

SRHR & CJ COALITION

27th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27) Key Messages and Recommendations

From the SRHR and Climate Justice Coalition

Overview

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Climate change, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are inextricably linked. Climate change has differential and negative impacts on women, girls, and gender-diverse people, including on their ability to exercise their SRHR, as a result of structural discrimination and intersecting inequalities that contribute to marginalization and vulnerability. SRHR must be considered a key component of climate adaptation and resilience action. It is a matter of climate justice.

Key Messages

SRHR are core requirements for climate resilience and adaptation, as well as foundations for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

- Lack of SRHR drives poverty, deepens the vulnerability of women, girls, and marginalized people across their life courses, and results in a range of injustices including high rates of maternal deaths, premature birth, unsafe abortions, and high HIV transmission.
- Climate change exacerbates these injustices and adds additional barriers. For example, climate-induced extreme weather events and disasters damage infrastructure, such as clinics and roads, preventing access to SRHR services, and can disrupt the availability of supplies of contraceptives and medical equipment. In addition to disasters, slow-onset climate events such as droughts can lead to an increase in gender-based violence.
- Ensuring SRHR supports health and well-being, which allows girls and women to make choices about their own lives, education, and livelihoods, and supports them to pursue leadership and economic opportunities, including in climate decision-making and as part of the just and equitable transition to a regenerative economy.

Institutional collaboration is necessary for an effective response to climate change.

Collaboration between government entities working on climate change, gender, health, and SRHR would support SRHR considerations to be integrated into country-level climate and disaster policies and programs, including NDCs and NAPs, to support comprehensive climate action and minimize unintended consequences

SRHR should be incorporated into strong, accessible, and climate-resilient health systems, including through Universal Health Coverage (UHC), in order to serve the full range of SRH needs of all women and girls and gender-diverse people, whether for contraception, antenatal care, infertility or comprehensive sexuality education. The full range of comprehensive SRH services includes accurate information, education, and counseling, including comprehensive sexuality education (CSE); access to a range of contraceptive methods; care related to sexual function; services for sexual and gender-based violence; antenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care; safe abortion care; and the prevention and treatment of infertility, STIs, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and reproductive cancers. (See [Accelerate Progress](#) for more.)

Contraception should not be seen as a strategy for climate change mitigation.

- Some stakeholders claim that contraception and girls' education are important interventions for climate change mitigation since they reduce fertility, which leads to lower population growth, and lower levels of greenhouse gas emissions. However, that is an instrumentalist and non-rights-based approach. Women and girls in lower-income nations, where fertility rates are comparatively high, are the main focus of such narratives. Advocating for restrictions on women's and girls' fertility as a means to solve social and environmental problems has a long, racist, and violent history, evoking population control and eugenics. Policies and practices driven by a desire to stem population growth have led to countless human rights violations.
- In contrast, climate change mitigation necessitates tackling unsustainable consumption and production, particularly in high-income countries, where per capita greenhouse gas emissions substantially surpass those of lower-income countries. The promotion of contraception as a climate mitigation solution, regardless of the emphasis on bodily autonomy, incorrectly places the burden of solving the crisis on those who are least responsible for it but are most affected by its consequences.

Climate finance must focus on system change, addressing inequality, and building resilience.

- Developed countries must fulfill their existing obligations under multiple international UN processes, including the UNFCCC, and urgently increase financial provision in the form of grants in a way that is predictable, adequate, transparent, and accountable. Funds should flow to the local level, and reach feminist, frontline, Indigenous, and community groups.
- Investments in information, services, and infrastructure toward resilient and inclusive health systems have the potential to reduce the impacts of climate change on SRHR.

Recommendations

The SRHR & Climate Justice Coalition recommends the following critical actions for Parties to demonstrate their commitment to SRHR in the implementation of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement.

Ensure SRHR is integrated into specific UNFCCC Gender Action Plan activities.

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) provides a clear existing pathway to integrate gender perspectives into climate action. Activities under all priority areas within the GAP—including capacity-building, knowledge management, coherence, gender-responsive means of implementation, and monitoring and reporting must integrate SRHR considerations. Read the [Coalition resource](#) on ways to integrate SRHR into implementation under each Priority Area.

Commit robust and feminist financing for the climate and SRHR intersection.

Recognize the lack of financial and other resources supporting women’s and feminist organizations’ climate work overall, and especially at the intersection of SRHR and climate, and Allocate the funding needed to implement holistic and integrated efforts that cut across the climate, health, and gender equality sectors, including:

- Investments that address underlying systemic causes of vulnerabilities to the climate crisis, including for women, girls, and Indigenous people
- Funds that are directed to feminist and women’s rights organizations
- Investments in climate-resilient health systems
- Social protection and public services, and UHC, including SRH in essential services, and
- Support and training for community health workers specializing in SRH to address climate-related health impacts.

Apply a human rights & social-justice-based approach to climate action that includes the full range of SRHR.

Fulfill ‘the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and inter-generational equity’ as articulated in the Paris Agreement and state obligation under international law to “respect, protect and fulfill human rights,” and recognize that these are only achieved with the realization of SRHR and access to the full range of SRH services.

Do not consider contraception as a climate change mitigation strategy or solution, and abandon the patriarchal and racist framing of pursuing population control, as it violates bodily autonomy and undermines girls’ and women’s human rights, particularly of girls and women in the Global South. Applying a social justice framework to climate action recognizes that the responsibility for reducing global greenhouse gas emissions should not be placed on people, particularly women, in low-emitting countries who contribute very little to the causes of climate change but are highly vulnerable to its effects.

Engage girls and women, in all their intersecting identities, and youth- and gender-focused organizations in climate processes.

Engaging those who are impacted the most by climate change in climate policy and processes ensures that their needs are recognized, prioritized, and addressed. This can be done through a range of actions from focused stakeholder consultations in NDC and NAP development processes to promoting women’s leadership on these issues at the local-, national-, and global levels.

Continue raising awareness on the intersections between climate change and SRHR.

Promote collaboration between government entities working on climate change, gender, health, and SRHR so that SRHR considerations can be integrated into country-level climate policy and programs, including NDCs and NAPs. Invest in more data collection and research that shed light on the nuances of the interlinkages on these issues, with an intersectional lens. Hold spaces in global development processes such as COP, Generation Equality Forum follow-up, and other UNFCCC climate platforms to discuss and raise awareness on these issues.

How to Join the Coalition

To find out more about the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Climate Justice Coalition, including how to join, please visit srhrclimatecoalition.org.