



Egypt's Global Perspective: **Women, Environment, and Climate Change**

March 2022



**JUST ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSITION
FOR WOMEN,
WIN WIN FOR ALL**

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Introduction

Climate change and the degrading environment are impacting everyone and facing all the countries of the world, that are aspiring to realize a just green environmental transition for everyone.

However, global studies confirm that women face environment degradation differently and in compound. This can be due to several reasons; women's unequal access to resources, land, technology, education and literacy, job opportunities, leadership positions, and the different forms of violence against women (VAW).

Women also usually bear a disproportionate burden of caregiving for family members. In addition, as the world is facing the devastating impact of COVID-19 outbreak, women were one of the most affected segments, which exacerbates their situation facing the effects of climate change.

Women are particularly prone to climate change because they are highly dependent in many societies on local natural resources for their livelihood. Accordingly, gender-based differences in time use, access to assets and credit and markets make it harder for women to face environmental degradation.

Moreover, climate change implications and environmental disasters affect women's access to essential reproductive health tools and also to Violence Against Women services essential to deal with. Being the majority of those living globally in poverty, women are disproportionately affected by extreme weather events, loss of agricultural productivity, destruction of life and property and other negative effects, all of which stem from the climate change crisis. Additionally, women are mostly in charge of using and managing household resources in times of environmental disasters.

Such inequalities, not only place women as among the most affected group, but also imply by definition that they are crucial players, agents of change and accelerators in dealing with different aspects of climate change, and in achieving the sustainable development agenda in this context, especially in improving agricultural productivity, resilience, and contributing to food security.

Unfortunately, women are underrepresented on the decision-making processes when it comes to environmental mechanisms.

The nexus between women, environment, and climate change is an important area for policy focus. For effective dealing with climate change, women have to be at the core of environmental governance and policy.

Egypt was announced to Host the COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh November 2022 and a High Committee was formed, headed by H.E. Prime Minister, Dr. Mostafa Madbouly, and with the membership of a group of Ministers – in the context of the Egyptian state’s hosting preparations – and a specific action plan was drawn up as a road map for organizing the preparatory work. In COP27, Egypt is keen to ensure gender sensitive perspective is integrated into response and policies and that women’s voices are considered.

Egypt's Global Perspective: Women, Environment, and Climate Change (WECC) has a two-fold purpose:

- Setting Egypt’s global perspective on the significance of the relation between gender equality and women’s empowerment on one side and climate action on the other side.
- Catalyzing enhancements to existing adaptation, mitigation, and response mechanisms and framework to better adjust to women needs and situation in the just transition, through preparing the ground to further integrate women considerations and leadership in national plans, and strategies related to climate action.

To achieve this purpose, building on previous national and international studies and several discussions with stakeholders’ on their practical experiences, will introduce suggested actions that will further promote gender equality and women’s empowerment perspectives in environmental governance.

Women most affected segments:

There are certain segments of women that are more prone to climate change effects and environmental degradation. Egypt’s global perspective targets those segments that include:

- Elderly women, women at reproductive age, and young women.
- Women with disabilities.
- Rural women.
- Poor women and female heads of households.
- Illiterate women.

- Women in informal employment and those working on small-scale agriculture and fishing industries.
- Women living in informal areas and climate prone areas (e.g., coastal areas).

International Framework

Research has proven that without exerting sincere efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, sustainable development cannot be attained, and action to achieve both needs acceleration. This was reflected in a series of international instruments and events, including:

- The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) (1995) has explicit reference to women active involvement in environmental decision making in “Strategic Objective K”.
- During the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2001, the first decision on the representation and participation of women was adopted.
- The creation of the Global Gender Climate Alliance (GGCA) in 2007.
- In 2008, UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) issued its first Gender Action Plan (GAP).
- A gender balance goal item was on the COP18 of the UNFCCC in 2012, agenda.
- During COP20 of the UNFCCC in 2014, the first Lima Work Program on Gender (LWPG) was adopted to advance gender balance and integrate gender considerations into the work of Parties and the Secretariat in implementing the Convention and the 2015 Paris Agreement so as to achieve gender sensitive climate policy and action, and, in 2019 parties of the UNFCCC agreed on a 5-year enhanced LWPG and its gender action plan.
- The World Leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Goal #5 concerning achieving gender equality and women empowerment has a positive cascading effects on the achievement of other SDGs, including SDG #13 related to taking urgent action to combat climate change and has a gender equality perspective. For instance, target 13.b aims to: “Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management .. including focusing on women”.
- In 2017, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) formed a GAP.
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation #37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change was adopted in 2018.



