

What should I know about gender equality in new and updated NDCs?

NDCs = Nationally Determined Contributions
aka commitments of each individual country towards the climate action goals of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement



Advocacy for gender responsive climate action is crucial in the upcoming months as countries deliver new and updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) until COP26, expected to take place at the end of this year. Real ambition would urgently bridge the current gap in pledges and the dire predictions of the latest IPCC report, while simultaneously addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and including actions for building resilience and adapting to climate change impacts.

Ambitious climate action does not only refer to emission reduction targets but also to ensuring that through those targets the transformation of economies and societies is achieved in a feminist way, leaving no one behind. The accelerating timeline of worsening climate impacts on lives, livelihoods, biodiversity, and ecosystem functioning marks this as the last chance for countries to

make their ambition reflective of the promises to aim towards keeping warming under 1.5 degrees while respecting human rights.

Gender issues were not adequately reflected in the first round of NDCs :

- In total 64 of 190 NDCs included a reference to women or gender;
- All 64 countries that included a gender reference were non-Annex I (developing) countries;
- Women or gender were most commonly mentioned in relation to adaptation (27 countries), followed by mitigation (12 countries);
- 22 countries, however, referred to women or gender as a cross-cutting issue mainstreamed across several sectors.

What are Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)?

The Paris Agreement sets the requirements for Parties in Article 4 and the Katowice climate package provides further guidance. Article 4 of the Paris Agreement gives the following definition:

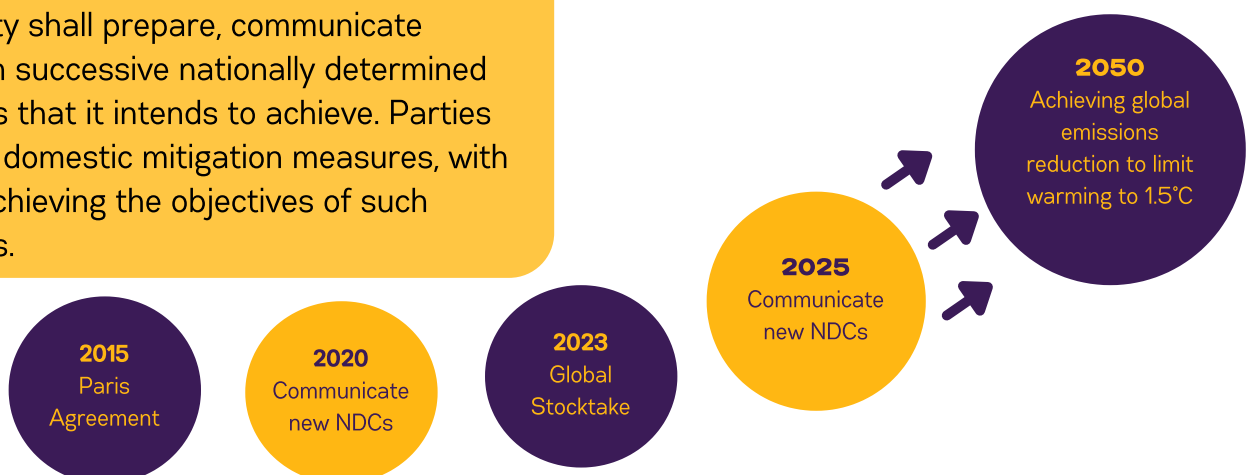
Article 4: 1) In order to achieve the long-term temperature goal set out in Article 2, Parties aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that peaking will take longer for developing country Parties, and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with best available science, so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century, on the basis of equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

2) Each Party shall prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions.

*The official **NDC registry platform** is hosted by the UNFCCC Secretariat. There you can find all first, updated and new NDCs for each country. <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NDCStaging>*

Global Stocktake

Moreover, the Paris Agreement has set up a mechanism to enhance ambitious climate action to achieve the 1.5°C temperature goal as long as current commitments remain inadequate. The mechanism operates on a five-year cycle to update NDCs. Many Parties are still preparing to submit their enhanced plans up to COP26, creating an window for feminists to advocate for gender-just climate action plans!



What rules does the Katowice climate package (rulebook) give about gender & NDCs?

The Katowice climate package lays out the guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Some key remaining issues Parties must decide for the 'Rulebook' include guidelines for market mechanisms and common timeframes on reporting.

