



Thematic Session
Feminism in the context of the environmental crisis and climate emergency

Concept Note
March 29th, 2021
11:30 – 12:50 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)
20:30 – 21:50 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)

Background

There is a direct relationship between gender equality, women’s empowerment and climate change. Women are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change which could exacerbate existing gender disparities. In addition, women have unique knowledge and skills that can help make the response to climate change more effective and sustainable. At the local level, women’s inclusion at the leadership level has led to improved outcomes of climate related projects and policies.

Climate change has a greater impact on those who are most reliant on resources for their livelihoods and those who have less capacity to respond to disasters and hazards, such as droughts, floods, and hurricanes. Women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty. Furthermore, women’s unequal participation in the labour market and in decision-making processes exacerbate inequalities and often prevent women from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policymaking, and implementation.

Women and marginalized people find it difficult to fight for survival, as the impacts of climate change add to structural inequalities such as gender-based violence and discrimination. This is even more accentuated for those living in small island states and territories, in less developed countries, in the Global South and for Indigenous peoples, impoverished people in urban areas, rural and remote communities, Afro-descendants, people with disabilities, migrant communities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTQI+) people, ethnic minorities, girls, older adults, communities discriminated against because of their descent and occupation, and many others.¹

¹ *Mujeres Transformando radicalmente un mundo en crisis*, Un Marco de referencia para Beijing+25 elaborado durante una reunión estratégica de activistas feministas en la Ciudad de México, del 22 al 24 de agosto de 2019. developed during a strategic meeting of feminist activists in Mexico City, August 22-24, 2019.



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The current climate crisis has led to an increase in disasters, forced migration, loss of livelihood, rising food prices, and regional conflicts over scarce resources such as water or fertile land. Adding to this crisis is the accelerated loss of biodiversity, the contamination of soils, food and water, and conflicts driven by the extractive industry. These intersecting crises are deeply gendered crises, with often devastating effects for women and girls around the world, already facing inequalities in decision-making, access to education, health and financial services and lacking bodily autonomy.

Women and girls around the world – while at the frontlines of impacts, are also leading transformative fights for change and a healthy planet. Women, particularly grassroots and Indigenous women, are often at the forefront of denouncing environmental degradation in their communities, fighting against the loss of livelihoods and community health, and challenging extractive and exploitative systems. These fights are often dangerous, particularly for women’s rights and environmental defenders.

In 26 years since the Beijing Platform for Action, many countries have incorporated a gender perspective in national climate and environmental policies and programs, as well as in global policy through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in commitments to human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, gender equality and women’s empowerment enshrined in the Paris Agreement. On the way forward, it is imperative to integrate a gender perspective into both mitigation and adaptation initiatives. It is critical to shift from words to action and ensure a just transition to an inclusive, circular, and regenerative green economy. Failure to address this issue, seriously threatens to reverse the advances on the 2030 Agenda.

This will require not only action from Governments to implement gender-transformative policies and approaches, but also shifts in both private and public finance away from investments in systems that cause harm – such as fossil fuel infrastructure, militarism and the carceral state, to systems that provide care – such as health, education, well-being, and environmental protection.

COVID-19 forces a collective lucidity on the depth of global interdependence; on the fact that the world is only as resilient as the least resilient country and person; and that in a context of widespread vulnerability, we are reaching tipping points in different dimensions—social, economic, and environmental. The feminist and environmental movements have emphasized time and again that true solutions to multiple environmental problems must address the root causes of these problems and not be limited to occasional and politically expedient fixes.



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The continuous participation of women in all their diversity and of feminist and environmental movements continues to be of the utmost importance to analyze, raise the voice, demand, propose and collaborate in the search for just, prompt, and efficient strategies to achieve greater environmental justice and gender and reverse the extreme exploitation and degradation that is currently endangering the survival not only of countless wild species but also of the human species. Women's access to green jobs and climate-resilient livelihoods will be a key steppingstone to help us bounce back. We need to make sure that economic recovery packages account for climate change and leave no one behind. It is necessary to have a comprehensive approach to gender and climate change that includes both mitigation and adaptation strategies which should be included into the Action Coalitions.

General Objective

The thematic dialogue on "Feminism in the context of the environmental crisis and the climate emergency" in the framework of the Generation Equality Forum will be an important opportunity to make our voices and expertise heard and to dialogue together about real solutions to environmental problems each more pressing times that often reinforce gender inequalities and other exclusions and discriminations.

Specific Objectives

- To address the main challenges for women in the environmental crisis
- To establish important actions and needs to include feminism in all environmental movements.
- To recognize how women's innovations and expertise have transformed lives and livelihoods, and increased climate resilience and overall well-being and by this, women have proven to be leading the way towards more equitable and sustainable solutions to climate change.

Participants

- Civil society organisations
- UN Agencies
- Private Sector
- Governments
- Financing mechanisms for climate change

Format



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This virtual dialogue will be held on March 29 from 11:30 – 13:00 am (MEX time) and in the evening from 20:30 – 22:00 (MEX time). The discussion will be driven by an experienced feminist moderator who will direct the conversation between nine different stakeholders and the audience to ensure a diversity of views. The audience will be able to interact by using the chat in the platform. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

Suggested time	Proposed activity
11:30 – 11:35 20:30 – 20:35	Welcome remarks
11:35 – 12:25 20:35 – 21:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated discussion with the panelists. Participants have between 3-4 minutes to answer each question. • What is the current situation of women regarding the environmental crisis and how can we find strategies to tackle the main challenges? • How do we promote the participation of women in design and implementation of risk prevention strategies ensuring all voices are heard (intersectionality)? What good practices and experiences can we share to have a global transformation? • What is the role of different stakeholders, like Civil Society, young feminists, governments, and the private sector in addressing the environmental crisis? • What would be your recommendations to comply with what was established in the Beijing Platform in the GEF and with the Action Coalition on Feminist Action on Climate Justice?
12:25 – 12:45 21:25 – 21:45	Q&A session. The Moderator reads selected questions from the chat.
12:45 – 12:50 21:45 – 21:50	Closing: moderator thanks participants and audience.