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**SUBMISSION**

**Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants: Report on the impact of climate change and the protection of the human rights of migrants**

Climate change disproportionately affects women[[1]](#footnote-1), girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and the least economically secure. The impacts of climate change can worsen the cycle of poverty and exacerbate situations of vulnerability for women and girls[[2]](#footnote-2), including gender-based discrimination in accessing land, natural resources, financial services, social capital and technology, with limited or no assets to utilize in the case of natural hazards or disasters. While global sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on migration in relation to climate change are limited, figures on internal displacement can shed some light on population movements associated with climate change, with some reports estimating that approximately 80 per cent of people currently displaced by climate-related events are women and girls. And with women four per cent more likely than men to live in extreme poverty[[3]](#footnote-3), the impacts of climate change, including slow-onset effects, may lead to higher numbers of them migrating as a result of decreasing crop productivity, water shortages and rising sea levels.

The decision to migrate in the context of climate change and the means in which to do so are inherently gendered, and are dependent on overlapping and intersecting economic, political, social, demographic, and cultural factors.[[4]](#footnote-4) Deeply entrenched gender inequalities as well as social and cultural norms may limit women’s opportunities to migrate and increase their risks to human rights violations, especially to gender-based violence. While migration may be an opportunity for increased autonomy and independence for some women, it may also expose them to risks. The increase in gender-based violence in the aftermath of disasters is well-documented, particularly for women and girls who are displaced and those living in camps or other places without privacy.[[5]](#footnote-5) Domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and forced and early marriage also increase significantly during climate crises.[[6]](#footnote-6) In Ethiopia, for example, the number of girls sold into early marriage in **exchange for livestock increased after drought-induced migration as families struggled to cope with extreme drought conditions**.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Migration may serve as an important adaptation strategy to climate change and a means to build resilience for individuals and communities, while also reducing exposure and vulnerability to hazards.** The extent to which migration can be a positive adaptation experience will be influenced by gender, age, race, disability status and other relevant factors.[[8]](#footnote-8) Existing international frameworks and mechanisms to manage safe and regular migration in relation to climate change are limited, and those that do exist have not all adequately integrated a gender-responsive approach. Addressing the linkages among gender, climate change and migration requires an integrated multisectoral approach that brings together global, regional, national and local efforts to ensure that political commitments are translated into concrete actions.

**Key recommendations**

* Develop and implement gender-responsive migration policies which protect and promote the human rights of migrant women and gender non-conforming migrants in the context of climate change.
* Ensure that national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women play a key role in migration and climate change discussions.
* Create gender-responsive regular migration pathways related to climate change which allow for both temporary and permanent migration.
* Provide clear information on existing visas and migration pathways that are available for those migrating as a result of climate change and disasters, in languages relevant to communities that are most at risk of hazards.
* Invest in the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on climate change impacts and migration flows.
1. In this submission, the term ‘women’ includes women in all their diversity,inclusive of age, including pregnant women, economically marginalised and affluent women, cisgender, transgender, gender non-conforming people, disabled women, women who travel with families and women who travel alone, and migrant women with regular migration status, and those without. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Alam, Mayesha, Bhatia, Rukmani, and Mawby, Briana. [*Women and Climate Change: Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security, and Economic Development*.](https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Women-and-Climate-Change.pdf.) Washington, DC: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2015.. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UN Women. 2018. [Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/sdg-report) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Black, R., et al. The Effect of Environmental Change on Human Migration. *Global Environmental Change*, 21, Supplement I, no. 0 (2011): 3-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Desai, Bharat H. and Mandal, Moumita*. Environmental Policy and Law*, 51 (2021) 137–157. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Castañeda Camey, et al., 2020. [*Gender-based violence and environment linkages*](https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/gender-based-violence-and-environment-linkages) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Gioli, G. and Milan, A. Gender, Migration and (Global) Environmental Change. In [*Routledge Handbook of Environmental Displacement and Migration*.](http://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315638843-11/gender-migrationglobal-environmental-change-giovanna-gioli-andrea-milan) R. McLeman and F. Gemenne, eds. London: Routledge International, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)