# Climate Justice 9



Ubuntu Project in South Africa on urban farming to improve food security during COVID-19.
Photo courtesy of Ubuntu

## KEY POINTS

- Increases in carbon dioxide (CO2) levels and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere in 2019 helped make it the second warmest year on record, according to a new report compiled by a network led by the World Meteorological Organisation.
- The past year witnessed increasing temperatures throughout the region, accelerating sea level rise, droughts, cyclones, and other disasters and pushing 12 million people in nine countries into a state of food insecurity.
- Climate change will make future disasters and epidemics, such as COVID-19 inevitable, pushing millions of women and girls even further into poverty.
- Globally, increasing natural disasters and weather-related emergencies have contributed to large increases in sexual trafficking and forced child marriage.
- The COVID-19 crisis represents an unprecedented wake-up call in the region, reminding leaders that they must prepare for more frequent emergencies linked to climate change.
- The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated food insecurity and other social challenges, leaving women and girls in impoverished communities, marginalised people, refugees and other displaced people especially vulnerable.
- The environmental crisis in SADC has extended from directly affecting agriculture and food security to impacting healthcare across the region. In 2019, climate shocks worsened measles outbreaks and Namibia saw a spike in hepatitis E transmissions in informal settlements due to poor access to water and adequate sanitation.
- The COVID-19 virus will contribute to food insecurity, conflict, and gender-based violence (GBV) for months and possibly years to come. However, it also presents an opportunity for governments in the region to re-align their priorities and pursue the development of renewable energy and "greener" economies.

# Introduction



Water distribution in Atsimondrano, Madagascar, in 2014.
Photo: Zotonantenaina Razanadratefa

Annual global temperatures will likely be at least 1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels in each of the coming five years, jeopardising globally-agreed climate change targets.[1] The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), like much of the rest of the world, needs to act fast to mitigate the worst effects of this warming. Already feeling the effects in 2019, the region experienced increased food insecurity due to droughts and flooding, with many families struggling to get a harvest from their arable land. Ongoing energy crises in the region add to this challenge, as citizens continue to struggle to access clean energy sources for their daily household needs.

Over the next decade, a warming climate will have major implications for Southern Africa, which faces a decrease in precipitation of as much as 20% and increases in the number of consecutive dry days. The greatest temperature increases will occur in Botswana, Namibia, northern Zimbabwe, and southern Zambia, with increases in the occurrence and intensity of temperature extremes across the region.[2] The western part of the region will become drier, with increasing drought frequency and heat waves. As warming continues, less rain will fall over the Limpopo basin and areas of the Zambezi basin in Zambia, as well as parts of western South Africa.

Increases in global temperature, sea level rise, ocean acidification, and other climate change impacts affect coastal areas and low-lying regions, including the small island states like Seychelles and Comoros. Climate change puts the survival of many societies, and of the biological support systems of the planet, at risk.[3]

Extreme climate-related hazards have already become more common across the region. During Cyclone Idai, which ravaged Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe in early 2019, leaving more than 1300 people dead, women found themselves in difficult situations, including an estimated 7000 women who faced life-threatening complications giving birth during the crisis.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) maintains that it remains possible to limit global temperature rise to 1.5° C - if, and only if, there "are rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities." It warns that, for Sub-Saharan Africa, which has experienced more frequent and more intense climate extremes over the past decades, the ramifications of the world's warming by more than 1.5° C would be profound. Temperature increases in the region will be higher than the



Women wade through flood waters in Namibia in 2019. Photo: Veronika Haimbili

[1] World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) data, 2020
[2] https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2018-march-2019/global-warming-severe-consequences-africa
[3] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/climatechange

global mean temperature increase, and regions in Africa near the equator will experience more hot nights and longer and more frequent heat waves.

Key events over the past year in this area of work include the rise of citizen action and civil disobedience on climate change and gender issues. Youth have become more vocal in their activism for climate justice and sustainable development. Sweden environmental activist Greta Thunberg galvanised the movement when she challenged world leaders who prioritise economic gain over environmental action. Thunberg's famous "how dare you" speech at the United Nations urged leaders to think about future generations in their actions of today.[4]

The United Nations 25th Conference of the Parties (COP25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2019 in Spain provided another important milestone on the path to fully operationalise the landmark Paris Climate Change Agreement.[5] Countries submitted new and updated climate action plans at the conference. At a continental level, climate change representatives met in February 2019 to discuss Africa's engagement at COP25, along with the African Climate Commissions.

Table 10.1: Key climate justice indicators

| INDICATORS | Angola | Botswana | Comoros | DRC | Eswatini | Lesotho | Madagascar | Malawi | Mauritius | Mozambique | Namibia | Seychelles | South Africa | Tanzania | Zambia | Zimbabwe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| National Action Plans submitted to UNFCCC[6] | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes, but out-dated[7] | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Number of National climate change policies/guidelines[8] | Nine (2008, 2x2010, 2x2012, 2x2013, 2x2014) | Two (both of 2009) | No data | Four (2 of 2011 and 2014) | No data | No data | Three (2003, 2010, 2013) | No data | No data | 11 (1995, 4x2009, 3x2011, 2x2013, 2014) | No data | No data | Four (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011) | Five (2003, 2005, 2012, 2013, 2014) | No data | Five (2003, 2006, 2x2011, 2012) |
| % women in climate decision-making[9] | 22 | 30 | None | None | 14 | None | None | None | 17 | 30 | 21 | 17 | 40 | 11 | 10 | 25 |
| % women sources on gender and climate change[10] | N/A | 9 | N/A | 21 | 22 | 38 | 23 | 14 | 20 | 30 | 10 | 55 | 41 | 23 | 30 | 39 |
| Prevalence of severe food insecurity in the population (%)[11] | | 41.3 | | | | | | 51.7 | 6.2 | | 39 | 3.2 | 29.2 | 36.9 | | |
| Access to electricity (%)[12] | 43.3 | 64.9 | 81.9 | 19 | 76.5 | 47 | 25.9 | 18 | 97.5 | 31.1 | 53.9 | 100 | 91.2 | 35.6 | 39.8 | 41 |
| Country has signed and ratified the global climate change treaty (Paris Agreement)[13] | 2016 (signed but not ratified) | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed in 2016, ratified in 2017 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed in 2016, ratified in 2017 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed in 2016, ratified in 2018 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed in 2016, ratified in 2018 | Signed and ratified in 2016 | Signed in 2016, ratified in 2017 |

*Source: Gender Links, 2020.*

[4] Greta Thunberg Speech during the UN 2019 General Assembly, accessed on 9 July 2020 from https://www.cntraveller.in/story/full-text-greta-thunberg-speech-how-dare-you-un-climate-action-summit/
[5] UN Climate Change Conference 2019, accessed on 10 July 2020 from https://unfccc.int/about-the-un-climate-change-conference-december-2019
[6] UNFCCC data https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Pages/NationalPolicies.aspx
[7] https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Country%20Documents/Parties/UNDAF-Action-Plan-Final-ENG-signed.pdf
[8] UNFCC Country Profiles , https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Pages/NationalPolicies.aspx
[9] National Government websites, Gender Links computations
[10] Gender Links, State of Women in SADC, 2019
[11] World Bank Data, Food Security Portal https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SN.ITK.SVFI.ZS?locations=AO-BW-KM-CD-SZ-MG-MW-MU-MZ-NA-SC-ZA-TZ-ZW-ZM
[12] World Bank Data, Access to Electricity, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=SC-MU-MZ-KM-AO-BW-NA-MW-MG-CD-SZ-LS
[13] UNFCC Agreement signatories, accessed from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_parties_to_the_Paris_Agreement#Signatories on 11 July 2020

Table 10.1 presents several climate justice indicators for the SADC region. It shows that:

- All countries have signed and ratified the Paris Climate Change Agreement, except Angola, which signed it but has yet to ratify it.
- Only one SADC country, Mozambique, has sent a climate action plan to the UNFCCC, although several have national climate change policies and guidelines.
- Five countries have no women in decision-making positions related to climate: Comoros, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Malawi.
- Women's voices remain underreported on media topics related to climate and the environment. Women comprised only 9% of sources in climate stories in Botswana, with Seychelles, at 55%, sharing the most women's perspectives in the region.
- Severe food insecurity has increased in parts of the region, especially in Malawi and Botswana, where 51.7% and 41.3%, respectively, do not have enough to eat.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call, further destabilising the region and imperilling tenuous development gains. Experts have described it as a warning that should force world leaders to address growing pressures linked to excessive carbon emissions, deforestation, massive food and meat production and consumption, industrialisation, and human encroachment in isolated ecosystems.

The COVID-19 pandemic also offers opportunities for environmental action. For instance, it sets a new baseline for what the region can achieve digitally: remote work, education, shopping, and more. As governments, private institutions, and even social media companies succeed in partnering, the pandemic helps build capacity to tackle climate change.[14] It also presents an opportunity to build women and girls' capacity with digital platforms as frontline workers in food security.

This chapter analyses climate justice in Southern Africa through a gender lens. It employs legal and policy frameworks to explore links between climate change, COVID-19, and the fight for gender equality. It examines the perilous risks, as well as opportunities arising from the twin pandemics of climate change and COVID-19. Examples cited include local level initiatives showing the power of people-driven action. The chapter ends with examples of movement building, including the youth-led movements that are taking the world, and Southern Africa, by storm.

COVID-19 presents an opportunity for women and girls to access digital platforms as frontline workers in food security

# Climate change - the Southern African reality

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), temperatures in Southern Africa will increase at twice the global average. Six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries are among the nine African countries that dramatic weather events will hit hardest in the coming years: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),

[14] Jason Pareja, Oneyoungworld, The effect of COVID-19 on climate change, May 2020

Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.[15] Late rains, the aftermath of two major cyclones, drought, and flooding have already put millions of lives at risk over the past year.



In **Angola**, unchecked warming could lead to the loss of 20% of the country's fisheries. Angola lacks the capacity, especially in vulnerable fishing towns like Tombwa, to adjust or adapt to the drastic changes, which have left many fishing communities increasingly vulnerable. Sea temperatures off the Angolan coast have risen 1.5 degrees - and possibly more - over the past century. The industry is home to some of the country's poorest citizens, including many migrants, who already live on the edge.[16]



In **Botswana**, recent droughts led to total crop failure in some parts of the country. For many in Botswana's agricultural sector, which boasts the most women farmers in the region,[17] changing seasonal weather patterns now arrive with frightening regularity each year.[18] "The effects of climate change are hitting home because crop production has decreased," said Thabang Botshoma, deputy permanent secretary in the agriculture ministry. "Climate change is currently doing more harm within the agricultural sector and this calls for action."



**Comoros** faces a range of threats from climate change, including increased variability in rainfall levels, leading to drought, flooding, and threats to water supplies for agriculture, drinking, and sanitation. Erratic rainfall supplies a paradoxical combination of droughts and floods, hindering agriculture in a country in which farm work employs up to 80% of the population. Crops on which farmers used to depend for their livelihoods, such as taro, now no longer succeed in the country.[19]



In the **DRC**, climate change has increased vulnerabilities in the already fragile state, particularly in the northeast, which has been experiencing increasing temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns. Widespread poverty, high population density, socioeconomic inequalities, and ongoing conflict already create stress in the country; the effects of climate change now add to this dangerous mix. Crop losses and failures from changing weather patterns will continue to reduce food security, increase livestock mortality, deplete fisheries, and damage infrastructure.[20]



GL country manager for Lesotho, Lucia Mabetha, on a field visit in Lesotho in June 2020. Photo: Ntolo Lekau



In **Lesotho**, reduced rainfall and frequent drought diminish crop production and result in lack of water availability and reduced water quality.[21] Drought and hot temperatures also create the conditions for more diseases and pests. The resultant crop failures have been creating food shortages and malnutrition. More frequent droughts and flooding also increase soil erosion, desertification, and land degradation.



