



United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign *UNiTE by 2030* *to End Violence against Women*

ANNEX to Action Circular Feb-March 2022

Agreed Conclusions CSW66: Turning Policy to Action

1. Introduction

The [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) during its sixty-sixth session (CSW 66), addressed for the first time gender equality in the context of climate change. In its [agreed conclusions](#), the Commission emphasized the importance of addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the context of climate change. Building on the previous [UNiTE Action Circular \(Feb-March 2022\)](#), this action circular will focus on the agreed conclusions of CSW 66 and how they can be used to intensify efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the context of climate change.

Important advocacy efforts at the margins of CSW 66 emphasized the need to have a strong focus on VAWG in the CSW Agreed Conclusions. Such efforts included CSO side events, [the statement by the Group of Friends For the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls](#), and efforts undertaken by UN Women and the Leaders of the Action Coalitions on [Gender Based Violence and Feminist Action for Climate Justice](#).¹



UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous (at left) and CSW66 Chair Ambassador Mathu Joyini Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations (at center) applaud the adoption of agreed conclusions during the closing of the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 25 March 2022 in the General Assembly Hall of United Nations Headquarters in New York. ©UN Women/Ryan Brown

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BACKGROUND

Orange Day

The United Nations Secretary General’s Campaign UNiTE to End Violence Against Women has proclaimed the 25th of each month as “Orange Day,” a day to raise awareness and to take action to end violence against women and girls.

As a bright and optimistic colour, orange represents a future free from violence against women and girls, for the UNiTE Campaign.

Orange Day calls upon activists, governments, and UN partners to mobilize people and highlight issues relevant to preventing and ending violence against women and girls, not only once a year, on 25 November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women), but every month.

You can find further information on the [UNiTE](#) campaign [here](#).

2. Key messages from CSW66

Below is a summary of the key messages and actions most relevant for EAW advocacy from the [agreed conclusions](#) of the Commission on the Status of Women in its 66th session.

- Climate change, environmental degradation and disasters have acute impacts on women and girls who are disproportionately affected by the loss of livelihoods during and in the aftermath of disasters, especially in developing countries and small island developing states (Para 22).
- Gender equality, women's empowerment and the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in decision-making in the context of climate change, is essential for achieving sustainable development and ending poverty (Para 4).
- Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization, including structural inequalities, racism, unequal power relations between men and women, negative social norms, gender stereotypes and gender-based violence (GBV) impede such participation and decision-making in public life (Para 19, 23).

- Displacement as a result of climate change increases the risk of all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and creates a number of challenges for women and girls including separation from support networks, homelessness, limiting access to essential services, education, employment and psychosocial support. (Para 26).
- The economic and social fallout of COVID-19 has compounded the impact of climate change and intensified all forms of VAWG and harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM (Para 28).



- The impacts of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters on women and girls in conflict-affected and post-conflict settings and the heightened risks of VAWG, need to be addressed, including through preventative and survivor-centered approaches (Para. 43).
- The lack of disaggregated data and gender statistics on climate change, environmental degradation and gender statistics, limits the capacity of policymakers to identify gender differences in vulnerability and adaptive capacity, as well as to develop and adopt evidence-based policies and programmes at all levels (Para. 56)
- Despite their significant contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation and policies and programmes, marginalized groups of women including indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women amongst others, face additional forms of discrimination and challenges that must be addressed (Para 58, 59 and 60).



Gladys Acosta Vargas, Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women addresses the opening session of the Commission on the Status of Women ©UN Women/Ryan Brown

2. Key messages from CSW66 continued

The Commission urged governments at all levels, entities of the UN system and international and regional organizations, civil society, women's organizations and youth-led organizations, private sector and national human rights institutions to take the following actions, including in addressing violence against women and girls:

Strengthen normative, legal and regulatory frameworks

- **Implement existing commitments and obligations for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEWE)** including in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes (Para 62.a).
- **Fulfil existing obligations on gender equality in climate change and related frameworks** including under the Rio conventions, the Paris Agreement, the Glasgow Climate Pact and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, taking into account their gender action plans and calling for the creations of such plans where there are none (Para 62c).
- **Support the full, equal, effective, and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls in climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes** by stepping up multi-stakeholder efforts to combat racism and related intolerance, stigmatization, negative stereotyping, and violence (Para 62g).

