

BEIJING+30 (“**B+30**”) CIVIL SOCIETY WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENT  
 (“**WG**”), WITHIN UNECE COUNTRIES, 2024

**B+30 ENVIRONMENT WG STATEMENT**

**1. Definition and vision**

Environmental degradation is one of the ten threats officially cautioned by the [UN's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change](#). [UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction](#) defines environmental degradation as “the reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives and needs.”

The adverse effects of environmental degradation, including those attributable to climate change, are inextricably linked to human rights. Multiple [reviews and studies](#) identify and describe risks climate change poses to women and girls' rights to water, food security, physical and mental health, adequate housing, sanitation, and self-determination.

While disproportionately affected by climate change, women and girls are uniquely situated to lead efforts of climate change response due to being connected to large networks, an integral element of community-based solutions and mobilisation.

The rights of [women and girls are especially threatened](#) by the adverse effects of climate change unless protected by the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). Member States must integrate the recommendations of civil society into their national and local policies as necessary tools to formulate gender-sensitive and environmentally conscious programmes and strategies.

**1.1. Methodology: BPfA review, in relation, to women and the environment**

The 1995 [BPfA](#) identified the 12 areas of concern, “Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and the safeguarding of the environment” as the areas of concern.

The BPfA includes three “Women and the Environment” strategic objectives:

1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels,
2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development, and
3. Strengthen or establish national, regional, and international mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

Furthermore, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which has the primary role in the follow-up to the BPfA, [has stressed the importance of addressing and integrating gender equality and empowerment](#) of all women and girls throughout national, regional, and global reviews of implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as ensuring synergies between the follow-up recommendation to the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda.

## **1.2 Analysis Undertaken: Changes in the Natural Environment since 1995**

In the years since the adoption of the BPfA, environmental degradation, including air, land, and water pollution and climate change, has progressed to crisis levels. Humanity now faces an existential threat from the adverse effects of climate change that have disrupted the planetary natural balance. Achieving gender equality and reversing environmental degradation is critical for humanity's survival. Bold, decisive steps are necessary to restore our planet and protect the health of future generations.

Multiple multilateral agreements exist to protect the rights of all women and girls, advance gender equality, and promote restoration of the natural environment. While climate change affects everyone, demographic groups with the fewest resources and options for responding to changing situations and crises are especially adversely affected.

## **2. Achievements**

Progress must be faster toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the UNECE countries.

The 2024 global edition of the Sustainable Development Report (SDR) provides the most up-to-date data to track and rank the performance of all UN Member States on the SDGs, including achievements and challenges related to gender, the natural environment, and quality of life.

## **3. Gaps**

Specific demographic groups of women and girls are not included in the BPfA; children below age 18, youth aged up to 30 years of age, those over the age of 65, individuals with disabilities, individuals originating from indigenous communities, children and low-income families affected by the climate crisis, and individuals living and working where investments in fossil fuels and derivative products are the cause of inequalities, health impacts, natural habitat destruction, and exacerbated consumerism.

Current norms obstruct the inclusion of women's voices in policymaking, educational programs, and implementation processes.

Access to funding and entrepreneurship opportunities in the transition to and implementation of females' entrepreneurship and leadership roles in the industries of renewable energy, and circular economy systems are not yet considered urgent.

Large gaps in data and statistics describing situations of social and economic inequalities intensify the vulnerability of women and girls to environmental degradation, including the adverse effects of climate change. A review of data from as far back as 1995 shows that data concerning all women and girls have been inconsistently collected and when aggregated, critical details were often missed.

Gender-responsive financing is inadequate to address all aspects of human-induced climate change.

## **4. Challenges**

The adoption of the BPfA, and more recently the Paris Agreement, Convention on Biological Diversity, and Convention to Combat Desertification attempted to provide an overarching framework to address climate change and promote gender equality. The current challenges faced in the planetary dimension continue mounting due to serious climate risks.

Climate change and natural disasters disproportionately affect all women. Resettlement, forced migrations, and displacement, including as a result of natural disasters or climate crises, place all women and girls in vulnerable situations. While climate change affects everyone's lives, demographic groups with the fewest resources and options for responding to changing situations and crises are especially adversely affected.

## **5. Recommendations**

In consultation with civil society, the UN and UNECE Member States must achieve their environmental and gender commitments. The provisions of [UNFCCC](#), [CEDAW](#), [UPR](#), [the Sendai Framework](#), [the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#), CSW Agreed Conclusions, ILO Decent Work Convention, and the BPfA must be fully implemented to protect the interests of all women and girls. The UN must ensure careful complementarity, coherence, and coordination to enable successful outcomes for all women and girls.

Responding to environmental degradation, including climate change, requires mitigation (reducing or eliminating emissions and hazards) and adaptation. [Immediate](#) responses to climate change are urgently required, including gender-responsive strategies to protect the rights and well-being of women and girls.

### **6.1 Key recommendations:**

1. Member State policies should fund women's full participation in climate action, leadership, and entrepreneurship, ensuring sustainable development and advancing the future, health, and wellbeing of both the environment and all women and girls.
2. Member States must provide universal environmental education to foster the adoption of effective disaster risk reduction policies and to implement programs that protect the interests of all women and girls, now and in the future.
3. Secure access to a reformed and sustainable food and agroecological system, which would include access to adequate and affordable supplies of clean water, nutritious and healthy foods, and healthy environments for all women and girls.

#### **6.1.1 Short-Term**

Mitigate and reverse environmental degradation.

#### **6.1.2 Medium-Term**

Institutionalise and implement gender mainstreaming throughout the governance of educational programs and institutions.

### **6.1.3 Long-Term**

The feedback loop of “Long Term Action” must include evaluation, monitoring, and updates where necessary to respond with transparency to ever-changing environmental, economic, and political circumstances.

We re-emphasise the urgency and need for Member States to integrate the [1995 BPfA recommended actions](#) as well as recommendations made by civil society since 1995 regarding environmental policies for women and girls, the promotion of equality across all sectors, and international and national governance to protect current and future generations.