



IN BRIEF

Advancing the Intersections of Gender, Climate, Peace and Security through the Women, Peace and Security framework



Illustration: UN Women

The impacts of climate change reach across all sectors of society, increasing the risk of security threats, conflicts, instability, and societal vulnerabilities. While these effects pose complex risks to global peace and security, they also offer a critical entry point to rethink and reshape solutions, ensuring that they are collaborative, equitable, and sustainable. A key element is understanding the gender dimensions of climate-related security risks to avoid exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and identify opportunities to promote the co-benefits of gender equality, enhancing climate resilience, and sustaining peace.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda provides a comprehensive framework to address these interconnected challenges and offers a viable alternative to securitized approaches to climate, peace and security issues. For more than twenty years, Member States have translated their WPS commitments into action at various levels through National, Regional, and Local Action Plans. These plans highlight the essential contributions of communities and civil society, advocate for gender-responsive, rights-based, and locally led approaches, and increasingly emphasize the importance of women's leadership and active involvement in climate resilience, peacebuilding, and security initiatives.

International frameworks addressing WPS and climate, peace and security

The WPS agenda has evolved to incorporate pressing security challenges, including climate change. UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) on WPS notes the changing global context of peace and security, relating to the impacts of climate change among other aspects and reiterates its intention to integrate women, peace and security across all its thematic areas of work.¹

National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS constitute a concrete instrument materializing the nexus of gender, climate, peace and security, with 54 out of 111 NAPs (48.6 per cent) incorporating references to climate. However, there is still untapped potential within NAPs to go beyond references and establish specific actions and targets.²

Since first discussing climate, peace and security in 2007, the UN Security Council has increasingly recognized the links between climate change and levels of security in particular regions or countries through thematic discussions and reflected in peacekeeping mandates. Gender considerations are however insufficiently addressed. To date only the mandate for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) explicitly calls for "gender-sensitive

¹ United Nations Security Council. (2015). *Security Council Resolution 2242 on Women, Peace and Security, S/RES/2242*. October 13, 2015. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf

² While as of October 2025 115 NAPs have been adopted, this analysis focuses on the 111 NAPs that are publicly available in the WPS Focal Points Network Database: <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/resources/>.

risk assessments on the negative impacts of climate change”.³

The intersection of climate, peace and security is increasingly addressed within the Rio Conventions. One prominent example is the adoption of the Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference marking the increasing recognition of peace and security within the climate space. While the document mentions the importance of gender-responsive risk and vulnerability mapping and recognizes the leadership of affected groups, including women, there remains the need to further strengthen the integration of a gender perspectives across the declaration and its implementation.⁴

Applying the Women, Peace and Security framework to Climate, Peace and Security

It is imperative that the WPS agenda not only informs policy and action but also empowers women as key agents in climate, peace and security. UN Women has identified concrete opportunities to leverage the WPS agenda to tackle both the root causes and impacts of these intersecting crises. The WPS framework grounded in the four pillars – Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief and Recovery – provides concrete opportunities and entry points to address climate-related security risks and strengthen gender- and peace-responsive approaches.

Across all four pillars, gender-responsive climate finance for fragile and conflict-affected contexts is crucial. Although awareness is increasing around the potential of climate finance to advance both climate action and peace and security goals, a UN Women analysis reveals a significant gap in funding for gender-targeted initiatives, pointing to a critical underinvestment in this area.⁵ It is crucial that innovative funding initiatives such as by the UN Peacebuilding Fund

or the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund's Women and Climate Security Initiative are advanced and resourced.⁶

Participation

Applying the WPS framework's 'Participation' pillar to climate, peace and security underscores the vital role of women and girls as leaders in decision-making on climate-related security risks, resource management, mediation, and peace processes. Their meaningful inclusion leads to more inclusive, equitable, and effective outcomes in addressing the intersecting challenges of these crises. However, to ensure this participation is truly empowering – not extractive – their existing contributions must be acknowledged and backed by strong institutional, financial, and technical support, along with clear accountability.

Through a joint initiative by UN Women and UNDP, women have emerged as key actors in mediating conflicts and preventing violence in the border areas of Gao and Menaka in **Mali** and Tillabéri in **Niger**.⁷ The initiative supported over 4,000 women through income-generating activities and sustainable natural resource management practices. As a result, women improved their livelihoods, became leaders in environmental protection and reforestation activities and their participation in natural resource management increased from 5% to 25%. Women peacebuilders also played pivotal roles in resolving over 128 natural resource-related conflicts and led community dialogues on land and water access.

Protection

The 'Protection' pillar of the WPS agenda highlights the need to ensure the safety and security of women environmental human rights defenders (WEHRDs) and peacebuilders leading climate action. Women face distinct threats for their advocacy, and their involvement must not compromise their security. Rising gender-based violence – especially impacting WEHRDs and women in the aftermath of natural

³ United Nations Security Council. (2022). *Security Council Resolution 2625, S/RES/2625*. March 15, 2022. [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2625\(2022\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2625(2022))

⁴ COP28. (2023). *COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace*. Retrieved on October 24, 2025, from <https://www.cop28.com/en/cop28-declaration-on-climate-relief-recovery-and-peace>

⁵ UN Women. (forthcoming). *Climate finance for gender equality and peace: a global analysis*

⁶ Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. (n.d.). *Women and Climate Security*. Retrieved on October 24, 2025, from <https://wphfund.org/women-and-climate-security/>

⁷ United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. (2020). *Femmes et gestion des conflits liés aux ressources naturelles: PBF/IRF-351*. <https://mpf.undp.org/project/00119957>

disasters – points to an urgent need for focused protection mechanisms and responses.