Over the years, **Madagascar** has allowed extensive deforestation and overharvesting, which compounds some of the impacts of climate change in the country such as droughts and floods. Madagas-

[15] https://www.wfp.org/news/climate-shocks-intensify-un-food-agencies-urge-more-support-southern-africas-hungry-people
[16] Washington Post, 2019, Climate change in Angola accessed from https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/world/climate-environment/angola-climate-change/ on 5 July 2020
[17] https://genderlinks.org.za/programme-web-menu/botswana-women-farmers-lead-the-way-2011-09-30/#:~:text=In%20most%20countries%20there%20is,land%20owners%20in%20the%20region.
[18] https://southerntimesafrica.com/site/news/botswana-hit-hard-by-climate-change-effects
[19] https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2019/2/5/comoros-spearheading-the-international-communitys-fight-against-climate-change
[20] https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/climate-change-profile-democratic-republic-congo-east
[21] https://www.lesmet.org.ls/home/open/Impacts-and-Adaptation

car is especially vulnerable to climate change, which presents its leaders with a dilemma as 90% of its citizens work in agriculture, which contributes 26% of its GDP. Bush fires, deforestation and deep ploughing have already significantly degraded the soil.

At least 1.6 million people in central and south **Mozambique** need assistance due to drought and severe weather. Mozambique is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to natural disasters and climate change. Severe food shortages have been taking a heavy toll, especially on children younger than five years, with some 67 500 children facing acute malnutrition. Crops have been failing; communities do not have enough food to eat; and families cannot produce enough to sell. All these result in an elevated risk of negative coping mechanisms, which often include reduction of number of meals and portion sizes. Mozambique is still reeling from the devastating effects of two major cyclones - Idai in the central-eastern parts and Kenneth in the northern parts of the country - which hit the country in 2019.



Extreme weather events already affect **South Africa**, with the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape recently experiencing the longest periods of drought in recorded history. Meanwhile, KwaZulu-Natal and the Wild Coast have seen severe storms and flooding with unprecedented frequency, and coastal cities face rising sea levels and increasingly common storm surges. An official government report has noted that more extreme weather events and a rise of 6°C in average temperatures across the country could be possible by the end of the century. It notes that climate change has already ravaged South Africa, predicting that the worst has yet to come.[22] Community led initiatives to mitigate the worse effects represent a crucial lifeline for many.



**Tanzania** faces more frequent and intense droughts, storms, heat waves, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and warming oceans. The effects of these will directly harm livestock and destroy people's livelihoods. The agricultural sector in Tanzania currently engages 80% of the country's labour force - about 13 million people and 49% of the country's GDP. Tanza-nia has already experienced decreasing annual rains, causing dire consequences for farmers and pastoralists, including loss of livestock.[23]



Climate change also represents a major threat to **Seychelles**' economy and way of life due to changes in rainfall patterns, sea level rise, increased coastal erosion, and flooding. Ocean warming and coral bleaching also have a significant impact on its marine ecosystems and fisheries. Its estuarine and coastal ecosystems are among the most threatened natural ecosystems in Seychelles, which means that, as a tourism destination, adopting ecosystem-based approaches will be vital to sustain this pillar of its economy.[24]

The recent spate of droughts and cyclones have tested the limits of SADC's emergency re-sponse and raised questions about preparedness and the effectiveness of regional early warning systems. The environmental crisis in SADC has extended from directly affecting agriculture and food security to impacting healthcare across the region. In 2019, climate shocks worsened measles outbreaks in Angola (3127 cases; 64 deaths), Comoros (132 cases; no deaths), and Madagascar (202 692 cases; 966 deaths), and Namibia saw a spike in hepatitis E transmissions (6527 cases; 55 deaths) in informal settlements due to poor access to water and adequate sanitation.

Malnutrition remains high in the region with 13 countries reporting prevalence of stunting at more than 20%, of which seven have a prevalence of stunting higher than 30%. The severity of the most recent droughts has resulted in a regional crisis that warrants immediate action to avoid more fatalities and emergencies. Following the 2018/19 El Niño episode, experts predicted that the number of food insecure people in SADC would rise to 41.2 million.[25]

[22] https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/climate-change-effects-south-africa-report/
[23] https://klimaretter.hamburg/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CLIMATE-CHANGE-IN-TANZANIA_information.pdf
[24] https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/06/29/ecosystem-based-adaptation-project-reduces-flood-risk-seychelles/
[25] https://politicaleconomy.org.za/2020/04/climate-change-and-adaptation-in-sadc/



Table 10.2: Representation of women and men in key decision-making positions related to the environment

| | Angola | | Botswana | | Comoros | | DRC | | Lesotho | | Madagascar | | Malawi | | Mauritius | | Mozambique | | Namibia | | Seychelles | | South Africa | | Eswatini | | Tanzania | | Zambia | | Zimbabwe | | Total Female | Total Male | Overall total | % Female |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | | | | |
| Year | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | 2019 | | | | | |
| Minister of Environmental Affairs (Wildlife) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 11 | 16 | 25 |
| Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 33 |
| Permanent Secretary (DG) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 25 |
| Minister of Tourism | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 11 | 16 | 13 |
| Deputy Minister of Tourism | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 75 |
| Permanent Secretary (DG) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Minister of Fisheries | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 27 |
| Deputy Minister of Fisheries | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 25 |
| Permanent Secretary (DG) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Minister of Water Affairs | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 15 | 23 |
| Deputy Minister of Water Affairs | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 29 |
| Permanent Secretary (DG) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 22 |
| Minister of Agriculture | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 16 | 6 |
| Deputy Minister of Agriculture | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 33 |
| Permanent Secretary (DG) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| Total | 7 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 24 | 109 | 133 | 20 |
| Total Composite | 9 | | 10 | | 6 | | 5 | | 7 | | 6 | | 5 | | 6 | | 10 | | 14 | | 6 | | 15 | | 7 | | 9 | | 10 | | 8 | | | | | |
| Percentage | 22% | | 30% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% | | 0% | | 17% | | 30% | | 21% | | 17% | | 40% | | 14% | | 11% | | 10% | | 25% | | | | | |

*Source: Gender Links, complied from government websites.*

Gender and climate justice are closely intertwined. Women are those most affected by natural disasters. Yet they are missing from the decision-making tables on climate change.Table 10.2 illustrates women's representation in climate change decision-making in SADC. The table provides sex disaggregated data for women ministers, deputy ministers and permanent secretaries/director generals in the ministries of Tourism; Fisheries; Water Affairs and Agriculture. This shows that on average women constitute one fifth (20%) of those making decisions in key environment ministries, down from 28% in 2017. South Africa (40%) leads the way. Other countries hover between zero and 30% representation of women in these key positions.

Table 10.3: Gender dimensions of climate change in SADC

| Area of concern | Gender implications |
|---|---|
| Food security | Most women in the region take part in farming, but they have trouble obtaining education, income, land, livestock, and technology. This means that climate change may negatively impact female farmers more than male farmers by further limiting their resources. Women produce between 60% and 80% of all food in the developing world, yet they own just 10% of all agricultural land and just 2% of land rights. |
| Water | Many countries in the region have been experiencing droughts and water shortages. This has compromised livelihoods, particularly for many women and young girls who must ensure availability of water. They now travel longer distances to collect water, often exposing themselves to dangerous threats such as human trafficking and sexual violence. |
| Division of labour | Gender-based prejudices and stereotypes exclude women from areas of the green economy such as transport and energy, wasting human resources and preventing the SADC region from achieving its full competitive potential. |
| School drop-out | In many countries, men force girls and young women to stay out of school to look for opportunities to generate income for their families as agricultural production in the region declines. |
| Land | Women, especially single women and widows, still struggle to access land for resettlement and production, including farming, to generate income for their families. |
| Transport | Women depend on access to public transport to a larger degree due to lower levels of car ownership, but also because of their preferences for the use of environmentally friendly solutions such as public transport. |
| Health | Women are more likely to have a greater awareness of health issues and more highly developed risk perceptions, which often impacts how they perceive health and environmental issues. Men tend to be more strongly oriented towards convenience. |
| Stress | Stress levels and related diseases may increase for both women and men. Because society expects men to support the family, they experience and express stress in different, often more devastating ways than women. |
| Migration | In many countries, men migrate from rural areas and small towns to move to big cities due to declines of natural resources and agriculture. They often leave women behind to care for the children and the elderly on their own. |
| Gender violence | Incidents of sexual violence remain frequent in shelters where natural disaster victims take refuge; and men and women share limited space with no privacy. These shelters usually lack safe and adequate ablution blocks and often women and girls must walk alone outside at night to relieve themselves, risking sexual abuse. |
| Energy poverty | Due to their lower average income, women are at greater risk of energy poverty than men and have fewer options for investing in low-carbon options such as energy efficiency and renewable energies. |
| Decision-making | The climate change sector does not equally include men and women at decision-making levels. There is an urgent need to improve gender equality in decision-making in this field, especially the transport and energy sectors. It is also important to increase the number of women with relevant qualifications in scientific and technological areas and who participate in relevant scientific bodies at the highest level. |

*Source: Gender Links, 2020.*

Table 10.3 summarises several gender dimensions of climate change. It shows how climate change has become a cause of conflict and how it perpetuates poverty, GBV, and an increased burden of care work amongst women. Climate impacts and environmental degradation drive increases in VAWG, while gender-based exploitation hampers efforts to address violence, according to a massive study released in February 2020 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

"Gender-based violence is one of the most pervasive but least talked-about barriers that face us in conservation and climate work," said lead author Cate Owren, adding that her report found unmistakable evidence that climate change leads to increased rates of GBV. "We need to take the blinders off and pay this concerted attention."[26] The number of people in need of emergency reproductive health services or protection from GBV escalates during a crisis. Concurrently, climate-induced natural disasters limit access to SRH services, safe water and sanitation, food security, and education. Disasters like Idai and COVID-19 also interrupt access to contraception and other important sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.[27]

The pandemic further emphasises the urgency for the region to understand and address the relationship between the effects of climate change and the persistence of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Women and girls face increasing vulnerabilities to gender-based violence (GBV) if governments do not find ways to mitigate recurrent climate-related threats such as drought, flooding, and disease outbreaks. In southern parts of Madagascar, for example, food insecurity following recurrent droughts forced some parents to pull young girls out of school to collect food, including cactus fruit, to sustain their families. As a food source, these fruits provide insufficient nutrients.[28]



Community members in Mahe, Seychelles, work to rehabilitate vital wetlands, which help decrease vulnerability to flooding.
Photo courtesy of Climate Home News

In March and April 2019, Southern Africa was hit by two devastating cyclones that left a trail of destruction in their path, and close to 2.2 million people in need urgent assistance in Mozambique alone. On 14 to 15 March **Tropical Cyclone Idai**[29] made landfall near Beira City, Sofala Province, in central Mozambique. The cyclone brought torrential rains and winds to Sofala, Zambezia, Manica and Inhambane provinces. Cyclone Idai continued across land as a Tropical Storm and hit eastern Zimbabwe with heavy rains and strong winds. The storm caused high winds and heavy precipitation in Chimanimani and Chipinge districts causing riverine and flash flooding and subsequent deaths, destruction of livelihoods and properties. Idai left more than 600 people dead and an estimated 1.85 million people in need in Mozambique alone.

On 24 April, **Tropical Cyclone Kenneth**[30] passed north of the Comoros Islands, hitting the northern island of Ngazidja. On the evening of 25 April, the cyclone made landfall in Mozambique between the districts of Macomia and Mocimboa da Praia in Cabo Delgado province. With wind gusts of up to 220km/h, Tropical Cyclone Kenneth became the strongest cyclone to ever hit the African continent. Cyclone Kenneth left 374,000 people in need.

