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Commission on the Status of Women Background Guide 2026

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Inés León Giménez and Assistant Director Rieke Langel (Conference A), and Director Catherine Tomczyk and Assistant Director Sabrina Lambrechts (Conference B). Inés (she/her) studies International Relations and Development at the Geneva Graduate Institute, majoring in Gender, Race, and Diversity and holds a triple master's degree in Political Science from Sciences Po Bordeaux, the University of Stuttgart, and LUISS Guido Carli. Her experience includes participating at CSW69, collaborating with UN Women, and working at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rieke studies International Organizations and Crisis Management at Friedrich Schiller University Jena and has a background in international relations and migration studies. Catherine received her MPA from the University of New Haven and currently works for the New York State Senate. Sabrina is a recent graduate of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University, where she studied Political Science and German language. Her academic interests center on climate-related displacement, global development policy, and the comparative analysis of social and political movements. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Ashlee Ann Rolheiser (Conference A) and Karla Paola Chávez (Conference B).

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Achieving Gender Equality through Access to Education in the Digital Age
2. Addressing the Gendered Impacts of Climate Change

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 PM ET on 1 March 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact the Deputy Secretaries-General at dsg.ny@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Inés León Giménez, Director
Rieke Langel, Assistant Director
Conference A

Catherine Tomczyk, Director
Sabrina Lambrechts, Assistant Director
Conference B



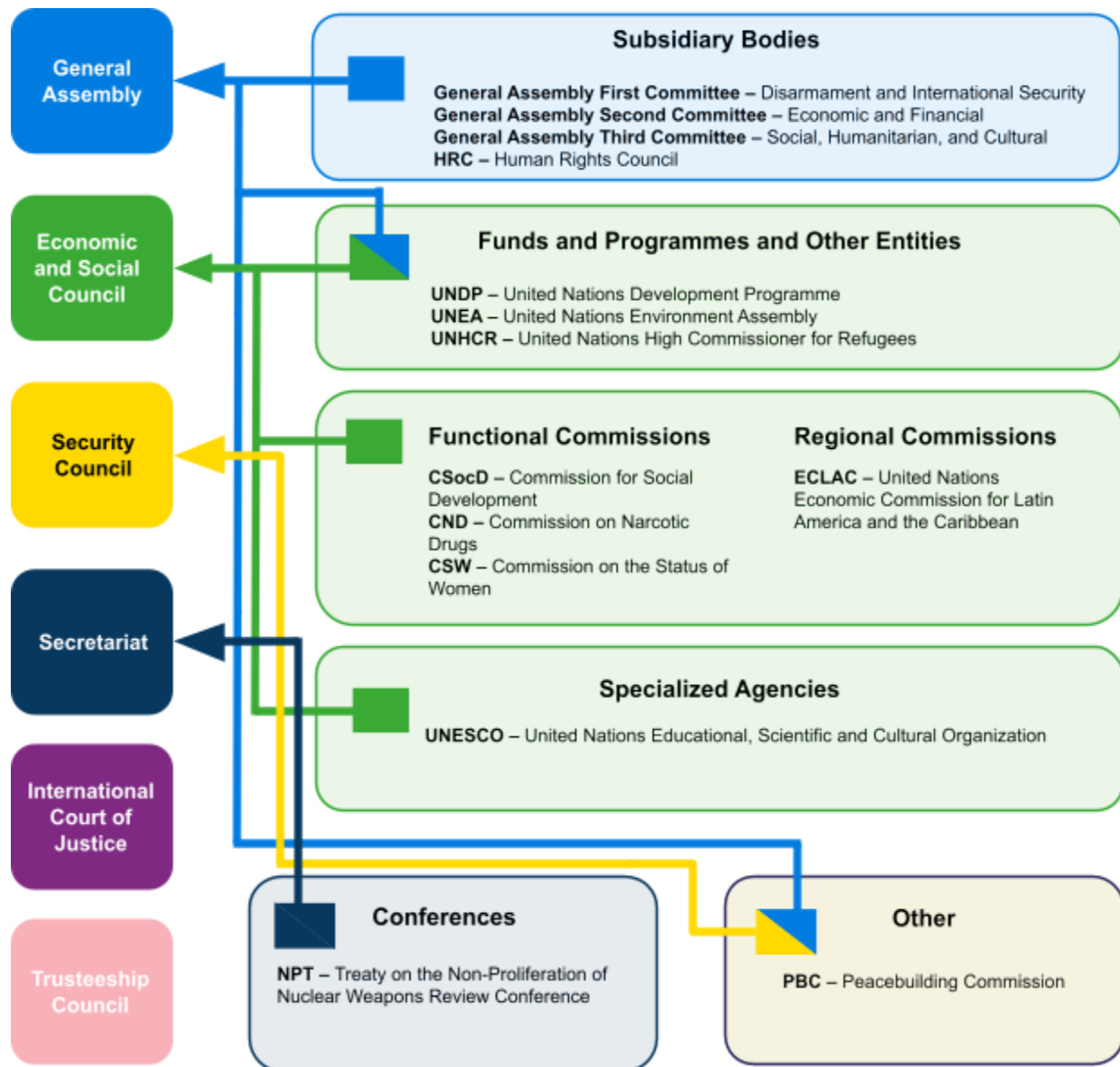
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN•NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the principal international body of the United Nations discussing women's empowerment and gender equality.¹ As such, CSW is the main forum to debate the ongoing progress of the creation and implementation of international norms and standards related to the advancement of women.² CSW's work is guided by the principles of the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, the 1993 *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, the 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA), and the outcome documents of the 23rd special session of the United Nations General Assembly, a follow-up to the BPfA titled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century."³ Each year, CSW reports to ECOSOC during the ECOSOC Management Session.⁴

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are intertwined with CSW's work on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment.⁵ While the overall work of CSW is closely aligned with SDG 5 (gender equality), women and girls' empowerment and gender equality are mainstreamed across several SDGs.⁶

Mandate, Function, and Powers

CSW provides policy guidance on gender equality and links women and girls' empowerment to sustainable development.⁷ The original mandate of CSW, adopted in 1946, was to provide "recommendations and reports to ECOSOC on promoting women's rights in political, economic, social, and educational fields... [and] urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights."⁸ This mandate was substantially expanded as a follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Women from 1975 to 1985 and the aforementioned conferences and sessions of the United Nations system.⁹

¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d.

² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A Brief History of the Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d.

³ Ibid. pp. 9-15; United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. 1995; United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/RES/55/71)*. 2000.

⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies*. N.d.

⁵ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2022/4)*. 2022. p. 2.

⁶ Ibid. p. 3.

⁷ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. pp. 156-157.

⁸ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Commission on the Status of Women (Res. 11(II))*. 1946. p. 525.

⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*. 2019. pp. 9-15; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2022/4)*. 2022. p. 2.



While the following list is not exhaustive, CSW's mandate can be summarized as:

- CSW **will generally**: outline international norms and standards and issue policy recommendations for gender equality; adopt agreed conclusions, declarations, and resolutions on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; advise intergovernmental bodies and Member States on gender mainstreaming; hold discussions on and track the progress on implementation of the BPfA.¹⁰
- CSW **will not generally**: implement or manage programs and projects on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment; support Member States, governments, and civil society in implementing programs and projects on gender equality.¹¹

Governance, Funding, and Structure

CSW consists of 45 Member States elected for four-year terms based on equitable geographical distribution.¹² The Chair and the four Vice-Chairs of CSW's Bureau rotate without specific geographical regulations and are elected for two-year terms.¹³

Each year in March, CSW holds its annual meetings to review progress, identify challenges, and develop policies on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment.¹⁴ For each annual meeting, CSW selects a priority theme related to its work, which is decided on in advance through its multi-year program of work.¹⁵ As the largest gathering on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment, CSW's annual session brings together governments, civil society, and other relevant actors to achieve gender equality.¹⁶ The outcome documents of CSW's annual sessions are referred to as agreed conclusions.¹⁷ Funding for CSW's annual meetings and other deliverables is provided by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) through the United Nations regular budget.¹⁸

¹⁰ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Report on the sixty-sixth session (26 March 2021 and 14–25 March 2022) (E/CN.6/2022/16)*. 2022; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d.; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*. N.d.; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. pp. 156-157.

