



GENDER EQUALITY & CLIMATE CHANGE

Message from the Editor

Climate change has sparked a heated debate in the past decade. Its impact is taking a heavy toll on economies and livelihoods. Although not initially evident, gender inequality and the climate crisis are one of today's greatest challenges.

This edition of 'Equality Matters' explores the relationship between gender equality and climate change, how climate change impacts women and girls, why gender equality is key to climate action, and why taking an intersectional approach is important. It also provides information on key concepts and recommendations.

This newsletter delves into gender equality and climate change at national, EU, and international levels.

We augur that you find this information useful!



What is Climate Change?

Climate Change can be defined as “a statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer).” [1]

Humans are contributing to global warming through various actions. For example, they are burning fossil fuels and cutting down forests. [2] “This adds enormous amounts of greenhouse gases to those naturally occurring in the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse effect and global warming.” [3]

Climate Change affects women and men differently.



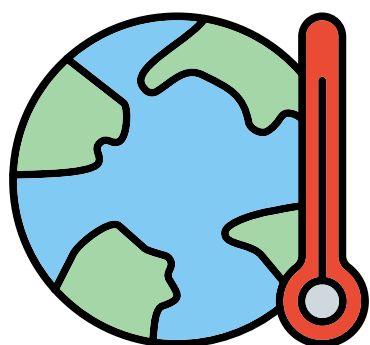
Humans are contributing to global warming through various actions



Gender Equality in Climate Change

Economic disparities, as a consequence of climate change, lead to differences in the capacity to cope with, and to mitigate, climate change.

Women's salaries and assets are lower. Thus, women are disadvantaged if expensive adaptation and mitigation measures are required. In fact, men are more likely to instal equipment at home to control and reduce energy consumption, such as smart meters. [4] In addition, *“Due to their often higher economic status, but also to their behavioural preferences, men are more likely to use private cars rather than public transport.”* [5]



The **health impacts** of climate change can differ between women and men for biological and social reasons.

For example, *“the majority of European studies have shown that women are more at risk, in both relative and absolute terms, of dying in heatwaves”.* [6]

The **consumption patterns** of women and men are different, resulting in more or less energy-intense lifestyles, and in differentiated attitudes/perceptions, based on different values.

For example, women are more likely to consider the carbon footprint of their food purchases and adapt their shopping accordingly. [7]



Facts [8]



Women (80%) are more likely than **men (76%)** to recognise that climate change is a very serious problem.

Women (66%) are more likely than **men (62%)** to have taken action to fight climate change.

Women are more likely to take actions related to the household, in the domestic sphere, that have an impact on climate change:

Actions related to the household	Women	Men
buying and eating less meat	37%	26%
buying and eating more organic food	36%	29%
reducing waste	78%	72%
cutting down the consumption of disposable items	64%	55%

Climate change afflicts **women and girls** more than **men and boys**.

Five ways climate change afflicts women and girls globally [9]

Climate change can:

1...lead to more gender-based violence

UN Environment estimates that **80%** of persons displaced by climate change are women, and when women are displaced they are at a greater risk of violence [10];

During extended periods of drought, women and girls make longer journeys to obtain food or water, which makes them **vulnerable to sexual assault**;

Some farmers, landowners or food vendors at times **insist on trading sex with women** in exchange for rent or food;

Attempts by women to negotiate providing labour in exchange for food are sometimes rejected, and these **men with power insist on sex**. [11]



2...contribute to an increase in child marriages

Weather extremes exacerbate poverty and destroy livelihoods.