[26] https://theenergymix.com/2020/02/14/massive-study-links-gender-based-violence-to-climate-change-environmental-degradation/
[27] http://venturesafrica.com/over-2billion-in-recovery-costs-following-the-impact-of-cyclone-idai/
[28] https://www.un.org/africarenewal/news/un-agencies-warn-deteriorating-food-security-southern-madagascar
[29] https://www.unocha.org/southern-and-eastern-africa-rosea/cyclones-idai-and-kenneth
[30] Ibid



# Zimbabwe: Women disproportionately affected by Cyclone Idai

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that Cyclone Idai affected 250 000 people in eastern Zimbabwe in 2019, including a disproportionate number of women. Idai affected 35 000 households consisting of more than 120 000 women and 60 000 children. Overall, Idai killed more than 1000 people in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Mozambique.[31] The World Bank estimated that the affected areas will require more than two billion dollars for economic recovery. This includes repairing sanitations systems damaged by the cyclone, which put families at risk of water- and food-borne diseases.

Women and girls faced increased sexual violence, unsafe labour, and an inability to reach medical centres during the disaster. More broadly, the disaster interrupted access to contraception and other vital reproductive and sexual health services. Idai also led to mental health challenges for many women and severe loss of incomes and livelihoods. The cyclone has pushed the government to think about creating more sustainable and resilient communities to ensure that such disasters do not cause such devastation in future.

While the donor community provided emergency relief aid, women continue to face the long-term effects of the cyclone. Chimanimani Council, one of several Gender Links Centres of Excellence, created a gender action plan that includes gender responsive disaster management. However, the council may not have the financial capacity to implement the plan without help from the government and business community. This presents a good opportunity for Zimbabwe's leaders to consider women, in particular survivors of gender violence, in its economic recovery planning for cyclone affected areas.

*Source: Adapted from Health News Zimbabwe, United Nations Development Programme in Zimbabwe, Government of Zimbabwe, Global Fund for Women, Gender Links Chimanimani Action Plan, 2019.*









Cyclone Idai wreaks havoc in Chimanimani.

Photos: Colleen Lowe Morna

[31] Global Fund for Women, 2019 Cyclone Idai: Standing in Solidarity with the Feminists Driving Recovery Efforts

# Climate Justice and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic came as no surprise to many in the movement for climate justice. It represents a stark reminder of the impact of environmental degradation and deforestation, which exposes humans to closer interaction with wild animals and the viruses they carry. Many see our response to this pandemic as a dress rehearsal for future climate-related emergencies. The impact of the virus and future crises will be most severe on communities already weakened by undernutrition, poverty, and environmental degeneration. COVID-19 has already increased food insecurity and caused a spike in GBV and harmful cultural practices - all of which disproportionately affect women and girls.

Disaster management pushed its way onto the agenda across the SADC region, as leaders sought to have measured and appropriate COVID-19 responses, even as several responded to multiple crises, including disasters linked to climate change. As in other emergencies, women and girls bear the brunt of the fallout from COVID-19, including additional household care, violence and abuse, and loss of income.

Women who step in to provide care during a pandemic face the highest risk of infection, even though they cannot isolate because of their care responsibilities. Internally displaced people in refugee camps, homeless people, people in detention and other institutions also suffer, as these places often lack access to proper running water and sanitation. Further, these groups go without adequate SRH services and are at heightened risk of GBV. Women frontline workers in essential services such as healthcare and agriculture need protective clothing to prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading. However, many went without these protections as SADC countries scrambled to respond to the pandemic, as South African President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged in March 2020 when he appointed Zimbabwean business leader Strive Masiyiwa to assist with efforts to source personal protection equipment (PPE) for the region.[32]



A woman washes her hands at a cash-distribution site in Nsanje District, Malawi, as part of measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in April 2020.
Photo courtesy of World Food Programme, Badre Bahaj

Women and girls already take on most care work in the current system, contributing to the burden of unpaid care work in homes and communities throughout the region as well as holding most care roles in hospitals. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of care work in a crisis, as support workers care for the sick, their families, and those who already needed care before the pandemic. The lack of public services and social institutions and structures to plug the holes in this crisis will have a profound impact on women in the region, including those already overburdened with this work.

In SADC, many countries and organisations launched special efforts to keep agriculture work safely running as an essential business and markets well supplied with affordable and nutritious food despite movement restrictions and income losses.[33] Food prices increased due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions prevented many small-scale farmers - largely women - from

[32] https://www.dw.com/en/covid-19-lack-of-regional-coordination-could-lead-to-more-deaths-in-africa/a-53456087
[33] World Bank, July 2020, Food security and COVID-19 accessed from https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-and-covid-19 on 11 July 2020

accessing income or food for their households. Indeed, despite government efforts, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an increase in food insecurity for most households in the region.

Food producers also face large losses on perishable and nutritious food as buyers have become limited and consumption patterns shift. Though food shortages usually *do not* drive food insecurity, disruptions to the supply of agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, seeds, or labour could diminish crops. When small-scale farmers face hunger they may resort to buying food instead of buying implements for the next planting season.

Other effects of COVID-19 on food security include:[34]

- Increased malnutrition among women from fragile and conflict-affected states, where logistics and distribution challenges already exist and where social distancing will lead to food shortages and abuse during COVID-19.
- Countries affected by multiple emergencies from more frequent extreme weather events (floods, droughts) may ignore the gender dimensions of food insecurity during COVID-19 as they battle to prioritise responses to multiple crises.
- Women in already chronically food insecure communities will have an additional burden to source food for themselves and their families during COVID-19. This includes women displaced by conflict and disasters related to the climate crisis.
- Women from countries with significant currency depreciation, (which drives up the cost of food imports) will face limited financial capacity to buy food.

> Food prices increased due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions prevented many small-scale farmers - largely women - from accessing income or food for their households



In **Angola**, the World Bank-financed Commercial Agriculture Development Project helps farming cooperatives and small- and mid-sized agricultural enterprises expand and improve their operations to meet the needs of local communities during the pandemic. This will benefit women who work in agriculture as they struggle to maintain an income during COVID-19.



In the **DRC**, the average price of a basic food basket has increased by 15% since COVID-19 hit the region. Many people displaced due to political unrest have resorted to negative coping mechanisms such as skipping meals or reducing meal portions. Without urgent action, aid agencies warned that levels of acute malnutrition, stunting, and anaemia will rise. These groups have urged governments to include refugees and displaced populations in social safety nets and COVID-19 response plans. Women and children suffer the most in these circumstances.[35] The World Food Programme has been working with the government and communities to improve the frequency and quality of food price and stock data, in particular around main urban consumption centres affected by COVID-19. It also helped the DRC plan for appropriate social protection, food and nutrition interventions and emergency response to food price hikes.[36]

[34] World Food Programme, Impact of COVID-19 on food security, June 2020
[35] United Nations News, July 2020, Refugees in Africa 'even more vulnerable than ever' amid COVID crisis, accessed from https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068021 on 11 July 2020
[36] World Bank, July 2020, Food Security and COVID-19 accessed from https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-and-covid-19 on 11 July 2020

# South Africa: Feeding communities during COVID-19



Beneficiaries of the Ubuntu Project collect their seedlings for planting during COVID-19 in Gauteng, South Africa, in April 2020. Photo: Dorah Marema

The team behind the Ubuntu Project know that food security means so much more than food on the table: it means human dignity. With this guiding principle, the programme, an initiative of the Green Business College, a social enterprise that trains green social entrepreneurs, has provided food to the neediest families during the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring their communities remain part of the process of producing it.

The project team also knows that food insecurity poses all sorts of social and economic risks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, increased violence within the household represents one major consequence of food shortages. Another relates to small-scale farmers, including many women, who watched their fresh produce go to waste because they could not get it to their usual markets during COVID-19.

To help address these issues, the Ubuntu Project collaborated with 23 permaculture farmers (mostly women) to provide food packages to the most vulnerable in their communities for a small fee, encouraging them to also grow their own food. These families receive a box of fresh produce, along with dried beans, eggs, soap, two packets of seeds, 50 seedlings, and compost. The project thus promotes urban farming as a means of ensuring food security.

The cost of a starter food package for a family of five is R350. With honey, add R80. The cost of just a fresh produce package is R220. The scheme has amplified the role that women smallholder farmers can play in a community in pioneering and building local healthy food systems. Across the country during the COVID-19 lockdown, South Africa saw a rise in the number of smallholder farmers supplying fresh produce, seedlings, seeds, and compost to their communities.

In another example, a group of 16 smallholder farmers in Gauteng province worked with the project to assist more than 2000 families and generate revenue for the farmers. The farmers also partnered with the households in those communities to teach them how to grow their own food, make seedlings, and compost. The farmers later bought back the seedlings and excess compost from the households.

The project plans to establish community solidarity markets and customers can also now order online and have the boxes delivered to their doorsteps across Johannesburg.

*Source: Ubuntu project coordinator, Dorah Marema*

COVID-19 has delivered some environmental benefits: cleaner air, lower carbon emissions, a favourable environment for wildlife to blossom and thrive

In the short term, COVID-19 has affected the environment both negatively and positively. The pandemic has disrupted livelihoods and increased food insecurity. Lockdowns and other restrictions mean farmers cannot plant crops or access inputs such as seeds, which will further imperil yields. Women, who carry most of the burden of overseeing food production and preparation, will be hardest hit. Many lost employment during the pandemic, pointing to the vital need for governments to explore new ways of empowering women to access income at times of crisis. In a new study published in the *Nature Communications* journal, researchers used a statistical model to predict how climate change, with its temperature increases and impact on socio-economic development, could increase the spread of epidemics like Ebola and COVID-19.[37]

COVID-19 has delivered some environmental benefits: cleaner air, lower carbon emissions, and a more favourable environment for wildlife to blossom and thrive. Now the big question is whether women can capitalise on this moment. The case of fisher women in Comoros demonstrates the challenges and the opportunities:



## Comoros: Pandemic further strains a struggling fisheries sector

For women in Comoros who rely on the fisheries sector, the days are longer, and the work is harder as warming sea temperatures deplete fish stocks. But the restrictions on fishing imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic could help to replenish the stocks and provide a space for women to have a say.

The fisheries sector accounts for 10% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), which means reduced fish numbers due to climate change affect the health and livelihoods of many women. Fewer fish means the fishing community must go further and further out into the open sea to catch them.



Nasbata Ahamada in Comoros in 2016. Ahamada works at a fish drying facility.
Photo courtesy of Erick Rabemananoro, World Bank

Small-scale fishing provides a vital safety net for many in Comoros - a historically reliable source of employment for the poorest.

[37] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/climate-change-could-push-ebola-untouched-regions-report-warns/

While the island's Directorate General for Fisheries Resources (DGRH) manages the industry, the international donor community, including the World Bank, assists small scale fisheries and vulnerable people in the industry. Comoros, Mozambique, and Tanzania form part of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Project, a World Bank-led initiative that aims to create a sustainable seafood industry through improved management of the sector.

In Mtsamoudou, where 10 000 residents depend primarily on agriculture and fishing for their livelihoods, COVID-19 has been an additional strain. The pandemic restrictions added to existing challenges in the sector that, on top of depleted fish stocks, include acute energy shortages, infrastructure challenges, inadequate and in some cases obsolete fishing equipment, limited financial support from the national budget, and a lack of coordination in the country's fishing industry.

To build resilience in the sector, Comoros needs to introduce women to modern and sustainable means of fishing. However, this may not be possible until the country can address its regular electricity shortages. Activists in the country say women need to have a voice in the management of their fisheries to minimise overfishing and boost the economic benefits of the industry for their communities. The COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity for both women and men to collaborate with the government to introduce more sustainable systems and processes in the vital industry.