¹¹ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. pp. 156-157; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Programme Implementation*. N.d.; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *About UN Women*. N.d.

¹² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d.

¹³ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. pp. 156-157.

¹⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Snapshot: What is CSW?* N.d.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Proposed programme budget for 2022 (A/76/6 Sect. 17)*. 2021.



UN Women hosts the Secretariat of CSW and provides guidance on operational activities aimed at the advancement of women.¹⁹ CSW and UN Women work closely together: CSW serves as the policy-making body, UN Women as the programmatic and implementation body.²⁰ UN Women supports the work of CSW substantively by providing annual documentation on critical areas of concern regarding gender equality and facilitates interaction between the commission and civil society organizations at its annual meetings.²¹ CSW also works closely with the General Assembly and ECOSOC.²²

¹⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A Short History on the Commission on the Status of Women*. 2019. pp. 8-10.

²⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Programme implementation*. N.d.; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Outcomes*. N.d.

²¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A Short History on the Commission on the Status of Women*. 2019. p. 9.

²² United Nations, General Assembly. *Proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017: Programme 14, Gender equality and empowerment of women (A/69/6 (Prog .14))*. 2014. p. 2.



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<https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2022/16>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies*. 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/content/ecosoc-subsidiary-bodies>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Commission on the Status of Women (Res. 11(II))*. 1946. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: [https://undocs.org/en/E/RES/11\(II\)](https://undocs.org/en/E/RES/11(II))

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council*. 1983. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from:

<https://undocs.org/en/E/5975/Rev.1>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2022/4)*. 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from:

<https://undocs.org/en/E/RES/2022/4>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A Brief History of the Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/brief-history>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *About UN Women*. N.d.

Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/hlpf-on-sustainable-development>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Member States*. N.d.

Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/member-states>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Outcomes*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/outcomes>

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Programme implementation*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/programme-implementation>



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*. 2019. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2019/A-short-history-of-the-CSW-en.pdf>

United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. 1995. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/RES/55/71)*. 2000. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/55/71>

United Nations, General Assembly. *Proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017: Programme 14, Gender equality and empowerment of women (A/69/6 (Prog.14))*. 2014. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: [http://undocs.org/en/A/69/6\(Prog.14\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/69/6(Prog.14))

United Nations, General Assembly. *Proposed programme budget for 2022 (A/76/6 Sect. 17)*. 2021. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: [https://undocs.org/en/A/76/6%20\(Sect.%2017\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/76/6%20(Sect.%2017))



1. Achieving Gender Equality through Access to Education in the Digital Age

Introduction

Achieving gender equality through education in the digital age represents a global priority for a more empowered and just future, according to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).²³ Gender equality is codified as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (gender equality) under the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), and aims to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and to ensure equal access to rights and services, including education and technology.²⁴ CSW and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endorse that gender equality, including, but not limited to, the educational and digital fields, is essential for the achievement of the SDGs.²⁵ While there is no explicit definition of the digital age from United Nations bodies, it is characterized by a rapid growth of digital technologies, engendering both unprecedented opportunities for social development for women and girls, but also new challenges.²⁶ Combining the use of digital technologies with digital literacy initiatives can contribute to gender equality by facilitating access to education.²⁷ Artificial Intelligence (AI), a term depicting machine-based predictive systems based on human-defined objectives, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), can propose context-specific solutions, which can further women's and girls' access to education.²⁸ However, the digital age encompasses diverse challenges for women and girls, including the gender digital divide and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), affecting their ability to access education through digital tools as they have less access to the digital space and can face a continuum of online-offline violence.²⁹

²³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. CSW67: Agreed Conclusions*. 2023. p. 2.

²⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. N.d.

²⁵ Global Goals. *Goal 5: Gender equality*. N.d.; United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. CSW67: Agreed Conclusions*. 2023. p. 2; United Nations Children's Fund South Asia. *Gender equality: Glossary of terms and concepts*. 2017. p. 3; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. N.d.; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Telling SAGA: improving measurement and policies for gender equality in science, technology and innovation*. 2018. p. 27; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Gender Snapshot 2024*. 2024. p. 5.

²⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Digital Age: Transforming Social Development*. 2024; United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. *International Women's Day: Innovation and technology for gender equality*. 2023.

²⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Digital Age: Transforming Social Development*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Press release: UN Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the role of technology and innovation, and education in the digital age in accelerating gender equality*. 2023.

²⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Digital Age: Transforming Social Development*. 2024; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization et al. *The Effects of AI on the Working Lives of Women*. 2022. pp. 9-10.

²⁹ United Nations Children's Fund East Asia and Pacific. *Girls' Digital Literacy in the East Asia and Pacific Region*. 2023, p. 19; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Digital Age: Transforming Social Development*. 2024; United Nations Population Fund. *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: A Growing Threat*. 2025.



The digitalization of education causes challenges, especially for women and girls, due to various factors, such as the gender digital divide.³⁰ The gender digital divide refers to the differentiated ability to access and use digital devices and information and communication technologies (ICT), where women and girls are more exposed to exclusion.³¹ Sociocultural norms, gendered educational practices, and material conditions can negatively impact the ability of women and girls to access these tools and acquire digital skills.³² As a result of the gender digital divide, women and girls have less access to digital spaces, which refer to social circles on the Internet where people, especially youth, gather and share, enabling feelings of belonging and community.³³ Another effect of the gender digital divide is a gendered gap in access to digital literacy, referring to the ability to confidently and critically use and engage with the digital space by searching, analyzing, and sharing information through the use of network-connected devices.³⁴ To address unequal access to digital literacy, digital inclusion emerges as an intersectional practice, focusing on the equitable access, use, and design of digital technologies, providing opportunities for everyone, including women and girls.³⁵

Education in the digital age represents an opportunity for women's and girls' empowerment.³⁶ Education is a driver of gender equality, as it conveys ideas, attitudes, and behaviors regarding gender roles in society, which can help address and dismantle harmful gender stereotypes.³⁷ Contemporary education, shaped by the digital transformation, creates challenges that disproportionately affect women and girls.³⁸ As 133 million girls are not enrolled in school, and two-thirds of illiterate adults are women, initiatives specifically focusing on gender inequity in education represent avenues towards improvement.³⁹ Gender-sensitive, -responsive, and -transformative approaches are useful tools to address such educational and technological gaps.⁴⁰ While gender-sensitive programming recognizes the different needs of men and women, gender-responsive programming includes targeted action to reduce gender inequality, and gender-transformative programming addresses root causes of gender inequality.⁴¹ A gender-responsive education, actively promoting girls' empowerment, including but not limited to the use of digital tools, is a pathway for a more equal representation of women in science, technology,

³⁰ United Nations Children's Fund. *Policy brief: Gender-responsive remote digital learning*. N.d. p. 1; United Nations Children's Fund. *COVID-19 and education: The gender digital divide among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa*. 2020; United Nations Children's Fund. *Remote learning and digital connectivity*. 2021.

³¹ Women in Digital Transformation. *What is the Gender Digital Divide Index?*. 2025.

³² Ibid.

³³ Melvin. *Digital tools, spaces, and places - mediators of youth work practice*. 2018.

³⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Digital literacy assessment*. 2023. pp. 4-9.

³⁵ United Nations, Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies. *Digital Inclusion*. N.d. p. 2.

³⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Gender Snapshot 2024*. 2024. p. 5.

³⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Gender equality and education*. N.d.; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *What you need to know about how UNESCO advances education and gender equality*. 2025.

³⁸ Global Partnership for Education. *Gender equality policy and strategy 2016-2020*. 2016. pp. 2-3; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Asia and the Pacific. *Asia's digital revolution must not leave its women and girls behind*. 2023.

³⁹ United Nations Children's Fund. *Girls' education*. N.d.; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *What you need to know about how UNESCO advances education and gender equality*. 2025.

