



TECHNICAL NOTE NO. RTB-002-UK

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United Nations Development Programme – UNDP  
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4. This publication was developed with the support of the "Macaozinho" chatbot. Artificial intelligence was used to draft the initial text and assist with research. The authors reviewed, edited, and verified the accuracy of all AI-generated content.

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UNDP is the United Nations' lead organisation in the fight to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with a broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, it supports nations in developing integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet.

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The *Route to Belém* platform is an initiative under the UNDP programme "Support to COP30" (BRA/24/007), which combines technical expertise with new technologies and digital environments to help make COP30 in Belém, Brazil, the turning point needed to address global climate change. This will be achieved through two strategies. The first draws on scientific studies to strengthen discussions among COP negotiators. The second uses digital tools, such as a smart scheduling application, metaverse platforms, and a virtual assistant (chatbot), to engage society, the private sector, and academia in the debates, enabling participation from both those in Belém and in other locations.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations, including UNDP, or its Member States.

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### ABSTRACT

Gender has gained increasing recognition in climate negotiations, particularly within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. This Technical Note examines the integration of gender perspectives in global climate governance, highlighting key institutional milestones such as the Lima Work Programme on Gender (2014) and the Gender Action Plan (GAP, 2017), which promote gender-responsive climate policies, equitable participation, and women's leadership. Despite progress—including improved representation in UNFCCC delegations and gender-sensitive financing mechanisms—challenges persist, such as insufficient funding, data gaps, and structural barriers. The Note also explores Brazil's efforts to mainstream gender in national climate policies, emphasizing initiatives in agriculture, energy, and traditional communities, while identifying remaining obstacles.

**Keywords:** Gender, Climate Change, UNFCCC, Gender Action Plan, Climate Policy, Brazil.

**JEL classification:** Q54, J16, O54.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender has taken on a significant role in global discussions, particularly regarding issues such as climate change, sustainable development, and human rights. International organisations, including the United Nations, have emphasised the need to integrate gender perspectives into public policies, recognising that women and gender minorities face disproportionate impacts resulting from environmental, economic, and social crises.

This approach aims not only to address historical inequalities but also to enhance the effectiveness of solutions, as equitable participation strengthens resilience and innovation..

The gender agenda has influenced debates on the economy, health, and global security, with specific targets outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). The cross-cutting nature of gender demonstrates that gender equality is not only a matter of rights but also a crucial pillar for tackling the complex challenges of the 21st century.

Climate change has profound and uneven effects on different social groups, disproportionately affecting women, especially in developing countries and vulnerable communities.

This increased vulnerability stems from historical and structural gender inequalities that limit women's access to productive resources, education, political participation, and fundamental rights. In many contexts, women bear primary responsibility for food production, water and energy collection, and family care: activities that become even more challenging in the face of extreme climate events such as droughts, floods, and storms.

Food and water insecurity, exacerbated by climate change, increases women's workload and can undermine their physical and mental health. Furthermore, environmental crises often lead to forced displacement, exposing women and girls to heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and abuse. Women's health is also disproportionately impacted, with increases in infectious diseases, pregnancy complications, and barriers to accessing healthcare services during emergencies.

In terms of education, girls are more likely to leave school to assist in domestic chores or to seek scarce resources, perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion. In the labour market, women predominate in sectors highly vulnerable to climate change, such as subsistence agriculture, fisheries, and small local economies, which might lead to loss of income and opportunities.

Despite these vulnerabilities, women play a central role as agents of resilience and transformation. They lead initiatives of adaptation, environmental conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources, contributing traditional knowledge and innovative solutions to address climate challenges. Recognising and strengthening women's leadership in climate change responses is essential to promoting social justice, gender equality, and building more resilient and sustainable societies.

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These points have been practically reflected in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. The issue of gender in climate negotiations encompasses discussions and proposals to ensure equality, participation, and empowerment of women, recognising both their vulnerability and their leadership potential for more equitable and efficient climate action. Persistent challenges such as political underrepresentation, structural violence, and data gaps remain, requiring coordinated efforts among governments, civil society, and multilateral organisations.

## 2. HOW THE ISSUE HAS BEEN APPROACHED

First, the importance of recognising gender has been acknowledged. As a result of negotiations, it is recognised that women, girls, and other gender groups are disproportionately affected by the impacts of global climate change, especially in the most vulnerable countries and communities. Full, equal, and meaningful participation of women at all stages of climate policies and actions is considered essential to achieving more effective and equitable outcomes.

Recognising this unique vulnerability is a key starting point. Women and girls are more severely affected by the impacts of climate change, particularly in contexts of poverty and inequality.