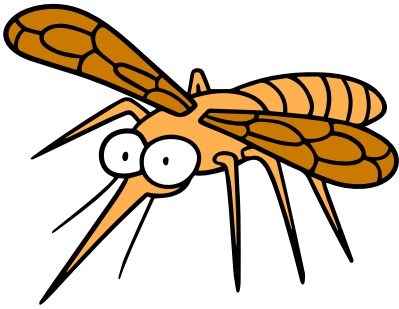
This may push families **“to marry off young daughters so there’s one less mouth to feed, in exchange for a bride price or because they believe they are improving a girl’s chances at a future.”** [12]

3...increase stillbirths

Research shows a connection between extreme heat and negative birth outcomes – *“a 1-degree Celsius increase during the week preceding delivery was associated with 6 per cent increase in risk during the warm season (May–September) that translates to about four additional stillbirths per 10,000 births.”* [13]



4....worsen other maternal and neonatal outcomes



Vector-borne illnesses such as dengue fever and malaria have been linked to premature birth, anaemia and miscarriage.

High temperatures “are lengthening the seasons when mosquitoes, which spread these illnesses, are active, and wet environments encourage their breeding.” [14]

5....disrupt sexual and reproductive health and limit access to contraception

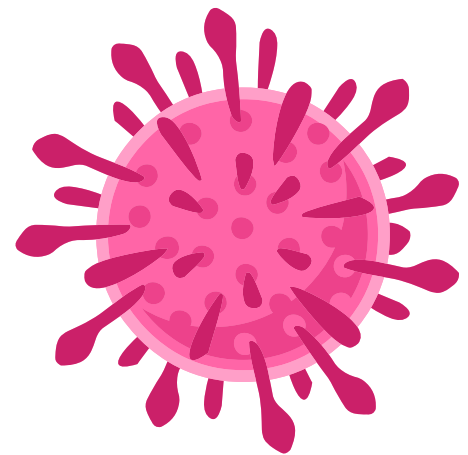
Sexual and reproductive health and rights services may be among the first to be curtailed in emergencies due to climate change.

As the **COVID-19 pandemic** has shown, emergencies redirect health-care resources toward fighting the latest threat and away from services considered less essential.

But even if **sexual and reproductive health and rights services** continue, “displaced women and girls often lose access to them, which can result in more unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.” [15]

Moreover, the **protection and health needs** of women and girls are often **overlooked in natural disasters**.

For example, in the wake of Cyclone Eloise in January 2021, “more than 21,570 of those women who require **contraceptives**” faced risks of unintended or unwanted pregnancies as they were unable to access family planning. [16]



Women in decision-making sectors related to climate

Even though women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men, women are underrepresented in the **decision-making sectors related to climate**.

Women are under-represented among the highest-ranking civil servants related to the environment and climate change.

Since women and men have different needs, priorities, and possibilities of mitigating the effects of climate change, it is **critical to** have both women and men in decision-making positions.



Percentage of women dealing with environment and climate change (2021)

	EU 28	MT
Members of the government or political executive [17]	32.3	33.3
Senior administrators [18]	42.8	38.8

Having both men and women engaged in decision-making positions broadens the perspectives and increases innovation and creativity.

In this context, **gender mainstreaming** is vital to ensure that legislative work and policymaking respond more effectively to the needs of all citizens.

Examples of gender mainstreaming actions



- Incorporating a **gender perspective** into national policies/actions/plans: systematic gender analysis; the collection and utilisation of sex-disaggregated data; the establishment of gender-sensitive indicators; and the development of practical tools.
- Ensuring the **active participation of women** in the development of funding criteria and the allocation of resources for climate change initiatives.

Budgets need to be gender analysed to ensure gender-sensitive investments in programmes for adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building.

- Ensuring that technological developments consider the priorities/needs/roles of women, as well as their knowledge/expertise.

Women's involvement, at all levels, in the development of new technologies can ensure that they are user-friendly, affordable, effective and sustainable.

Gender equality from an intersectional perspective

The interactions and social relations between women and men are not sufficiently analysed since most data on gender is concentrated on gender differentials.

