

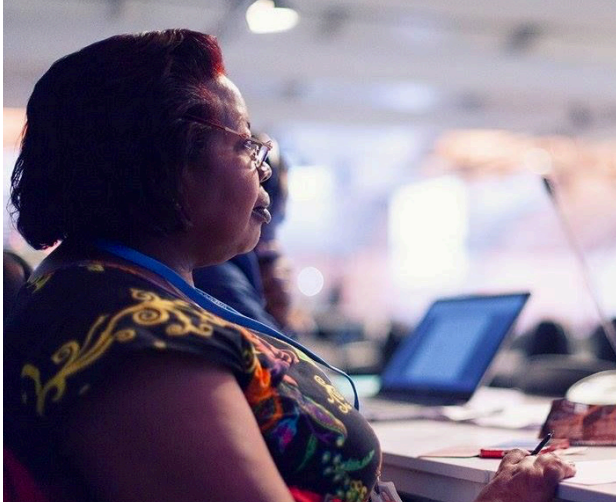


Standing in our Power:

African Women's and Girls' Demands for COP27

INTRODUCTION

The 2022 climate negotiations (COP27) will take place on the African continent for the first time in six years. In this context, African Feminists have gathered from all five regions of the continent to launch a set of collective demands that should be addressed during COP27. The African feminists who contributed to this document work within the climate ecosystem to drive and scale actions across a range of priority themes, including women's and youth leadership in climate processes, energy transition, climate finance, technology, and the interrelated demands for climate, social, and economic justice.



Left photo by Annabelle Avril, WECF
Right photo by Hoda Baraka, Survival Media Agency



CONTEXT

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) once again confirms the feminist adage that climate change is a grave and mounting threat to our collective wellbeing and a healthy planet. According to the IPCC's sixth assessment (IPCC AR6, 28th February 2022), human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and thus affecting the lives of billions of people around the world.¹ Ecosystems and people least able to cope are being hardest hit. Although climate change affects all sections of the population, countries that are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods are gravely impacted. Women from those countries commonly face multiple risks and bear greater burdens from the impacts of climate change, patriarchy, persisting poverty, and growing inequalities.

Africa is warming faster than the global average and the IPCC report considers it very likely that all of Africa will continue to warm during the 21st century.² Greater variability in rainfall has led to more intense droughts and flooding, aggravating already disaster-prone areas. With increasing temperatures, existing water stress will be amplified, putting even more pressure on the agricultural system, particularly on smallholder farmers and food producers—the majority of whom are women. To many communities across Africa, the natural environment is not only a secure source of food, shelter, and energy, but also the source of the vast spectrum of traditional medicine, culture, heritage, customs, and centuries of accumulated history and knowledge. A failure to address climate change may not only lead to the destruction of ecosystems, but also to the destruction of the very soul of the continent.

1 <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

2 <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2018-march-2019/global-warming-severe-consequences-africa>

The United Nations estimates that 80% of climate refugees are women.³ In Nigeria's Northeast, for example, various human activities have sped up climate change impacts, leading to a scarcity of resources like water, food, and land. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) statistics (2021) revealed that women constitute 53% of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the conflict-affected Northeast of Nigeria.⁴ Yet, women—especially African women—are too often locked out of the decision-making tables and corridors of power where climate change policies and programs are made and designed.

The complexity and interconnectedness of vulnerability are well articulated in the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report ("Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability"⁵ - part two), where colonialism has been identified as one of the key drivers of climate change. Such an acknowledgement gives credence to the calls for climate justice for the Global South and for the development and visioning of new systems that shift away from the oppression and exploitation of people and nature, toward collective care and wellbeing. The report reiterated that addressing inequities in access to resources, assets, and services, and in participation in decision-making and leadership, is essential to achieving gender and climate justice. It further revealed that intentional long-term policy and program measures and investments to support shifts in social rules, norms, and behaviors are essential to address structural inequalities and create an enabling environment for marginalized groups to effectively adapt to climate change.

3 <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-43294221>

4 <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/northeast-nigeria-displacement-report-36-may-2021>

5 <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>



Photo by Hoda Baraka, Survival Media Agency

Despite facing multiple challenges and structural marginalization, African women, girls, and Indigenous People are leading exceptional work protecting the natural environment and fighting climate change. Local solutions that have been tested and proved to be gender-just and transformative can be traced across the continent—from [green energy](#) projects in rural Uganda for households and agricultural cooperatives, to [empowering rural women through integrated, climate-resilient development](#) in Ethiopia, to local women’s groups in Nigeria engaging with the Green Climate Fund (GCF). These solutions and many others, which continue to be documented by [Women and Gender Constituency](#), are testimony to invaluable leadership of women, in all their diversity, in the fight against climate change. Thus, investing in their leadership and solutions is not just a right and just thing to do, but also a mitigation strategy in and of itself.