⁴⁰ United Nations Population Fund et al. *Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change Phase III (2018-2021)*. 2021. p. 2.

⁴¹ Ibid.



engineering, and mathematics (STEM).⁴² Promoting girls' education, including in fields where they are underrepresented, such as STEM, is a way to help close the educational gap in the digital era.⁴³

International and Regional Framework

The international community highlights education as a contributor to achieving gender equality and the rights of women and girls.⁴⁴ International human rights law links gender equality with education in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR).⁴⁵ Article 2 prohibits discrimination based on sex, while the Preamble emphasizes that education is a tool to promote respect for these rights.⁴⁶ Article 3 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966) declares that all rights shall be guaranteed without any kind of discrimination, such as discrimination based on sex, while Article 13 recognizes the right to education, highlighting as well the need for available and accessible technical education.⁴⁷ The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (1979) expresses women's right to freedom of discrimination in education in Article 10, which includes the right to freedom from gendered stereotypes.⁴⁸ The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (Beijing Declaration) (1995) underlines women's right to education as a human right, further pointing out how teaching materials can reproduce gender-bias and how mass media holds great educational potential.⁴⁹

Gender equality and education are interconnected objectives and an instrument for achieving the SDGs.⁵⁰ The 2030 Agenda positions gender equality as a specific objective and as a means of achieving all SDGs, with SDG 5 aiming to achieve gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, as outlined in target 5.8 on "enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women."⁵¹ In order to achieve target 4.3 on "ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university," progress can be made by addressing education quality and access issues where gender, geography, and socio-economic status intersect.⁵²

⁴² Equals Global Partnership. *eSkills4Girls Fund*. 2025; United Nations Children's Fund. *Policy brief: Gender-responsive remote digital learning*. N.d. p. 3.

⁴³ United Nations Children's Fund. *Towards an equal future: Reimagining girls' education through STEM*. 2020. pp. 6-11.

⁴⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 17.

⁴⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966.

⁴⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979. p. 4.

⁴⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*. 1995. pp. 45-46.

⁵⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 17-18.

⁵¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.; Global Goals. *Goal 5: Gender equality*. N.d.

⁵² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.; Global Goals. *Goal 4: Quality education*. N.d.; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*. p. 17.



General Assembly resolution 79/1 on “The Pact for the Future” (PFTF) and the *Global Digital Compact* (GDC) (2024) build the nexus between gender equality and digital technologies.⁵³ Action 31 of the PFTF highlights the importance of harnessing technology, science, and innovation as drivers of gender equality.⁵⁴ The PFTF emphasizes the gender digital divide and how technology can exacerbate gender inequality through discrimination or bias, while committing the States parties to addressing these gendered issues through fostering the inclusion of women and girls in science, technology, and innovation.⁵⁵ Objective 1 of the GDC commits to closing the gender digital divide and increasing efforts towards reaching the SDGs, through women’s and girls’ empowerment and their equal participation in digital spaces.⁵⁶ Objective 3 calls for the creation of a digital space that is inclusive, safe, and respectful of human rights, as digital technologies have the potential to produce or amplify gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination.⁵⁷

Multiple regional frameworks address women’s educational rights and strive towards ending the discrimination against women through education.⁵⁸ The *Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1952) of the Council of Europe guarantees women the right to education as a human right.⁵⁹ The *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003) recognizes women’s right to education and acknowledges the role of educational materials and media in reproducing gendered stereotypes and in promoting gender equality by addressing harmful socio-economic norms and practices affecting women.⁶⁰ The Council of Europe’s *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (2011) commits States parties to fostering education that promotes gender equality in Article 14, while Article 17 highlights the role of the media in preventing violence against women.⁶¹ Additionally, the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* (1994) highlights that education has the potential to change social and cultural norms, therefore ensuring the protection of women’s human rights.⁶²

Role of the International System

CSW is the principal international body committed to achieving gender equality, including through education, equal digital access, and safe digital use.⁶³ The *CSW67 Agreed Conclusions* (2023) highlight the important nexuses, challenges, and solutions in terms of access to education and digital skills for

⁵³ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future* (A/RES/79/1). 2024. p. 25.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 39.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 43.

⁵⁸ African Union. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. 2003. pp. 13-14; Council of Europe. *The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*. 2011.

⁵⁹ Council of Europe. *Protocol to the Convention Protocol for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. 1952. p. 3.

⁶⁰ African Union. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. 2003. pp. 13-14.

⁶¹ Council of Europe. *The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*. 2011. p. 3.

⁶² Organization of American States. *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women*. 1994.

⁶³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women*. N.d.



women's and girls' empowerment.⁶⁴ The *Political Declaration on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (Beijing+30 Political Declaration) (2025) further emphasized the need to provide girls with access to quality education and to digital tools and training in order to advance gender equality in Clause 11.⁶⁵ The Political Declaration also underscores the need to ensure a violence-free digital world for women and girls, and to close the gender digital divide through public-private partnerships or international cooperation.⁶⁶

Both CSW and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) foster multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance gender equality in the digital age.⁶⁷ Events like the CSW67 intergenerational panel discussion "Rethinking How to Bridge the Gender Digital Divide" and "Digital Solutions for Gender Equality and SRHR," hosted at CSW69, provide platforms for Member States and international organizations to exchange experiences, share best practices, and develop new partnerships.⁶⁸ Additionally, the EQUALS partnership gathers the International Telecommunication Union, UN Women, and other stakeholders, aiming to provide women and girls with digital skills.⁶⁹ UN Women also convened the Generation Equality Forum in 2021, where stakeholders addressed contemporary gender equality issues, such as the gender digital divide, through Action Coalitions, including a forum on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality.⁷⁰ The *Action Coalitions' Global Acceleration Plan* identifies actions committed to bridging the gender digital divide, increasing investments in feminist technology and innovation.⁷¹ Other key agenda items included building inclusive innovation systems and combating TFGBV.⁷²

Various United Nations entities work to promote gender equality via education and digital access, as it relates to other action areas such as supporting children or preserving culture.⁷³ UNESCO highlights the gender digital divide and proposes programmes to help close it, as highlighted during its side event at CSW69 on "Achieving gender equality in the digital age."⁷⁴ Further, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) puts forward pathways to guarantee digital learning for girls through initiatives aimed at

⁶⁴ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls: CSW67 Agreed Conclusions*. 2023. p. 2.

⁶⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Political declaration on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2025/L.1)*. 2025. p. 4.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

⁶⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *About Us*. 2025.

⁶⁸ Delegation of the European Union in New York. *Rethinking How to Bridge the Gender Digital Divide*. 2023; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW69 Side Event Schedule*. N.d.

⁶⁹ International Telecommunication Union. *Bridging the gender digital divide*. 2023.

⁷⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Placing Gender Equality at the Heart of the Global Digital Compact*. 2024. p. 3.

⁷¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Action Coalitions Global Acceleration Plan*. 2021. pp. 104-120.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ United Nations Children's Fund. *Advancing Girls' Education and Gender Equality through Digital Learning*. 2021. p. 3; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *I'd Blush if I Could: Closing Gender Divides in Digital Skills Through Education*. 2019. p. 15.

