote gender parity and encourage the participation and representation of women, in their diversity, in negotiations and decision-making at the subnational, national, and international levels related to climate change.

By the mid-2000s, international commitments and agreements were fundamental for incorporating the right to full and equal participation of women in the policies and action plans of the three Rio conventions: the CBD, the UNCCD and the UNFCCC, as well as other MEAs such as the Ramsar Convention and the BRS. With regard to the UNFCCC, it should be noted that although the Convention did not integrate gender equality from the outset, it is since 2008 that there has been a gradual increase in women's participation in the global processes associated with the UNFCCC.

This progress can be attributed to decisions within the COP adopting a gender parity objective in the Convention's bodies to improve women's participation,⁷⁵ 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 gender and climate change policies and plans at the national level.

⁷⁴ Based on discussions of the "Advisory Group" associated with C40Cities for the development of guidelines for mainstreaming gender-inclusive climate action in cities. June-October 2020.

⁷⁵ Decision 23/CP.18, UNFCCC. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/cop18/spa/08a03s.pdf#page=47>. Decision 3/CP.25, Paragraph 7, UNFCCC. Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2019_13a01S.pdf.

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 dedicates a specific implementation axis to the participation of women's and feminist organizations and movements in the design, implementation and monitoring of gender equality, women's rights, and sustainable development policies. Among the measures agreed upon in the Montevideo Strategy is the establishment of effective, institutionalized, and representative participation mechanisms for the diversity of women, 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 promote 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 role in monitoring public policies (Montevideo Strategy, measure 3.c). For its part, the Escazú Agreement provides, in Article 7, Paragraph 10, that "Party shall establish conditions that are favorable 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, 2018).⁷⁶

Regarding women's participation in national and subnational decision-making spaces in relation to climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean, there are no data or statistics to analyze at the regional level. While it is true that some countries are making efforts in this direction, the data are still fragmented, are relevant only for one territory—usually associated with one project—and there is a lack of quality data.

It is in the formation of youth groups related to the climate emergency, where there is a large participation of young women in Latin America. An interesting fact that ratifies this situation can be seen in the equal percentage representation of male and female delegates between 26 and 35 years of age at the UNFCCC (UNFCCC, 2020).⁷⁷

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

Actions to promote fuller and more effective participation of the countries of the region at the international level

- Designate a country focal point for gender and climate change at the UNFCCC and officially inform the Gender Focal Point (GFP) of the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- Establish a regional network of National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points (NGCCFP) assigned to the UNFCCC, in order to coordinate actions and develop proposals for regional initiatives.
- Request the State entity that represents the country at the UNFCCC (e.g., the State representative to the Convention may be the Ministry of Environment or the Ministry of

⁷⁶ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). (2018). *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/PUB.2018/8), Santiago.

⁷⁷ UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). (2020). "Report of the Secretariat Gender Composition" (FCCC/CP/2020/3), UNFCCC, [online], <https://unfccc.int/documents/254399>.

- Foreign Affairs) to include MAW and women's groups from diverse groups (feminist, indigenous, Afro-descendant, rural and urban, among others) in the official delegation.
- Promote, with the State representative to the Convention, parity in the delegations and greater representation of women as heads of delegation, as well as the presentation of women's candidacies to the UNFCCC bodies. In addition, it is recommended that all members of the Delegation receive training on the importance of the link between gender and climate change.
 - Apply for travel funds for women delegates. Travel funds for women delegates are administered by the UNFCCC GFPs or by civil society organizations. One possibility to consider is to apply for the creation of a women delegate fund for Latin America and the Caribbean directly to donors.
 - Request the UNFCCC's GFP to incorporate women delegates from the country in the formal and non-formal education and training programs carried out within the framework of the negotiations.
 - Ensure that the country's position considers the differentiated impacts and needs of indigenous and Afro-descendant women and men, as well as their proposals regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Actions at national and subnational levels

- Establish a network of subregional gender and climate change focal points facilitated by the NGCCFP.
 - Organize meetings with the women who participated in the national delegation to the UNFCCC in order to share with organizations at the subnational and national levels the status of the negotiations and identify actions to be implemented.
 - Facilitate the participation of women, in all their diversity, in decision-making spaces associated with climate change (e.g., the development and implementation of NDCs).
 - Create study groups on gender and climate change 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 designed by and for women on gender and climate change that have an impact on the reduction of gender gaps and promote the empowerment of women in their diversity.
- (d) **Production of knowledge, data, and statistics:** to enhance the generation, availability, dissemination of knowledge, analysis and use of data, statistics and indicators on issues related to gender equality and climate change.