Second, women's participation and leadership must be actively promoted to ensure their full, equal, and meaningful involvement during all stages of climate negotiations, policy formulation, and implementation.

Third, among the key institutional milestones are the establishment of the Lima Work Programme on Gender and the Gender Action Plan (GAP), which set out guidelines, priorities, and activities to integrate gender across all areas of the UNFCCC.

Fourth, important efforts have been made to integrate gender into policies and financing, emphasising the need to include gender considerations in national plans, climate projects, and financing mechanisms, and to facilitate access to resources for women and women-led grassroots organisations.

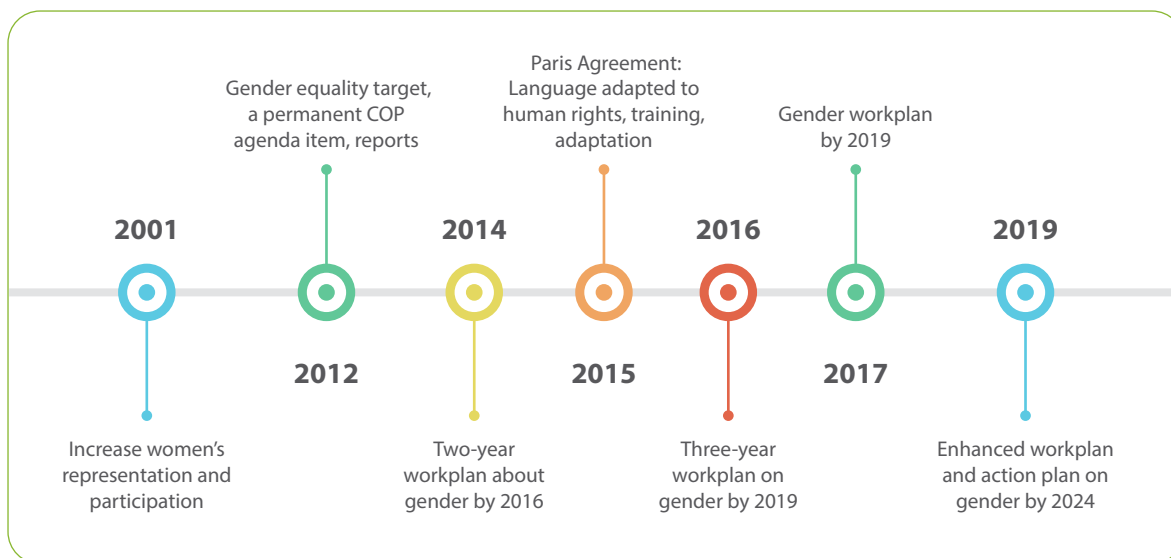
Fifth, capacity-building and skills development through training, exchange of experiences, and capacity enhancement for women delegates and leaders.

Sixth, monitoring and evaluation, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis in climate policy reports and assessments.

Despite these initiatives, challenges remain in mobilising additional resources, strengthening practical implementation, and increasing women's representation in decision-making positions.

The UNFCCC, in turn, has made progress in bringing gender into its policy and action agenda, thereby recognising that climate change affects men and women in distinct ways, particularly in contexts of social vulnerability.

Figure 1. Gender timeline in the UNFCCC



Fonte: UNFCCC (2021, 2).

These broader advances can be outlined in the following dimensions:

1. **Institutional framework and guidelines:** The Gender Action Plan (GAP 2017), adopted at COP23, aims to integrate gender equality into climate action, with targets that include: (i) promoting gender-balanced participation in delegations and negotiations; (ii) ensuring that climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), address gender considerations; and (iii) strengthening women's capacity in adaptation and mitigation. The GAP was renewed and expanded at COP25 (2019) and COP28 (2023), with more robust targets through 2028, including dedicated financing for projects with a gender focus.
2. **Inclusion in climate negotiations:** Several COP decisions have underscored the need for gender-sensitive approaches, including COP20 (2014, Lima) and COP21 (2015, Paris), which highlighted women's empowerment in the Paris Agreement (Article 7.5). The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC), the official UNFCCC group advocating for inclusive policies and monitoring the implementation of commitments, was established in 2009 as a coalition of civil society organisations focused on women's rights and gender equality within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The WGC was formally recognised as an official observer by the UNFCCC Secretariat in 2011.
3. **Climate financing and gender:** Mechanisms such as the GCF and the Adaptation Fund require projects to include gender analyses in order to access resources. Programmes such as *Women for Results* (part of the UN Global Climate Action Awards) highlight women-led initiatives.

Despite progress, women still account for less than 30 per cent of national delegations. There is also a lack of sex-disaggregated data, as many countries do not monitor climate impacts by gender. In addition, cultural barriers persist, as in some contexts social norms restrict women's access to resources and decision-making processes.