⁷⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *I'd Blush if I Could: Closing Gender Divides in Digital Skills Through Education*. 2019. pp. 39-41; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Advancing gender equality in the digital age at CSW69*. 2025.



increasing the accessibility of digital learning solutions and empowering girls in STEM.⁷⁵ Together with UNICEF Europe and UNICEF Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme initiated the joint platform STEM4ALL, a virtual space where women and girls, policy-makers, and the private sector can share advocacy, research, and news to promote gender equality in STEM.⁷⁶ Identifiably, there is a need for more reliable data from Member States to assess gender gaps in science.⁷⁷

Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) support fostering gender equality through digital education by initiating programs to close the gender digital divide and ensure equal representation in STEM.⁷⁸ NGO, such as Plan International and the Women Leaders Network for Development, play a key role in closing the gender digital divide by providing girls with digital literacy skills through capacity building, mentorship programs, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.⁷⁹ International and regional NGOs, like Women in STEM and Women in Tech Africa, aim to reduce gender inequality in the field by encouraging girls to engage with science through mentorship initiatives, digital capacity training for women, and sparking girls' interest in STEM.⁸⁰ The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) harnesses the impactful role education can have in shaping sociocultural norms for the advancement of gender equality in the digital era.⁸¹

Gender Equality in the Digital Space: Addressing the Gender Digital Divide

The gender digital divide describes the multidimensional gap between men's and women's ability to access and use the Internet and digital technologies, take part in their development, and benefit from them.⁸² The gender digital divide manifests in access to material means, such as owning a mobile phone or accessing the Internet, but also encompasses how girls are less likely to progress to more advanced digital competencies.⁸³ While the access of women to digital technologies has increased recently, the gendered gap in digital skills persists.⁸⁴ The digital access gap is most prevalent in the Global South, with infrastructure, devices, and data being less affordable to women due to income disparities, especially women in rural and remote populations such as Indigenous, displaced, or refugee communities.⁸⁵ Without advanced digital skills, women are less likely to pursue a career in STEM and be involved in the

⁷⁵ United Nations Children's Fund. *Advancing Girls' Education and Gender Equality through Digital Learning*. 2021. pp. 2-3.

⁷⁶ United Nations Development Programme et al. *About STEM4ALL*. 2025.

⁷⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *UNESCO Call to Action: Closing the gender gap in science*. 2024. p. 3.

⁷⁸ Plan International. *Bridging the digital gender divide*. 2025; Women Leaders Network for Development. *Closing the Gender Digital Divide in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Transformative Approach to Digital Inclusion*. 2024.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Women in Tech Africa. *About Women in Tech Africa*. N.d.; Women in STEM. *Our Vision*. N.d.

⁸¹ Forum for African Women Educationalists. *Gender-Responsive Pedagogy*. 2024.

⁸² United Nations Children's Fund East Asia and Pacific. *Girls' Digital Literacy in the East Asia and Pacific Region*. 2023. p. 19; Women in Digital Transformation. *What is the Gender Digital Divide Index?*. 2022.

⁸³ United Nations Children's Fund East Asia and Pacific. *Girls' Digital Literacy in the East Asia and Pacific Region*. 2023. pp. 6-7.

⁸⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. 6.

⁸⁵ Ibid.; Women Leaders Network for Development. *Closing the Gender Digital Divide in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Transformative Approach to Digital Inclusion*. 2024; United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls: CSW67 Agreed Conclusions*. 2023. p. 18.



development of innovation and technology, such as AI and predictive algorithms, which can lead to gender-based discrimination through innovation and technology, reinforcing discriminatory sociocultural norms.⁸⁶ At CSW67, the UN Women Executive Director highlighted CSW's leading role in addressing the gender digital divide through developing norms and standards for the international community.⁸⁷

Sociocultural norms negatively affect the interests and aspirations of women and girls, reinforcing the gender digital divide.⁸⁸ Gender stereotypes can cause a lack of motivation, interest, and confidence for women and girls, thus diminishing technology-related aspirations and learning opportunities for girls.⁸⁹ The results of international educational surveys, such as "Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study," revealed that girls tend to be less confident than boys in subjects such as mathematics, therefore, deterring their performance and interest.⁹⁰ Additionally, low performance expectations from teachers and parents can reinforce gender segregation.⁹¹ Stereotypes can also lead to restrictions being imposed, such as caretakers restricting the access of girls to digital tools, furthering the gender digital divide.⁹² Sociocultural norms can be addressed through educational efforts, addressing both internalized biases and stereotypes of women and girls and teachers, and their teaching materials.⁹³ Further, the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality, supported by CSW and UNESCO, urges Member States to review learning and teaching materials to prevent the reproduction of negative gender biases.⁹⁴

While digital technologies represent educational opportunities for women and girls, they also generate gendered challenges, including TFGBV.⁹⁵ Radio, television, or mobile phones can create a safe and confidential environment in which women and girls, especially in remote locations or crisis contexts, can receive education, including sexual education.⁹⁶ Simultaneously, technology increases the risk of exacerbating harmful gender norms, as UNESCO found that girls and non-binary students are more often victims of cyberbullying or image abuse than boys.⁹⁷ To use the full potential of digital technologies, UNESCO identified the value of addressing the lack of diversity among developers of such technologies

⁸⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. 6.

⁸⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW67 opening statement: Digital rights are women's rights*. 2023.

⁸⁸ United Nations Children's Fund. *Advancing Girls' Education and Gender Equality through Digital Learning*. 2021. p. 1.

⁸⁹ United Nations Children's Fund East Asia and Pacific. *Girls' Digital Literacy in the East Asia and Pacific Region*. 2023. p. 7.

⁹⁰ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Supporting girls' and women to pursue STEM subjects and careers: advocacy brief*. 2024. p. 1.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 2.

⁹² United Nations Children's Fund East Asia and Pacific. *Girls' Digital Literacy in the East Asia and Pacific Region*. 2023. p. 9.

⁹³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Supporting girls' and women to pursue STEM subjects and careers: advocacy brief*. 2024. pp. 4-6.

⁹⁴ Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality. *About*. N.d.; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Supporting girls' and women to pursue STEM subjects and careers: advocacy brief*. 2024. p. 6.

⁹⁵ United Nations Children's Fund. *Advancing Girls' Education and Gender Equality through Digital Learning*. 2021. p. 1; United Nations Population Fund. *Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: A Growing Threat*. 2025.

⁹⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender report – Technology on her terms*. 2024. p. 38.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 3.



and educating students about stereotypical gender norms that may be reinforced through the use of technology.⁹⁸ At CSW67, multiple side events discussed the nexus between gender-based violence and the digital world, bringing together government officials, international organizations, and civil society organizations.⁹⁹ Generation Equality Action Coalitions on Gender-Based Violence and on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality both address TFGBV through initiatives supported by UN Women.¹⁰⁰ In their work with civil society, governments, and tech platforms, Women's Rights Online advocates for more inclusive digital policies that center education and the protection of women's rights online as core tools to closing the gender digital divide.¹⁰¹

Fostering the Inclusion of Women and Girls in STEM

Women are globally underrepresented in STEM higher education and careers, which can reinforce gender inequalities and stereotypes.¹⁰² Data collected by OECD indicates that the highest gap in degree enrollment between men and women is in technical and technological sciences.¹⁰³ UNESCO reports that women make up only 35% of STEM graduates between 2018 and 2025, leading to an under-representation of women in STEM careers.¹⁰⁴ The resulting gender imbalance bears the potential to increase or create discrimination and biases in technology design and implementation.¹⁰⁵ UNESCO describes STEM careers as the jobs of the future, holding the potential to drive innovation, social well-being, inclusive growth, and sustainable development, which is why involving women in the development of future technologies can support a more inclusive digital future for all.¹⁰⁶ At CSW69, the African Union hosted a multi-stakeholder discussion "Girls and Women's STEM education: Moving the needle Beyond Beijing+30", calling for greater focus and investment in girls' STEM education, especially in African States.¹⁰⁷

Early efforts to overcome STEM gender bias during the first years of formal education have the potential to improve girls' access to STEM.¹⁰⁸ Research by UN Women Europe and Central Asia identifies that addressing women's and girls' self-confidence in STEM through workshops in formal education settings

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 51.

⁹⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW67 Side Event Schedule*. 2023.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Repository of UN Women's work on technology-facilitated gender-based violence (March 2025)*. 2025. p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Women's Rights Online. *Digital Divide*. 2024.

¹⁰² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. iv.

¹⁰³ United Nations Development Programme. *Women in STEM. The Journey of Women in STEM - Insights and Recommendations from North Macedonia*. 2022. p. 4; World Economic Forum. *Global Gender Gap Report 2022*. 2022. p. 42.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender report – Technology on her terms*. 2024. p. 3; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Artificial Intelligence*. N.d.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Artificial intelligence in education*. N.d.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Girls' and Women's Education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*. N.d.