Reporting & Capacity Building

On gender responsive mitigation action, the Katowice climate package states that NDCs should include *information on the planning processes that the Party undertook to prepare its nationally determined contribution and, if available, on the Party's implementation plans, including, as appropriate: (i) Domestic institutional arrangements, public participation and engagement **with local communities and indigenous peoples, in a gender-responsive manner.***

On capacity building and participation, the Katowice climate package also encourages Parties to *continue to promote the systematic integration of **gender-sensitive and participatory education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and regional and international cooperation into all mitigation and adaptation activities implemented under the Convention, as well as under the Paris Agreement, as appropriate, including into the processes of designing and implementing their nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and climate policies.***

What to expect this year?

Updated NDCs were expected to be submitted in 2020; however, due to the global pandemic and postponement of COP26 to November 2021, many countries are still in the process of updating their NDCs. As of March 2021, only 75 countries have submitted updated NDCs.

On the road to COP26, several "climate action moments" will further underline the urgency of ratcheting-up ambition. The expected intersessional meetings and several international high-level events on oceans, biodiversity and gender equality will take place. Throughout the year, Climate Action Weeks are planned for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific.

The imperative of designing NDCs that are gender-responsive should be clear at each of these moments, as well as in any interactions with Parties.

Where can I find more information on NDCs?

Several initiatives are undertaking analyses of NDCs:

Gender Climate Tracker

WEDO's Gender Climate Tracker (GCT) provides an overview of NDCs as well as a gender analysis per country. This analysis takes a multi-step approach to evaluating the extent to which a government has addressed the linkages between gender and climate change in its NDC. This involves noting: the existence of any reference to gender or women in the policy; the nature of the reference, which includes the reference's context, the ways women are positioned in the NDC, and the existence of gender-responsive budgeting in the NDC; and participatory planning processes and mechanisms or processes for monitoring. All information can be found on the GCT website [here](#). The GCT is also available as a mobile App.

NDC Tracker

The World Resource Institute has created this tool displaying countries that intend to submit updated NDCs, indicating each country's share of global greenhouse gas emissions and highlighting countries that intend to or have submitted more ambitious targets.

CARE Report Card

CARE has analyzed the latest updated NDCs of 16 countries using WEDO's GCT as a model.

Climate Action Tracker

The New Climate Institute and Climate Analytics analyze key emitting countries and the EU to provide information about the effect of national policies on emission reductions and overall impact of emission reduction targets. Furthermore, CAT assesses the fair share of national policies and targets compared to the global effort to limit warming to 1.5°C, and then analyzes gaps for achieving the goal. They are also tracking new/updated NDCs and comparing their ambition to previous submissions.

#NDCsWeWant

WWF provides an overview on NDCs within the overall climate change conversation. With a checklist of 20 criteria, they have assessed and provided a short summary per country for the recently updated and new NDCs. WWF displays the results of their assessment according to four categories: 1) NDC We Want; 2) Short Way to Go; 3) Some Way to Go; 4) NDC We Don't Want.

How does the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan support gender-responsive NDCs?

The Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan, adopted in 2019, contain several key activities that aim to support the integration of gender into climate action at national level. By aligning national planning processes around NDCs to these GAP activities highlighted below, countries could outline clear action areas for gender-responsive national climate action.

A. Capacity-building, knowledge management and communication

A.1: Strengthen capacity-building efforts for governments and other stakeholders in mainstreaming gender in formulating, monitoring, implementing and reviewing, as appropriate, national climate change policies, plans, strategies and action, including nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans and national communications.

D. Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation

D.2: Raise awareness of the financial and technical support available for promoting the strengthening of gender integration into climate policies, plans, strategies and action as appropriate, including good practices to facilitate access to climate finance for grassroots women's organizations and indigenous peoples and local communities.

D.3: Promote the deployment of gender-responsive technological solutions to address climate change, including strengthening, protecting and preserving local, indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices in different sectors and for improving climate resilience, and by fostering women's and girls' full participation and leadership in science, technology, research and development.

D.5: Engage women's groups and national women and gender institutions in the process of developing, implementing and updating climate policies, plans, strategies and actions.

D.6: Exchange information on lessons learned among Parties that have integrated gender into national climate policies, plans, strategies and action, as appropriate (e.g. information on results, impacts and main challenges), and on the actions that Parties are taking to mainstream gender in any updates thereto, as appropriate.

E. Monitoring and Reporting

E.2: Monitor and report on implementation of gender-responsive climate policies, plans, strategies and action, as appropriate, reported by Parties in regular reports and communications under the UNFCCC process.

Information and Advocacy: How do I learn more and do more?

"Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral and social issue but also an economic challenge and a critical barrier in the implementation of climate change and sustainability solutions."

- Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC

Learning more about your country's NDC

Each country will have slightly different processes for the development of an NDC, as well as national climate policy-making broadly. Here are a few tips to get started:

- Check the [UNFCCC NDC Registry](#) to see if your country has already submitted a new or updated NDC;
- If they haven't, review your country's previous NDC to see what information it contained and if there were any gaps;
- Work with other organizations and allies in your country to map the Ministries and individuals engaged in the NDC process as well as in developing national climate strategies, participating in UNFCCC negotiations;
- Visit the [NDC Partnership website](#) for a quick overview on country NDCs.
- If you have one, contact your [National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point](#) to get information on any ongoing NDC review processes.

Advocating for a gender-responsive NDC

Once you know a bit about your country's NDC, what are the next steps?

- Develop a resource list for your country on (1) the key ways in which climate change is impacting/ intersects with gender issues, including around agriculture, land ownership, leadership and decision-making, access to jobs in the clean energy sector, water and biodiversity, care work, education, health, and critically, access to resources; (2) the experts, organizations and women's/ grassroots feminists groups that exist in your country who should be engaged in national planning;
- Reach out to decision-makers outlined in your country mapping to request specific engagement of women and gender-related groups in NDC planning;
- Create key messaging documents that highlight the Paris Agreement commitment to human rights and gender equality in all climate actions.

What should I look for when analyzing my country's NDC?

As a first step, examine the following:

- Are the principles contained in the Preamble to the Paris Agreement (i.e. human rights, gender equality, the rights of Indigenous Peoples) re-confirmed in this NDC?
- Are there any references to 'women', 'gender' or 'human rights' in the country's first NDC? Have these been included in a second or updated NDC?
- If used, how is "gender" understood - (i.e. women and girls as beneficiaries or gender as social lens/ multidimensional intersection?)
- Is gender equality a cross-cutting issue, mainstreamed throughout the NDC (i.e., does it pertain equally to adaptation, mitigation, finance, resilience, etc.)?
- Are there references to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) – such as voluntary family planning - or in the context of population growth?

Improving Your Country's NDC

Strengthen / Add Language in the Introduction

- If there is Preambular language, add gender equality / human rights and explicit re-commitment to the principles in the Paris Agreement;

- Add that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue to all areas of climate action;
- Explain that gender-responsive climate action contributes to ambition and ensures that climate action is more effective;
- Expand the language of women and girls to unequal gender relations with respect to the context.

Strengthen Language Across Sectors

- Ensure gender is mainstreamed through all sectors of the NDC;
- Include requests for the collection of sector specific gender-related data and analysis to better ensure a just transition;
- Include activities to pursue gender-responsive budgeting.

Strengthen Coherence

- Ensure existing national policy frameworks or actions to advance gender equality are mentioned in the NDC.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Generate sex and gender disaggregated data and analysis, gender-responsive climate vulnerability assessments and inputs from gender experts to inform the NDC revision process;
- Implement participatory & inclusive mechanisms for monitoring NDC implementation.

Where can I find additional resources?

Visit the Women and Gender Constituency at www.womengenderclimate.org for the resources listed here and more!

[WGC Webinar "Advocacy for Gender Just Climate Action"](#)

The Women and Gender Constituency organized this webinar in July 2020, showcasing and addressing designers and implementers of gender just climate solutions.

[BRIEF "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Updated and New Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)"](#)

This brief by WEDO, reviews the available updated and new national climate commitments from countries (or NDCs as they are referred to in the climate process) for information on the integration of gender considerations. Though many countries have yet to submit new and updated NDCs, there is some indication of progress as more countries reference gender in their new/updated NDCs than do not.

[Pocket Guide on Gender Equality Under the UNFCCC](#)

The 2020 edition includes the latest UNFCCC developments, such the adoption of the Enhanced

Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan at COP25.

[REPORT "Spotlight on Gender in NDCs"](#)

An analysis of Parties' instruments, plans and actions supporting integration of gender equality principles and practices aims to outline some of the national structures and systems in place for integrating gender into climate action and serve as a proxy baseline on the potential ability of countries to advance progress on gender-responsive action in addressing the climate crisis in conjunction with the updating and implementation of new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

[Climate Action Network: "What are Transformative NDCs"](#)

The Climate Action Network has published a report, an explanatory video and an advocacy presentation about how transformative NDCs look like. This also includes information on gender responsiveness and can support your advocacy.

[The CLARA guide to Nationally Determined Contributions](#)

CLARA prepared this guide to help civil society organizations in your country shape climate actions in the land sector.