

UNPACKING CLIMATE INSIGHTS FROM WD2023 TO DRIVE COP28 ACTION

Girls and women suffer the most from the climate crisis despite having contributed the least.

At the Women Deliver 2023 Conference (WD2023), the intersection of girls and women and the climate crisis was a cross-cutting issue recognized as one of the biggest challenges to gender equality globally. Many critical topics and calls-to-action were raised, and we have identified **three main themes:**



Bodily autonomy is a climate justice issue



Girls, women, and youth are key to driving climate justice



We need feminist systems change

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1 Bodily Autonomy Is a Climate Justice Issue

Bodily autonomy is about agency and the right to make decisions about one's body and one's life. It is fundamental to gender equality and to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). But climate change directly and indirectly impacts bodily autonomy, SRHR, and gender equality, due to existing inequalities and gender roles. Climate-induced shocks and stresses disrupt access to SRH services and sometimes completely end them. Related negative coping strategies by households and communities can increase girls' care burden, result in child marriage, pulling girls out of school and contribute to gender-based violence. Climate and SRHR should be addressed in tandem through both climate and health policies.

In addition, the lack of bodily autonomy impacts girls and women's resilience in the face of climate shocks and stresses and contributes to a negative cycle of reduced well-being. To achieve justice in the face of the crises, it is essential to support and uphold bodily autonomy. Gender-transformative and gender-responsive policies and country adaptation plans are essential, including the fulfillment of SRHR and ensuring that comprehensive SRHR services are accessible and high-quality. This in turn supports resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of climate change.

"The impact of others' decisions had a negative effect on indigenous communities: the water is drying, years of drought, ice melting in the mountains. It affects what happens in the life and bodies of women and girls."

Tarcila Rivera Zea, CHIRAPAQ,
Climate Pre-Conference

"Severe drought, flooding, unseasonal rain in some parts, people are internally displaced, and in these camps, there is GBV, poor access to health and education, some children, especially girls are exposed to child labor and expected to bring food to the family and drop out of school."

Participant from Ethiopia,
Climate Impact on Adolescents
Concurrent Session

"Women did not know that they had rights regarding the environment and land. With the effects of climate change, women have to travel long distances to secure food, health, and education in Senegal. Women do it all and men only take the money to marry someone else. Women are in charge of the household but are particularly vulnerable. What women live in Senegal is particularly difficult, with the effects of climate change and socio-economic instability."

Geneviève Manta,
National Federation of Rural Women of Senegal / Stand for her Land Campaign,
Climate Pre-Conference



2 Girls, Women, and Youth Are Key to Driving Climate Justice

They are powerful leaders, solution designers, and change makers for climate adaptation and mitigation, yet they are too often left out of decision-making spaces. Girls and women, especially from marginalized and frontline groups, are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, despite having contributed the least to the climate crisis. Young people of today will be faced with unprecedented climate effects and disasters throughout their lifetime, and adolescent girls, because of their age, gender, and other identities, are even further threatened by the crisis. They should not bear the burden of solving the climate crisis, but their co-leadership should be prioritized in every climate commitment and investment, whether related to land, water, energy, just transition, health, or anything else.



"The underrepresentation of women is rooted in patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial systems that hinder their involvement, the same systems that created the climate crisis. Our work should focus on dismantling these structures and creating inclusive spaces for women's leadership to thrive. Women's participation in climate action is a matter of justice. We do not advocate for women's engagement because it makes economic sense or because it aligns with political correctness. We emphasize women's participation because it is fundamental to human rights and a dignified life. It is, indeed, a matter of justice."

Mwanahamisi Singano,
WEDO, Climate Plenary

It's essential to create environments that naturally bring together people of different age groups within climate spaces and to ensure girls have a significant presence in decision-making spaces. There must also be adequate funding for girls-led movements that prioritize girls' agendas.

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"Let's ensure that the voices of women and girls are not just demanding space but securing their rightful, active roles and respected positions as critical stakeholders in driving action, both nationally and internationally."