*Source: Adapted from the World Bank and the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth (SWIOFish 1) programme, January 2020*

# Gender aware climate change policies




**Article 31, 1a:** State parties shall develop policies, strategies, and programmes to address the gender issues in climate change in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Environment and Sustainable Development.

**Article 20.2** of the Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development: State parties shall undertake gender analysis and gender mainstreaming of all environmental management, climate change and sustainable development policies, programmes, projects and budgets.

## International frameworks on climate change

For more than 25 years, the international community has sought to address climate change at the multilateral level - but so far it has seen only limited success. The international climate change regime provides for a set of norms and institutions that exist to address rising greenhouse gas emissions, which remains arguably the world's most controversial environmental issue.

The 1992 UNFCCC provides a framework for climate action but does not contain specific mitigation obligations. Since 1992, the Conference of the Parties (COP) has met annually to implement and further develop the international climate regime. Adopted in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol quantified mitigation targets for industrialised countries with targets to reduce greenhouse gases by 5% from 1990 levels. Discussions about justice played a significant role in shaping the UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol, and the global treaty signed in Paris in December 2015. The UNFCCC has provided a forum for discussions about key justice issues alongside international climate policy. However, the topic once again proved to be a controversial one at the 2015 Paris meeting, COP21.



Women work together to prepare the soil for farming in Limpopo, South Africa, in January 2019. Photo courtesy of Sethosa Ruth

Long-standing divisions still exist at the international level, most prominently between developed and developing countries. The former group includes countries responsible for the largest share of carbon emissions, while the latter group has so far disproportionally faced the larger impact of a changing climate in the form of droughts, flooding, rising sea waters, and other challenges. Other dimensions to justice within the area of climate change governance and policy focus on gender, Indigenous communities, and land use rights, but these debates usually still play out within the frame of North-South relations.[38]

After the 2009 UN Copenhagen climate change conference, which marked the end of a two-year process to increase international cooperation on the issue, the international climate regime witnessed a gradual paradigm shift: away from the top-down, prescriptive logic of the Kyoto Protocol towards a more flexible bottom-up approach.[39] At the same time, the long-standing "firewall" between countries in the global north and south began to crumble. Negotiations eventually resulted in the adoption of a new climate treaty at COP21 in Paris. The Paris Agreement introduced a new hybrid approach to global climate governance, combining bottom-up national target-setting with a rigorous top-down oversight system.

## *The Paris Agreement*

The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015 at COP21, was a new milestone in the fight to address climate change. It represents the first time that states signed an international legally binding treaty to reduce carbon emissions that establishes obligations for all signatories to submit mitigation contributions every five years, and to report on implementation. A stock taking process will regularly assess these contributions with respect to the joint goal to keep temperature increases well below 2°C.

Climate activists celebrated its adoption as a historic achievement. It enshrines a new logic of global cooperation, representing a decisive shift away from the top-down regulatory approach that had previously underpinned the international climate change regime. Experts have referred to the Paris Agreement as a "model for effective global governance in the 21st century," because it does not attempt to "resurrect Kyoto-style 'mega-multilateralism," acknowledging that bottom-up national action, combined with sub-

[38] https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/study/ugmodules/climatechange/seminars/climate_justice_okereke_and_coventry.pdf
[39] http://docplayer.net/179314097-The-long-road-to-paris.html

national and private experimentation, provide the most realistic approach to keeping global warming to 1.5-2°C.[40] However, the agreement's success hinges on whether or not ambition will be scaled up significantly over time. For now, it remains a global promise, even though evidence suggests that current mitigation pledges will be insufficient to limit global warming to 2°C.[41]

The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015 by the COP21, represented a new milestone in the fight to address climate change

The fact that climate change transcends international boundaries has made it a global political issue, ensuring that measures for combating it require collective action from the entire international community. However, getting all countries to agree on how to combat climate change represents a major challenge. Disagreements and discussions revolve around topics such as distributive justice, reciprocity, and economic rationality.

On 1 June 2017, the United States announced its intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement and stop implementation of its nationally determined contribution (NDC), with its president, Donald Trump, stating that the agreement "is simply the latest example of Washington entering into an agreement that disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit of other countries." Since this significant development, other US players, including governments of US states like California, have continued to participate in climate discussions; indeed, California hosted the Global Climate Action Summit in September 2018.

On 1 January 2020, a new international climate regime took effect under the 2015 Paris Agreement, according to detailed rules agreed at the COP24 climate summit in December 2018. But one piece of that regime remains unresolved, having proved so contentious that countries have been unable to agree on the rules governing its use: Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, covering a single side of A4 and containing just nine densely worded paragraphs (6.1 through 6.9).

This short text contains three separate mechanisms for "voluntary cooperation" towards climate goals: two based on markets and a third based on "non-market approaches." The text outlines requirements for those taking part but leaves the details - the Article 6 "rulebook" - undecided.

In simple terms, the first mechanism would allow a country that meets its Paris climate pledge to sell any overachievement to a nation that has fallen short on its own goals. This overachievement could be emissions cuts but might also cover other targets. For example, some countries have set goals for renewable energy capacity or forest expansion.



Farmers set up drip irrigation systems to support agriculture during dry periods in Eswatini in 2020. Photo courtesy of Zethu Shongwe

[40] https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/12/why-the-paris-agreement-is-a-model-for-21st-century-global-governance/
[41] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/global-governance/sites/global-governance/files/the_long_road_to_paris_the_history_of_the_global_climate_change_regime.pdf

The second mechanism would create a new international carbon market, governed by a UN body, for the trading of emissions reductions created anywhere in the world by the public or private sector. A renewable power plant could, for example, generate carbon credits, or an emissions-saving factory could upgrade its facility.[42]

Madrid hosted the 25th COP from 2 to 13 December 2019, intending it as a launchpad for the full implementation of the Paris Agreement post-2020. COP25 asked countries to, *inter alia*:

- Submit climate action plans and timeframes;
- Resolve the financing of climate action worldwide;
- Resolve how to support countries affected by the impacts of climate change;
- Conclude the negotiations related to Art. 6 of the Paris Agreement; and
- Establish financing of loss and damage from climate change.

> Leaders must begin to pay more than lip-service to action plans to curb carbon emissions

Countries did not agree on several issues and failed to reach consensus on several contentious issues including, among others, negotiations related to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement; financing of global climate action; and transparency reporting requirements and (common) timeframes for climate commitments. Countries agreed to try to resolve these issues at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, in November 2020. However, the UN later postponed this conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, COP25 made very little progress on critical issues such as Article 6 and other ambitious plans. Many attendees expressed their frustration with the conference outcomes. UN Secretary General António Guterres noted that "the international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation, and finance to tackle the climate crisis." Several climate campaigner groups and Indigenous rights activists staged a protest to demand that nations do more to avert catastrophic climate change outcomes.

Devoted political will and urgent collective action of state and non-state actors (at all levels) will be necessary in future discussions to address climate change. Leaders must begin to pay more than lip-service to action plans to curb carbon emissions. They should take the period before COP26 as an opportunity to renew commitments and appropriately plan for climate action. COP26 will initiate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Seychelles and Zimbabwe introduced partnership plans during the 2019 climate meeting in Spain. Their plans included best practices on climate leadership efforts, shared stories and best practices, and highlighted gaps in support to achieve their climate objectives and the SDGs.[43]



**Zimbabwe**'s partnership plan outcomes include local climate change mainstreaming; capacity strengthening for climate finance; reducing water vulnerability; engaging micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises; increasing the adoption of low-carbon and clean technologies; scaling up climate-smart agriculture; and strengthening early warning systems. The plan has 27 partners, with financial contributions of US$23 million.

[42] https://www.carbonbrief.org/in-depth-q-and-a-how-article-6-carbon-markets-could-make-or-break-the-paris-agreement
[43] SDG Knowledge Hub, January 2020, accessed from https://sdg.iisd.org/news/six-countries-launch-ndc-partnership-plans-at-unfccc-cop-25/ accessed on 10 July 2020



# Zimbabwe: Tree planting "the acacia way"

Using one of the most iconic trees in Africa, Zimbabweans have been "greening" their communities in what some refer to as "the acacia way." In the city of Kadoma, a growing population means the city has lost some of its green space over the years. To counter this trend, officials at the department of housing recently embarked on a tree planting program under their "green cities" scheme.

The programme to plant native trees like the acacia in parks and open spaces also mitigates the effects of climate change by adding new plant life that will convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. Indigenous tree planting also promotes natural bird life.

As a Centre of Excellence, the Kadoma City Council also uses tree planting to improve the livelihoods of marginalised people. It awarded management of the activity to six community groups of widows and men's clusters.

The Council now presents its work at major events and conferences, workshops, national tree planting days, and school programmes, challenging attendees to plant indigenous trees, "the acacia way." The council works in conjunction with the Forestry Commission, Environment Africa, and Kadoma Community Capacity Centre to encourage developmental initiatives in natural resources conservation and management for the primary benefit of women and children. Council named its programme "Going the Acacia Way." The project provides both indigenous and exotic nursery trees to those willing to plant them.

Through the project, wards in the city have initiated ward-based parks, where residents plant and maintain their green belts. Local companies such as Kadoma Hotel and Conference Centre and Nyaradzo Funeral Services have financed some of these activities. The Nyaradzo Group provided 300 Trees to Kadoma City Council and 2000 trees to Kadoma Women for Development.

*By Gaudencia Goredema Zimbabwe as part of a submission for the SADC Protocol@Work Gender Links Summit 2020.*



"Greening" the "the acacia way" by adding new plant life that will convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. Indigenous tree planting also promotes natural bird life. Photo courtesy of Freepix

## *UNFCCC COVID-19 response*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Secretary-General Guterres highlighted that the crisis represents an unprecedented wake-up call for governments. He noted that they should heed the warning as they transition their economies to meet the needs of the future.

COVID-19 spurred the UN to devise a blueprint for a healthier planet and society that leaves no one behind, this includes acting across the UN system to ensure a more resilient future.[44]

Due to the global crisis, the UN postponed the COP26 conference set to take place in Glasgow in November. However, African countries spoke out, urging developed countries to close the climate finance gap in 2020 and asking the UNFCCC to hold COP27 in 2021 in Africa, as originally planned.[45]

COVID-19 spurred the UN to devise a blueprint for a healthier planet

## *Gender dimensions of the UNFCCC*



Comorian women and children carry logs, branches, and twigs from forests on Anjouan Island, where the UN has helped communities restore forests in important watersheds to stop soil erosion and failing harvests.
Photo courtesy of Hannah McNeish

From the very start of the UN climate negotiations, feminists, gender experts, and civil society groups have fought for climate action to have women's rights and gender equality at its core. A gender-responsive answer to climate change strengthens the overall effectiveness of climate action and ensures it does not further exacerbate inequalities. The Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) in 2014 (adopted at COP20 and prolonged at COP22) marked one milestone on this path, as did the gender action plan (GAP) in 2017 (adopted at COP23). Their aims included the advancement and implementation of mandates for gender equality that already exist under the UNFCCC, institutionalisation of gender into all UNFCCC areas, and support for implementation of gender-responsive climate action.[46]

Parties to the UNFCCC have recognised the importance of involving women and men equally in UNFCCC processes and in the development and implementation of gender-responsive national climate policies. In 2019, at COP25, parties agreed to review and enhance the LWPG and GAP for an additional five years or more. During the two weeks of negotiations, controversies and setbacks on basic issues dogged gender negotiations. Nevertheless, the advocacy strate-

