

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE SWANA REGION

*With findings
from Morocco,
Sudan & Tunisia*

DECEMBER 2023



ABOUT POLITICS4HER



Politics4Her is a global intersectional feminist platform and youth-led movement advocating for the inclusive participation of young women and girls in politics, civil society and other decision-making bodies.

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CONTENT WARNING & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Please note that since this policy report includes words and phrases that should be avoided, you may come across some that you consider discriminatory, or that have been used historically to oppress certain people or groups. This may cause distress for people who have experienced discrimination based on their identity. Given the nature of this policy report, we understand that many of the issues discussed are personal and emotive for many people. While naming oppressions is necessary to deconstruct them, we recognize that this can take a toll on those that are directly affected. Please take care in the reading of the policy report and prioritize your well-being.

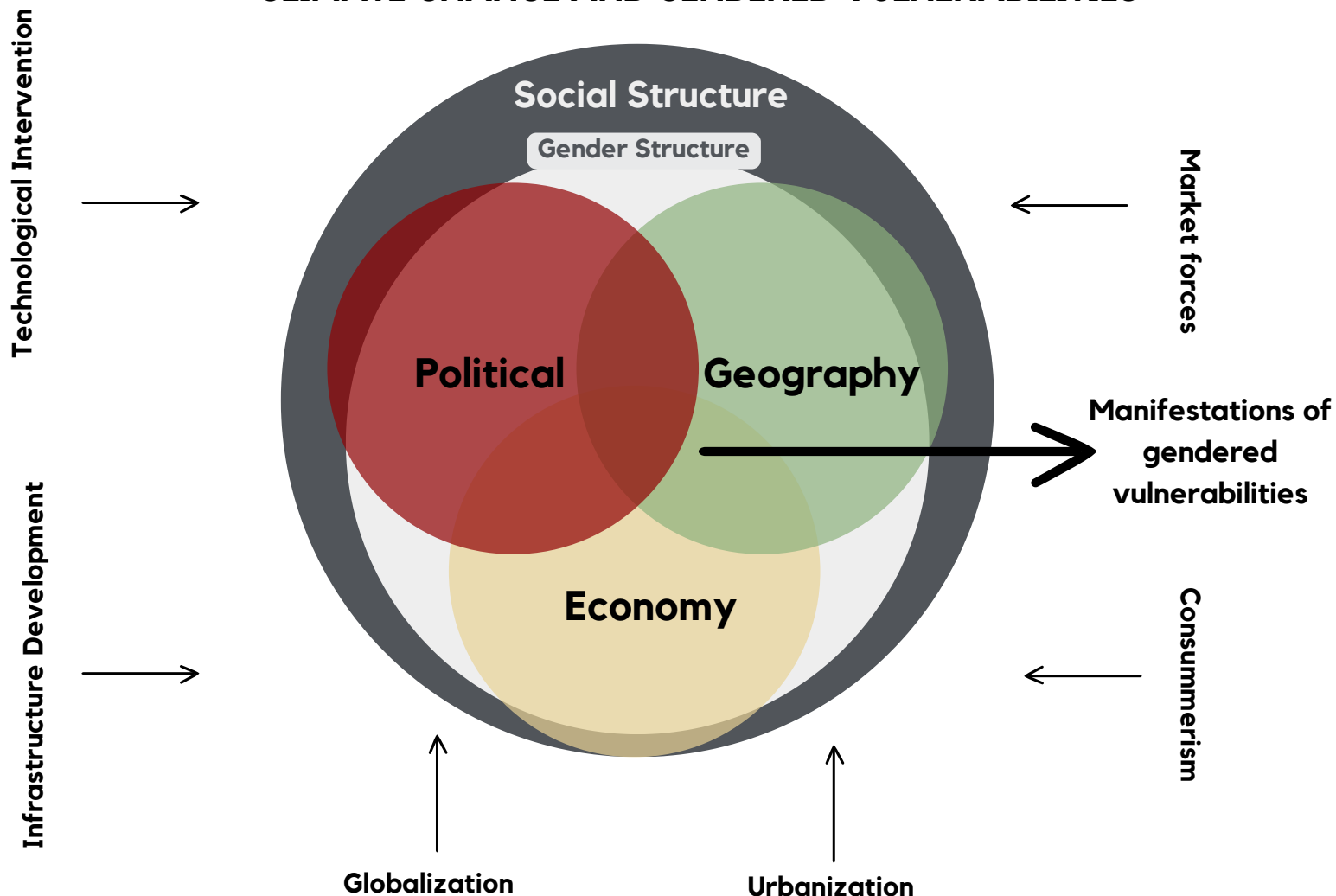
This policy report primarily discusses the experiences and challenges faced by women and girls in the context of climate change and gender inequality. However, we want to expressly acknowledge the diverse spectrum of gender identities beyond the binary. Throughout this document, we strive to use inclusive language that respects and acknowledges various gender identities and expressions. We understand the importance of recognizing and affirming the rights and experiences of everyone, regardless of gender identity.