¹⁰⁷ African Union. *CSW69: Multi-Stakeholders Discuss Strategic Ways to Move the Needle Beyond Beijing+30 in Girls and Women's STEM Education*. 2025.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Supporting girls' and women to pursue STEM subjects and careers: advocacy brief*. 2024. p. 1.



offers positive learning experiences for women students in relation to computer science.¹⁰⁹ NGOs like Women in STEM or Women in Tech Africa hold workshops and extra-curricular activities in primary schools to interest young women students in STEM.¹¹⁰ The UNICEF toolkit for educators on gender-responsive digital pedagogies aims to create more inclusive classrooms by implementing and mainstreaming gender-sensitive curricula and teaching methods, in line with CSW67 recommendations.¹¹¹ Similarly, FAWE's Gender-Responsive Pedagogy model aims to develop gender-sensitive teaching methods without reproducing gender differentials in education.¹¹²

AI has the potential to be a unique tool for digital learning, furthering gender equality if current gendered challenges, such as the gender digital skills gap, are addressed successfully.¹¹³ By acting as a virtual tutor, being adaptable to individual learners' needs, and filling gaps in resource-restrained areas, AI has the potential to make education more accessible and inclusive.¹¹⁴ Simultaneously, AI remains less accessible to women due to the gender digital skills gap.¹¹⁵ UNESCO sees governments, NGOs, trade unions, and academia as responsible for supporting women workers in developing digital skills that will help them access the STEM and AI fields.¹¹⁶ The gender imbalance in STEM, specifically technology, can be addressed through direct opportunities, such as prizes and awards, mentorship programs, or capacity development initiatives supporting women in their new skills development or business development.¹¹⁷ Further, UNESCO's multi-stakeholder collaborative platform, Women4Ethical AI, offers support for the public and private sector on ensuring an equal representation of women in the development and use of AI and the promotion of inclusive, non-discriminating AI systems, supporting gender-transformative educational efforts.¹¹⁸

Gender-sensitive training for STEM professionals can create a more inclusive work environment, preventing women from leaving the technology sector.¹¹⁹ UN Women identifies that technology workplaces can be uncomfortable environments for women and minorities, due to prevailing

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Europe and Central Asia. *Gender Gap in the STEM Fields and Proposed Intervention Programmes*. 2020. p. 100.

¹¹⁰ Women in STEM. *Our Vision*. N.d.; Women in Tech Africa. *About Women in Tech Africa*. N.d.

¹¹¹ United Nations Children's Fund. *Gender-Responsive Digital Pedagogies: A Guide for educators*. 2022. pp. 10-36.

¹¹² Forum for African Women Educationalists. *Gender-Responsive Pedagogy*. 2024.

¹¹³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Artificial intelligence in education*. N.d.

¹¹⁴ Safe Sustainable World. *Can AI help us achieve the SDGs?*. 2025.

¹¹⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *The Effects of AI on the Working Lives of Women*. 2022. p. 9; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. 6.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *The Effects of AI on the Working Lives of Women*. 2022. p. 9.

¹¹⁷ United Nations Development Programme Asia and the Pacific. *Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in the Asia Pacific*. 2024. pp. 52-53; Women in Tech Africa. *2021 Women in Tech Africa Awards*. 2021.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Artificial Intelligence - Women4EthicalAI*. N.d.

¹¹⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Sticking points in STEM*. 2019; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. 23.



micro-aggressions, subconscious biases, or sexual harassment.¹²⁰ A study conducted in the United States of America found that 40% of women working in engineering and technology exit their careers within the first five years.¹²¹ UNESCO affirms that organizational change and gender-sensitive training is needed to create more inviting work environments for women in STEM.¹²² UN Women encourages colleagues who identify as men to be strong allies, adhering to zero-tolerance policies for sexual harassment.¹²³ UN Women uses their Women Empowerment Principles, which provides guiding principles for the private sector on how to empower women in the workplace, to develop training materials and male allyship manuals to be used by technology companies to foster more gender-inclusive workplaces.¹²⁴

Despite efforts by the international community to address the current gender inequality in STEM education and research in the digital age, the need for more research persists.¹²⁵ In addition to women's underrepresentation in STEM higher education and careers, women are less likely to publish, receive lower payments for their research, and progress slower in their STEM careers than men.¹²⁶ To address the underrepresentation of women in science and technology at all levels of education and research, UNESCO launched the global STEM and Gender Advancement (SAGA) project, which aims to offer tools for policy-makers.¹²⁷ SAGA explores relevant policies affecting gender equality and aims to develop indicators for the study of this issue, as global guidelines are currently missing.¹²⁸ As the need for reliable and relevant data persists, the search for global guidelines on how to ensure gender equality throughout all levels of education and research remains ongoing.¹²⁹

Conclusion

Achieving gender equality through access to education in the digital age requires addressing structural barriers affecting women and girls in their ability to access digital skills and tools, as well as technological careers.¹³⁰ Challenges such as the material difficulty to access digital tools, the reproduction of gender biases in educational settings, and the lack of women representation in STEM, especially women experiencing multiple forms of discrimination, can be addressed by CSW by engaging with existing

¹²⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. 11.

¹²¹ Fouad et al. *Women's Reasons for Leaving the Engineering Field*. 2017. p. 4.

¹²² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Telling SAGA: improving measurement and policies for gender equality in science, technology and innovation*. 2018. p. 72.

¹²³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Sticking points in STEM*. 2019; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. 23.

¹²⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Transforming Patriarchal Masculinities: Learning from Practice*. 2024. p. 30.

¹²⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Telling SAGA: improving measurement and policies for gender equality in science, technology and innovation*. 2018. p. 21.

¹²⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Sticking points in STEM*. 2019.

¹²⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Telling SAGA: improving measurement and policies for gender equality in science, technology and innovation*. 2018. p. 21.

¹²⁸ Ibid. pp. 21, 68.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 68.

¹³⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Statement: Digital skills for life*. 2023.



frameworks such as the *Beijing Declaration*, the *Beijing+30 Political Declaration*, and the *PFTF*.¹³¹ Avenues for addressing TFGBV and equal participation of women in STEM development at CSW have been outlined within Generation Equality Action Coalitions and CSW67 Agreed Conclusions.¹³²

Member States have the opportunity to improve access to education and to digital literacy for women and girls by supporting gender-responsive and gender-transformative education in order to achieve SDG 5 before 2030.¹³³ For Member States to successfully implement these approaches, there is a need for more reliable gender-disaggregated data and improved measurement tools, as highlighted by the SAGA project.¹³⁴

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can CSW promote the harnessing of digital tools and skills in educational settings while closing the gender digital gap? How can Member States collaborate in a multi-stakeholder approach in order to address TFGBV in educational settings? What educational initiatives are being led at a local and national level to increase women's representation in STEM studies and careers? What policy recommendations could be imagined at CSW for Member States to ensure a fair representation of women and girls in STEM from primary education to formal employment?

¹³¹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Political declaration on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2025/L.1)*. 2025. p. 4; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. iv.

¹³² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Political declaration on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2025/L.1)*. 2025. p. 4; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. 2020. p. iv.

¹³³ Equals Global Partnership. *Her Digital Skills*. 2022; Forum for African Women Educationalists. *Gender Responsive Pedagogy - A Toolkit for Teachers and Schools*. 2018. pp. 3-6.

¹³⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Telling SAGA: improving measurement and policies for gender equality in science, technology and innovation*. 2018. pp. 21, 68.