There are enormous 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 throughout the world. There are limitations ranging from the lack of global standards to the lack of institutionalization of environmental statistics and, in the case of the link with gender, the lack of a multi-stakeholder dialogue (between MAWs, national statistics offices and sectoral ministries) to establish information needs. For example, one of the main barriers is that environmental information systems and climate transparency frameworks (which must be established according to the Paris Agreement) do not include gender and climate change indicators and do

not have the capacity to conduct subsequent gender analyses. In addition, there is no global guidance on gender, environment, and climate change indicators that would allow for novel analyses correlating the environmental landscape with the social landscape.

In addition, many systems or processes are not designed to capture the complexities of socioeconomic and environmental interactions in the territories; there is a lack of quality data, as they are often not based on standards or may be inaccurate; and in those cases where data are available, they are not used, and their dissemination is limited.

The production, analysis and use of statistics are and should be part of gender equality policies in the countries, and a priority among official producers of statistics in the countries of the region. This, for example, is established in the implementation axis number 9 of the Montevideo Strategy (ECLAC, 2017b)⁷⁸ by establishing that it is key to generate information systems to transform data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into political decision.

Measuring and collecting data from a gender perspective in relation to climate change and sustainable development contributes to the formulation of more solid, evidence-based policies and allows for the evaluation of policy effectiveness, thus facilitating better policy development (GBA, MIF & IDB, n.d.).⁷⁹

Without data disaggregated by sex and with an intersectional approach to climate change, it will be impossible to know how far we have come and how far we are from achieving the objectives proposed in regional and international agreements, conventions, and goals or in actions and policies at the national and subnational levels.

In terms of knowledge generation, the region would benefit from addressing issues such as the care economy and climate change, gender violence and climate change, human mobility linked to environmental factors and their differentiated effects.

For example, the issue of human mobility linked to environmental factors is an increasingly frequent reality in our region. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center's (IDMC) Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021⁸⁰, conflicts and disasters caused 40.5 million new displacements in 149 countries. This is the highest number ever recorded: 30.7 million were associated with disasters, of which 30 million are climate-related, with 32,000 related to drought, 26,000 to extreme weather, 102,000 landslides, 1.2 million to wildfires, and 1.4 million to floods. Some women go across international borders to seek protection and assistance, usually in neighboring countries. As stated by the World Health Organization (WHO), although some cases are well documented, the total number of people displaced across borders by disasters is unknown. The same is true for people displaced within their countries or

⁷⁸ ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) (2017b), *Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda in the Framework of Sustainable Development towards 2030* (LC/CRM.13/5), Santiago.

⁷⁹ Global Banking Alliance for Women (GBA), Data2X & Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (n/d), "The Value of Sex-Disaggregated Data", [online]. Recovered from <https://data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/MeasuringWomensFinInclusion-ValueofSexDisaggData.pdf>.

⁸⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). 2021. Global Report: Internal displacement in a changing climate. Available at: https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/grid2021_idmc.pdf.

across borders in the context of environmental degradation.⁸¹ The lack of agreed criteria to distinguish human mobility makes it difficult to identify people in this situation (Aguilar, in press).⁸²

Some recommendations at a national and regional level are:

At a national level

- Contribute to the production of quality data on gender and climate change through:
 - Elaborate and add gender-relevant questions to surveys related to environment, climate sectors (i.e. energy, residue management, transportation, etc.), and disasters.
 - Consistently record gender and other variables associated with intersectionality and interculturality in administrative data sources related to the environment (e.g., property registries, payment for environmental services, natural resource exploitation concessions, climate insurance, among others).⁸³
 - Promote the development of a monitoring and reporting system for NDC gender commitments.
- Use data to inform gender-sensitive climate change policies, strategies, measures and actions through:
 - Capacity building for those responsible for policy making to understand where to find and how to interpret and use data on the gender-climate change nexus.
 - Promoting dialogues and other forms of collaboration between data production sources (gender, environment or gender-environment) and data users (e.g., environmental policy makers, advocates, journalists, etc.) to facilitate access, interpretation and use of data and promote evidence-based decision making.