INTERSECTIONALITY

The concept of intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, recognizes that individuals hold multiple identities which intersect in complex ways to shape their experiences. In the context of climate justice, considering intersectionality means acknowledging that gender issues are intertwined with other social categories like race, class, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, socio-economic background and geography.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDERED VULNERABILITIES



By choosing Tunisia, Morocco, and Sudan as the focus countries, this policy report recognizes the diversity of experiences and challenges that women and girls face in different geographical and cultural contexts. This approach is in line with an intersectional feminist perspective that seeks to understand the unique intersections of identity and how they contribute to disparities in climate impacts and responses.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region, encompassing countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Sudan, is confronted with multifaceted challenges arising from climate change and gender inequality. These challenges necessitate a comprehensive policy response that recognizes and addresses the intersection of climate justice and gender equality.

This policy report focuses on the often-overlooked relationship between climate crisis and gender injustice, emphasizing the particular context of climate change in Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco. It seeks to identify the implications of the climate crisis on gender-specific policies, such as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), early, forced, and child marriage, as well as the marginalization of sexual and gender minorities.

By employing a participatory approach, this research seeks to amplify the lived experiences and opinions of marginalized communities in these countries striving to overcome climate and gender inequalities.

INTRODUCTION



This year, the SWANA region has been marked by persistent instability and a growing climate crisis. The occurrence of hazardous events such as the earthquake in Morocco, floods in Libya, and droughts in Sudan, has led to massive forced displacement and has further heightened the region's vulnerabilities. The intersection of climate change and gender dynamics emerges as a critical and pressing challenge. This policy report delves into the nexus between climate vulnerabilities and gender inequalities in Sudan, Morocco, and Tunisia. These countries, distinguished by their diverse geography, culture, and socio-political landscapes, offer insights into the complex interplay of environmental crises and gender disparities.

In Sudan, where the gender-climate intersection is stark, women grapple with heightened vulnerability from climate change-induced water scarcity, which not only triggers conflicts but also exacerbates gender-based violence and fosters a rise in child marriages. Disruptions in agriculture further worsen economic vulnerabilities, amplifying the challenges faced by women in the region. Meanwhile, in Morocco, susceptibility to hazardous events prompts adaptation efforts, yet the national climate policy lacks a sufficient gender focus, thereby overlooking the unique challenges faced by women and girls in the wake of such crises. Similarly, Tunisia confronts a crisis as climate change-induced sea level rise intersects with persistent gender injustices, particularly impacting women engaged in rangeland cultivation.

These narratives underscore the imperative for immediate, comprehensive, and gender-sensitive strategies to navigate the intricate dynamics of the climate crisis in the SWANA region. Addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change and gender disparities requires interventions that transcend traditional responses, recognizing the nuanced and heightened impact of these crises on vulnerable populations.

As the repercussions of climate change intensify, the vulnerabilities faced by women in these areas are increasingly evident, influencing not only their socio-economic standing but also impacting their health, safety, and overall well-being. Consequently, it is essential to implement inclusive, gender-responsive policies that can effectively tackle the interwoven challenges of environmental degradation and societal progress in the diverse SWANA countries. Through this thorough analysis, our aim is to guide policymakers and stakeholders, advocating for the adoption of policies that are both gender-sensitive and climate-aware, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable future throughout the SWANA region.

METHODOLOGY



The policy report was crafted using a mixed-methods approach, encompassing thorough desk research involving the analysis and review of government documents, articles, journals, and pertinent literature related to the subject. Additionally, a participatory qualitative method was employed by issuing a call for recommendations, inviting relevant stakeholders to contribute to the research.

In total, 23 respondents participated in the survey. Subsequently, five in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals specializing in gender and climate, feminist activists, and researchers actively engaged in our targeted regions. The evidence gathered from these comprehensive methods has afforded us a deeper insight into the intersection of gender and climate justice in Tunisia, Sudan, and Morocco. This nuanced understanding forms the basis for the evidence-based policy recommendations elucidated in this policy report.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN MOROCCO



In Morocco, the escalating impacts of the climate crisis pose distinct challenges, particularly for women and girls. A 1°C temperature increase since the 1960s, coupled with projections of an additional rise of 1 to 1.5°C by 2050, has created a starkly unequal landscape. Women and gender minorities bear the brunt of these changes as they grapple with amplified water scarcity, heightened risks of droughts, and the severe consequences of floods.

The gendered dimensions of vulnerability are accentuated despite Morocco's proactive measures. Noteworthy initiatives, such as allocating 64% of funding between 2005-2010 for the National Plan Against Global Warming and committing to dedicating at least 15% of the overall investment budget to climate change adaptation, have been implemented. However, the unequal impact persists, affecting women and girls disproportionately. They face challenges in accessing resources, adapting to changing environmental conditions, and safeguarding their livelihoods in the face of climate-induced adversities. The nuanced impact on women and girls underscores the need for continued efforts to address gender-specific vulnerabilities in Morocco's climate resilience strategies. An intersectional approach that considers both climate and gender factors is crucial for fostering inclusive and effective adaptation measures.