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2. Addressing the Gendered Impacts of Climate Change

“Everywhere, women and girls are taking action to confront the climate and environmental crises.”¹³⁵

Introduction

The climate crisis plays a unique role in gender inequality.¹³⁶ Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns and is a global crisis with far-reaching consequences.¹³⁷ Climate change is a threat multiplier, meaning that, in addition to extreme weather events, it magnifies the impact of other factors that lead to displacement, such as poverty, loss of livelihoods, increased competition for resources, and, ultimately, conditions that increase conflict.¹³⁸ The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) defines climate adaptation as adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to expected climatic shifts and their effects.¹³⁹ Climate resilience is often used as a marker of sustainable development, referring to the capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with, respond to, and recover from climate-related hazardous events.¹⁴⁰ Climate displacement refers to the forced or voluntary movement of people who must leave their homes due to the effects of climate change.¹⁴¹ The term “climate refugee” is often used to describe people displaced due to climate change; however, the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* does not recognize such persons as refugees.¹⁴² While climate change affects everyone in different ways, it deepens existing social, economic, and political inequalities, particularly for women and girls.¹⁴³ Gender disparities compound these impacts, reflecting structural inequalities and underscoring the urgent need to achieve gender equality, which means valuing the roles and rights of all genders equally in society.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, climate finance is the allocation of funding to mitigate and adapt to climate change and often overlooks gender equity in these plans, leaving women and marginalized groups without adequate support despite being disproportionately affected.¹⁴⁵

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change due to existing social, economic, and political inequalities.¹⁴⁶ According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), women are 14 times more likely than men to die in a natural disaster, which are increasing in rate and destruction due to

¹³⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *We Must Push Back against Anti-Rights Pushback, Secretary-General Stresses in Opening Remarks to Commission on Status of Women*. 2022.

¹³⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *What Is Climate Change?*. N.d.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Siegfried. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. *Climate Change and Displacement: The Myths and the Facts*. 2023.

¹³⁹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Introduction*. N.d.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Climate Action Pathway Climate Resilience: Executive Summary*. N.d.

¹⁴¹ Global Refuge. *Resources, updates, and information from Global Refuge on climate displacement*. 2025.

¹⁴² Siegfried. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Climate change and displacement: the myths and the facts*. 2023.

¹⁴³ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Five ways the climate crisis impacts human security*. N.d.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Children’s Fund. *Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts*. 2017. p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Introduction to Climate Finance*. N.d.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How Gender Inequality and Climate Change are Interconnected*. 2025.



climate change.¹⁴⁷ Gender-responsiveness refers to the creation of environments that reflect an understanding of the realities of women's lives and the capacity to analyse policy from a gendered perspective.¹⁴⁸ Globally, more women than men experience food insecurity and are more likely to be displaced, suffer pollution-related illnesses, lose income, and face increased rates of gender-based violence (GBV) during and after climate-related disasters.¹⁴⁹ According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), GBV entails any harm or threat of harm inflicted on a person because of male-female power imbalances entrenched within a society, and often spikes in the aftermath of environmental emergencies due to weakened social protections and insufficient response planning that fails to account for the needs of women and girls.¹⁵⁰ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) identifies environmentally caused migration as a gendered process and acknowledges the disproportionate burden put on women in particular, including that women are more vulnerable to risks such as abuse, discrimination, exploitation, GBV, and at a higher risk of being trafficked, all of which can impact sexual and reproductive health services.¹⁵¹

International and Regional Framework

The United Nations has adopted numerous mechanisms that strive to significantly expand women's access to justice at the international level, often highlighting the gendered impacts of climate change.¹⁵² This effort was first reflected in the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), which laid the groundwork for international commitments to gender equality.¹⁵³ Later, the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1999) further strengthened these commitments by highlighting the gendered dimensions of disaster risk reduction (DRR).¹⁵⁴ Building on the foundation of CEDAW, the UNFCCC set the framework for global climate action, and its subsequent *Gender Action Plan* (GAP) promoted gender-responsive climate policy and the equal participation of women in climate action through the prioritization of monitoring and reporting, capacity and knowledge building, gender balance, women's participation and leadership, and gender-responsive implementation.¹⁵⁵ Expanding on these priorities, the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2015) highlights the disproportionate impact of climate change-induced disasters on women and girls and advocates for a gender-responsive approach to DRR governance that prioritizes understanding disaster risk, investing in resilience, and enhancing preparedness for effective response.¹⁵⁶ That same year, the *Paris Agreement* (2015) further integrated gender equality into climate policy by emphasizing the empowerment of women in climate policymaking and requiring gender-responsive capacity-building efforts.¹⁵⁷ Synthesizing these earlier commitments, the

¹⁴⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Five ways the climate crisis impacts human security*. N.d.; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How Gender Inequality and Climate Change are Interconnected*. 2025.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Gender-responsiveness*. 2022.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Population Fund. *Five ways climate change hurts women and girls*. 2021.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Population Fund. *Five ways climate change hurts women and girls*. 2021; United Nations Children's Fund. *Gender-based violence*. N.d.

¹⁵¹ International Organization for Migration. *Gender, Migration, Environment and Climate Change*. 2025.

¹⁵² United Nations, General Assembly. *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/54/4)*. 1999. pp. 5-7.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 5-7.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 5-7.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *The Gender Action Plan*. N.d.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction. *Sendai Gender Action Plan*. N.d.

¹⁵⁷ Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Paris Agreement*. 2015. pp. 4, 11, & 17.



Glasgow Climate Pact (2021), adopted at the Conference of the Parties 26th session (COP26), built on prior frameworks by advancing climate finance commitments, finalizing global rules for carbon markets under Article 6 of the *Paris Agreement*, reinforcing UNFCCC's GAP, and reaffirming that climate planning should be gender-responsive.¹⁵⁸ While the *Glasgow Climate Pact* reinforced gender-responsive approaches within climate finance, the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2025) recently broadened this agenda through the *Beijing +30 Political Declaration*, which provided a renewed framework for global gender equality, embedding climate resilience as a central pillar of women's empowerment.¹⁵⁹

In 2015, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) established a global framework for integrating gender equality and climate action, recognizing that women's empowerment is essential to achieving environmental sustainability.¹⁶⁰ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are central to addressing the gendered impacts of climate change.¹⁶¹ SDG 5 (gender equality) calls for the elimination of bias against women and girls, and its target 5.2 seeks explicitly to eliminate all forms of violence, including trafficking and exploitation of women.¹⁶² SDG 5 also acknowledges that women are disproportionately affected by climate change, as they are often responsible for securing food and water for their households, and emphasizes empowering women by increasing community resilience to climate shocks.¹⁶³ SDG 13 (climate action) calls for urgent action to mitigate the impacts of climate change.¹⁶⁴ More specifically, SDG 13.b promotes inclusive, gender-responsive climate change planning that involves women, youth, and other marginalized groups.¹⁶⁵ Building on these principles, in 2022, the General Assembly adopted resolution 76/300 on "The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment."¹⁶⁶ The resolution acknowledged the impacts of climate change on the human rights of women and girls, and reaffirmed the targets of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, it recognized the importance of the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls as leaders and defenders of natural resources, and as agents of change in safeguarding the environment.¹⁶⁸

Regional organizations play a crucial complementary role in addressing the impacts of climate change and promoting gender equality by developing adaptive strategies tailored to the diverse topographies,

¹⁵⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *The Glasgow Climate Pact - Key Outcomes from COP26*. N.d.

¹⁵⁹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *The Glasgow Climate Pact - Key Outcomes from COP26*. N.d.; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The Beijing Platform for Action at 30: Marking Progress and Addressing Challenges in Pursuit of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*. 2025.

¹⁶⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 3-4.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. pp. 3-4.

¹⁶² Ibid. pp. 3-4.