[44] United Nations, Corona Virus Communications, March 2020, https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-urges-countries-%E2%80%98build-back-better%E2%80%99 accessed on 9 July 2020
[45] SDG Knowledge Hub, Africa Group responds to postponement of COP26 accessed from https://sdg.iisd.org/news/african-group-responds-to-postponement-of-cop-26/ on 10 July 2020
[46] https://www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/41624/no-gender-justice-on-a-dead-planet

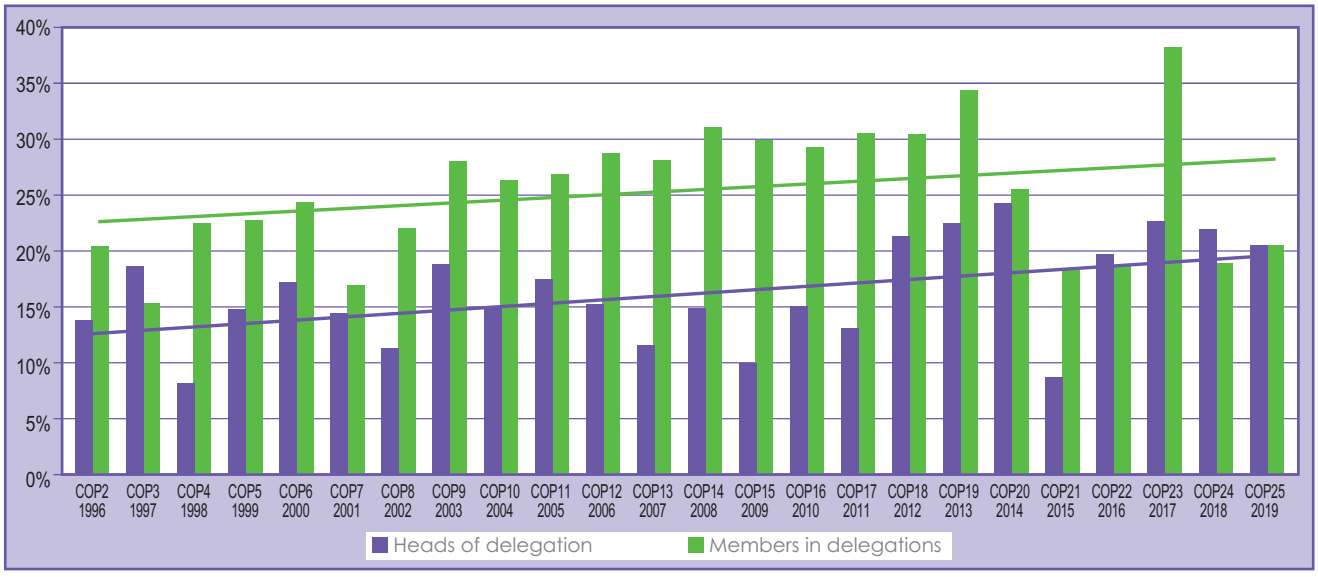
gies of the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) and allied groups mobilised and put pressure on the parties. Finally, this led to an agreement by the end of the conference. It represented one of the few outcomes of the event that civil society groups celebrated.

The GAP maintained the five priority areas contained in its earlier version: 1) Capacity-building, knowledge management, and communication; 2) Gender balance, participation, and women's leadership; 3) Coherence; 4) Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation; and 5) Monitoring and reporting. It has a set of objectives and activities that includes a new specification on the level (international, regional, national, and local) for implementation of each area. It aims to advance the knowledge of gender-responsive climate action and translate it into climate action taken on by the UNFCCC Secretariat, governments, international organisations, and other stakeholders.

Compared to the previous GAP, it has broader objectives with more comprehensive activities, which often go beyond capacity building and information exchange. Importantly, it integrates gender-just climate solutions, e.g. gender-responsive technologies, and an acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledge in conserving and protecting nature and climate. It also integrates an intersectional approach to understand the multiple impacts that people suffer in the climate crisis according to their gender, race, country of origin, and age. However, the new enhanced gender decision remains loose in terms of financing mechanisms for implementing the GAP activities, as well as in the very outline of the activities, which do not have specific targets or outcomes set for the five-year term. The current indifference of governments to review their NDCs and accelerate action to implement the Paris Agreement also endangers effective gender-responsive climate action altogether.

While women and girls around the world have received recognition for their dedicated advocacy for climate action, climate decision-making processes still do not equally include their voices. The annual *UN Gender Composition Report* looks at two fundamental areas: gender make up of decision-making and technical bodies under UN Climate Change (also known as constituted bodies) and national delegations to climate conferences. It shows that an initial positive trend in 2018 towards more gender-balanced constituted bodies reversed in 2019. The report posits that changes in gender balance remain inconsistent and vary from year to year and across constituted bodies.

Figure 10.1: Women's participation in climate negotiations




*Source: https://www.gendercc.net/genderunfccc.html*

Figure 10.1 shows women's participation in COP climate negotiations over several years. Most years, women represented less than 30% of delegations, with COP23 representing the first time that more than 35% of delegations included women. COP25 had an almost equal number of women for both heads of delegations and members of delegations.

Based on 2019 data in the *Gender Composition Report*, only five out of 15 constituted bodies had female representation, down from eight of 13 in 2018. Average female representation on constituted bodies sits at 33%. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) executive board had the lowest number, with only 10% female representation. National delegations also show a lack of progress in achieving equal representation. Women comprised only 38% of the 11 306 national delegates to the 2018 UN Climate Change conference in Katowice, Poland, an improvement of one percentage point from the previous year. The numbers decline further for heads of delegation, with women holding 27% of these spots.[47]

At this rate of change, these UN conferences will not achieve gender parity for delegates until 2046, and not until 2068 for COP heads of delegation. Even though the presence of women within the climate change negotiations does not necessarily ensure that discussions will robustly address gender issues, it is important for women to have equal representation in these discussions.

The 2020 *Women 2030 Global Shadow Report* noted that urgent gender just climate and forest conservation action can only happen "with women's meaningful participation in decision-making, building on international agreements and gender work plans." The report called for increased supports for locally-owned, women-led climate resilient solutions, such as agroecological food production. It also noted that COVID-19 has further restricted women's representation at, and access to, international climate processes. Researchers want the UN and other bodies to implement policies to ensure equal participation during the pandemic.[48]

## *Women and Gender constituency of the UNFCCC*

The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) is one of nine UNFCCC stakeholder groups. Established in 2009, the WGC now consists of more than 30 women's and environmental civil society organisations that work to embed women's voices and rights in all processes and results of the UNFCCC framework.

The WGC provides several ways for these groups to influence the annual conferences and shape the UNFCCC as well as a platform to exchange information between members and with the UNFCCC Secretariat. The constituency also ensures that meetings, workshops, and conferences include women's civil society.

It draws on global commitments to gender equality and women's rights, especially as they relate to climate change and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related commitments. The constituency also challenges exploitative and patriarchal economic models that created the climate crisis.

The WGC bases its principles on democratic and participatory governance, respectful and supportive participation, wide and inclusive membership of accredited civil society observers, and regional balance. Other principles include transparent procedures and clear, timely and flexible communication; processes that allow for effective participation of members from all regions and backgrounds; building on history (collectively and individually); mentoring (of younger generations and other newcomers); a goal-oriented approach; and providing a plat-

[47] https://unfccc.int/news/women-still-underrepresented-in-decision-making-on-climate-issues-under-the-un
[48] https://www.women2030.org/global-report/

form for women's leadership with broad and participatory access.[49]



Women small holder farmers in South Africa in 2017.
Photo courtesy of Sandiswa Manana

The main objectives of the WGC include:

- Ensuring the representation of women's voices, experiences, needs and capacities in the UNFCCC process and providing gender perspectives in all related discussions;
- Developing and advocating for common positions based on climate justice principles and working together towards achieving shared goals;
- Contributing women and gender-sensitive perspectives and a wider critical analysis of current developments within and around the official negotiations to help foster communication between women and gender organisations and groups;
- Facilitating and engaging in the daily women and gender caucuses during the negotiations;
- Liaising with other caucuses and constituencies, especially to identify and build upon common ground; and
- Collaborating on funding opportunities in a transparent manner and according to agreed guidelines to support the collective work and diverse representation of the Constituency in the UNFCCC process and allow for enhanced capacity building and knowledge sharing.

## *The Sustainable Development Goals*

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, member states express their commitment to protect the planet from degradation and take urgent action on climate change. The Agenda identifies climate change as "one of the greatest challenges of our time" and notes that "its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development."

Women's equality and empowerment has a standalone SDG, number five, but attainment of this goal is integral to all the SDGs, including those related to climate change and the environment.

SDG 13 aims to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact," while acknowledging the UNFCCC as the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. More specifically, the associated targets of SDG 13 focus on the integration of climate change measures into national policies, the improvement of education, awareness-raising and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warnings. SDG 13's alphabetical targets also call for the implementation of commitments undertaken at the UNFCCC and for the promotion of mechanisms able to increase capacity for effective climate change related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing states.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a huge challenge to the attainment of all SDGs, as communities around the world will experience setbacks toward progress. The pandemic has already imperilled progress on several fronts, as illustrated across the SADC region by increases

[49] UNFCCC, Women and Gender Constituency objectives

in food insecurity and malnutrition after years of reducing hunger; massive unemployment and economic insecurity that may take years to overcome; and land loss due to drought, flooding, desertification, and erosion. The virus also presents opportunities, including around innovation and digital solutions to address the SDGs and development challenges.

## Global: Peoples' Summit calls for safety and equality

In September 2019, during the UN General Assembly, Amnesty International co-organised a climate change and human rights summit that highlighted the principles of safety, equality, peace, and justice.[50]

Summit attendees committed to a world where people thrive as part of nature and where human rights - including the rights of Indigenous peoples - and the environment come before corporate profit.



People's Summit participants march for climate change action in New York at the UN General Assembly in 2019. Photo courtesy of Google Images

Gender organisations in attendance included Gender Links and Earthlife.

The summit declaration highlights the following gender equality commitments, which remain especially relevant in the COVID-19 era.

- Recognised that businesses have wilfully disregarded their responsibility to respect human rights, further contributing to infringements of the human rights of women, children, Indigenous peoples, local communities, and other disproportionately affected groups, and to the destruction of ecosystems across the planet.
- We pay particular attention to those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and who are most at risk of attacks and restrictions based on gender, race, and other forms of discrimination, such as women human rights defenders, Indigenous rights defenders, and other excluded and marginalised defenders and communities. We will defend all those who peacefully demonstrate and engage in acts of civil disobedience to demand climate action from undue repression and persecution.
- Committed to increase efforts to place human rights at the core of climate activism. This will be done through following the lead of Indigenous peoples, youth, women, people living in poverty, persons with disabilities, fishing communities, peasants, pastoralists, local communities, workers, and other disproportionately-affected groups, who are leading the call for climate justice and against activities that destroy the planet.

The summit also raised concerns about escalating climate justice related killings and GBV, threats, harassment, and criminalisation of environmental human rights defenders that often go unpunished.

*Source: Adapted from People's Summit on Human Rights and Climate change declaration, September 2019*

[50] Amnesty International, Climate, Rights and Human Survival Summit Declaration, September 2019

# African frameworks

Climate change threatens to push millions of Africans into poverty by 2030 and unravel hard-won development gains. Many African countries have made significant development achievements in the last few decades with annual growth averaging 4.5%, but increasing weather, water, and climate risks threaten these gains.

Africa, a continent covering 54 countries, contributes only 4% of the total global emissions. According to the IPCC, Africa will suffer some of the most adverse climate impacts. African countries have already come to the table with ambitious NDC climate plans under the Paris Agreement.[51]

## *African Union commitments*

Even before the SDGs, the African Union (AU) climate strategy included implementation of climate change programmes to achieve sustainable development and alleviate poverty, with emphasis on the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children.[52] The AU has been exploring the idea of electing a special envoy for climate change and security to strengthen its response to climate risks. The idea of the envoy stems from an AU peace and security council meeting in May 2018. It represents a unique opportunity to pre-empt migration and forced displacement and "climate-proof" the AU's peace and security architecture.[53] Climate change related displacements affect women and children more than any other groups.