The impactful earthquake on September 8th, 2023, registering a magnitude of 6.8, serves as a poignant example of how climate change intensifies existing gender inequalities. This seismic event directly affected over 300,000 people, laying bare the urgent need for adaptive strategies that meticulously consider the distinctive challenges faced by women, especially those in remote, rural areas, and indigenous Amazigh communities. These communities, already grappling with the ramifications of the climate crisis, find themselves even more acutely affected. Women, particularly those in marginalized settings, bear an inequitable burden as they navigate the upheaval of environmental chaos, managing water scarcity and confronting the extensive social and economic repercussions in the aftermath of disasters. Their resilience in the face of such compounded challenges underscores the necessity for targeted and inclusive climate adaptation strategies in these vulnerable regions.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN TUNISIA

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Tunisia, boasting a crucial 1300 km Mediterranean coastline integral to its economic development, grapples with substantial climate threats that intersect with gender dynamics. The nation is highly sensitive to direct impacts and sea level rise, and these challenges are intricately tied to its socioeconomic context, where gender plays a crucial role. The economy is linked to sectors such as water, agriculture, and tourism, and women often bear a disproportionate burden in navigating the consequences of climate change in these domains.

Despite Tunisia setting ambitious targets in its revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), aiming for a 45% reduction below 2010 levels and an unconditional target of 27% by 2030, gender-specific climate challenges persist. Women, particularly those in vulnerable communities, face unique and heightened risks, as their roles in water management, agriculture, and tourism make them more susceptible to the impacts of climate change. This includes increased workloads, health risks, and economic vulnerabilities.

Marginalized women farmers residing in rural areas bear the disproportionate and devastating consequences of climate change, grappling with challenges such as drought and soil erosion along with gender and socio-economic disparities. 17% of Tunisian women are employed in the agricultural sector and an alarming 75% of Tunisia's land is currently undergoing the severe process of desertification, which is rising the rates of female unemployment and poverty.

Addressing these challenges necessitates acknowledging the interconnected web of gender, economic, and environmental issues and implementing solutions that empower women by recognizing their unique struggles and contributions in the face of climate crisis.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN SUDAN



Sudan is currently grappling with a dire humanitarian crisis characterized by escalating conflict and violence. The impact of rising temperatures has been profound, affecting approximately 350,000 people in the region. Climate change exacerbates the situation, manifesting in desert encroachment southward and a significant reduction in rainfall, contributing to heightened instability. The resulting displacement, induced by both conflict and climate change, introduces additional pressures, including the spread of new diseases. As forces loyal to two rival generals engage in a battle for control, Sudan teeters on the brink of collapse, with millions of people forcibly displaced, culminating in an unprecedented humanitarian disaster.

As one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations, Sudan faces heightened risks due to rainfall variability and an economy heavily dependent on natural resources. Rising temperatures, particularly in key wheat-growing areas, raise concerns for food production. Consequently, the agriculture sector, contributing 20% to GDP and employing 80% of the workforce, faces threats to food security and livelihoods. Additionally, around 3 million people are internally displaced due to conflict and climate change. Despite the submitted NDC outlining promising emission reduction targets across sectors such as energy, forestry, and waste, Sudan's complex socio-environmental landscape requires robust adaptation measures.

The conflict has evolved into a dire scenario involving war crimes and reports of persistent sexual violence. Compounding the crisis, relief funding is dwindling, exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation. The intertwining challenges of conflict and climate change in Sudan disproportionately impact women and girls, intensifying their vulnerabilities. The humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by both conflict and climate change, has led to a stark increase in violence against women and girls, as reported by CARE International and the United Nations.

Furthermore, the conflict's tragic toll on the rights of women and girls is profound, with close to 6 million individuals affected within the first six months, marking a distressing milestone. The synergy of conflict and climate change induces shifts in livelihood patterns, forcing men to migrate away from communities. This environmental displacement leaves women to grapple with the consequences, both environmental and social, further complicating their circumstances.

THE IMPACTS ON GENDER

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

The impending impact of climate change in the SWANA region introduces significant threats to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). As primary earners in many cases and crucial contributors in rural settings, women in the region face heightened risks due to climate change, particularly female breadwinners. The degradation of essential natural resources creates obstacles for women in earning a livelihood, raising concerns about their ability to access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

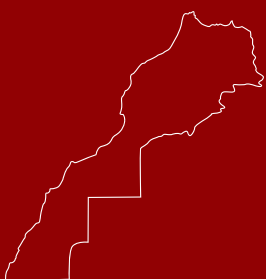
Extreme weather conditions contribute to the challenge by affecting maternal health amid escalating risks of air pollution and climate-related diseases. The ramifications extend to everyday essentials, with disruptions like droughts impacting the availability of clean water and menstrual products, disproportionately affecting women's SRHR. The economic fallout exacerbates the struggle for access to paid-for sexual healthcare services, particularly for marginalized groups. In the SWANA region, where challenges are particularly acute, ensuring SRHR is not just a public health necessity but an issue that demands urgent, strategic, and inclusive interventions. The intersectionality of these issues underscores the necessity to bridge the gap between climate action and SRHR.



In Sudan, the confluence of elevated poverty rates and an unmet demand for contraceptives is worsened by the intricate impact of climate change, leading to a notable upswing in unintended pregnancies. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in regions with heightened vulnerabilities, such as Darfur, Kordofan, and Gedaref, where women confront escalated risks during heatwaves. The ongoing climate-induced crises further constrict women's access to high-quality health services, thereby amplifying the rates of maternal and neonatal mortality. Economic hardships, protracted conflicts, and deeply rooted harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) are significantly exacerbated by the changing climate, compounding the impediments to women's access to comprehensive SRHR services and perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability within the nation.