At a regional level

- Form a regional working group for the development of a guide for gender-specific indicators related to mitigation and adaptation actions in climate transparency frameworks.
- Leverage the work of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean and other coordination mechanisms at the regional level, including the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, the SDG Gateway,⁸⁴ to identify the needs for generating data, statistics and indicators on issues

⁸¹ Kälin, W. and S. Weerasinghe. 2017. 'Environmental Migrants and Global Governance: Facts, Policies and Practices', in McAuliffe, M. and M. Klein Solomon (Conveners) (2017) *Ideas to Inform International Cooperation on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. IOM: Geneva.

⁸² Aguilar, Lorena (in press), Study on the differentiated impacts of land degradation, desertification and drought on women and men, UNCCD, Germany.

⁸³ Other examples can be found in <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/64/EGM/Seager%20Jexpert%20paperdraftEGMB25EP9.pdf> and the Gender GGEO <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-gender-and-environment-outlook-ggeo>.

⁸⁴ The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the regional office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have developed, together with the agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system in the region and the Development Coordination Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, an online portal constituting the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean [<https://agenda2030lac.org/es>].

related to gender and climate change for monitoring the SDGs at the regional level and for the exchange of knowledge between countries, UN System agencies, and civil society.

- Take advantage of spaces for dialogue and regional agreements such as the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA) and its articulation with the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (RCWC) and other subsidiary bodies of ECLAC that convene high-level authorities of the governments of the region 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 of statistical strengthening for the production of indicators that allow the follow-up of commitments achieved.
- Promote the development of gender-sensitive studies on human mobility and climate change.
- Promote the development of a regional monitoring and evaluation system (based on information from gender responsive monitoring systems at the national level) to follow up on the progress and impacts of gender considerations under the NDCs.

(e) Public and private climate finance flows earmarked and invested in *gender-responsive climate solutions*

The current crisis should be seized not only as an opportunity to rethink the countries' development financing agenda, but also as an occasion to reach a socio-political consensus for the implementation of ambitious reforms in order to embark on a sustainable and equitable reconstruction process. Building a better future means placing equality and environmental sustainability at the center of the recovery phase. In this context, ECLAC's Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, warned "of the need to implement a reform of the international financial architecture that, among other measures, would make it possible to expand financial support to small middle-income countries that are highly indebted and vulnerable to climate change"⁸⁵ taking into special consideration the Caribbean countries which face situations of high vulnerability to climate change and high levels of accumulated debt as a consequence of the disbursements that had to be made to address the impacts of extreme weather events.⁸⁶

Today, for the first time, all major climate finance mechanisms associated with climate change have mandates in the form of gender policies or action plans, which is a significant step forward and serves as a signal for the rest of the global climate finance architecture to follow suit. The incorporation of gender equality principles emphasizes the importance of inclusive and equitable resource allocation, women's participation, and increased access to resources, as these factors are key to effective and efficient implementation, sustainable through time at all levels. However, one of the great challenges is to ensure

⁸⁵ Bárcena, A. (2020). Speech Third Annual Conference of the Global Research Alliance for Sustainable Finance and Investment. Columbia University.

⁸⁶ In this regard at the regional level, in 2015, within the framework of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the UNFCCC, held in Paris in December of that year, ECLAC presented the strategy to reduce the external public debt of Caribbean countries considered Small Island Developing States (SIDS), through the creation of a "regional resilience fund" to finance climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. The Debt Swaps for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative is a central part of this proposal and consists of financing through instruments such as Debt Swaps for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, in exchange for which the beneficiary countries would have to commit to allocate the resources they save on debt service to this Caribbean resilience fund, dedicated to financing climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives and which would be managed by a solid and reliable financial institution. See <https://www.ECLAC.org/es/comunicados/ECLAC-propone-alivio-la-deuda-caribe-anglofono-invertir-lucha-cambio-climatico>, and <https://www.ECLAC.org/es/pressreleases/eclac-presents-debt-alleviation-strategy-based-debt-swap-proposal-high-level-meeting>.

compliance and implement the gender policies of international financial instruments at the national and regional levels related to mitigation and adaptation.

