

WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

Charter of the UNFCCC Women's and Gender Constituency

Updated: May 2024

Article 1. Our Network

The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) is one of the nine stakeholder groups of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Established in 2009, the WGC now consists of 54 women's and environmental civil society organizations, who are working to ensure that human rights and gender equality are firmly anchored in all climate actions under the UNFCCC and to challenge the extractive, exploitative and patriarchal economic model which has resulted in the climate crisis. The WGC has no particular political and/or religious affiliation.

As the WGC represents the voices of hundreds and thousands of people across the globe, members of the Constituency are present at each UNFCCC meeting and intersessional to work alongside the UNFCCC Secretariat, governments, civil society observers and other stakeholders to ensure that women's rights and gender justice are core elements of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The goal of the Women's and Gender Constituency (WGC) is to formalize the voice of the women's rights, feminist and gender equality-focused civil society organizations present and regularly active in UNFCCC processes, and to develop, streamline and advocate common positions. The Constituency aims to bring together as many NGO observers accredited to the UNFCCC as possible to work democratically towards achieving its goals. Individuals and organizations who are not accredited to the UNFCCC are encouraged to work through those accredited members and participate in the WGC-hosted advocacy network. The Constituency draws upon global commitments to gender equality and women's rights, especially as they relate to climate change, and toward the advancement of the Rio Conventions and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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Article 2. Our Vision

A gender-just and equitable world that fosters a life in dignity free of all forms of discrimination and oppression and protects the right to a safe, healthy, clean, and sustainable environment.

Article 3. Our Mission

Lead, strengthen and hold space for feminist leadership - particularly from the Global South (Majority of the world)- in the UNFCCC and related processes to achieve our vision by working collectively and dismantling prevailing power structures and development pathways fuelled by colonial extractive growth models.

Article 4. Our Guiding Principles and Values for Advocacy

- **Decoloniality**
 - Critically reflecting, challenging, and deconstructing language, narratives, values, and norms that perpetuate colonial and neocolonial extractivist thinking and practices. This encompasses challenging imperialist knowledge and economic systems, classical development approaches, white supremacy, patriarchy and dominant, profit-oriented economic, political, and cultural systems that fuel oppression and threaten the planetary boundaries and the rights of nature.
- **Intersectionality**
 - Recognizing and addressing overlapping forms of discrimination, oppression, and exploitation that shape peoples' lived experiences, access to and control of resources and decision-making spaces, as well as vulnerabilisation to climate change.
- **Equity and Justice**
 - Acknowledging the historical responsibility and ecological debt of polluting countries and industries responding to the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), while amplifying the voices and stories of those who were and/or are still colonized and advocating for equitable redistribution of resources, opportunities, and benefits.
- **Care Economy nurturing Wellbeing and Solidarity (Economies)**
 - Advocating for a macroeconomic system that prioritizes well-being over profit and addresses ongoing economic disparities and social injustices resulting from colonial and capitalist legacies where socially constructed roles and sectors, gendered and geographical division of labor prevail. This entails moving beyond extractivist and traditional growth-based systems.

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- **Self-determination and Agency**
 - Supporting the right of colonized and marginalized peoples to make their own decisions about their land, resources, climate solutions and cultural practices by integrating their own knowledge, techniques, histories, and worldview. Recognizing their agency and freedom as agents of change and not passive recipients of dispensed benefits and aid.
- **Protection and Consolidation of Bodily Autonomy**
 - Advocating for each person's right, freedom, and power to make decisions about their own body without interference from others, where sexual and reproductive justice is a reality for individuals in all of our diversity. Moreover, advocating and protecting everybody's right to live free from violence and threats thereof.
- **International Solidarity**
 - Rejecting militarism and armed conflict as ways to protect human dignity and nature. Moreover, recognizing, echoing, and standing in solidarity with collective forms of resistance, activism, and protest from the oppressed against imperialism, fascism, capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, genocide, dehumanization and occupation of territories.
- **Movement Strengthening**
 - Collaborating and building alliances with climate, social, economic justice, and other movements to challenge systemic oppression collectively, demand governmental accountability and transparency, and dismantle asymmetries among and within regions. This includes encouraging individuals from privileged backgrounds to support actively and stand up in solidarity, as well as defending the right of speech and peaceful assembly.
- **Transparency, Accountability, Respect and Compassion**
 - Engaging in respectful, participatory, accountable, and transparent procedures, decision-making and communication led by mutual respect and empathy.