Tunisia, a pioneering Arab nation in legalizing abortion in 1973, still grapples with SRHR access issues due to healthcare workers sometimes refusing the procedure. However, Tunisia has acknowledged GBV as a crucial intersection between SRHR and climate change in its 2021 NDC. It has taken a step forward by incorporating a measure to support women exposed to GBV as a health-related adaptation strategy, reflecting an ongoing commitment to addressing multifaceted challenges at the intersection of reproductive rights and climate resilience.



Morocco has made notable progress in SRHR, witnessing a decline in maternal mortality rates, enhanced health services, and increased access for married couples in urban areas. Despite these strides, women in rural regions, especially flood-prone areas like Figuig, Ten Drara, and Bou Arfa, continue to face significant SRHR challenges due to severe climatic conditions. These difficulties jeopardize women's access to SRHR services, consequently exerting a profound toll on their mental and physical well-being.



Early and forced child marriage

The terms child marriage, early marriage, or forced child marriage are often used interchangeably. This pervasive practice spans various cultures, religions, and societies, penetrating deeply without the child's consent. According to UNICEF, child marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child. It is considered a human rights violation and a harmful practice that disproportionately affects women and girls globally. Setting and enforcing a minimum legal age for marriage is crucial to protect girls, who are more affected than boys by the practice of child marriage. Environmental factors, such as climate change, can also play a role in increasing child marriage, as poor families living in areas at high risk of natural disaster have cited the resulting insecurity as a factor pushing them to marry their daughters early.

New estimates from Save the Children suggest that the number of girls facing the dual challenges of climate change and child marriage is poised to rise by 33% to almost 40 million by 2050. The 2023 report, *"Girls at the Centre of the Storm: Her Planet, Her Future, Her Solutions"* highlights that about two-thirds of child marriages transpire in regions with heightened climate risks. The nexus between the climate crisis and child marriage disproportionately impacts young girls, jeopardizing their education, exposing them to violence, and escalating risks during pregnancy and childbirth. The intensification of climate change contributes significantly to the alarming increase in child marriages, posing a direct threat to the well-being and future prospects of these vulnerable girls.

In Morocco **14%** of girls are married before their 18th birthday.

In Sudan **55%** of women with no education were married before the age of 18.

In Tunisia **2%** of girls are married before the age of 18.

The strong relationship between climate change and child marriage is evident in many contexts, where the risks associated with climate change amplify the likelihood of gender-based violence. Child marriage, identified as a negative coping mechanism in response to climate change, becomes more prevalent. Families, grappling with poverty and illiteracy, may opt to marry off their daughters early, hence intensifying the challenges faced by girls in their futures and perpetuating cycles of poverty.

In Morocco, the link between child marriage and climate change is discernible through various socio-economic indicators. With 14% of girls marrying before turning 18, it's evident that climate-induced challenges contribute to this phenomenon. The disparity is stark, with a quarter of Moroccan girls lacking education entering marriage by 18, compared to 7% of those with secondary or higher education. The persistence of child marriage reveals a significant gap in the country's legal framework, emphasizing the need for comprehensive measures to address the impact of climate change on this harmful practice.

Sudan's experience reflects the intertwined challenges of prolonged conflicts, climate crisis, and economic limitations, all fostering conditions conducive to child marriage. A staggering 55% of women with no education are married before 18, underlining how limited educational opportunities exacerbate vulnerability. As highlighted by Girls Not Brides, child marriage acts both as a driver and consequence of poverty, with the confluence of conflict and climate crisis exacerbating these dynamics.

In Tunisia, despite a commendable decrease in the prevalence of early marriage from 7% to 2% over 18 years, climate-related disruptions introduce new challenges. The 2021 report by the African Women's Development and Communications Network indicates that these disruptions, particularly in household income, elevate the risk of child marriage and gender-based violence. The strain on families, struggling to adapt to climate-induced changes, underscores the need for continued efforts to address both the direct and indirect consequences of climate change on vulnerable populations, especially young girls at risk of early marriage.

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Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

Women and girls face heightened vulnerability to various forms of SGBV, both within and outside the family, which are exacerbated by external factors such as climate change that intensifies existing gender inequalities. Climate-related events and disasters, such as droughts in Darfur or earthquakes in Morocco, led to women and girls disproportionately shouldering the burden of these crises, resulting in an increased vulnerability to heightened levels of SGBV. The aftermath of these disasters often forces women and girls to live in crowded camps without adequate privacy, creating environments conducive to increased sexual violence.

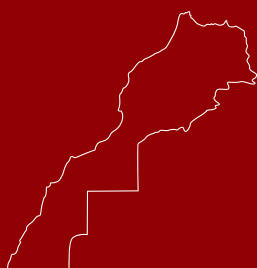
Moreover, the scarcity of natural resources due to climate change also adds an economic burden on women, who often serve as primary caregivers and resource managers, heightening their vulnerability to SGBV. In confronting the intersectionality of climate change impacts and SGBV, it becomes imperative to address not only the immediate consequences but also the systemic inequalities perpetuating such vulnerabilities.