Integrating gender perspectives into climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes

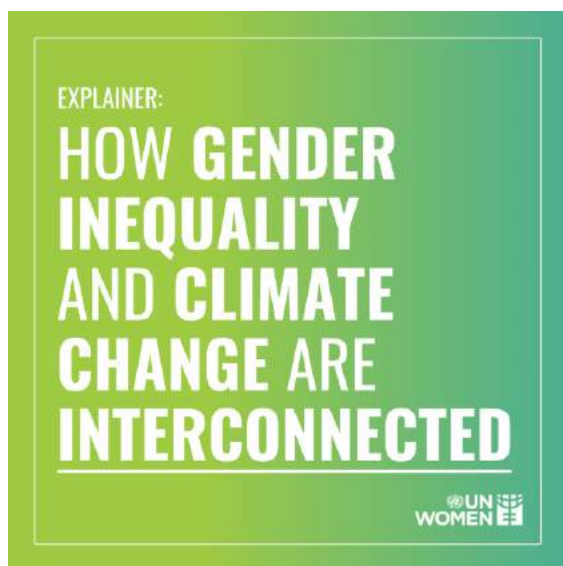
- **Integrate gender perspectives into policies on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience, disaster risk reduction and environmental degradation** (Para 62 i)



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the opening session of the Commission on the Status of Women. ©UN Women/Ryan Brown

- **Promote awareness of the disproportionate effects of climate change on women and girls**, particularly those facing violence, discrimination and displacement, harmful practices, and insecurity of land tenure, income and food and ensure that policies and programmes reflect these impacts (Para.62. j)
- **Strengthen coordination and gender mainstreaming across sectors** and all levels of government to formulate, implement and evaluate climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes
- **Ensure the full, equal and effective participation and leadership of women including young women** at all levels of relevant climate change decision making bodies and processes, including through temporary special measures (Paras 62.0 and P)
- **Promote gender responsive water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) measures** to reduce the time spent by women on collecting household water and fuel to prevent SGBV when women and girls access sanitation facilities outside of their homes. (Para.62. t).

2. Key messages from CSW66 continued



Expanding gender-responsive finance

- **Increase the gender-responsiveness of investment in climate change, environment and DRR policies and programmes** by scaling up financial resources from all relevant sources. (Para.62. u).
- **Provide adequate resources to national gender equality machineries** and entities responsible for climate change to ensure a gender perspective is integrated into relevant policies, programmes and projects (Para 62.z)
- **Increase public and private financing to feminist and women's civil society organizations**, including young women led organizations for climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction initiatives, including those that apply local and indigenous knowledge and solutions (Para. 62. aa).
- **Build and strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls** in the context of climate change through financing the provision of sustainable infrastructure and public services, social protection, and decent work for women (Para. 62. bb).
- **Promote and protect the rights of indigenous women and girls** by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence and higher rates of poverty (Para.62.dd).
- **Eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of VAWG, online and offline**, including domestic violence, gender-related killings/ femicides, harmful practices, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, as well as trafficking in persons and other forms of exploitation in public and private spaces which are exacerbated in contexts of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence and end impunity (Para. 62. mm).
- **Take measures to create a safe, enabling and violence-free working environment for women**, especially front-line workers and those involved in disaster response and recovery, including by ratifying key international treaties which provide protection against GBV and SH (Para. 62. mm).
- **Strengthen women's and girls' equal access to justice and essential services**, including comprehensive social, health and legal services for victims and survivors; increase women's legal literacy and awareness of available legal remedies and dispute resolution mechanisms and strengthen the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of judicial and relevant institutions at all levels (Para. 62.nn).
- **Address the root causes of VAWG**, including by combating gender stereotypes and negative social norms and engaging all relevant stakeholders including men and boys, media, religious and community leaders and educational institutions (Para. 62. oo).

2. Key messages from CSW66 continued

- **Support the important role of civil society actors** in promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women; take steps to protect CSO's and women's human rights defenders (WHRD's), particularly environmental WHRD's; create a safe and enabling environment for the defense of human rights; prevent violations, abuses, threats, harassment, violence and reprisals against them; combat impunity and ensure that abuses are promptly and impartially investigated and that those responsible are held accountable (Para. 62.qq).

Enhancing gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex

- **Strengthen capacity of national statistical offices to collect disaggregated data on climate change** and disaster impacts, including by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics (Para 62. ss).
- **Fund research to understand the impact of climate change on women and girls**, including in relation to Child, Early and Forced Marriage, trafficking in persons, paid and unpaid care and domestic work, violence against women and girls and other areas to inform policies and programmes and to assess women's ability to cope with and adapt to climate change and disasters, particularly in developing countries (Para 62. tt).

Fostering a gender-responsive, just transition

- **Protect and promote women's right to work across all sectors** by eliminating occupational segregation and discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes and violence and sexual harassment, supporting the transition from informal to formal work in all sectors, ensuring their equal pay for work of equal value, protecting them against discrimination and abuse and ensure their safety in the world of work (Para. 62.vv).