Article 5. Objectives and Strategies for their Achievement

- Provide a platform to uplift feminist leadership in climate policymaking, especially the leadership of grassroots, Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour (BIWoC), and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, inter, queer and gender non-conforming (LGBTIQGnC+) people.
- Ensure the active and meaningful participation and representation of feminist, grassroots, BIWoC and LGBTIQGnC+ people's voices, experiences, needs and priorities in all related discussions within the UNFCCC fora.
- Be intentional with our advocacy work, ensuring it is drawn on common positions, statements, demands, and campaigns based on our collective principles and vision.

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- Enhance and foster regional mobilization, campaigning, and collective organizing to bridge between regional, local and global processes, channelling broader WGC messaging to the regions and ensuring the broader WGC messaging reflects regional realities and complexities.
- Fostering knowledge sharing and strengthening intergenerational knowledge and advocacy through mentoring young feminists and newcomers in the space.
- Facilitate and engage with members, advocates, and all individuals/organizations/institutions interested in women's human rights and gender equality in the daily women and gender caucus taking place during UNFCCC meetings and intersessionals.
- Conduct evidence-based advocacy supported by the latest science together with traditional and ancestral forms of knowledge that support real instead of dangerous distractions.
- Advance on and advocate for disaggregated data collection, research, and gender analysis for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of climate policies.
- Support and amplify gender-just climate solutions that foster decentralized, democratic, and community-based alternatives to address the multiple crises.
- Challenge risky, unproven, and dangerous distractions, such as geoengineering, that seek to perpetuate colonial models of territorial appropriation and promote false "solutions" under the narrative of green technologies and capitalism. This includes pushing back market-based solutions that perpetuate power imbalances.
- Collaborate 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.
- Challenge and campaign to end corporate and elite capture of multilateral and policymaking spaces, such as the UNFCCC, countering conflicts of interest which undermine the advancement of the Paris Agreement and exert undue negative influence.
- Liaise with other caucuses, constituencies, and coalitions to collaborate in campaigning and political strategy demanding the accountability, coherence, and fulfilment of government obligations.

Article 6. Ways of working to foster safer spaces

The WGC commits to build safer spaces for all members. It is a space where problems are addressed, and neither personalities nor individuals are attacked. The Women and Gender Constituency does not tolerate any form of discrimination. This includes but is not limited to sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, fatphobia, ageism or discrimination on the basis of immigration status, ethnicity,

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religious, cultural, and/or spiritual beliefs, or any other kind of oppressive behavior. Such behavior is unacceptable and will be challenged.

As a feminist network, we strive to fight for social justice through collaborative, intersectional, and critical commitment outside and within our space. We engage with advocates from an understanding that unlearning and deconstructing structures of oppression in our behavior and thinking are an ongoing process for everybody. This does not mean that individuals are not responsible for their actions, but that we encourage people to expand how they think about systems of oppression and discrimination.

Some guidelines for building safer spaces include:

- **Avoid assumptions** about someone's identity and its generalizations. Ignorance or attempts at humor are not considered excuses for unacceptable behavior.
- **Space to speak.** Please be aware that it may be difficult for those belonging to marginalized groups to participate in discussions both online and in person. Be mindful of the space you take. If you have spoken on several occasions, make sure you give space for others to participate.
- **Zero tolerance for any form of harassment.** This means no unwanted messaging, sharing of images or unsolicited contact with someone wherever it takes place, including during events, conferences, social events, and training sessions. This also means no inappropriate sexual comments or sexually based jokes, songs, or taunts, as well as comments about body shape or size.
- **Pronouns.** A pronoun is how you refer to someone. Please ask people their pronouns if you are meeting them for the first time. Use their correct pronouns, even if the words are unfamiliar to you. If you make a mistake and refer to someone with the wrong pronoun, apologize and use the correct pronoun for the next time.
- **Accessible language.** Try to use as much as possible clear and uncomplicated language. If you mention a theory, acronym, or person, please give a brief description of them, no matter how knowledgeable you believe your audience is. Moreover, efforts will be taken by the Constituency to advance on language justice by providing interpretation in different meetings and translation of documents as much as possible.
- **Content warnings.** Give people a heads-up if you will discuss something that others might find upsetting. Sometimes upsetting things happen and we need to be able to talk about how we deal with them as a community. It's important to have a space where we feel able to do this.