In Sudan, the Gender-Based Violence Cluster anticipated that in 2023, approximately 3.1 million individuals, predominantly women (93%), children (42%), and people with disabilities (15%), will require assistance. With the escalation of conflict since April 15, 2023, has significantly increased this risk, with the current estimate now standing at 4.2 million people facing heightened GBV risks. The ongoing clashes, compounded by the challenges of the climate crisis, have disrupted protection services, intensifying the threats faced by women and girls in these disaster-affected areas. Particularly in regions deeply impacted by climate change, SGBV becomes a life-threatening concern, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups, including women, children, and people with disabilities.



Tunisia has made significant progress in addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by enacting laws to criminalize acts such as marital rape and domestic violence, and repealing the controversial 'Marry-your-rapist' law in 2017. However, the impact of climate change has introduced new challenges, exacerbating economic and social disparities. The combination of existing factors and the effects of climate change has created a landscape where Tunisian women continue to face high levels of violence, with at least 47% of women experiencing domestic violence in their lifetime. The link between climate change and SGBV is evident, as extreme weather and environmental stressors can fuel hunger, sickness, resource scarcity, conflict, and displacement, placing women at greater risk of violence. The interconnectedness of the climate crisis and SGBV in Tunisia underscores the need for comprehensive approaches that address both environmental and gender-related challenges.



The impact of climate change in Morocco has introduced new challenges for women, particularly those who serve as primary earners in households and play crucial roles in rural settings. As vital natural resources degrade due to climate change, women encounter barriers to earning a living and supporting their families, which in turn elevates the risk of exposure to SGBV. The link between climate change and SGBV is evident, as extreme weather and environmental stressors can fuel hunger, sickness, resource scarcity, conflict, and displacement, placing women at greater risk of violence.

EXISTING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS & POLICIES FOR ACHIEVING GENDER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE



Various international frameworks and policies address the critical intersection of gender and climate justice. The Paris Agreement, a landmark global accord, recognizes the importance of gender equality in climate action, while the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change emphasizes the need for gender-responsive policies. The Beijing Platform for Action, Sustainable Development Goal 5, and regional initiatives such as the African Union Gender Policy further contribute to integrating gender considerations into climate-related strategies. Additionally, some countries adopt National Gender Action Plans to specifically address the gender dimensions of climate change at the national level. While these frameworks exist, ongoing efforts are essential to ensure their effective implementation and to foster a comprehensive approach that advances gender equality within the context of climate justice.

Existing legal frameworks and policies for achieving gender and climate justice in the SWANA region, including Morocco, Tunisia, and Sudan, have made progress in addressing gender disparities and climate change. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement to ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing these interconnected issues. More efforts are needed to ensure that these policies are effectively implemented and that women's rights are protected. These legal frameworks and policies aim to empower women, address GBV against them, and ensure that they have equal access to resources and services, particularly in the context of climate change and its impacts.

Morocco has made significant efforts to address gender within the climate crisis through various frameworks and policies. The Moroccan Climate Change Policy framework (MCCP) prioritizes climate adaptation and mitigation, but there is a need to prioritize climate risk prevention and reduction as resilience-building strategies for Moroccan women, especially in the context of disaster preparedness. Additionally, Morocco has made substantive investments in renewable energy, transitioning to a green economy, and promoting social access to green employment for women. However, gender remains conspicuously absent from government plans, and there is a need to integrate gender considerations into climate justice efforts to ensure women's active involvement in addressing the impacts of climate change.



**National Climate
Plan (2018-2030)**

**National Gender
Equality Strategy
(2018-2021)**

**Gender-Responsive
Climate Financing**

Morocco's National Climate Plan, known as the "Plan Maroc Vert," highlights the need to enhance women's access to resources, capacity building, and technology.

The strategy emphasizes the need to address the specific challenges faced by women in the context of climate change and ensures their active participation in decision-making processes related to environmental and sustainable development.

Morocco has made efforts to ensure that climate financing mechanisms consider gender dimensions by creating funds such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) which supports projects in Morocco to promote gender equality and empower women in climate change resilience and mitigation activities.

Tunisia has been recognized for its progressive gender policies, particularly compared to other countries in the region. The country has prioritized action for climate justice, with a significant focus on promoting women's participation in climate change action. According to a global survey on gender equality in Tunisia, promoting women's participation in climate change action was identified as a top priority by respondents, with 52% believing that the Tunisian government should promote the training and hiring of women in climate-related sectors.

The National
Climate Change
Adaptation
Strategy 2012

The intended
nationally
determined
contribution
(INDC) and NDC

The National
Energy Transition
Strategy 2016-
2020

This plan took into consideration the importance of gender-inclusive strategies. It acknowledged that women are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change especially during drought periods since they are often the ones responsible for water supply and hold over 70% of active jobs in agriculture and forestry.

The focus on gender, land-use planning, and disaster risk reduction was identified as cross-cutting issues in the adaptation strategies and the recognition of women as an important role of women in climate change and the commitment to further legal and institution processes in the country.

One of the five pillars of this strategy is the promotion of women's active participation in both economic and political activity. And to stimulate their entrepreneurship in the field of renewable energies and efficient eco-technology.