Climate adaptation can bring great benefits to people and the economy. Unfortunately, actions and financial commitments have not matched the scale of the crisis. On the sidelines of UNFCCC COP 26, UNEP launched its new report *The Adaptation Gap Report 2021: The Gathering Storm*. The report concludes that adaptation costs are likely to be at the upper limit of an estimated \$140 to \$300 billion per year by 2030, and \$280 to \$500 billion per year by 2050 for developing countries alone. Climate finance flowing to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation planning and implementation reached \$79.6 billion in 2019. Overall, estimated adaptation costs in developing countries are five to ten times higher than current public adaptation finance flows, and the gap is widening. The report also indicates that less than one-third of the 66 countries surveyed had explicitly funded COVID-19 measures to address climate risks by June 2021.⁸⁷

Notwithstanding the above, financing for climate change adaptation is a real opportunity to promote human rights and gender equality in line with the ambitions of the Paris Agreement (see preambular paragraph 11 of the Paris Agreement). However, without careful consideration, there is also a real risk that these investments will not benefit those who need them most—vulnerable people in communities on the frontline of climate change—or, worse, will exacerbate existing inequalities or generate new ones. Hence the need for adaptation-related finance to be *gender-responsive* where it addresses gender differences and involves the meaningful participation of women and men in all their diversity.

Unfortunately, the architecture of climate finance has not been designed to involve small grassroots organizations. Typically, funds channel resources through “implementing agencies,” mostly large international environmental organizations or UN System Agencies, which then distribute funding to others, and women’s organizations are often at the end of this line.

Given the above and as stated by Williams (2015)⁸⁸ women’s groups will need access to increasing flows of climate finance at global, regional, and national levels; however, given the complex nature of climate change fund instruments and their cumbersome processes, women and communities may have difficulty accessing them, which is why it may be necessary a technical capacitation process to access this type of financing. These funds are oriented in the first instance to large-scale, capital-focused technology projects, which often do not adequately support adaptation strategies that are important to both men and women. Secondly, the application processes for these funds often act as a disincentive and barrier for women and communities to access them.

Some recommendations at regional and national levels to ensure that climate finance flows, both public and private, are targeted and invested in gender-responsive climate solutions are:

At a regional level

- Ensure that post-COVID 19 recovery and reconstruction work⁸⁹ focuses on building resilience through:

⁸⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (2021), *Adaptation Gap Report 2021: The gathering storm - Adapting to climate change in a post-pandemic world*. Nairobi, [online], <https://www.unep.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report-2021>.

⁸⁸ Williams, M. (2015). *Gender and Climate Change Financing: Coming Out of the Margin*. New York: Routledge.

⁸⁹ Based on ECLAC (2021), COVID-19 Special Report No. 10 - Financing for Development in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond [online], https://repositorio.ECLAC.org/bitstream/handle/11362/46710/1/S2100064_es.pdf.

- Lobby multilateral, regional, subregional, and national development banks to play a key role in recovery efforts by increasing capitalization and relaxing lending criteria. To this end, a significant percentage of the loan portfolio should be channeled toward green investments and climate change projects. This involves supporting both subregional and national banks to access low-cost financing, long-term capital and the technical capacity to access funds and design projects.
- Link the green economy with emergency employment programs that promote ecosystem restoration and encourage the use of nature-based solutions (NBS). This can be achieved by the following means: protecting, restoring, or managing natural forests and wetlands in watersheds to preserve a buffer to protect coastal communities from flooding; creating a large-scale program to pay the unemployed or vulnerable communities for restoring landscapes; and urban revegetation, urban agriculture, and nature-based tourism. In the same vein, official development assistance (ODA) flows— which should be provided on the basis of criteria other than per capita GDP— should be allocated for the most part (at least 50% of the total) to the transformation of the productive matrix (renewable energies) and the accumulation of human capital (education).
- Develop and support the implementation of gender equality and women’s empowerment criteria in policies and initiatives related to the green transition in Latin America.
- Prioritize investment in the care economy, recognizing it as a dynamic sector that can generate multiplier effects on well-being, redistribution of time and income, labor participation and growth with sustainability.
- Recognize the knowledge and practices of indigenous, native and Afro-descendant peoples for individual and collective resilience in order to finance their expansion and scaling-up.
- Promoting resilience through initiatives such as the Caribbean Resilience Fund, with the objective of attracting large-scale, low-cost financing for investment in green sectors, reducing debt by swapping debt for climate adaptation, and supporting investment in resilience-building projects.

At a regional and national level

- Promote the development of a set of complementary financing mechanisms, through consultation processes and a programmatic agenda based on seven elements⁹⁰:
 1. Clarifying and explaining the concepts and instruments of climate change financing.
 2. Emphasizing the added value of *gender-responsive* and women’s autonomy outreach. This can occur through an educational process focused on women’s groups, climate change activist groups, women’s machineries, legislators, and institutions in charge of implementing financing initiatives.
 3. A comprehensive, regional assessment and monitoring project that addresses the flows and distribution of climate finance through the various multilateral and bilateral instruments and modalities for their impacts on poor women and men in communities.