THE GLOBAL GOALS



BPFA
Strategic
Objective K

1995

UNFCCC/
LIMA LWPG
& Paris
Agreement

2014/2015

UNFCCC/
COP
gender
equality
decisions

2001

UNSDGs
Goals #5 &
#13

2015

Global
Gender
Climate
Alliance

2007

UNCCD
Gender
Action Plan

2017

UNCBD
Gender
Action Plan

2008

CEDAW
General
Recomm.
#37
2018

Areas of Suggested Actions

A just environmental transition anchored on inclusive climate action, will play a strong role in empowering women and achieving gender equality through the promotion of better opportunities in education, skills development, decent work and employment, and social protection, which all in turn spur green growth. The following suggested actions represent the different steps towards a comprehensive vision for capitalizing on women capabilities and knowledge in developing and implementing sound and efficient environmental policies, ensuring equality and sustainability. This vision aspires to crystalize a win win situation for all and further promote gender equality and women's empowerment in climate action. Adopting just transition as a point of departure, the following suggested actions are grouped under seven areas:

1. Promote gender sensitive perspectives within adaptation, mitigation, and responses:

- Incorporating the gender equality and women's empowerment dimensions within relevant strategic national instruments and their reporting (e.g., National Communication Reports/National Determined Contributions (NDCs)/other environment-related and disaster risk reduction instruments).
- Identify and address women-specific impacts of climate change in developing and implementing adaptation initiatives, particularly in areas related to water, food security, agriculture, energy, health, disaster management. Important gender equality and women's empowerment issues associated with climate change adaptation, such as inequalities in access to resources, including credit, extension and training services, and information and technology, should also be taken into consideration.
- Enhance multisectoral (intra-governmental) coordination with regards to gender equality and women's empowerment in the environmental field, in order to establish coherence among relevant institutions.
- Enhance the capacities of National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point(s).
- Upgrading the skills and capacities of women or gender units within competent ministries and authorities.
- Promote the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment models (e.g., Gender Equity Model of the World Bank and Women's Empowerment Principles of the UN Global Compact and UN Women) within the private sector working in the environmental field.

2. Strengthen Women's Voice and their Meaningful Participation in environmental governance:

- Appoint more women in environment-related decision-making structures, and facilitate their representation and participation in designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating relevant policies and strategies.
- Promote the leadership of rural women, and support women leadership in agricultural and natural resource management, and strengthen their livelihood options.
- Upscale capacity development and mentorship programs of women's leadership skills and women's empowerment and gender equality expertise, especially those related to climate change governance.
- Develop a code of conduct for workers in the environmental and agricultural sectors to ensure equality between men and women and protect women from all forms of violence against them in those sectors
- Upscale essential services for protection and elimination of VAW, through the promotion of Women's Complaints Office services and hotlines.

3. Leverage opportunities for women within the just transition to the green economy and green consumption habits and within blue economy in the context of achieving sustainable development:

- Facilitate and ensure women's improved access to and control over: land, financial and productive resources, knowledge and smart technologies (especially renewable energy services).
- Integrate green policies within mega developmental initiatives (e.g., Financial Inclusion for women), including Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs) – green credit lines and banking services for women.
- Provide support to women working in the agricultural and fisheries sectors to utilize eco-friendly and sustainable agriculture approaches, methods, and services (including extension).
- Increase investments specially in small scale fisheries, and acknowledge upscale economic remuneration for women in the blue economy in the context of achieving sustainable development, including adequate access to occupational health and safety tools and measures.
- Promote women and girls improved participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields of education (including climate science) to leverage women's talents and innovations, and develop and upscale women digital skill, to narrow down gender digital divide.

- Train women on skills related to ecologically–friendly job fields (e.g., eco–tourism job opportunities), and promote jobs opportunities for women in the following economic sectors:

- Eco–Tourism.
- Circular Economy field.
- Agriculture and Food Security (including agroecology).
- Fisheries, Water and Coastal Resources Management (the coastal economy sectors).
- Waste Management.