Sudan has made efforts to integrate gender and climate change in national policies, such as the Gender and Climate Change Group (GCCG), which developed a three-year gender action plan (GAP) to promote a gender-transformative approach to address existing gender imbalances concerning water insecurity and the impacts of climate change. However, Sudan still faces significant challenges in achieving gender equality, with a lack of women's participation in decision-making and limited access to information and services. Women in Sudan are more exposed to climate change disasters, have fewer resilience assets, rely more on natural resources, have high rates of illiteracy, low skills, and low access to professional employment, making them more vulnerable to climate change calamities than men.

**National
Adaptation
Program of Action
(NAPA)**

**The intended
nationally
determined
contribution
(INDC) and NDC**

**Management
Project (SSNRMP)**

Among the guiding principles for the adaptation projects, gender equality was considered as a priority in the design. That's because climate change has direct effects on women's livelihood since they are traditionally responsible for all the household duties including water and firewood collection, and the cultivation of land in rural areas.

The main points focused on the promotion of gender-sensitive approaches, women's empowerment, and increasing their involvement in the community especially since more men were quitting agriculture to focus on income-earning opportunities in the urban regions rather than staying in the rural side

Since women are the most vulnerable segment of the community the SSNRMP focused on the importance of women's active participation and the creation of approaches that are fully consistent with the GEF (Global Environment Facility) policy of Gender Mainstreaming and the World Bank Group's renewed Gender strategy.

While Morocco, Tunisia and Sudan, have made strides in integrating gender considerations into their climate change policies, an intersectional feminist critique reveals the nuanced challenges and gaps that need urgent attention. Tunisia's initiatives acknowledge women's vulnerability in the face of climate change but may need to address intersectional factors such as class and rural-urban disparities. Sudan, on the other hand, emphasizes gender equality in adaptation projects but must grapple with broader issues of women's limited access to decision-making and services. Lastly, Morocco's commendable efforts include legal reforms and gender-responsive plans, yet the intersectionality lens urges a closer examination of how these policies address the diverse experiences of women, considering factors like socioeconomic status and regional disparities.

An intersectional feminist perspective underscores the importance of dismantling interconnected systems of oppression to truly achieve climate justice and gender equality in these nations' policies. The countries in the SWANA region need to further prioritize gender-inclusive climate action, address intersectional factors affecting women's vulnerability, and ensure that policies and initiatives consider the diverse experiences of women, including socioeconomic status and regional disparities. This approach is essential to achieve meaningful and inclusive climate justice and gender equality in the region.



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SUDAN

Data from the survey and interviews underscores the crucial need for women in climate leadership, aligning with feminist goals of challenging gender stereotypes. Emphasizing the importance of creating spaces for women in traditionally male-dominated fields, particularly in Sudan's agricultural sectors, the discourse highlights SRHR as the foremost concern at the intersection of climate change and gender inequality. The urgency of addressing gender stereotypes, ensuring women's active participation in policy-making, and recognizing the unique challenges of climate change and SRHR is paramount.

"In Sudan, climate action is viewed from a very narrow perspective of green energy and ending dependence on fossil fuels", exclaimed one of the survey respondents. This indicates how there is a failure to recognize the specific vulnerabilities of women in the face of climate change and also how to involve them in decision-making processes for developing effective and equitable climate strategies.

When inquired about the current state of gender equality in the context of climate action in Sudan, another survey respondent answered:

Nonexistent, unjust and there is quite some room for development. Women are constantly being undermined and their work is almost always overlooked especially with the ongoing political disputes in Sudan.

intersection of gender and climate change may be limited, this cultural perception underscores the significance of incorporating women's perspectives and roles in environmental protection efforts, potentially providing a valuable foundation for more inclusive and effective climate action.

The collected data highlights the intricate interplay between climate change, gender inequality, and the imperative for an intersectional feminist approach to climate action in Sudan. The emphasis on SRHR as a pivotal concern at the convergence of climate change and gender inequality underscores the interrelated challenges at hand. The prevailing narrow focus on green energy and fossil fuel reduction in Sudan neglects the specific vulnerabilities of women to climate change and reflects an exclusionary approach in decision-making processes. Despite this, recognizing the cultural foundation that places the environment under the protection and care of women offers a potential starting point for more inclusive and effective climate action and social justice initiatives. To address climate change comprehensively, efforts must prioritize an understanding of diverse experiences, dismantle gender stereotypes, promote women's leadership, and foster inclusive policies that acknowledge and confront the distinctive challenges faced by women in Sudan within the context of climate change.



Interestingly, another survey respondent highlighted how despite the lack of the conceptual popularity of the nexus between climate change and gender in Sudan, "the environment and earth, in general, are considered under the protection and care of women." This perspective likely reflects the acknowledgment of women's traditional roles in tasks related to resource management, agriculture, and the general well-being of communities. While formal discussions about the

Zenab for Women in Development

Zenab for Women in Development, a national non-governmental organization in Sudan, has implemented a transformative agricultural program empowering women as "game changers" to build resilient livelihoods in the face of the ongoing climate crisis.