DEMANDS

Representation, leadership, and participation: African feminists call for the inclusion of women and young people in the national and UNFCCC decision-making processes. We demand

- 1 Equal representation and meaningful engagement of women, girls, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and youth in their diversity at all climate change processes at global and national levels.
- 2 Knowledge and skills development opportunities for women, girls, and young people related to the climate processes, to aid their engagement in national delegations and global policy processes.
- 3 Prioritization of investment in implementation and monitoring of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (GAP), including support to National Gender Climate Change Focal Points. The intermediate review of the progress of implementation of the activities contained in the Gender Action Plan is underway. Several gains have been recorded, but a lot of work remains to be done. Supporting National Gender Climate Change Focal Points from the Global South must be prioritized if GAP ambition is to be fully realized and gender mainstreaming accelerated across all national climate change processes and programs.

Just and Equitable Transition from Fossil Fuels for all:
We demand

- 4 Developed countries commit to immediately halt all new investments in fossil fuels and nuclear energy, with a clear and urgent shift from a fossil fuel-based economy to a sustainable, just and feminist economy centering gender-responsive use of renewable energies.
- 5 Developed countries, particularly the European Union, pull out of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) and stop its expansion to other countries. The treaty allows coal, oil, and gas corporations to obstruct the transition to a clean energy system by giving such corporations the power to sue governments in secret tribunals and before commercial arbitrators whose incentive is not to protect the planet, but rather to protect the interests of such corporations.⁶

⁶ <https://friendsoftheearth.eu/energy-charter-treaty/>

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A targeted, multi-dimensional approach to supporting the poorest and most vulnerable African, Small Island State, Latin American, and Asia Pacific communities that make up the Global South through investments in safe and clean energy to cut greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, and strengthen local economies.

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Renewable, safe and clean energy projects that reduce the burden of unpaid care work, which women and girls spend up to 75% of their time engaged in.⁷ (Gender transformative renewable and clean energy programs prove to have multiple health and livelihood co-benefits.)

Climate Finance: African feminists demand the provision of adequate, accessible, affordable, flexible, and human-rights-centered climate finance as a matter of justice and equity. We call for increased transparency and accountability for pledges made and public funds delivered by developed countries. We demand

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The creation of a dedicated, debt-free finance facility for loss and damage to urgently support developing countries currently dealing with multiple losses and damages caused by the climate crisis. It is unjust and inhumane for developing countries and communities to be left alone, pushed to use already scarce resources or trapped in a cycle of debt for a crisis they contributed to the least.

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Delivery in full of USD 100 billion climate finance per year. African countries' climate finance needs have been estimated to be USD 250 billion each year.⁸ Thus, the [New Collective Quantified Goal](#) on climate finance must deliver beyond the USD 100 billion mark while ensuring the need to keep warming below 1.5°C.

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The scaling up of adaptation finance by prioritizing grants as opposed to loans. This allows low-income countries that are already heavily indebted and facing unsustainable debt burdens to support adaptation programs that provide social safety nets and increase communities' resilience to climate shocks, as well as reduce the care burden when public services are inadequate, under-financed or fail in the wake of severe climate impacts.

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Reassessment of funding modalities by financing institutions and mechanisms in order to ensure flexible funding to fit different contexts and funding needs of distinct groups—especially women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples. This includes rethinking the approach of channeling climate finance needed, particularly in the face of loss

⁷ <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/womens-unpaid-care-work-everything-to-know/>

⁸ <https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/publication/climate-finance-needs-of-african-countries/#:~:text=Africa's%20USD%202.5%20trillion%20of,12%25%20of%20the%20account%20needed.>

and damage, by directing it to affected communities as opposed to UN-organized programs and the private sector.

- 12** Meaningful engagement and inclusion of women, girls, and young people in the development of funding criteria and allocation for climate change initiatives, including adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer, and capacity strengthening at all levels.
- 13** Governments and climate funding facilities make funding available to support the work of National Gender Climate Change Focal Points (NGCCFPs) and gender-transformative climate change programs.
- 14** Strengthening of government capacities for gender budgeting for climate change initiatives.