Transformative policies and climate-smart development approaches are crucial to adapt to the increasingly complex and uncertain impacts of climate change. At COP25, African countries called on developed countries to take robust action and implementation to close the ambition gap of both cutting emissions and climate finance, which they had promised to do by 2020 in the Kyoto Protocol.

Africans already experience more disasters. For instance, in 2019 Cyclone Idai affected more than three million people in the SADC region, destroying almost half of Mozambique's annual crop production and critical infrastructure. By 2050, climate change could force more than 86 million people to move across countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Rising conflict, political instability, and the climate crisis have become inextricably linked.

> One in every three people already face water scarcity in Africa

Conflict happens for many reasons, but water insecurity, and its subsequent impact on land resources, is often a factor. In 2017, water played a major role in conflict in at least 45 countries, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East. As climate change increases the risk of drought, in Africa - where one in every three people already face water scarcity - the stakes will also increase.

The AU prioritises adaptation and resilience building, given that the continent emits the least greenhouse gases yet bears the most negative impacts of climate change. Unfortunately, adaptation does not receive the global attention that it deserves. African leaders must continue to raise this issue at international events.

[51] https://www.cnbcafrica.com/insights/energy-environment/2020/02/05/op-ed-now-is-the-time-to-put-climate-change-on-the-african-unions-agenda-ngozi-okonjo-iweala/
[52] African Union Climate Change Strategy, 2014, accessed from https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/cap_draft_auclimatestrategy_2015.pdf on 8 July 2020
[53] Florian Krampe and Vane Moraa Aminga; February 2019, The need for an African Union Special Envoy for Climate Change and Security

# SADC frameworks for climate change

While the entire world is struggling with the challenges presented by the changing global climate, Southern Africa is uniquely susceptible to the impacts of climate change. In coming decades, experts expect the SADC region to experience higher land and ocean surface temperatures than in the past, which will affect rainfall, winds and the timing and intensity of weather events. As noted earlier in this chapter, climate change poses several risks to SADC goals for regional economic development. Increased frequency of floods, cyclones and droughts may damage infrastructure, destroy agricultural crops, disrupt livelihoods, and cause loss of life.

SADC leaders have committed to several international conventions and programmes on climate change. All SADC Member States have signed on to the following conventions:

- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which advocates for reduced emissions toward lowering global temperatures and offers guidance on coping with the impacts of climate change;
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which specifically targets the preservation of internationally important wetlands and contains a resolution covering climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation; and
- The Convention on Biological Diversity, which has resulted in numerous decisions and technical papers describing the links between biodiversity and mitigation of climate change effects.

Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding between SADC and the World Food Programme highlights adaptation to climate change as one of six principal areas for cooperation. Similarly, stakeholders associated with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the regional climate change programme have developed a framework of sub-regional climate change programmes.

## *The SADC Gender and Development Protocol*

The post-2015 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development states in Article 31 in Part Ten, Gender and Climate Change that: Develop policies, strategies, and programmes to address gender issues in climate change should be in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Environment and Sustainable Development. It also obliges states to conduct research to assess the differential gendered impacts of climate change and put in place effective mitigation and adaptation measures.



Women learning to use renewable energy and energy effiencent technology in Joubert Park and Alexandra township, South Africa.
Photo courtesy of GenderCCSA

## *The SADC Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development*

The SADC Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development's main objective is to promote sustainable utilisation and transboundary management of the environment. It covers environmental issues such as climate change, waste and pollution, management of chemicals, bio-diversity and natural heritage, sustainable land management, marine and inland resources, as well as cross-cutting issues on gender, science, technology, trade and investment.[54]

The Protocol aims to enhance the protection of the environment; promote equitable and sustainable use of natural resources and the environment; promote shared management of trans-boundary environment and natural resources and promote effective management and response to impacts of climate change and variability. It also facilitates the harmonisation of policies, strategies and legal frameworks to enhance regional coordination of environmental management, as well as regional integration and it provides a legal framework for transboundary environment and natural resources.

Article 12 commits that state parties shall take measures to address issues of climate change including trans-boundary considerations, through adopting the necessary *legislative and administrative* measures to enhance *adaptation* to the impacts of climate change, bearing in mind the diverse and *gender differentiated levels of vulnerabilities*; taking nationally appropriate voluntary climate change mitigation measures; addressing the negative impact of climate change on, among others food security, water resources, health, economic activities: particularly agriculture, tourism, energy and industrial development, fisheries and infrastructure, human security, poverty eradication efforts and gender equality initiatives.

# National strategies

**SADC Protocol on Environment and Sustainable Development Article 31, 1a:** State parties shall develop policies, strategies, and programmes to address the gender issues in climate change.

**Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development Article 20.2:** State parties shall undertake gender analysis and gender mainstreaming of all environmental management, climate change and sustainable development policies, programmes, projects and budgets.

**Botswana** has created a multi-stakeholder National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) to ensure broad representation, qualifications, and experience in climate change matters. It includes youth, women, and vulnerable groups with relevant skills. The NCCC will provide technical guidance to the government of Botswana on implemen-

[54] https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/25617/

tation of UNFCCC resolutions, decisions, and recommendations. It will also guide implementation requirements for the IPCC reports and dissemination of findings. The committee will also have a role in guiding strategies for national responses, in particular recommendations of vulnerability assessments, hydro-meteorological hazards such as floods, veldt fires, and drought, and technology needs assessments. In collaboration with the Climate Change Coordination Unit, NCCC will also guide the implementation of public awareness strategies and outreach programmes and incorporate climate change in the national education curriculum at all levels.



Women working on a cabbage farm in Botswana in 2016.
Photo courtesy of William Moseley



The government in **Comoros** has been helping create a Green Climate Fund (GCF) to build capacity to understand and respond to threats from climate change. The government hopes to access funding from GCF and other sources to fund a project called Ensuring Climate-Resilient Water Supplies in the Comoro Islands, which will directly help nearly half a million people manage water supplies and strengthen water infrastructure.[55]



**Malawi** developed a national climate change policy in 2016. The government also launched its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in 2019. Malawi has been recovering from the cumulative impact of flooding from the 2019 cyclones and the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw the country declare a state of emergency. The pandemic caused a major disruption that will hinder progress towards the achievement of milestones set in the NAP. The cyclones destroyed between 25000 and 35000 hectares of maturing crops in southern parts of the country, thus decreasing production estimates.[56] Women and girls face an additional burden: their unpaid care responsibilities increased because of the storms and the pandemic. They must walk longer distances to water points and sanitation facilities, increasing the risk of GBV.



**Namibia** has both a national policy on climate change and its National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2020 to support the government's climate and development agenda.[57] Climate change will affect the already arid country's agricultural systems, especially in the north, where many people rely on animal husbandry. Namibia has endured recurrent drought conditions since 2013, affecting drier regions and claiming human lives. Although it has seen some improvements in rainfall activities since 2016, erratic and irregular rainfall remains common in most parts of the country, threatening agricultural productivity.



The Government of **Seychelles** developed a climate change policy in 2020.[58] In it, the government contends that, while Seychelles ranks as a low emitter, its susceptibility to climate change has increased over the years. The small island republic relies on tourism for its economic growth. Climate change threatens this, as it manifests primarily in the form of rising and warming sea levels in the Seychelles. This also represents a major problem for vulnerable populations in low-lying areas. Warming seas destroy coral reefs and reduce marine life important for food and tourism. The country developed the Blue Economy Strategic Policy and Roadmap of 2018-2030 to help it maximise sustainably in the ways it benefits from the sea.

[55] https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2019/2/5/comoros-spearheading-the-international-communitys-fight-against-climate-change
[56] FEWS NET led joint assessment
[57] https://ndcpartnership.org/sites/all/themes/ndcp_v2/docs/country-engagement/countries/NCDP_Outlook_Namibia_v1b.pdf
[58] http://www.meecc.gov.sc/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/seychelles-national-climate-change-policy-may-2020.pdf



**South Africa** has made strides in developing climate change policy. The country adopted its Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) in October 2019, representing a major shift in energy policy. The government also enacted a carbon tax bill and it is readying to enact a climate change bill to provide a coordinated and integrated response to climate change and its impacts in accordance with the principles of cooperative governance. In 2019, the government also published the Draft National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for public comment in Government Gazette 42446. Emerging evidence suggests a rise in extreme weather events in South Africa, with increased heat wave conditions, longer dry spells, and increased intensity in rainfall. Climate zones across the country have already been shifting, degrading ecosystems and landscapes, and increasing the frequency of veldt fires.[59]



**Zambia** has felt the pinch from climate change over the past two years as parts of the country faced famine following one of the worst droughts in the past decade.[60] This is despite Zambian legislators launching a national policy to mitigate the threats posed by climate change. It provides guidance on how the Zambian economy can grow in a sustainable manner and complement the implementation of the seventh National Development Plan. It also promotes coordination of all adaptation and mitigation measures towards combating climate change, with the vision for "a prosperous and climate resilient economy by 2030."



Excellent climate change mitigation and planning in **Zimbabwe** did not spare the country from the devastation of Cyclone Idai in 2019. Eastern Zimbabwe experienced torrential rainfall and high winds, resulting in crop and livestock losses and destruction of food stocks. The worst affected districts, Chimanimani and Chipinge in Manicaland, represent the country's breadbasket, where "agricultural activity forms the main source of income and contributes to Zimbabwe's main agricultural exports, including tea and tobacco."[61] In total, researchers estimate that the storms affected 270 000 people in nine districts. Making matters worse, COVID-19 hit Zimbabwe hard, just as many in these regions had begun to recover from Cyclone Idai.



Cyclone Adai affected Chimanimani, which was one of the hardest districts hit in Zimbabwe.
Photo courtesy of Colleen Lowe Morna

[59] https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-environmental-affairs-publishes-draft-national-climate-change-adaptation-strategy
[60] https://www.caritas.org/2020/02/zambia-droughts/
[61] http://www.fao.org/3/y4632e/y4632e0y.htm

# Mitigation and adaptation measures

**Article 31, 1b:** State parties shall conduct research to access the different gendered impacts of climate change and put in place effective mitigation and adaptation measures.

**Article 20.6 Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development:** State parties shall, as part of their research agenda, include all aspects of gender in environmental management, risk assessment, emergency and disaster response, and other sustainable development initiatives.

Across SADC member states, policymakers have invested in numerous pilot studies aimed at establishing the most appropriate approaches to building the resilience of the region's agriculture sector, especially for smallholder farmers who produce the bulk of the region's food. After many trials, the region has plenty of information about proven interventions whose implementation holds the key to building climate resilience. However, lack of financial, institutional, and human capacities still constrains implementation of these measures. To address this, leaders need to mobilise investment, which will be central to supporting the necessary transformation and the scaling of climate resilient agriculture.

The increasing body of evidence on climate change impacts, as well as increasing demand from a growing population, requires a cross-sectoral approach such as the Water Energy Food (WEF) nexus, to promote sustainable development. The WEF nexus provides a framework for managing synergies and trade-offs between water, energy, and food in the context of emerging constraints on sustainable development. As a socio-ecological approach, it provides an opportunity to sustainably address complex problems such as climate change adaptation, while still promoting regional economic development.