Hence, attention must be paid to differences within each gender. It is important **to take intersectionality into account**, *“which means linking ‘gender’ to other influencing factors, such as social class, income, education, living and working conditions, and cultural and ethnic background.”* [19]

Women's and girls' participation in the fight against climate change should be a top priority. In fact, the role of young women has been remarkable in leading the push for change.



Greta Thunberg

- **Greta Thunberg** became known when she was 15 years old after challenging world leaders to take action for climate change mitigation. Her small campaign had a global effect, inspiring other young people worldwide to organise their protests.
- By December 2018, **more than 20,000 students** from the UK to Japan **joined her campaign**.
- In 2019, Thunberg received the first of three Nobel Peace Prize nominations for climate activism. [20]
- **Women** do not only play a crucial role in climate change, but they need to be **at the heart of climate action**.
- In addition, **mainstreaming gender in climate action** is necessary for sustainable impact.



Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow

Towards implementing **Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Change** - key concepts and recommendations: [21] [22]



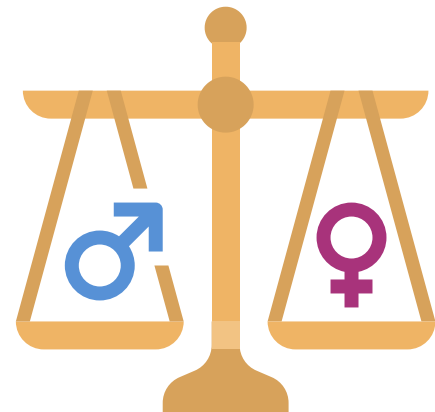
- **Integrate** the gender perspectives into mitigation and adaptation actions
- **Ensure** that adaptive actions aim to build up the asset base of women
- **Ensure** mitigation and adaptation efforts also address sources of gender-based vulnerability, gender inequality and poverty
- **Conduct** an in-depth and evidence-based analysis of women's and men's role in sectors impacted by, and their strategies for coping with, climate change
- **Further research** on how climate change impacts both women and men, and on the different ways that women and men can contribute to climate change
- **Identify** the gaps in the existing body of research and develop strategies for integrating gender research into policy making processes
- **Raise awareness** on the relevance of gender issues vis-à-vis climate change
- **A profound and systemic change** involving not only gender mainstreaming but also a transformation of gender relations and societal structures
- **Involve** national legislative bodies, local and regional governments, the private commercial sector, civil society organisations or research and academic institutions, in climate change policies and their implementation.

Moreover, the **Opinion on the gender equality dimensions of climate change** [23], published in April 2022 by the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, recommends that:

- The EU and its Member States **enhance gender mainstreaming** by systematically including a gender equality perspective in all climate policies and strategies, as well as climate-related policies (such as energy, transport, agriculture, production, household consumption, technological innovation and research, etc) at all stages from definition to implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- The EU **adopt a structured, resourced, and systematic long-term approach** to gender mainstreaming in climate change, based on gender analysis, data and research:



- Member States **strengthen coordination and collaboration** between their gender equality ministry and/or institutions and their ministries in charge of climate change and related sectoral policies, notably through mutual learning and exchange and networking in climate-related sectors, along with focal points;



- The EU **provides regular training** to and consultation between EU gender and climate focal points;
- The EU and its Member States **promote greater representation of women** in climate decision-making, negotiations and leadership, aiming for gender parity, including through the implementation of temporary special measures such as quotas;
- The EU and its Member States **strengthen gender-transformative** climate funding and expand access to climate finance for women and women's climate resilient enterprises;
- The EU and its Member States **develop and finance strategic and long-term initiatives** to tackle discriminatory gender norms, stereotypes and barriers around women's and girls' leadership, for instance showcasing women's input into the green transition, promoting women role models in STEM or challenging cultural norms.

Gender equality and climate change are being given increased prominence on the **international, EU, and national agendas** due to their impact and consequences on the daily lives of men and women in society.