Ineza Umuhoza Grace,
L&D Coalition, Climate Plenary

Despite the distinct gendered effects of climate change on adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), there is a noticeable lack of knowledge about the impact of climate change on this demographic. In a 2023 digital climate survey conducted in Kenya, Botswana, and Zambia, a notable percentage of AGYW revealed limited to no knowledge about climate change, emphasizing the urgency of improved climate education.

Governments must prioritize investing in girls' education to empower them for climate action.

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3 We Need Feminist Systems Change

The climate crisis is not an isolated issue; it is intertwined with global systems of power and oppression that transcend national borders. This stems from historical practices of colonial resource extraction and capitalist industrial production, which in turn, are molded and justified by a patriarchal framework of control and exploitation. A social-justice-framework and a human rights-based feminist approach to climate is crucial to achieving climate justice. It also entails recognizing historical responsibilities and the ecological debt of affluent nations through financing, including loss and damage financing, while prioritizing historically marginalized communities and centering indigenous and local knowledge and practice.

Sustainability without a human rights approach does not work. We need financial debt payoff for climate loss and damage.

Youth for our Planet Youth Zone
Consultation for COP28

"We know the failures of adaptation finance. They are figuring it out as we speak. There is work to be done in understanding the gender dynamics of loss and damage. We need to center in colonialism and slavery and understand what it did to our communities even to understand our current realities and what they mean in the context of affected small island states."

Ayesha Constable,
Young People for Action on Climate Change,
Climate Pre-Conference

"We face a system designed to maintain the status quo, so how do we develop a blueprint for systems change? We must challenge the existing system and build a new framework that starts at the community level and expands to shape national norms. This includes recognizing that climate change is a direct consequence of capitalism."

Jacqueline Patterson,
The Chisholm Legacy Project,
Climate Pre-Conference

"We are in a resistance struggle. We need to work together, or we won't make it. We fought for 30 years to get loss and damage into the COP document and there is still discussion on this. The system is working as it is supposed to work - extracting from those it was supposed to work with."

Noelene Nabulivou,
DIVA for Equality, Climate Pre-Conference

To bring transformational change, financial support needs to go to grass-roots organizations and focus on movement building. This includes providing resources to protect activists, especially those facing threats from extractive industries, to ensure their ongoing advocacy. Additionally, addressing debt injustice remains a critical concern, as many low- and middle-income countries are still burdened with high-interest loans instead of receiving grants.

These issues are interconnected and necessitate comprehensive action.

Climate Pre-Conference

Key Climate Moments at WD2023

- Plenary featuring frontline activists and the launch of Project Dandelion, a new women-led global climate justice campaign.
- More than 150 advocates attended the Gender and the Climate Crisis Pre-Conference.
- More than 15 climate-related concurrent sessions and side events took place.
- Climate was a major theme throughout the youth zone and the youth and Girls Deliver Pre-Conferences.

Calls to Action

Take action before, during, and after COP 28 in person and online.

Push for inclusion:



Make your voice heard in social media, COP28 side events, and statements to say that girls, women, and youth in all their diversity must be equitably, systematically, and meaningfully included as co-creators, co-designers, and co-leaders in climate decision-making processes and spaces, at all levels. Demand that decision-makers allocate adequate funding for the participation of girls and women and to resource grassroots movements led by them.

Amplify the importance of SRHR:



Contact your ministry and demand that your government recognize and address the links between bodily autonomy, SRHR, and climate change. Encourage them to speak up at the health segment of the World Climate Action Summit on December 2nd and during Health Day on December 3rd 2023. Get involved in preparations for your country's climate policies, such as National Adaptation Plans or Nationally Determined Contributions. See if they already are addressing gender or SRHR.

Hold leaders accountable:

Demand accountability from global leaders and United Nations' institutions like the UNFCCC to ensure real funding towards loss and damage and an independent financing facility. It's time for reparations from wealthy nations that address the ecological debt and support those who have borne the brunt of climate change.



Engage in a group to drive collective action:

Check out these groups and coalitions that are active at COP28 and working to advance gender equality, feminist climate justice, and SRHR in the context of climate change.

- [SRHR and Climate Justice Coalition](#)
- [The Women and Gender Constituency](#)
- [Project Dandelion](#)