Agriculture and Land Rights: African feminists demand

- 15** Expanded women's access to and control over land, productive resources, and debt-free, flexible funding for ecological agricultural production and food sovereignty efforts.
- 16** Protection of the rights of women small-scale farmers and food producers, artisanal fisheries, pastoralists, and Indigenous Peoples from losses and damages caused by climate change, eviction, abuse, and violence.
- 17** Respect for communities' rights to full control of their agriculture and indigenous seed and food systems, as well as traditional farmers' rights as espoused in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.⁹ (These efforts will help better serve the health of people, the planet, and local livelihoods by supporting smallholder food producers, especially women. Investments in diverse, local sustainable food systems also support food sovereignty and help countries become less dependent on neoliberal corporate-led food production and food imports.)

Technology: African feminists demand

- 18** An immediate halt to the practice of "biopiracy" (the unauthorized appropriation and commercial exploitation of knowledge and genetic resources from farming and Indigenous communities by individuals or institutions seeking exclusive monopoly control through patents or intellectual property.) Indigenous Peoples, and particularly women as custodians of these resources, have preserved and conserved these resources for generations. Biopiracy restricts future use of these resources while failing to compensate the communities from which they originate.

⁹ <https://www.fao.org/3/i0510e/i0510e.pdf>

Technological developments related to climate change should incorporate and compensate Indigenous and women's specific knowledge, and respond to their specific needs—including accessibility, user-friendliness, affordability, effectiveness, and sustainability.

- 19 That private sector investments in mitigation and technology are not used as replacements for public investments. Maximizing monetary returns on private sector investments means that meeting public welfare needs in the face of the climate crisis is at risk of being undermined. Privatization of responses to the climate crisis will only work to breed the commoditization of climate action, reinforce neocolonialism against those disproportionately affected, and promote neoliberal capitalism.
- 20 Defund false solutions and untested, unsustainable and imposed technological fixes that prove to be nothing more than spur profit generation schemes for foreign private investment.

Intersectionality and linkages with other work programs: African feminists demand

- 21 Gender mainstreaming in national policies, programming, and budgets related to climate change and disaster risk reduction that addresses gender-based violence and strengthens the provision of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services. More specifically, that the UNFCCC secretariat, National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points, and relevant organizations and Parties promote collaboration between government entities working on climate change, gender, health, and SRHR, so that SRHR considerations can be integrated into country-level climate policy and programs, including NDCs and NAPs.
- 22 Development of national climate learning strategies that are gender-transformative and recognize the importance of youth leadership by prioritizing civic engagement, green skills, life skills, policy processes, and activism, and meaningfully engage girls and young women in the development of these strategies. ([Action for Climate Empowerment - ACE](#))
- 23 Centering human rights and enhancing the safety and security of women human rights and climate justice defenders, especially in conflict areas, by reducing the proliferation of firearms and denouncing militarism.
- 24 The protection of water sources and watersheds such as natural forests to ensure water security for communities and the spin-off benefit of reducing the workload of women and girls. The human right to water must be protected through extensive environmental impact and social assessments with a gender lens before any trans-boundary or inter-country water management projects, including hydropower projects, are approved.

- 25 Preservation of the oceans and coastal ecosystems (such as river deltas, estuaries, sand dunes, mangroves and coral reefs) by developing effective adaptation and mitigation measures to address harmful impacts of climate change and environmental pollution. This includes addressing sea level rise, ocean warming, and ocean acidification.
- 26 Strong coherence with other international policy frameworks, such as [Convention for Biodiversity \(CBD\) targets](#), [the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), and [the Generation Equality Forum Feminist Action for Climate Justice](#). With emphasis on generation of lessons and formation of partnerships and collaborations to ensure that community-led disaster risk reduction, resilience and conservation priorities are adequately funded and implemented.
- 27 A shift away from neoliberal capitalist economic models that excessively, unjustly, and unsustainably exploit natural resources and women's bodies to fuel the greed of a few individuals and countries at the expense of sustainable development for many developing countries and the health of the planet.
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ABOUT THE TASKFORCE

In January 2022, a small group of African Feminists, mostly advocates with long-lasting engagement with the Women and Gender Constituency started the African Feminists Taskforce for COP27 with the aim of mobilizing African feminists ahead of COP27 to be hosted in Egypt and ensure African feminists' voices and demands, aspirations, and vision are centered in COP27 processes and outcomes. In April 2022, a public call was made to expand representation and ensure inclusivity of the taskforce. To date, more than 150 feminists are part of the African feminist's taskforce. The membership of the taskforce is open to everyone identifying as a feminist from Africa.