

# Preface

Protecting the planet and its biodiversity is the single most important intergenerational responsibility we face. Moreover, the impacts of environmental and climate change are not gender neutral. In developing and advanced economies alike, women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men. Through climate change and severe environmental hazards, millions of people are placed at risk of displacement, 75% of whom are women. Despite women's role in agriculture and farming, women farmers have limited rights to inherit, access and use land and other productive resources, due mainly to deep-rooted social norms. Lower access to finance and education further restricts their ability to prepare for and respond to environmental shocks. Women tend to be overrepresented in low-income groups, which are most affected by pollution in cities and environmental damage from industry. Furthermore, during and after an environmental crisis or a pandemic, women and girls are exposed to an increased risk of gender-based violence. Discrimination and violence also affect women's mobility patterns and transport choices, which can have negative environmental impacts.

Throughout the world, women tend to display a higher sensitivity to environmental concerns, but they are largely under-represented in the decision-making processes of global climate leadership –whether in finance, economy, energy or infrastructure ministries, or in business. These factors all add to the structural challenges faced by women and girls in the legal and social framework. Significant gender gaps remain in labour force participation (especially in higher paying jobs), wages, and access to finance and natural resources. Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities, highlighting the intersection of climate and gender justice.

Women are not only victims but also powerful agents of change, and come with knowledge and skills to contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

While UN processes have long recognised the interlinkages between climate and gender justice through the UNFCCC Gender Action Plans and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, more needs to be done to support countries in systemically integrating gender analysis into data collection efforts, as well as climate change, budget and development cooperation policies.

This OECD report brings together, for the first time, all the existing evidence from OECD countries on the differential impacts of environmental factors on men and women's health, such as air pollution, water and soil contamination, exposure to chemicals, climate change and natural disasters. It demonstrates that understanding and effectively taking into account the gender dimension of climate change is key to achieving sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This timely publication also looks into how to foster the economic opportunities that could emerge for women in greener economies. The green recovery and transition, informed by policies that support gender-sensitive job reallocation, could create a virtuous circle of gender equality and sustainable development, while offering opportunities for women's economic empowerment.

Ensuring gender equality and addressing the various intersectional concerns that affect the most vulnerable population not only strengthens social justice, it also contributes to managing the economic and environmental imperatives. Through this work, the OECD emphasises the need for an integrated approach

to gender equality and environmental sustainability in all policy areas and sectors. The proposed policy measures support governments in gathering systematic evidence on gender-differentiated environmental impacts, and provide a way forward for more effective policy action.

A missing and unheralded part of climate solution is gender equality. Let us work together to make the gender-environment nexus a force for transforming our economies and societies to be more resilient, inclusive and sustainable.



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