Recognizing the pivotal role of women in addressing climate change and improving food security, the initiative provides female farmers with comprehensive training, climate-resilient agricultural packages, and improved seed varieties. Over 42,000 individuals, including 5,330 female-headed households, have benefited from improved food security, strengthened climate resilience, and increased agricultural productivity.

Through 'train the trainer' workshops, 73 women's associations have been established, fostering leadership and knowledge capacity among approximately 5,300 women. The project's holistic approach encompasses seed multiplication farms, breaking traditional barriers by empowering women with knowledge, resources, and independence, ultimately fostering gender equality and sustainable agricultural practices in Sudan.





MOROCCO

In examining Morocco's role in addressing the climate crisis, particularly through the lens of women's participation, the discourse reveals a nuanced landscape. The assertion that Morocco stands as a leader in which women actively contribute to climate solutions is supported by the notable representation of women in key ministerial roles. However, adopting an intersectional feminist perspective prompts a critical inquiry into the inclusion of indigenous voices, particularly given their disproportionate vulnerability during climate crises, as witnessed in the tragic earthquakes of September 2023.

One interviewee pointed out that Morocco is a leading country in which women play a pivotal role in tackling the climate crisis. This statement is supported by the fact the first minister for the Department of Water was a woman, as well as the current minister who leads the Ministry of Energy and Mines is a woman. As seen in the September 2023's deadly earthquakes in the country, the interviewee also calls on policymakers and people in power to adopt a bottom-up approach while making decisions, considering the voices of marginalised groups first, rather than a top-down approach.



One of the survey respondents stated, *"In recent years, Morocco has implemented initiatives and projects aimed at empowering women in climate change adaptation and mitigation. For example, the "Adaptation of African Agriculture" project focuses on building the capacity of rural women in climate-smart agriculture techniques, enabling them to adapt to climate change challenges effectively. Despite these efforts, challenges related to gender equality and climate action persist in Morocco. Women's representation and participation in decision-making processes and leadership roles in climate-related institutions can still be limited. Additionally, there might be gender disparities in access to resources, education, and training opportunities, which can hinder women's full involvement in climate action."* This underscores that issues such as limited representation in decision-making, leadership roles, and potential disparities in access to resources highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of intersecting factors like power dynamics, socio-economic status, and educational opportunities in addressing gender equality in climate initiatives.

While discussing the current state of gender equality in the context of climate action in Morocco, another survey respondent mentioned:

The gender disparities due to climate change are horrendous... From my experience in talking to the population in very remote areas in Morocco, women are the ones exclusively in charge of water, heating and agriculture. These three components are all directly impacted by climate change which is only making the situation worse and much harder to handle.

"In Morocco, like many other countries in Africa, the debate about gender egalitarianism in the context of climate action is unfortunately under-represented and under-debated in the academic and policy landscapes. So not much is known about the current and upcoming environmentally induced threats women in Africa are and will be faced with", exclaimed another survey respondent. These insights on gender disparities exacerbated by climate change in Morocco, indicate that urgent action is required. To bridge this gap, addressing patriarchal norms, amplifying indigenous voices, ensuring inclusive representation, and promoting gender equality in academic and policy discussions surrounding gender and climate justice is crucial.

Mahar Assahel Cooperative

The Mahar Assahel Cooperative, established in 2019, focuses on supporting local fisherwomen engaged in shellfish collection. The cooperative addresses their specific needs by providing essential resources such as transportation and workspace near the sea.

Emphasizing sustainable harvesting practices, Vice-President Fadma Ouchane highlights the use of fine blades to scrape shellfish while respecting the species' habitat. The cooperative plays a crucial role in processing and selling the collected shellfish, contributing to the fisherwomen's monthly income, which ranges from DH 200 to DH 300 (\$20-\$30).

A noteworthy aspect is the year-round nature of shellfish harvesting, providing a consistent income source. Despite modest earnings, the income helps supplement monthly finances and purchase food. Additionally, the shellfish serve as a valuable, protein-rich food source for the fisherwomen's families. Overall, the Mahar Assahel Cooperative's work revolves around empowering women, promoting sustainability, and contributing to both economic and nutritional well-being within the community.



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TUNISIA

The gathered data exposes a significant barrier hindering women's active involvement in climate-related endeavors in Tunisia—financial constraints. Economic limitations, particularly prevalent in the northwest region, compel girls to forsake education, reinforcing traditional gender roles and impeding women's knowledge and participation in climate initiatives. An interviewee from Tunisia shed light on how gender dynamics within the agricultural sector exacerbate these challenges, subjecting women to underpayment, mistreatment, and gender-based violence during transit to work sites. This perpetuates a cycle of economic dependence, constraining women's autonomy and impeding their engagement in climate initiatives.

Despite these obstacles, a positive development surfaced as the interviewee highlighted the active participation of women in climate action, constituting over 60% of the youth negotiation group—a commendable stride toward gender equality within the youth climate movement.

However, uncertainties persist regarding the inclusivity of this group, particularly concerning rural and underrepresented Tunisian women. Interestingly, a survey respondent expressed a contrasting view, perceiving a lack of gender equality in Tunisia's climate action leadership positions, predominantly occupied by men.