In **Colombia**, the UN Women programme *Mujeres Cambiando su Mundo* (Women Changing Their World) has empowered 489 women directly and nearly 2,000 indirectly through 23 livelihood initiatives, 14 environmental preservation efforts, and collective self-protection strategies.⁸ Women-led organizations have advanced strategic litigation, environmental risk monitoring, and secured eight public–private agreements that strengthen local resilience. 746 women have simultaneously engaged in institutional dialogues, influencing national policy through the incorporation of gender-responsive protections into the Comprehensive Guarantees Program for Women Leaders, the development of new risk protocols, and the design of a national strategy for environmental defenders.

Prevention

The ‘Prevention’ pillar of the WPS agenda tackles the underlying drivers of climate-related insecurity and conflict through gender-responsive approaches. It highlights the need for inclusive policy development, robust early warning mechanisms, climate adaptation efforts and economic resilience as peacebuilding strategies that consider the specific vulnerabilities and experiences of women and marginalized communities, aiming to reduce and prevent climate-related security risks.

UN Women, together with its partners, is undertaking gender-responsive climate risk assessments – a tool that allows to assess and understand current and future climate-related security risks and identify response measures from a gender perspective – across various regions and settings. An integral gender analysis in these assessments is key to identifying risks and opportunities linked to gender norms, climate change

and insecurity. A study in **Sri Lanka**, commissioned by the UNDP-DPPA Joint Programme and UN Women and conducted by Adelphi Research offers a comprehensive analysis linking gender dynamics, peacebuilding efforts, and climate resilience in the districts of Badulla, Batticaloa, Hambantota, and Mullaitivu. Similar assessments are planned for the Sahel, the Pacific, and other regions to ensure that gender considerations remain integral to climate security evaluations.⁹

Relief and Recovery

The ‘Relief and Recovery’ pillar of the WPS agenda highlights the importance of incorporating gender-responsive and climate-sensitive strategies in post-conflict recovery and disaster response. It calls for recovery efforts that specifically address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalized populations, ensure their active participation in reconstruction processes, and embed climate resilience to foster long-term, inclusive peace and sustainable development in affected areas.

A UN Women study conducted in Sindh and Gilgit Baltistan regions of **Pakistan** revealed that during the 2022 floods, women had limited access to early warning systems and faced displacement, increased responsibilities at home as well as greater exposure to domestic violence in the aftermath.¹⁰ As a result, they often had to rely on community-based support networks, since official aid efforts led by the government and military frequently failed to address their specific needs. In response, UN Women is supporting the Government of Pakistan in implementing its Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework by documenting women’s experiences at the intersection of climate change and human security, highlighting their adaptation strategies, and identifying ways to strengthen gender-responsive climate resilience in flood-affected areas.

⁸ UN Women Colombia. (2025). *Mujeres cambiando su mundo*. <https://colombia.unwomen.org/es/digital-library/publications/2025/06/mujeres-cambiando-su-mundo>.

⁹ UNDP, UNDP, UN Women. (2025). *Gender Responsive Climate Security Assessment for Sri Lanka*. <https://srilanka.un.org/en/302447-gender-responsive-climate-security-assessment-sri-lanka>

¹⁰ UN Women Pakistan. (forthcoming). *Women, Climate, and Security: Stories of Resilience from Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan*.

Recommendations

Integrate WPS and Climate, Peace and Security Commitments Across International, Regional and National Frameworks: Advocate for the explicit integration of gender-climate-security linkages into global frameworks, while highlighting WPS NAPs as effective entry points to materialize the nexus of gender, climate, peace and security.

Support Women's Participation, Leadership and Women-Led Solutions: Amplify and support the leadership of feminist and women-led organizations in climate, peace and security, create inclusive spaces for diverse groups of women – including Indigenous women, displaced women, young women, and women with disabilities – to address climate-related security risks, promote capacity development and network building and involve women as co-designers and co-implementors of conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive climate initiatives.

Enhance Protection Mechanisms: Ensure that the participation of women peacebuilders and environmental human rights defenders as well as climate activists is accompanied by the establishment of protection mechanisms and improved through shared lessons regarding preventive frameworks, reporting and accountability systems.

Anticipate Future Risks through prevention efforts: Integrate gender perspectives into climate risk assessments, climate policies and programming, and into response mechanisms across peacebuilding, development, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian interventions.

Strengthen sustainable, peace-positive, gender-responsive relief and recovery efforts: Promote gender-responsive measures that enhance resilience to climate-related insecurities through the development of conflict-sensitive adaptation plans, climate-resilient livelihood opportunities, and targeted relief to marginalized communities.

Advance gender-responsive climate finance for fragile and conflict-affected contexts: Expand flexible and accessible funding and strengthen women's direct access to conflict-sensitive climate finance through gender targets, simplified application procedures and tailored capacity-building initiatives.

UN Women exists to advance women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. As the lead UN entity on gender equality, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviours and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. We keep the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.