⁹⁰ These recommendations are adapted from Williams, M. (2015). *Gender and Climate Change Financing: Coming Out of the Margin*. New York: Routledge.

4. Information and training on techniques and operations to expand knowledge and practices related to project and program proposals for gender-sensitive climate finance in both the public and private sectors.
5. Programs that catalyze and leverage women's organizations, both urban and rural, to implement and manage climate change initiatives at the national and regional levels.
6. Develop specific innovative and transformative projects designed by and for women on gender and climate change that have an impact on the reduction of gender gaps and promote the empowerment of women in their diversity.
7. A participatory research agenda, focused on generating evidence on the impact of climate finance mechanisms on the status of women (e.g., gender audits for financing projects, gender impact assessments and processes toward the development of gender-sensitive climate finance indicators, focusing on both *ex ante* and *ex post* mechanisms).

At a national level

- Guarantee direct access to financial resources:
 - Ensure that the MAW and representatives of women's organizations are part of the decision-making spaces on the prioritization and development of initiatives and projects (e.g., National Climate Change Committee, Ministry of Planning, among others).
 - Design and formalize a system that allows the MAW, in accordance with the framework and scope of its mandates, to participate, review and monitor the different projects that are developed to ensure compliance with the gender equality guidelines and requirements of the financing mechanisms.
 - Incorporate in the project budget resources for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of gender considerations, as well as training and awareness-raising actions on the link between gender and climate change.
 - Provide MAWs with adequate human and financial resources to ensure that climate change policies, programs and projects promote gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the full participation of women in their diversity.

V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Latin America and the Caribbean is highly sensitive –especially the Caribbean and Central America–, to the effects of climate change. In addition, our region continues to be the most unequal region in the world and has been the region whose development has been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 66th session of the CSW is taking place in a context of increased urgency and demands at the global level to face the climate crisis, as well as the loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation and pollution. In Latin America and the Caribbean, these calls to action occur in a context of profound inequalities, where persistent gender inequality has been a structural feature of the region and where environmental activists are seriously threatened in the defense of their territories against the dominant development style based on extractivism and the exploitation of life.

In this context, the impacts of climate change are also heterogeneous. They are related to the structural challenges of gender inequality: socioeconomic inequality and poverty in the context of exclusionary growth; patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns; the sexual division of labor and the unfair social organization of care; and the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere. These challenges exacerbate each other and generate complex socioeconomic, cultural and belief systems that hinder and reduce the scope of policies on gender equality and women's autonomy, including actions against climate change and environmental policies.

Although there is a robust international and regional normative framework on gender equality and women's autonomy in relation to climate change, many efforts to address it are limited to interventions that, in their implementation, have failed to break down unequal power structures or to have a structural impact on closing gender gaps or promoting the enjoyment of women's rights. Thus, gender inequalities continue to hinder sustainable development and manifest themselves in different areas and sectors: initiatives related to adaptation and mitigation associated with climate change are no exception.

Climate action can, therefore, either reinforce, exacerbate or even generate new inequalities, or intentionally aim to overcome them and accelerate progress towards gender equality. As countries and communities examine their policy, physical, economic, and socio-cultural structures in response to climate change, long-standing gender inequalities can be identified and addressed.

Given this reality, Latin America and the Caribbean, as the only region in the world that for more than four decades has promoted a deep, ambitious and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda, and which has the first regional binding agreement on the environment – the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean - has the potential to become a region that transforms and promotes gender equality and women's autonomy in decision-making spaces at the international level and in the adoption of measures and financing linked to the environment, climate change, disaster risk reduction and management and sustainable development.

Likewise, it is essential to advance in the integration of the gender perspective in environmental, climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, initiatives and programs, strengthening the full and effective participation of women in all their diversity, the effective protection of human rights defenders, and the coordinated work between the machineries for the advancement of women and the governing bodies of environmental policies, and between the different levels and powers of the State, in order to promote climate action in line with the obligations related to gender equality.

This reference document and its recommendations, prepared as part of the preparation process for the Sixty-sixth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66) within the framework of the 62nd Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, seeks not only to advance towards the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development in the region, but also to make innovative and transformative contributions from Latin America and the Caribbean to the global arena.