Effectively addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach that acknowledges and dismantles intersecting systems of oppression. Initiatives breaking financial barriers, providing educational opportunities, and supporting economic empowerment are essential to enhance women's representation in climate decision-making. This multifaceted strategy aligns with the call for targeted programs and capacity-building events to empower women, ensuring their meaningful participation in shaping a sustainable and equitable future. The emphasis lies in fostering a more inclusive and diverse climate action landscape that embraces the voices and experiences of all, regardless of gender or minority status.



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There's no gender quality in the context of climate action in Tunisia, the leadership positions are always occupied with men, so this program will define the gender equality in the context of climate action.

Association She is the Goal

She is the Goal is an organization based in Chenini-Gabes, dedicated to providing training for women leading environmental projects. Through its activities and projects, She is the Goal actively promotes the principles of social and solidarity economy. The association's focus is on supporting women, enabling them to establish decent living conditions for their families while simultaneously contributing to the improvement of their community.

Soumaya Razgallah, its President, emphasizes the importance of innovation, advising young people in their job search that opportunities for positive impact exist regardless of their specialty or expertise. She envisions expanding the reach of the association to other governorates, with the overarching goal of empowering more women and championing environmental initiatives.

The primary objective of "She is the Goal" is to assist women in enhancing and developing their self-esteem, fostering personal growth, and creating a positive impact on both individual lives and the community at large.





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Overall, these case studies collectively reinforce the idea that women are not just victims of climate change but are also powerful agents of change and resilience.

As they increasingly take on roles traditionally dominated by men, such as in agrarian labor and fisheries, women are proving indispensable in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Recognizing and supporting these efforts is crucial for achieving long-term sustainability and resilience in the face of global environmental challenges.

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Strengthen Legal Protections Against SGBV and Child Marriage in the Context of Climate Displacement:

Recognize the heightened vulnerability of women and girls to SGBV and child marriage in the context of climate-induced displacement. Strengthen legal frameworks to explicitly address and penalize acts of gender-based violence and child marriage in situations of environmental crisis. Ensure the provision of safe spaces, support services, and legal assistance for survivors, with a focus on the unique challenges faced by displaced populations.

2

Promote Comprehensive SRHR Education and Services in Climate-Affected Areas:

Implement targeted programs that provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education and services in climate-affected regions. This includes access to family planning, maternal health care and menstrual care. Empower women and girls to make informed choices about their reproductive health, especially in the face of climate-related challenges, and dismantle barriers to accessing these services.

3

Integrate Intersectional Approaches in Climate-Resilient Infrastructure Development:

Recognize the unique challenges faced by rural indigenous women in the planning and development of climate-resilient infrastructure. Incorporate an intersectional lens to address their specific needs and vulnerabilities arising from climate change impacts. Tailor infrastructure projects to consider gender-specific concerns such as access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and energy resources. Ensure that development initiatives are culturally sensitive, taking into account the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous communities while fostering resilience in the face of climate-related challenges.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

4 Promote Women's Leadership in Climate Decision-Making Bodies:

Advocate for increased representation of women, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, in climate decision-making bodies at local, national, and international levels. Promote gender-responsive policies that empower women to actively participate in shaping climate strategies and initiatives. Ensure that diverse voices and perspectives are heard in the formulation and implementation of climate policies.

5 Develop Gender-Responsive Climate Education Programs:

Implement education programs that integrate gender-sensitive and climate-resilient curricula at all levels of the education system. Foster awareness and understanding of the intersectionality between gender and climate change, encouraging a mindset shift toward sustainable practices. Empower young girls and boys with the knowledge and skills to contribute to climate resilience and challenge gender norms that perpetuate inequality.

6 Establish Early Warning Systems for Gender-Responsive Disaster and Conflict Preparedness:

Develop and implement early warning systems that are gender-responsive, inclusive, and address the specific challenges posed by both climate-related disasters and conflicts. Recognize the differentiated impact of these events on women and men, taking into account the intersecting vulnerabilities. Provide targeted information and resources to enhance the capacity of women to prepare for and respond to climate-related emergencies and conflicts, recognizing the complex dynamics that may exacerbate gender inequalities in times of crisis.

CONCLUSION



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This policy report underscores the pressing need for a comprehensive and intersectional approach to tackle the intricate challenges arising from the intersection of climate change and gender inequality in the SWANA region. The vulnerabilities laid bare by the climate crisis intensify existing gender injustices, impacting the health, safety, and overall well-being of women. In response, targeted policy measures are imperative.

Our research amplifies the voices of marginalized communities, highlighting the indispensable linkages between climate justice and gender equality. The challenges faced by SWANA nations call for inclusive, gender-responsive policies that acknowledge the unique nuances of each country, promoting resilience, sustainability, and gender equality in the face of a shifting climate.

In alignment with our recommendations, we emphasize the need for legal frameworks that advance gender and climate justice, while recognizing the necessity for ongoing refinement. By documenting inspiring case studies and best practices, we demonstrate the potential for positive change.

This policy report serves as a call to action, urging policymakers and stakeholders to adopt gender-sensitive, climate-aware policies. By embracing the recommendations we've outlined, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and sustainable future. The proposed interventions lay a foundation for policies that prioritize the well-being of all, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of a climate-resilient and gender-equitable future.

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