¹⁶³ Ibid. p. 18.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*. N.d.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 23; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*. N.d.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/RES/76/300)*. 2022. p.2.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 2.



ecological systems, and economic realities of their Member States.¹⁶⁹ For instance, the 2018, African Union's *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032)* was among the first regional frameworks to ensure that climate policies are gender-responsive, promoting the active participation and leadership of women in climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation efforts through strengthening economic empowerment, building resilience and comprehensive protection, improving legal and institutional mechanisms, and promoting access to education, capacity-building, and technology.¹⁷⁰ Following 2020, *A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025* of the European Union integrates climate change as a key pillar within a broader effort to mainstream gender across all policies and funding, linking directly to the 2019 *European Green Deal* to ensure environmental initiatives address women's needs and promote their participation in the green transition.¹⁷¹ The strategy also advances gender impact assessments in climate legislation and supports women's representation in green innovation sectors.¹⁷² Most recently, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) *Gender Outlook (2024)* draws attention to the intersection of poverty and climate change in East and Southeast Asia, warning that an estimated 2.5 million more people will be pushed into poverty by 2030 if climate change persists.¹⁷³ ASEAN calls for increased gender-responsive adaptation and social protection measures to address this risk.¹⁷⁴

Role of the International System

Addressing the gendered impacts of climate change is central to CSW's mandate.¹⁷⁵ During CSW's 46th session in 2002, "Environmental Management and the Mitigation of Natural Disasters" called for mainstreaming a gender perspective into research on the impacts and causes of climate change and encouraged the application of these results into policies and programs.¹⁷⁶ Two decades later, at its 66th session in 2022, the priority theme "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes," further advanced this vision.¹⁷⁷ Member States adopted policy recommendations recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls, committing to gender-responsive climate action and DRR, promoting women's leadership in green economies, and calling for increased investment into gender-responsive climate finance.¹⁷⁸ The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) advances these policy goals through its broader post-2015 development agenda, promoting women's economic empowerment and strengthening

¹⁶⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Women, resilience, and climate change: Experiences from Europe and Central Asia and beyond*. 2025. p. 9.

¹⁷⁰ African Union. *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032)*. 2023.

¹⁷¹ European Commission. *A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*. 2020.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *ASEAN Gender Outlook 2024 highlights climate change threats to women and girls in Southeast Asia, a warning sign for other regions*. 2024.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *ASEAN Gender Outlook 2024 highlights climate change threats to women and girls in Southeast Asia, a warning sign for other regions*. 2024; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. N.d.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *In Focus: Climate action by, and for, women*. N.d.

¹⁷⁶ UN Women Watch. *Women, Gender Equality, and Climate Change*. 2009.

¹⁷⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW66 (2022)*. N.d.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.



community resilience to climate disasters through adaptation initiatives and gender-responsive training in vulnerable communities.¹⁷⁹ The conclusion of the *Beijing+30 Review* (2024) in 2025, a 30-year appraisal of the 1995 *Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action)*, discusses strategies for integrating gender and poverty considerations into climate finance and advocates for strengthening gender-responsive climate finance flows.¹⁸⁰ UN Women underscores that women are often early adopters of new agricultural techniques, first responders in crises, entrepreneurs in green energy, and key decision-makers within households; thus, their leadership and experiences must be fully integrated into all levels of climate policy to achieve gender equality and build a sustainable future.¹⁸¹

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNDP play a critical role in addressing the gendered impacts of climate change by implementing gender-responsive climate projects at both national and community levels.¹⁸² For instance, the Empower Programme, jointly implemented by UN Women and UNEP, aims to strengthen gender equality in climate change and DRR policy in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁸³ It works to increase the diversity of women's representation in climate decision-making and promote their participation in climate-resilient livelihoods.¹⁸⁴ As a result of this initiative, 14 Member States have improved climate resilience and DRR capacity, adopted 11 gender-responsive policies at the regional or national level, and implemented 38 climate-resilient interventions.¹⁸⁵ Complementing these efforts, UNDP's Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation Guidebook and its Gender-Responsive Toolkit provide practical frameworks for integrating a gender approach into climate adaptation and DRR initiatives.¹⁸⁶ The guidebook helps localized communities implement projects to adapt to climate change impacts, such as droughts, flooding, sea-level rise, soil degradation, and extreme weather events, through vulnerability assessments, community-based adaptation projects, gender-responsive climate policies, and climate-resilient technologies.¹⁸⁷ Meanwhile, the Toolkit supports both the government and institutional levels in building capacity for gender-responsive disaster preparedness, recovery, and resilience.¹⁸⁸ Community-based adaptation projects begin with small-scale policy laboratories that generate knowledge for local climate change adaptation.¹⁸⁹ For example, in Bangladesh, UNDP supported a women-led community project that introduced salt-tolerant rice varieties and improved rainwater harvesting systems to address salinity intrusion and recurring floods, thereby enhancing food security and strengthening women's leadership in disaster planning.¹⁹⁰ Local communities, civil society organizations, or national partners often implement similar projects, such as

¹⁷⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *In Focus: Climate action by, and for, women*. N.d.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Advancing Gender-Responsive Climate Finance in Asia-Pacific: Insights from the Beijing+30 Review*. 2024.

¹⁸¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *In Focus: Climate action by, and for, women*. N.d.

¹⁸² United Nations Development Programme. *Gender and Climate Change: Impact and Adaptation*. 2015; United Nations Environment Programme. *Gender and climate action*. 2025.

¹⁸³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies*. N.d.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Asia and the Pacific. *Germany, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland invest in women for climate-resilient future*. 2024.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation Guidebook*. 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit*. 2015.

¹⁸⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Community-Based Adaptation Project*. 2025.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.



promoting sustainable crop varieties or improving agricultural and water-collection practices, with UNDP's technical support, funding facilitation, and capacity-building.¹⁹¹

Climate and Displacement of Women and Girls

Climate displacement disproportionately affects women.¹⁹² UNICEF estimates four out of five people experiencing climate-related displacement are women and girls.¹⁹³ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has drawn attention to how the impacts of climate change exacerbate existing gender inequalities and power dynamics that reinforce restrictive gender norms.¹⁹⁴ According to UN Women, by 2050, climate change may push up to 158 million more women and girls into poverty.¹⁹⁵ IOM explains that family financial hardship, often caused by factors related to climate change, such as drought or natural disasters, disproportionately affects young women and girls, who are usually pressured to drop out of school to take on domestic work or find employment.¹⁹⁶ As part of its approach to humanitarian needs, UN Women seeks to address these issues by calling for gender-responsive humanitarian action that prioritizes the specific needs of women and girls in climate-induced crises, including access to livelihoods, protection from GBV, and women's participation in recovery and resilience planning.¹⁹⁷

The intersection of climate displacement and gender heightens women's exposure to GBV.¹⁹⁸ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reports that violence against women and girls increases during or after extreme events, driven by economic instability, food insecurity, and resource scarcity.¹⁹⁹ These forms of violence, encompassing sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, often worsen as tensions over limited resources, such as water and arable land, rise and, in turn, can lead to increased numbers of displacements as well.²⁰⁰ For instance, UNFPA has found increases in sex trafficking following cyclones and typhoons in the Asia-Pacific region, and the frequency of domestic violence and sexual abuse, while female genital mutilation reported by UNDP has increased in Uganda during periods of drought.²⁰¹ Without meaningful intervention, UNFPA speculates that one in every ten cases of intimate partner violence will be linked to climate change by the end of the century.²⁰² Efforts to mitigate GBV in the aftermath of natural disasters include the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which has collaborated with nearly 100 grantees and researchers since 2021 for its "Learning from Practice" adaptive programming project, and the UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), which

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Why Women are Key to Climate Action*. N.d.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Women in Science, Not in Silence: Pioneering Change in the Global Climate Change Crisis*. 2024.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *New report shows how feminism can be a powerful tool to fight climate change*. 2023.

¹⁹⁶ Benslimane. International Organization for Migration. *Breaking Gendered Barriers: Exploring the Nexus between Youth, Climate Change, Migration, and Gender*. 2024.

¹⁹⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women Humanitarian Strategy (2022-2025)*. 2023.

¹⁹⁸ United Nations Population Fund. *Five ways climate change hurts women and girls*. 2021.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Siegfried. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Climate Change and Displacement: The Myths and the Facts*. 2023.

²⁰¹ United Nations Population Fund. *Five ways climate change hurts women and girls*. 2021.