## *Women's unique role in climate mitigation*

Social, economic, and political realities provide the context in which adaptation and mitigation take place. Complex power relations and socio-economic characteristics result in different people experiencing different climate impacts. Capacity building linked to climate and women's rights and gender equality should focus on gender differences and ensuring that climate change does not erode gains made toward gender equality. Women, men, and child-headed households have different capacities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Studies show that women face greater difficulties in adapting to climate change than their male counterparts. This is especially true for women who depend on agriculture as a source of livelihood, as illustrated throughout this chapter. While women face unique and sometimes disproportionate burdens because of climate change, they are not merely victims. To the contrary, women are also agents with important perspectives and homegrown knowledge, which can

[62] http://mzansiagritalk.com/archives/4233

inform and influence solutions to address climate change. In many communities around the world, climate change has already forced women to adapt if they want to survive and care for their dependents.

One study conducted in two communities of Gaza Province in southern Mozambique - Mapai-Ngale in Chicualacuala District and Magondzwene in Chibuto District - revealed that climate change has a differential impact on women and men due to power relations and their differentiated roles in these communities. The former community sits upstream on the Limpopo River and is vulnerable to droughts, while the latter is downstream on the same river and vulnerable to flooding. Researchers selected the communities based on agreed common criteria for the region: rural, poor, vulnerable, and already facing climate change effects.[63]

The study found that women have access to, but not control over, natural resources and other property rights. Women do most of the reproductive and part of the productive work, while men control the productive work. Successive droughts in these communities has increased men's migration to South Africa and other places in search of work. Consequently, women's role in productive work has increased. For example, women's participation in alcoholic drink brewing in Mapai-Ngale and fisheries-related work in Magondzwene has increased. This imposes pressure on women, forcing them to spend extra time doing productive work instead of their reproductive jobs and time spent with their children. On the positive side, men's migration has enhanced women's participation in decision-making. Women currently employ several coping and adaptation strategies, including the use of alternative food sources.

The 2020 *Women 2030 Global Shadow Report* found that "women farmers often have different preferences than men. They tend to adopt more environmentally sustainable practices and have a stronger focus on agroecology, climate resilience and nutrition." It found that men often even rate women's influence in climate mitigation and agricultural sustainability even higher than women themselves do, although some still protest women's leadership in the sector.[64]

There is general consensus amongst policymakers and academics on four ways to strengthen women and men's capacities for better adaptation to climate change. These include implementation of existing policies and programmes, allocation of resources, capacity building, and reinforcement of women's participation in local institutions. Due to the key role women play, facilitators should always consider them as the priority group in any activity. Since agriculture represents the main women's activity in many SADC communities, experts recommend capacity building of women in agriculture and agro-processing techniques.[65]



A health worker in Mozambique responds to the COVID-19 crisis in April 2020.
Photo courtesy of Club of Mozambique

Lack of adequate funding has prevented some climate research from taking a gendered focus. This may eventually pose a risk. It is important to understand the unique risks that women face and find ways to share them, for example through trade, technology transfer, and information sharing among SADC countries.

[63] https://www.fanrpan.org/archive/documents/d00922/
[64] https://www.women2030.org/global-report/
[65] Source: https://www.fanrpan.org/archive/documents/d00922/



# Madagascar: Building resilience to climate change



Women farmers gather for a meeting to discuss climate change mitigation techniques in Madagascar in April 2019. Photo courtesy of Edwin Fitobea

Women farmers have been taking action to protect their communities from the worst effects of climate change in southern Madagascar, employing new gardening skills to bolster local food security.

In the Amboasary Sud region, increases in droughts and malnutrition regularly affect the public and local farmers.

To address these challenges, women's groups created market gardening projects to involve more women in agriculture as well as empower them financially.

Apart from climate change mitigation, specific objectives of this project include raising awareness within society about the equal rights of men and women to access agricultural work and eliminating the stereotype that forces women into care work. Both men and women have a responsibility to feed their families.

The project also works with students to plant leafy vegetables in irrigated family plots. Families can consume the vegetables and sell them in local markets. Convincing locals of the value in planting non-traditional crops that have resistance to drought (including cassava and corn) has been a challenge in some cases. Agricultural experts provided technical support to educate the community and set up water systems.

Now, families in the community, including many that had previously resorted to selling livestock to feed themselves, have more sustainable food sources as well as income from their gardens.

Experts have also shown locals how to adapt their gardens to cold, heat, frost, abnormal wind, hail, nematodes, insecticides, worms, and increased rainfall. This holistic approach to adaptation builds resilience among local communities for years to come.

*By Edwin Fitobea as part of a submission for the SADC Protocol @ Work Gender Links Summit 2019*

# Access to clean energy sources

More than half of the population of the SADC region live in rural areas and lack access to clean energy and water. The interrelationship between water and energy supply, water resources, and climate change thus factor into decision-making in most countries. According to a recent World Bank report published as a background paper to support dialogue, the silo approach to issues of energy in the region contributes to the failure to achieve set goals that would move the region toward clean energy for all.[66]

[66] Water Power Magazine (2017), Addressing the energy-water nexus in Southern Africa, available at http://www.waterpowermagazine.com/opinion/opinionaddressing-the-energy-water-nexus-in-southern-africa-5818909/

The global energy transition offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform the energy sector in all aspects. The transition towards a renewable, distributed, decarbonised energy system will create an array of social and economic benefits, including growing employment.

With public policy support, women can garner a growing share of expanding employment in this young and dynamic sector. Perceptions of gender roles remain the most important barrier to entry into the sector. Cultural and social norms drive these and influence many of the fundamental decision in the region.

So far, access to clean energy sources has focused on electrification. However, households within the SADC region have increasingly acquired solar energy. Yet unaffordable prices for solar equipment prevent many women from accessing this energy source. Most SADC countries have not achieved universal electricity and clean water supply. This adds to the burdens that women face in their multiple roles.[67]



**Botswana** will soon add renewable energy and natural gas generation sources to its portfolio through independent power producer (IPP) projects. Previous IPP projects have not succeeded due to regulatory framework challenges; however, Botswana now permits production for export by an IPP under its 2007 amendment to the Electricity Supply Act. Botswana has tremendous potential for solar energy utilisation. In September 2016, the government renamed its energy organ the Ministry of Mineral Resources, Green Technology and Energy Security to signal a new commitment to introducing renewable energy. The government has developed a new medium-scale solar project outside Gaborone, but it still primarily uses solar applications for water heating and small-scale electricity generation.



The DRC has one of the lowest rates of electrification in Africa. This puts the country in an advantageous position to move towards renewable energy. The DRC has large mineral resources and a potential to install up to 100 000 megawatts of hydropower capacity. Off-grid solar systems, which provide solar-powered products, have been a key part of reaching the rural poor across East Africa. Thus far, off-grid solar providers have shied away from the DRC, but new research shows that the country presents a compelling market.[68] There is vast potential to serve urban consumers and businesses with higher levels of demand. Innovative renewable energy suppliers can pilot new concepts at a competitive price and achieve sustainable returns. Lessons from research in the Kivu regions could serve as a model for a diverse energy system reaching across the DRC. It could include: grid connection for large industry; mini-grids powered by solar and hydro for medium-size "anchor" businesses and neighbouring households; large solar home systems for small businesses and large households; and "pico-solar" for low-income households. The DRC already employs a myriad of energy solutions in a patchwork across cities. So, the behavioural change required to shift to this model would be far less drastic than in locations with a functioning grid. Thus, the DRC could demonstrate "leapfrogging" at scale, and provide an example for other post-conflict countries to emulate.[69]



The World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA) have provided the Government of **Lesotho** with up to US$52.9 million in funding for the implementation of the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Programme. It will improve access to energy for people living in rural areas and in the outskirts of urban areas, small and medium enterprises, and off-the-grid economic centres. IDA and the World Bank will also provide technical assistance to build the capacity of both public and private sectors to ensure sustainable provision of electricity in Lesotho. The Lesotho Electricity Corporation will upgrade hydro-based mini-grids, provide new metering for new and existing households as well as extend its grid to commercial and industrial consumers. The project will strengthen the legal and regulatory frame-

[67] Annual Development Effectiveness review (2015) Level 1 Development in Africa, available at https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Development_Effectiveness_Review_2015/ADER_2015__En__-_Level_1.pdf
[68] https://nextbillion.net/drc-energy-urban-development/
[69] https://nextbillion.net/drc-energy-urban-development/

work for the deployment of mini-grids and help finance the construction of mini-grid infrastructure to provide electricity services to new users in up to 40 communities.[70]



**Mauritius** currently depends on expensive energy imports. It has set a target to achieve 35% renewable energy by 2030. It is also conducting research on ocean energy. The country has announced key projects to accelerate its shift to clean and renewable sources of energy. Mauritius also plans to increase the share of local renewable energy in the energy mix to 40% by 2030. The new projects include: setting up of a two megawatt floating solar photovoltaics (PV) plant at the Tamarind Falls reservoir; increasing the capacity of the solar PV farm at Henrietta from two megawatts to ten megawatts; installing 1000 solar panels on houses of low-income families; and commissioning a battery energy storage system of 14 megawatts. The COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity for Mauritius to accelerate the shift away from imported energy. In the aftermath of the pandemic, reliable electricity will be crucial to support businesses and boost the economy.



Police check IDs as people enter a shopping mall during the COVID-19 pandemic in Mahebourg, Mauritius, in May 2020.
Photo courtesy of Doreck Clair/AFP via Getty Images

Attitudes in **Comoros** towards electricity policy have also shifted. The authorities want to replace decades of reactionary decision-making with a proactive approach, so they have been looking at renewable energy, particularly solar PV with battery storage. A number of private sector-led projects have cropped up and the European Union is funding a 300 kilo-watt pilot scheme in Mohéli. Such projects, alongside plans for a ten megawatt geothermal plant at Karthala, could transform the Comoros energy sector, which currently relies on partially-operational diesel plants. However, some worry that both private sector interest and international donor support could dry up should the political situation deteriorate, or in the wake of COVID-19.[71]





**Malawi** has an opportunity to achieve 100% access to electricity by 2030 according to a sustainable energy study recently launched in the country. With a population of 17.6 million people, the African nation lags behind much of the world on energy access with just 11% of its population able to access grid electricity. For those connected to grid power, supply remains largely unreliable. Accelerating energy access has clear benefits to poverty eradication efforts, climate change mitigation, health, water, and economic transformation.[72] The country has a high potential for solar and new hydro technologies to enter into the power market. Malawi's energy sector has undergone important sector reform efforts recently, including the unbundling of the national utility, the Electric Supply Company of Malawi (ESCOM). The Government of Malawi is conducting a restructuring exercise of the power market with the intention to IPPs to enter the market.



Coal still dominates **South Africa**'s indigenous energy resource base. Internationally, coal remains the most widely used primary fuel, accounting for about 36% of the total fuel consumption of the world's electricity production. Coal provides 77% of South Africa's primary energy needs, whilst renewable energy sources generate just 8.8%. In 2011, South Africa launched its Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), which its leaders

[70] https://www.smart-energy.com/industry-sectors/policy-regulation/52-9-million-in-funding-to-improve-access-to-energy-for-basotho-people-lesotho/
[71] https://www.africa-energy.com/case-study/comoros-political-instability-threatens-energy-sector-recovery
[72] http://unohrlls.org/news/malawi-has-an-opportunity-to-achieve-100-sustainable-energy-access-by-2030/

see as a big success. REIPPPP signed 27 power purchase agreements in June 2018 and plans to add 19 400 megawatts of new renewable generation by 2030 according to the draft updated Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) released in August 2018.



## South Africa: Village gardens grow food to reduce carbon footprint

A group in Limpopo has discovered that one of the best ways to reduce greenhouse gases may also be one of the simplest: local agriculture and food production. The Reakgona Disability Centre at GaMabiloane village in Polokwane works with disabled adults in its community to grow vegetables.