Global Context

Understanding and effectively taking the gendered dimension of climate change into account is key for achieving sustainable development and the **United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

In 2021, the **26th UN Climate Change Conference**, more commonly referred to as **COP26**, was held at the SEC Centre in Glasgow, Scotland, between the 31st October and 12th November 2021.

This Conference was an opportunity for different stakeholders to discuss **climate action** including the **disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls**.

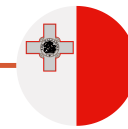


Maltese Context

In Malta, in 2010, **Prof. Simone Borg** was appointed **Malta's Ambassador for Climate Action**.

Prof. Simone Borg chairs the **Climate Action Board**, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of climate action targets within the public sector and promoting initiatives within the private sector in Malta.

Moreover, both female and male social partners work closely with the Government and Malta's Ambassador for Climate Action in stakeholder dialogue meetings to **implement climate action**.



EU Context

In addition to the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 goals, at the European level, the European Commission is committed to include a **gender perspective** in all its major initiatives responding to European challenges such as climate change.

The European Parliament has also produced a number of **resolutions** that address **climate change from a gender perspective**. For instance, the European Parliament Resolution of 16 January 2018 on **women, gender equality and climate justice** addresses the connections between **gender and climate change**. [24]

In January 2022, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) "*adopted a strongly worded opinion on **Gender equality and Climate change: towards mainstreaming the gender perspective in the European Green Deal***" that calls for gender equality to be integrated into the European Green Deal and EU climate policies.



The NCPE's work

The **NCPE** works to **promote equality** in the areas covered by its remit by investigating complaints, creating awareness-raising campaigns, delivering training sessions to different stakeholders, and providing input to policies and legislation.

Indeed, the **NCPE** gave its contribution to the Opinion on the Gender Equality Dimensions of Climate Change of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Once adopted, the **NCPE** disseminated the Opinion to relevant stakeholders to urge the promotion of the implementation of respective measures at national level.

Contact the NCPE



equality@gov.mt



www.ncpe.gov.mt



+356 2276 8200



Gattard House National Road
Blata l-Bajda HMR 9010



NCPE



References

- [1] <https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-and-Climate-Change-Report.pdf>
- [2] https://ec.europa.eu/clima/climate-change/causes-climate-change_en#:~:text=Humans%20are%20increasingly%20influencing%20the,greenhouse%20effect%20and%20global%20warming.
- [3] Ibid
- [4] Eurobarometer 513 – Climate Change – July 2021
- [5] <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/c7cbe91b-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/c7cbe91b-en#section-d1e18683>
- [6] https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/144781/9789241508186_eng.pdf
- [7] Eurobarometer 513 – Climate Change – July 2021
- [8] Ibid
- [9] <https://www.unfpa.org/news/five-ways-climate-change-hurts-women-and-girls>
- [10] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/climate-change-exacerbates-violence-against-women-and-girls#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%2080,High%20Commissioner%20for%20Human%20Rights.>
- [11] <https://www.undp.org/blog/why-climate-change-fuels-violence-against-women>
- [12] <https://www.unfpa.org/news/five-ways-climate-change-hurts-women-and-girls>
- [13] Ibid
- [14] Ibid
- [15] <https://www.unfpa.org/news/five-ways-climate-change-hurts-women-and-girls>
- [16] https://mozambique.unfpa.org/en/news/role-family-planning-humanitarian-contexts-cyclone-eloise?_ga=2.200081582.1684817976.1649402297-1800959587.1642503110
- [17] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_env_nat__wmid_env_natmin_envmin/datatable
- [18] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_env_nat__wmid_env_natmin_envadm/datatable
- [19] Ibid
- [20] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49918719>
- [21] <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNDP%20Linkages%20Gender%20and%20CC%20Policy%20Brief%201-WEB.pdf>
- [22] <https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-and-Climate-Change-Report.pdf>
- [23] https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/opinion_gender_equality_climate_change_2022_en.pdf
- [24] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0005_EN.pdf