



# RESOURCE GUIDE ON GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE



United Nations Development Programme



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# FOREWORD

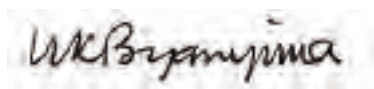
Climate change is the defining human development issue of our generation. The 2007 Human Development report acknowledges that climate change threatens to erode human freedoms and limit choice and the report further underscores that gender inequality intersects with climate risks and vulnerabilities. Poor women's limited access to resources, restricted rights, limited mobility and muted voice in shaping decisions make them highly vulnerable to climate change. The nature of that vulnerability varies widely, cautioning against generalization but climate change will magnify existing patterns of inequality, including gender inequality.

In the agricultural sector, rural women in developing countries are the primary producers of staple food, a sector that is highly exposed to the risks that come with drought and uncertain rainfall. In many countries, climate change means that women and young girls have to walk further to collect water, especially in the dry season. Women in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, spend 40 billion hours per year collecting water – equivalent to a year's worth of labor by the entire workforce in France; moreover, women can be expected to contribute much of the unpaid labor that will go into coping with climate risks through soil and water conservation, the building of anti-flood embankments, and increased off-farm employment.

While underscoring the vulnerability of poor women to climate change, it should also be acknowledged that women play an important role in supporting households and communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Across the developing world, women's leadership in natural resource management is well recognized. For centuries, women have passed on their skills in water management, forest management and the management of biodiversity, among others. Through these experiences, women have acquired valuable knowledge that will allow them to contribute positively to the identification of appropriate adaptation and mitigation techniques, if only they are given the opportunity.

Moving forward, UNDP will continue to support gender equality and women's empowerment: one important aspect of this work will be facilitating women's equal participation in the ongoing climate change negotiations process, to ensure that their needs, perspectives, and expertise are equally taken into account. UNDP will also work to orient policymakers and government delegates on the gendered aspects of climate change, while supporting the efforts of local people on the ground.

This resource guide aims to inform practitioners and policy makers of the linkages between gender equality and climate change and their importance in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It makes the case for why it is necessary to include women's voices, needs and expertise in climate change policy and programming, and demonstrates how women's contributions can strengthen the effectiveness of climate change measures. As the world moves towards a new global agreement on climate change, it is critical that women contribute to the effort and that their perspectives are equally represented in the debate.



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