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In the event of experiencing any form of discrimination or harassment, the Facilitative Committee shall be informed and the **Standard Operating Procedure for Conflict Resolution** shall be followed.

Article 7. Governance Structure

Article 7.1. Regionalization

The WGC has long envisioned decentralizing its collective organizing and influencing through WGC regional caucuses/nodes. Members and advocates from different contexts and regional challenges, power and shape the network through their specific needs and aspirations. Acknowledging that regions are at different stages of collective organizing when it comes to their engagement with UNFCCC, the purposes of the WGC regional caucuses/nodes are to:

- To lead and support regional collective mobilization and organizing on behalf of WGC;
- Advance feminist climate justice in the regional and national policy-making processes;
- Connect local and regional movements, perspectives, and alternatives with the global policy landscape.

The minimum guidelines are:

- Regional caucus leadership and members should agree to the overarching framework and principles of the global Women and Gender Constituency;
- At least one member of the leadership/ coordination team of the regional group should be an officially accredited entity of the UNFCCC and an official WGC member;
- Members of the regional caucus should also join/ be invited to join the global WGC advocacy network and mailing list;
- Mailing lists for each region will have the (@womengenderclimate.org) domain and be co-managed by the regional coordinating leads and the WGC Coordinator;
- Regional messaging groups should exist on either WhatsApp or Signal (as preferred by and accessible to each region) with at least the WGC Coordinator given admin permissions alongside regional leads (to ensure knowledge management and sustainability);
- One member of the Facilitative Committee will be appointed as contact point to whom regional leads will communicate and share advocacy plans and work, as well as needs for support;
- Regional leads will meet with the Facilitative Committee contact point on a bimonthly basis to update on plans. *(Note: The frequency of these meetings can vary according to regional event needs);*

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In turn, each region will develop their own process for regional coordination, leadership and elections, in order to lead inputs on regional demands, regional climate weeks, events, and gatherings, following the collective principles from the constituency. For a more detailed clarification of the proposed structure and scope of work of the regional caucuses, see the **WGC Standard Operating Procedure on Regionalization**.

Article 7.2. Membership

To become a constituency member, the organization must be recognized as an observer to the UNFCCC process. Information for organizations wishing to apply to observe the UNFCCC process can be found on the [UNFCCC website](#). Upon application, organizations will be asked to align themselves with a Constituency. Members wishing to be part of the WGC should tick the box 'Women and Gender'. Answers to questions such as how the constituencies interact with the UNFCCC Secretariat, if an organization can be affiliated with multiple constituencies, among others, can be found in [this link](#).

To further be engaged in collaborative advocacy, members are required to endorse the guiding principles and objectives reflected in this Charter and respective guidelines to ensure safer spaces within our network in order to participate in the work and governance of the WGC. The **WGC Standard Operating Procedure on Becoming a Member** extends the requirements and procedures conducted to evaluate the application to the membership.

Article 7.3. Facilitative Committee, co-Focal Points, and Coordinator

The WGC has a flexible governance structure which can be adapted to meet the demands of its membership best and ensure proper international and regional coordination and guidance. The governance structure is to be transparent and accountable to the members of the WGC.

Facilitative Committee (FC):

- 6-8 individual members with a strong regional diversity and balanced representation of the global North and global South;
- Ensure that the committee is composed of representatives of member organizations as well as part of the WGC Advocacy group.
- Any individual applying to be a member of FC (from members or advocacy network), must demonstrate at least a two-year track record of active engagement in the WGC work including regular and consistent engagement in the work of the WGC through its advocacy ecosystem.
- Ensuring representation that includes young feminists and other intersectional identities.