- Energy.
- Construction.
- Research and Education, Innovation and Technology.
- Local Development.
- Petrochemical Industry.
- Forestry (e.g., oils).
- Transport.

- Support women work in livestock, bio–products, recycling, circular economy, composting (enhancing job opportunities, adopting agro–economic systems, protecting biodiversity, and minimizing waste), and mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment practices in related economic value chains.
- Protect women’s existing inheritance rights and land ownership.
- Provide preferential access for women–led business through the green public procurement promotion.
- Promote weather–indexed insurance and seed fairs, to enhance farmers’ adaptive capacities and resilience and promote greater agricultural experimentation, crop diversity, and sharing information.
- Develop and promote transfer of new technologies to better enhanced environmental policies and capacity building outcomes.

4. Tackle differential health and social implications of environmental issues on women:

- Enhance access of women to family planning services and strengthen healthcare systems and services for women.
- Upscale environmentally sustainable urban development and green decent housing programs, and provide educational and capacity building programs for women and families within wider environmental programs, and ensure that the design of such programs reflect women needs.
- Provide psychological and mental health services to women living in climate change prone areas.
- Provide enhanced social protection programs (e.g., cash transfer, asset transfer, immediate increased food commodities, subsidized food on discount to meet basic needs) to women who are most affected by climate change (including women farmers and female heads of households) and identify opportunities for social protection to enhance adaptation, and for social protection programs to be more climate–resilient.

5. Promote Educational and Behavioral Change on women and climate change:

- Upscale capacity building and educational programs for women with a focus on rural women leaders and women facilitators (agents of change on local level) who are attached to climate change and environmental disasters and hazards to increase women's coping skills and capacities, including agricultural methods for sustainable agri-production and natural resources management, tapping on local radio and television as prominent sources of information, especially for women living in rural areas and coastal areas.
- Develop school education programs that target climate change and environmental degradation and ensure that it addresses gender equality and women's leadership and combat stereotypes against women's role in dealing with environmental degradation.
- Leverage global and local awareness campaigns (e.g., the 17 Days of Activism for the Empowerment of Rural Women Leaders and their Communities) and design campaigns to tackle: a) stereotypes in job market and fields of education for men and women, b) managing resources, waste management and sorting, using green energy alternatives, and adopting green and reasonable consumption habits, c) impact of climate change on women's health and prevention and protection against climate related diseases especially mental diseases.
- Showcase women-led green initiatives and women's leadership in environmental mechanisms through adopting and highlighting Climate Change Women Champions as role models to change stereotypes on women's role in this sector. This can be through developing incentive tools (e.g., women climate champions competition).

6. Apply women-specific perspectives in financing for climate action

- Integrate principles of gender equality and women's empowerment into climate action financing.
- Develop women-sensitive criteria for climate change financing mechanisms supporting adaptation, mitigation, capacity-building and technological cooperation as appropriate.
- Include women's needs related to the environment within Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) efforts.

7. Promote knowledge, data generation and analysis on women and climate change:

- Support the relevant data collection and monitoring mechanisms, and include indicators to monitor and track progress on gender equality and women's empowerment targets (e.g., disaggregated data by sex, age, and disability on deaths and injuries from natural disasters/land ownership), and develop a specific criterion for disaggregated data by sex, age and disability to be used in designing climate projects/programs.
- Continue to collect data to support women's employment in green sectors and business (e.g., green energy and green construction) and women's education in related fields of study (e.g., STEM – climate science), paving the way for sound and informed gender analysis and gender impact assessments of climate policies.
- Build on generated knowledge about women in coastal areas to be able to facilitate and understand their engagement in adaptation- mitigation – response efforts.
- Integrate disaggregated data by sex, disability and age within the Climate Change Interactive Vulnerability Maps.
- Improve and invest in statistical capacities in areas of disaggregated data by sex, and specially coordination capacities in relevant institutions.

Actors and Partners

- Government and public entities, with concrete commitment to implement gender-sensitive just transition.
- Academia, delivering a substantive contribution to knowledge generation and innovation.
- Multilateral and regional partnerships in support of just transition through technical assistance and/or funding.
- Private sector including banking sector, implementing measures for just transition for women.
- Civil society organizations contributing to a just environmental transition for women.