The centre began the project in 2012 and it now includes 28 women and 20 men who take part in soil preparation and fertilisation, weed control, pest control, and other gardening care.

After harvesting, the group also sell their produce at the local market. Partners involved in the project include the Limpopo Department of Social Development and the Department of Agriculture, which supplies advice, seeds for farming, and a space to farm.

Ward councillors and ward committee members also help at the centre, which runs on a membership basis and uses monthly R100 contributions instead of donor funding to pay the bills. The membership fees also help provide seeds and garden tools.

The success of the project means the community members no longer need to travel into town to buy imported produce, which reduces the village's carbon footprint and helps support local jobs and a sense of community solidarity.

*Source: Ruth Sethosa as part of a submission for the SADC Protocol@Work Gender Links Summit 2019*

# Adaptation in the water sector

Although all sectors must deal with the impact of climate change, it affects water resources more than most. Already unreliable in much of the SADC region, experts predict that access to water will become more challenging due to climate change. Water scarcity challenges have already intensified in recent years thanks to disrupted rainfall patterns, increased evaporation loss, and increased demand. Consequently, the SADC Secretariat has been working to develop a Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Strategy for the Water Sector. It aims to minimise the impacts of climate change through adaptive water resources development and management.

The CCA strategy recognises that water issues impact a range of sectors, including energy,

[73] https://southerntimesafrica.com/site/news/global-climate-challenges-a-sadc-cry-for-water-energy-and-food-security

health, and agriculture. Likewise, adaptation measures require diverse levels of governance and management oversight. Therefore, water use in the region needs an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach, which offers a goal-oriented system of controlling use of water as a means of slowing the effects of climate change. Southern Africa is one of five global regions in the world most exposed to serious risk of flooding in coastal and deltaic areas. At the regional level, SADC has been developing a programme to respond to this.



## Namibia: Local government reckons with changing weather

As residents of the driest country south of the Sahara, Namibia's leaders know they face unique risks from climate change compared to their counterparts in other parts of the SADC region.



Oshikuku experienced destructive flooding from heavy rainfall during the annual rainy season in April 2018. The community faces increased droughts and flooding due to the changing climate. Photo courtesy of The Namibian

Predicted increases in temperature and evaporation as well as increased variability of rainfall will exacerbate the existing agricultural and social challenges linked to climate change in the community. This includes intense flooding during the annual rainy season.

To mitigate changing weather patterns, the Oshikuku Town Council has established groups to fight against climate change, including a women and youth group. It includes a disaster risk management committee that distributes food to communities affected by prolonged droughts.

Councillors worry about changing weather patterns because they affect food production, wind, and rainfall. Death and disease will increase if the council cannot effectively meet the basic needs of its citizens.

Along with the women and youth group, Council established different committees to educate community members on ways to mitigate the worst effects of prolonged drought and protect enough of their crops and gardens to ensure food security.

Council has also mainstreamed climate change into its policy and legal frameworks and developed specific climate change interventions; education programmes; and capacity building to prepare community members for climate change.

The local government also allocated some of its budget to sponsor a chicken project for community food production. Gender Links worked with the council to conduct entrepreneurship training to equip community members with knowledge and capabilities to set up new green business ventures.

*Source: Submitted as an entry for the Namibia summit by Oshikuku council, July 2019*

# Capacity

**Article 20.3** of the Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development notes that state parties shall design gender responsive capacity building, education and training on environmental management and climate change for sustainable development initiatives.

Women and men have different capabilities in terms of mitigating and adapting to climate change at the individual and group levels. Education, gender roles, division of labour and income shape the options available to women and men to convert to low-carbon lifestyles and related technologies. Capacity building initiatives on gender and climate change have been attempting to help close the gender gap in climate change mitigation in the region.

Uncovering the dynamics of power relations helps stakeholders understand why some groups contribute differently to greenhouse gas emissions and why climate change affects some differently than others. It also allows for an analysis of the ways in which climate change mitigation and adaptation may lead to different roles and responsibilities in the future. All stakeholders must consider these to identify solutions that draw on the skills, knowledge, resources and experiences of both sexes.

# Stakeholder engagement

**Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development Article 20.5:** State parties shall employ people-centred, equitable, gender inclusive and participatory consultations of all stakeholders in all environmental management and climate change for sustainable development programmes and initiatives.

A number of global campaigns now collaborate to raise the issue of gender and climate change with the objective to fight for gender justice alongside activism for action to address climate change. Most of these campaigns highlight the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, including the poorest and most marginalised women throughout the developing world who represent the group that has contributed least to global warming.

# Gender and climate justice

***The Women's Global Call for Climate Justice*** global campaign brings together a group of regionally diverse women's rights and feminist organisations to address the urgent need for just action on climate change. Since its launch, the campaign has become a platform for hundreds of women's rights organisations and thousands of activists and allies to demand climate justice.

***Women Building Power (WoMin)*** represents working-class women impacted by extractives industries in more than 12 African countries. The campaign's work supports women's organisations towards a future in which African women enjoy climate, energy, food, gender, and development justice. Activists in the group have rooted their current campaigns in grassroots struggles led by women in four countries - the DRC, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda. This women-led, women's rights campaign against exploitative fossil fuel and extractive industries supports movement-building in these specific localities and at national and global levels. It unifies women's struggles across localities and countries through a common set of political demands.[74]

***Earthlife Africa climate change campaign*** mobilises women and youth on climate change issues. It provides support to these often-marginalised groups to engage the government, the UNFCCC, and other international agencies in implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation policies. It helps create environmental awareness amongst citizens on the detrimental impacts of nuclear and coal, whilst promoting the uptake of cleaner and low-cost renewable energy technologies. It has partners in South Africa and the other BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries. Earthlife is a member of the Friends of the Earth International.[75]

***Voice and Choice campaign:*** Gender Links leads the #VoiceandChoice campaign at both local and national levels to highlight the need to include women in climate change decision-making, financing, adaptation, and policy-making. Gender Links' Centres of Excellence lead the fight against climate change through their gender-responsive action plans.



Members of Earthlife demonstrate against fossil fuel energy in Johannesburg in 2018. Photo courtesy of Google Images

# Youth and climate justice

Youth involvement in climate justice policy-making is crucial. Policies need to be gender-sensitive and pro-youth, with focus on women and children, especially those in rural areas. As the future is theirs, young people need to be involved in local climate adaptation funds and national action plans. These action plans should also include all citizens in research and development; planning and policymaking; knowledge and capacity development; and enhancing women's participation in climate change adaptation.[76]

[74] https://womin.org.za/who-we-are/what-is-womin.html
[75] Earthlife campaigns page, accessed from https://earthlife.org.za/campaign-climate-change/ on 11 July 2020.
[76] UNFCC, Guidelines and Submissions for gender and youth involvement in National Action Plans on Climate Change, 2019 accessed from https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/Documents/201904231521---PHL%20Submission%20-%20Gender%20and%20Climate%20Change.pdf on 10 July 2020

Key areas for youth involvement in gender-responsive climate change policymaking and planning include:

- Disaster response, including responding to events like the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Gender-sensitive impact studies;
- Conducting gender needs assessments;
- Systematic application of gender mainstreaming methods in adaptation and mitigation interventions;
- Use of gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation methods that will collect data from youth;
- Fostering gender equality in green job creation and promotion;
- Designing gender-responsive climate actions to enhance access to climate finance;
- Gender-responsive climate budgeting;
- Identification of community-based organisations to form communities of practice and knowledge exchanges that strengthen young women leadership in the grassroots; and
- Knowledge management.



South Africa youth climate activist Ayakha Melithafa
Photo courtesy of Google Images

Youth such as 17-year-old South African climate activist Ayakha Melithafa have demonstrated they have the capacity and drive to challenge outdated policies and approaches to climate justice. In January 2020, Melithafa told the 50th annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that climate change connects to other chronic global problems like poverty, inequality, xenophobia, and GBV. The Grade 12 student at the Centre of Science and Technology in Khayelitsha shared a stage at the event alongside other youth activists, including Sweden's Greta Thunberg. In Davos, she used her platform to inspire social and climate activism in her community, speaking out against the country's polluters. She also called on the South African government to cut its carbon emissions and plan a just transition to a greener economy and future.

Melithafa works as a recruitment officer and spokesperson for the African Climate Alliance, a youth-led climate advocacy group. A graduate of Project 90 by 2030's YouLead Initiative, which selects youth environmental leaders, she also received a bronze President's Award for Youth Empowerment medal in 2019. In September 2019, Melithafa joined a group of 16 children and youth, including Thunberg, to file a groundbreaking legal complaint to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The group aimed their petition at the biggest climate polluters among the signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It documents how , in early 2018, Cape Town residents prepared for "Day Zero," when government planned to switch off the city's water supply to nearly four million residents. Melithafa says the climate changes she experiences in Cape Town make her feel "sad and angry" and she worries about a "miserable future." In September 2019 the climate activist told the Saturday Star: "The world is starting to listen to us, and more old people have stopped seeing what we are doing as a rebellious act."

Sadly, youth leading the movement at Davos also faced the unfortunate reality that their generation will also continue to confront racism alongside their fight for environmental protections. In an episode that reflected media bias and made headlines around the world, Ugandan climate change activist Vanessa Nakate called out the Associated Press after she noticed she had been cropped out of a photograph, where she appeared alongside Thunberg, and youth activists Isabelle Axelsson, Luisa Neubauer and Loukina Tille.

"Africans have truly been erased from the map of climate action," Nakate said during an interview with CNN, noting that it points to the wider issue of erasing African voices from discussions about climate change. "Very many African activists have been doing a lot of work, putting in a lot of effort, trying to get their message heard and listened to... It was the first time in my life that I understood the definition of the word 'racism.'"[77]

[77] https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/30/africa/uganda-activist-vanessa-nakate-cropped-intl/index.html

Nakate received an outpouring of support on social media and the incident forced AP to apologise. Coupled with global protests against anti-Black racism in early 2020, the incident shines a spotlight on the numerous concurrent battles that many African youth activists must fight as they carve space in a Western-dominated dialogue to raise their voices and speak out about climate change, inequality, and racism.




Vanessa Nakate, left, appeared at a joint press conference in Davos in 2020 with other well-known youth climate activists. When the AP published a picture of the event, she had been cut from the image.
. Screen grab comparing the edited AP image with the original photo

# Next steps

- The region needs to capitalise on the positive environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and use it to inform strategies to combat climate change.
- Reflection on the COVID-19 responses, or lack of, must inform how the SADC region shapes climate change adaption for generations to come. Country policymakers should focus on building a future that uses a gender lens and addresses the concerns of the most vulnerable members of society.
- Many SADC countries demonstrated that they could flatten the COVID-19 curve and in some cases almost eliminate the virus; they should apply the same urgency and ingenuity to fight climate change, which will have even more devastating impacts.
- Climate change could soon become the worst crisis of our times. Countries in the SADC region should appreciate the collective vulnerability and responsibility and act accordingly. Its consequences will shape the region for many centuries to come.
- Economic stimulus packages, recovery plans and company bailouts put forward by countries in the SADC region to fight the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic should include incentives for building a greener and healthier future. Green recovery packages should address both the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing climate crisis.
- Both climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic rely on scientists and experts, and thus leaders must unite behind the science and not play politics.
- All the key stakeholders in the SADC region (governments, businesses, civil society, and citizens) should take advantage of this historic moment to change the course of the future by investing in technologies that prevent and address the systemic risks and vulnerabilities caused by climate change. Now is the time to drastically reduce carbon emissions and improve resilience to future pandemics and climate-related emergencies.
- Leaders must nominate more women to represent the region at international climate change events as well as on regional and national bodies that address climate change.
- SADC countries should invest in raising awareness about climate change and spreading accurate facts and science to counter misinformation that puts lives at risk.