### 3. LIMA WORK PROGRAMME ON GENDER AND GENDER ACTION PLAN

The Lima Work Programme on Gender and the Lima Gender Action Plan, established at COP20 in 2014, marked a significant milestone by recognising the need to promote gender equality and women's empowerment within the climate negotiation process. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) was created to operationalise the Lima Programme, defining priority areas, activities, indicators, and responsibilities to integrate gender perspectives across all areas of the UNFCCC, including mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, and capacity-building.

Its main lines of action are as follows:

- **Participation:** Encouraging the presence and leadership of women in national delegations and decision-making processes within the UNFCCC.
- **Capacity-building:** Providing training and programmes to strengthen the technical, leadership, and negotiation skills of women delegates.
- **Gender in policies and projects:** Requiring climate projects and financing to consider gender-differentiated impacts and promote equality.
- **Monitoring:** Collecting sex-disaggregated data and conducting gender analysis in national and international report.
- **Access to finance:** Promoting mechanisms that facilitate access to climate resources for women and women-led grassroots organisations.

To further strengthen gender-responsive climate action, at COP25 in Madrid, Spain (2019), Parties adopted the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender (ELWPG) and its Gender Action Plan (GAP), under Decision 3/CP.25.

The main objectives of the ELWPG and GAP are: (i) advancing gender equality in climate policy — ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in UNFCCC processes; (ii) strengthening gender-responsive implementation — integrating gender considerations in mitigation, adaptation, finance, and technology; (iii) enhancing capacity-building and knowledge sharing — supporting training and awareness on gender and climate change; and (iv) monitoring and reporting progress — tracking gender-related actions under the UNFCCC.

The GAP, in turn, defines five priority areas with specific activities:

- 1. Priority 1: Capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, and communication.**
  - Develop training programmes on gender-responsive climate action.
  - Share best practices and case studies on gender and climate change.
- 2. Priority 2: Gender balance, participation, and women's leadership.**
  - Increase women's representation in UNFCCC delegations and bodies.
  - Support women's leadership in national and local climate policy formulation.
- 3. Priority 3: Coherence between gender and climate policies.**
  - Integrate gender perspectives into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and climate finance mechanisms.
- 4. Priority 4: Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation.**
  - Ensure climate finance (e.g., GCF, Adaptation Fund) is gender sensitive.
  - Promote the development and transfer of gender-responsive technologies.
- 5. Priority 5: Monitoring and reporting.**
  - Track progress in integrating gender into climate actions.
  - Report sex-disaggregated data in climate initiatives.

Since COP25, there have been achievements such as greater gender balance within UNFCCC bodies (e.g., female representation reached 38 per cent in bodies established in 2022); more countries integrating gender into their NDCs and NAPs; and the WGC actively advocating for stronger gender policies.

However, some challenges remain, including uneven implementation across countries due to limited financing and capacity-building; persistent gaps in gender-responsive climate finance (with only a small fraction directed to gender issues); and the need for more robust accountability mechanisms.

At COP28 (2023), Parties reviewed the progress of the GAP and extended it for an additional five years (2024–2028), with strengthened measures including:

1. Enhanced tracking of gender-responsive climate finance.
2. Expanded Support for women-led climate initiatives.
3. Stronger linkages between gender and just transition policies.

By empowering women and promoting gender equality, the UNFCCC can enhance the effectiveness and equity of global climate responses.

Beyond the UNFCCC, countries such as Canada, Sweden, and the Netherlands provide examples of these efforts, having implemented explicit policies to integrate gender into their climate actions and financing. Another example is found in multilateral climate funds, such as the GCF, which require gender action plans for funded projects.

## 4. CLIMATE AND GENDER IN BRAZIL

In Brazil, actions linking gender and climate change have gained ground in public policies, projects, and civil society initiatives, although there is room for further and faster progress. The following points highlight some relevant fronts and mechanisms.

### 4a. Public policies and national plans

The 2016 National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (*Plano Nacional de Adaptação à Mudança*—PNA) included guidelines to promote **gender equality** in adaptation actions, recognising that women (especially those who are rural, Indigenous, and *Quilombola*) are more vulnerable to climate impacts. The plan calls for the inclusion of women in water resource management and resilient agriculture.

The 2011 Low-Carbon Agriculture Plan (*Agricultura de Baixo Carbono*—ABC+) includes programmes that encourage women's participation in training on sustainable techniques, such as pasture restoration and crop-livestock-forest integration (ILPF).

In its 2015 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), updated in 2022, Brazil explicitly mentioned **gender equality** for the first time as a cross-cutting principle in its NDC, although without specific targets.

