

The Netherlands' Civil Society Priorities for the Agreed Conclusions.

66th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, 14-25 March 2022.



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The empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes is crucial to achieve gender equality. In the light of Covid-19, the UNFCCC COP26, the alarming conclusions of the IPCC report (2021), and the CSW66 priority themes, the Netherlands' Civil Society has identified a set of priorities for the Agreed Conclusions.

Where do we stand?

Climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters are crises that disproportionately affect girls and women in all their diversity¹ with the most marginalized people experiencing the gravest consequences. The impact of the climate and biodiversity crises and gender-blind policies further aggravate gender inequalities²:

- Worldwide, women and girls are at a higher risk for displacement, morbidity, and mortality as a direct consequence of climate and biodiversity related disasters.
- Women and girls often have an important agenda-setting and mobilizing role, but are underrepresented in professions in the climate- and environmental sector as well as in participation processes, (political) decision making, and leadership positions overall.
- Women and girls lack access to financial support and capital for climate adaptation technologies, climate action programmes, and environmental protection.

Recommendations

Given the extent and complexity of alleviating the disproportional impact of climate and biodiversity related crises and disasters on women and girls, as well as the empowerment of all women and girls in this context, the Netherlands' Civil Society has prioritised the following four recommendations for the Agreed Conclusions³:

1. Implement an integrated gender transformative, inclusive, and intersectional approach.

A gender *transformative* approach emphasizes the agency of all women and girls and is crucial to address the root causes of gender inequality and unequal power relations. An *intersectional* approach is necessary to take into account the variety of backgrounds and positions of women⁴. This is essential to do justice to the multiple experiences of discrimination and (in)equality amongst woman and girls.

The Agreed Conclusions therefore must call upon Member States to:

- implement a **gender transformative approach on all levels** (international, national, local), and ensure **policy coherence in all areas and sectors** linked to the climate and biodiversity crises.
- include **gender equality and anti-discrimination as a policy goal** with accompanying targets and indicators, and integrate this approach in all stages of policymaking.
- **prevent policies and programmes from having a negative impact** on gender equality and human rights at all levels, and to avoid maintaining or reinforcing existing power structures and mechanisms of exclusion.
- ensure **gender-sensitive disaster management** including emergency reproductive health services, access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), including dignity kits.

¹ When we mention women and girls in this paper, we always refer to women and girls in all their diversity. This acknowledges the difference in experience and identities of women and girls of all ages, ethnicities, religions, cultural backgrounds, sexualities, gender identities, social economic status and disabilities among others.

² ActionAid, Both ENDS, WECF, WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform. (2021). *Onlosmakelijk verbonden: gendergelijkheid, klimaat en biodiversiteit. Concrete aanbevelingen voor integraal beleid.*

³ Besides these recommendations, Dutch Civil Society endorses the recommendations given in the Expert Group Meeting Report and emphasizes that the recommendations developed by Dutch Civil Society in 2020 for Beijing+25 are still relevant and applicable. Moreover we urge Member States to apply with all international conventions such as the Paris Agreement (2015).

⁴ such as age, ethnicity, migration status, education, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.

2. Invest in gender-disaggregated data and gender analyses, paying close attention to intersectional aspects.

The collection, analysis and application of gender statistics and analysis⁵ is crucial to assess the root causes of the unequal impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises on women and girls.

The Agreed Conclusions therefore must call upon Member States to:

- collect standardized gender-disaggregated and intersectional data -with **a guarantee of privacy and human rights**- that pays attention to differences and inequalities in needs, opportunities, and situations of all women and girls.
- **jointly develop and implement standardized methods**, to enable the comparison of metrics at different levels and over time.
- collect and analyse **data that focusses on the gendered causes and drivers of vulnerability** to the effects of the climate and biodiversity crises. Including differences in roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights, gender stereotypes, cultural norms, power relations, and discrimination.
- **measure and evaluate the impact** of the climate and biodiversity crises and policies on girls and women, in particular the impacts on the most marginalized people.

3. Ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in decision making processes

Those who are most vulnerable to climate and biodiversity related disasters are the least heard and involved in climate related solutions. To rectify this, full, equal, and meaningful participation of all women in the decision making process is crucial.

The Agreed Conclusions therefore must call upon Member States to:

- **guarantee, promote, and institutionalize meaningful representation** in political and economic decision-making processes, on all levels. By eliminating the (legal) barriers to participation and by the implementation of quotas for women in politics, public administration, education, science, and business sectors.
- invest in **female and feminist leadership positions, and role models** in male-dominated sectors such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math sectors.
- facilitate women's and girls' **access to knowledge, resources, and funding**.
- recognize the **knowledge of local communities and Indigenous people** in climate and biodiversity related policies.
- support, facilitate, and monitor **equal representation of (young) women in international negotiations and conferences** on UN and EU climate and biodiversity policy.
- **increase finance to feminist, including youth, organizations within local communities** to preserve the local environmental ecosystems and local-lead climate solutions.

4. Eliminate sexual and gender-based violence

The risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including economic violence, femicide and human trafficking, increases during and in the aftermath of climate related crises such as displacement. And selected approaches for climate mitigation and adaptation and the responses to disasters can sustain or reinforce SGBV even further (e.g. by increasing poverty, vulnerability and dependency relationships).

The Agreed Conclusions therefore must call upon Member States to:

- develop policies and programs that **address risk factors and causes of SGBV**. Special attention must be paid to **the role of men and boys** in the prevention of SGBV.
- ensure that SGBV can **be reported through accessible, confidential, and supportive mechanisms**, including accessible legal mechanisms and domestic violence shelters.
- ensure that the approaches for climate mitigation and adaptation and the responses to disasters **do not sustain or reinforce SGBV**.
- invest in **climate resilient health systems** to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are guaranteed.
- **protect (female) activists**, defenders of gender equality and LGBTQI+ rights, Women Human Rights Defenders, journalists and protectors of the living environment of Indigenous peoples against SGBV and persecution.
- **ratify ILO Convention no. 190** to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work.

⁵ A gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights and entitlements affect people of different genders. Also see: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1143>