The Commission called upon UN Women to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting governments and national gender equality mechanisms, in coordinating with UN system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 agenda , including in the context of climate change, environmental and DRR policies and programmes (Para 65).



3. Advocacy on VAWG and Climate Change and Suggested Actions

The [CSW66 Agreed Conclusions](#), provides Governments, UN agencies, and civil society organizations a lens for gender-responsive policies and programmes on climate change adaptation and resilience. It recognizes the significant impacts of climate change on VAWG and makes important linkages and connections between climate change and work to end violence against women and girls (EVAWG). The strategic direction emerging from the five action areas outlined above calls for continued advocacy, for which some key advocacy priorities are suggested in the section below building on the [February-March 2022 action circular](#).



SUGGESTIONS FOR ADVOCACY AT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

- **Coordinate a national or local dialogue to raise awareness** of the intersections and impacts of climate change on VAWG in your particular context to catalyze cross-sectoral collaboration across the climate change and EVAW sectors and explore possible strategies and solutions.
- **Cultivate partnerships** between the EVAW, climate change and disaster risk reduction sectors to strengthen coordination and collaboration on policies and programmes that address the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on VAWG.
- **Advocate for the inclusion of VAWG prevention and response** in the gender action plans of the Rio Conventions and the Sendai Framework as well as into the national adaptation plans, national biodiversity strategies and action plans as well as in national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction.
- Advocate for climate change to be addressed through **national and local VAWG action plans**, the Emergency Response Plans that the Secretary General has called upon member states to develop in [Our Common Agenda](#).
- **Integrate the context of climate change into VAWG programming** such as the [EU-UN Spotlight Initiative](#) or [Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls](#).
- **Advocate for gender-responsive finance** towards climate change strategies and comprehensive EVAW programming to address the exacerbated risks of VAW due to climate change.
- **Raise awareness of the key role of women's rights and civil society organizations**, women environmental human rights defenders, young women leaders, women journalists and advocate for increased funding to support their advocacy, policy and programmatic work.

3. Advocacy on VAWG and Climate Change and Suggested Actions continued

- Call for urgent action to be taken to **protect the rights of women's environmental human rights defenders** and to strengthen mechanisms for preventing violence and abuse against them and improving access to justice and accountability to end impunity. The [Esperanza Protocol](#) launched in December 2021, provides guidelines based on international human rights law, primarily to governments and justice officials, to promote an adequate response to threats against human rights defenders, and in particular, support the effective investigation, prosecution, and punishment of such threats.
- Establish partnerships with the National Statistics Office, Gender Equality Mechanisms, Academia, Civil Society Organizations in your country to **ensure research is funded and sex-disaggregated data is collected** to understand the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on violence against women and girls, as well as the risk factors, vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities of women and girls in both urban and rural settings.
- **Advocate for temporary special measures**, such as quotas for women including specialists in EAWG to be represented and meaningfully and effectively participate as delegates to the UN Climate Change Conference 2022 ([UNFCC COP 27](#)) and the UN Biodiversity Conference ([COP 15](#)) and other decision-making fora at the regional and national levels.
- **Engage Generation Equality Forum commitment makers** in your country or region to inspire further action to deliver progress on the Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition and the Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition blueprints.



4. MAIN PRINCIPLES OF UNiTE CAMPAIGN ADVOCACY



- ✓ **Honour and acknowledge women's movements** and their leadership in the 16 Days of Activism and in preventing and ending violence against women and girls in general.
- ✓ **'Leave No One Behind':** Apply a human rights-based approach and focus attention on the most underserved and disadvantaged groups of women and girls experiencing intersecting forms of harm in efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls.
- ✓ **Survivor-centred:** Take a respectful and 'do no harm' approach to the telling and/or retelling of survivor stories, only

with their informed consent and under conditions in which they feel empowered to exercise their agency. This and the empowerment principles are vital for the engagement of survivor advocates/activists on their own terms. All UNiTE partners must ensure that survivor advocates' rights, safety, dignity and confidentiality are prioritized and upheld. For more information, please refer to Ensuring survivor-centered and empowering approaches.

- ✓ **Multi-sectoral:** Everyone in society has an important role to play in ending violence against women and girls and we all must work together across sectors to address the various aspects of violence against women and girls.
- ✓ **Transformative:** Fostering critical examination of gender roles, regimes and practices, while seeking to create or strengthen equitable gender norms and dynamics for fundamental, lasting changes for women and girls.
- ✓ **Elevate the voices of young feminists:** While the world has been reviewing progress made over the past 25 years since the adoption of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), it is time to create platforms to elevate voices of the next generation of feminists who are shaping their future now.

5. Endnote

1. Side [event](#) convened by UN Women during CSW and the UN Women-IUCN policy brief: [Tackling VAWG in the context of climate change](#)