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Active constituency members and advocates of the WGC advocacy network can nominate themselves for election to the FC, which will be formed every year following a staggered elections modality and will support and facilitate the work of the Constituency and co-Focal Points. In this sense, re-election is possible.

Co-Focal Points:

- The FC members will nominate two of its members (Global North / Global South) or (Global South/ Global South) to serve in the role of co-Focal Points for any given meeting of the UNFCCC (ideally to serve over the full two-year term or on rotation).

The Membership serves as the Governance body of the WGC, and the Facilitative Committee is the key body for implementation and coordination, not the co-focal points alone. The **Standard Operating Procedure document on Election Process & Facilitative Committee** specifies in more detail the election process of the Facilitative Committee and includes the Terms of Reference outlining specific functions and responsibilities for the Facilitative Committee and co-Focal Points.

Coordinator:

Working in close coordination with the Facilitative Committee, the WGC Coordinator will support the WGC to influence the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with a goal to ensure that global climate change policies are founded on core principles of gender equality and justice, women's rights and environmental sustainability. The tasks during this period will remain generally in line with the areas outlined in the **Terms of Reference for the Coordinator** role, and deliverables will be further elaborated in a work plan.

Article 8. Forms of engagement and decision-making

Article 8.1. Communication & Meetings

The WGC will communicate via a mailing list created and maintained by the FC. One mailing list will serve as a communication platform for the overall advocacy network, and a targeted one will be used for communicating specifically with member organizations. In the spirit of fairness, the number of contact persons from each organization represented on the members list will be limited to 2 people, however, voting procedures will follow the principle of one vote per organization.

The constituency will aim to host one monthly call with the advocacy network opening a space for strategizing, conspiring, strengthening knowledge, and sharing updates and key engagements for the

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network and advocates. WGC members shall meet at least 3 times a year to discuss issues relevant to the governance of the network, annual planning and coordination, welcoming new members, and discussions of various kinds that require consultation and decision-making processes.

Article 8.2. Decision-making

When feedback or decisions are required from WGC members, the relevant information will be shared within a reasonable timeframe and if no objections are raised by the set date, consensus will be assumed. Ad-hoc decision-making processes may be adopted under circumstances such as a COP, where a shorter turnaround time may be necessary, with consultation and agreement from members, following the no-objections process. Decisions will therefore be adopted according to the consensus of members actively engaged in Constituency work, and according to the principles outlined above. If conflicts occur, the co-Focal Points and/or the Facilitative Committee will be asked to mediate, referring to the WGC **Standard Operating Procedure on Conflict Resolution**.

Article 8.3. Thematic Working Groups

The thematic groups bring together advocates and members interested in following up on particular issues that are discussed on the UNFCCC agenda and/or are linked to the demands of the network and the feminist movement. Anyone who is part of the advocacy network can be part of these working groups. The working and meeting modality is flexible and agreed upon by the members of the group. More information on the thematic working groups can be found in the **Standard Operating Procedure on Forms of Engagement**.

Article 8.4. Representation and Participation in UNFCCC Meetings

Annually, several meetings, dialogues, and workshops that follow specific mandates within the UNFCCC agenda items take place in different geographical locations. To ensure that the demands from the WGC resonate in the multiple spaces, the constituency encourages the participation of advocates and members from the network to represent the network. The network representative commits to represent the collective interests of the network without prioritizing individual organizations' agendas; advocate towards regional and global demands framed by the constituency; and follow the Charter's guiding principles and values. Considerations for the selection of representatives can be found in the **Standard Operating Procedure on Forms of Engagement**.

Article 8.5. Submissions and Statements

Submissions are important for sharing feminist experiences, building understanding, and advancing work on gender-just climate solutions within different UNFCCC mandates and decisions. This is a means of strategic

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advocacy with policymakers that seeks to reflect priorities from the constituency to advancing climate and gender justice within this multilateral space. More information on the elaboration and agreement of submissions, common statements, and interventions can be found in the **Standard Operating Procedure on Forms of Engagement**.