At the sectoral level, several programmes and institutions focusing on gender in climate mitigation and adaptation actions can also be identified, as summarised in the following table.

**Table 1. Sectoral initiatives focusing on gender**

| Sector                     | Examples                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Renewable energy</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projects such as Energy + Women (Ministry of Mines and Energy—MME) train women in rural and peri-urban communities to work in solar energy and energy efficiency. This includes women's cooperatives in the Northeast installing photovoltaic systems</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Smallholder farming</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisations such as the Brazilian Semi-Arid Articulation (<i>Articulação Semiárido Brasileiro</i>—ASA) promote social technologies (e.g., cisterns) with a focus on women, reducing their workload and increasing resilience to drought</li> <li>Agroecology projects (e.g., Via Campesina) empower women through sustainable practices</li> <li>Projects such as Rural Women and Climate, focused on food security and adaptation, implemented in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Cities</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable cities: Some municipalities (e.g., Recife) have local climate plans with a gender focus</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Culture</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Aldir Blanc Law (2021): Included calls for tenders specifically for women-led cultural projects with environmental themes.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Traditional Peoples</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous and Quilombola women lead reforestation and conservation projects (e.g., the <i>Quebradeiras de Coco Babaçu</i> Movement in Maranhão)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### 4b. Civil Society and research

The Climate Observatory and the Gender and Climate Network, in coalition with civil society, have advocated for gender-responsive policies and produced studies on the subject. A concrete example of this effort is the 2021 report *Gender and Climate in Brazil*, which highlights disparities in access to resources and information.

Meanwhile, universities and research networks have incorporated this intersectional topic into their research agendas. Groups such as the Gender and Climate Studies Centre (*Núcleo de Estudos em Gênero e Clima*) at Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) study the distinct impacts of climate change on women.

#### 4c. Financing and international cooperation

Gender equality and climate issues have become mainstream in international financial cooperation, replicating their impact in projects and financing in Brazil. This includes not only requiring sex-disaggregated data but also delivering financing at the local level with indicators that address women's needs. Examples include efforts between international and multilateral development banks and the Brazilian Development Association (*Associação Brasileira de Desenvolvimento*—ABDE), which brings together the national development finance system to integrate climate and gender as key priorities in their actions, studies, and events. This collaboration has strengthened the importance of these themes within the financial institutions associated with ABDE.

Other examples can be found in projects funded by climate finance mechanisms. Brazilian entities have accessed resources from the GCF and the Amazon Fund for initiatives that include gender components, such as training women in forest management. One example is the *Floresta+Mulher* Project (Ministry of the Environment), which compensates women for environmental services in the Amazon.

#### 4d. Challenges

Despite progress, several challenges remain and present opportunities to further advance the integration of gender and climate issues. These are key areas requiring attention in Brazil:

- **Intermittent implementation:** Many policies fail to move beyond the planning stage due to budget cuts or changes in government.
- **Data gaps:** There is limited sex-disaggregated data available to monitor climate impacts.
- **Structural barriers:** Inequality in access to land, credit, and political participation ultimately hampers women's involvement.
- **Robust monitoring:** Brazil has made strides in rhetoric and some practical measures; however, national coordination, dedicated resources, and robust monitoring remain insufficient.
- **Expanding opportunities for women's leadership:** Civil society and women from traditional communities are leading many initiatives, demonstrating that climate justice is inseparable from gender equality. Empowering this leadership to expand their reach and initiatives can help accelerate progress and create positive examples.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Integrating a gender perspective into climate policies and negotiations represents a crucial step forward in promoting justice and effectiveness in the global response to climate change.

The evolution of integrating a gender perspective within the international climate regime, from the establishment of the Lima Work Programme (COP20) to the consolidation of the Gender Action Plan (COP25) and its recent revision and expansion (COP28), demonstrates significant progress in institutionalizing gender-responsive approaches.

Key advances include: (a) increased female representation in UNFCCC decision-making bodies; (b) systematic incorporation of gender considerations in climate policy instruments (NDCs, NAPs); and (c) development of climate finance mechanisms with gender equality criteria.

However, operational challenges remain, particularly regarding the effective allocation of financial resources, technical capacity-building, and the development of robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Full operationalisation of these normative frameworks requires: (i) strengthening national institutional arrangements; (ii) harmonisation with other global agendas (SDGs 5 and 13); and (iii) systematic production of sex-disaggregated data. Embedding these elements will be essential to ensure that climate policies simultaneously achieve mitigation/adaptation effectiveness and social equity.

Despite ongoing challenges, the efforts made thus far have consolidated the understanding that gender equality is indispensable to achieving more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable climate solutions, paving the way for a fairer future for all.



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