²⁰² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How Gender Inequality and Climate Change are Interconnected*. 2025.



provides both programmatic and institutional disaster response support for local women's organizations that are working in fragile settings.²⁰³ For instance, in the Solomon Islands, WPHF supported the implementation of the Protection and Gender in Emergency Response, which has addressed GBV in humanitarian and climate-related disasters through rapid localization of gender-inclusive humanitarian response and DRR across the islands.²⁰⁴

Only 15 out of 133 world leaders who participated in COP28 were women, reflecting a severe underrepresentation of women in global climate leadership.²⁰⁵ According to UNDP's *Gender Equality in Public Administration* report covering 170 countries, women continue to face barriers that prevent them from advancing to the highest levels of influence and decision-making.²⁰⁶ Similarly, a UN Women review of national climate action plans found that only 55 countries make any specific references to gender equality, and only 23 countries recognize the inclusion of women in policymaking as essential to advancing climate commitments.²⁰⁷ COP29 negotiations sought to address this gap by extending the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender, which includes a gender action plan to advance gender equality in climate action.²⁰⁸ These commitments build on earlier calls by CSW for governments to integrate a gender perspective into national environmental policies and to allocate sufficient resources that ensure the full and equal participation of women in environmental decision-making.²⁰⁹ One initiative aimed at meeting the demands of these policy drives is a FAO-supported project in sub-Saharan Africa that trains women farmers in sustainable land management, crop diversification, and water conservation to improve food security and drought resilience.²¹⁰ Moreover, UNESCO has called for a mentality shift at national and local levels that would allow for women to lead the implementation of international climate change commitments, arguing that to respond to the gendered dimensions of climate displacement women and girls should be prioritized as part of the solution because they have the potential to offer unique experiences and knowledge that can aid in solving the climate and environmental crisis.²¹¹

Climate Finance for Women's Empowerment

Gender-responsive climate finance is essential to ensure that women-led solutions are funded and scalable.²¹² Yet only 1% of climate financing worldwide is directed to women-led organizations, and only 0.01% of global finance supports projects that address both women's rights and climate, such as the

²⁰³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls in the Context of Climate Change*. 2022.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Women in Science, Not in Silence: Pioneering Change in the Global Climate Change Crisis*. 2024.

²⁰⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Women shine as leaders, yet their absence at top levels of public service threatens pandemic recovery*. 2021.

²⁰⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Women in Science, Not in Silence: Pioneering Change in the Global Climate Change Crisis*. 2024.

²⁰⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *COP29 decisions deliver gains for gender equality in climate action, but more remains to be done*. 2024; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *The Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender*. N.d.

²⁰⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *CSW66 (2022)*. N.d.

²¹⁰ Lambrou et al. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Gender: The Missing Component of the Response to Climate Change*. 2006.

²¹¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Women in Science, Not in Silence: Pioneering Change in the Global Climate Change Crisis*. 2024.

²¹² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women calls for increased gender-focused climate finance at COP29*. 2024.



EmPower program.²¹³ At the CSW's 52nd session (2008), the Commission highlighted that climate change is not a gender-neutral issue due to its direct impact on women's lives, including the burden of domestic work and the difficulty of making everyday sustenance.²¹⁴ The Commission called for greater financing to promote gender equality and empower women in the context of climate change and urged governments to integrate the gender perspective into environmental policies, strengthen institutional mechanisms, and ensure the full and equal participation of women in decision-making on environmental issues at all levels.²¹⁵

Women around the world are leading efforts in sustainable agriculture, water management, and disaster response, but often lack the financial resources to scale up their operations.²¹⁶ UN Women, therefore, called for increased gender-focused climate finance at COP29, citing the lack of gender-responsive climate finance and the underrepresentation of women in climate decision-making.²¹⁷ In 2024, the annual Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), a body under UNFCCC, focused on the theme "Accelerating Climate Action and Resilience through Gender-Responsive Finance."²¹⁸ SCF recognized gender-responsive finance as a core strategy in enhancing the effectiveness of climate action.²¹⁹ The EmPower programme uses this financing approach, in which women's leadership has expanded energy access in remote areas, thereby strengthening community resilience to disasters such as cyclones and floods.²²⁰ As women bear disproportionate impacts of climate change, expanding gender-responsive climate finance aims to create more just access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making for women.²²¹

Despite global commitments to gender equality, women continue to face significant barriers in accessing climate finance and participating in decision-making processes.²²² The COP29 climate conference set a new collective goal for climate-related financing, aiming to reach \$300 billion annually by 2035.²²³ Notably, 35% of delegates at COP29 were women.²²⁴ Throughout the conference, advocates of gender equality called for a gender-responsive transition to a sustainable global economy, which includes recognizing women as a vital beneficiary group of climate finance.²²⁵ UNDP Gender Responsive National

²¹³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Women in Science, Not in Silence: Pioneering Change in the Global Climate Change Crisis*. 2024; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Closing the Gap, Boosting Ambition: Investing in Women is Key to Climate Action*. 2024.

²¹⁴ Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. *Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change*. 2009.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women Calls for increased gender-focused climate finance at COP29*. 2024.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *2024 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance*. 2024.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Gender-responsive finance for climate action and resilience*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Gender and Climate Change*. 2016.

²²¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women calls for increased gender-focused climate finance at COP29*. 2024.

²²² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The climate crisis is unjust for rural women: FAO gender expert*. 2024.

²²³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *COP29 decisions deliver gains for gender equality in climate action, but more remains to be done*. 2024.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.



Communications Toolkit addresses how women face significant barriers in accessing financial resources intended for adaptation and climate mitigation.²²⁶ It explains how disparities in education, asset ownership, financial inclusion, and technology access structurally exclude women from climate finance benefits.²²⁷ Additionally, institutional, legal, and cultural barriers continue to systematically restrict women from shaping climate strategies by excluding them from the decision-making process.²²⁸ The UNDP Climate Finance Network focuses on gender and social inclusion, and on climate change finance, to ensure that finance strategies are inclusive for all community members.²²⁹ It does so through a framework that facilitates strategic investments, collaborative partnerships, capacity-building, modeling of climate impacts on economic growth, and novel financial mechanisms, such as tax strategies to boost climate funding.²³⁰

Conclusion

Gender inequality intensifies the risks and consequences of climate change, while climate change in turn deepens existing gender disparities.²³¹ Despite international recognition of these compounding threats, significant gaps remain in ensuring that climate policies, financing mechanisms, and decision-making bodies adequately reflect and respond to women's lived experiences.²³² Women and girls, particularly in low-income and climate-vulnerable regions, face higher risks of displacement, food insecurity, health complications, and GBV, yet remain underrepresented in the very spaces where decisions about climate policy and finance are made.²³³ International frameworks, such as the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, underscore the importance of integrating gender into climate strategies, but their implementation remains inconsistent.²³⁴ For example, while women lead many community-based adaptation efforts, they receive just 1% of global climate finance.²³⁵

Empowering women through inclusive policymaking and gender-responsive climate finance is essential to building resilient, sustainable, and equitable communities.²³⁶ To ensure gender-responsive climate finance, States must aim to implement specific mechanisms like gender budgeting in national climate strategies, requiring gender impact assessments for all climate-related funding, and ensuring earmarking for projects that address both climate resilience and women's rights, as recommended by UN Women.²³⁷

²²⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit*. 2015.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Climate Finance Network*. N.d.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How Gender Inequality and Climate Change are Interconnected*. 2025; United Nations Children's Fund. *Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts*. 2017. p. 4.

²³² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *COP29 decisions deliver gains for gender equality in climate action, but more remains to be done*. 2024.

²³³ United Nations Population Fund. *Five ways climate change hurts women and girls*. 2021.

²³⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *The Gender Action Plan*. N.d.

²³⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Community-Based Adaptation Project*. 2025; United Nations Development Programme. *Climate Finance Network*. N.d.

²³⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Advancing Gender-Responsive Climate Finance in Asia-Pacific: Insights from the Beijing+30 Review*. 2024.

²³⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Women in Science, Not in Silence: Pioneering Change in the Global Climate Change Crisis*. 2024.



Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How does climate-induced displacement uniquely impact women and girls in conflict-prone or fragile regions? To what extent have international climate agreements translated into measurable progress on gender equality in climate decision-making? How can Member States work to include women and girls in the decision-making process when it comes to climate-related policy? In what ways can Member States work to overcome existing structural barriers to combating the gendered impacts of climate change? How can national governments implement effective gender-responsive budgeting within their climate finance frameworks?



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