

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) SUBMISSION TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)  
ON CLIMATE CHANGE, MIGRATION AND GENDER, September 2019**

**IOM Key messages on gender and climate migration**

- Climate change impacts, environmental change and natural disasters affect men and women in different ways. Vulnerability to climate and environmental stressors is also shaped by gender roles and responsibilities. These differentiated impacts are clear both in cases of migration linked to slow-onset events and forced migration occurring in the context of sudden-onset events. Among others, they range from differentiated protection issues, access to services, health impacts, the weight of existing gender cultural norms that can expose women to additional risks, access to land tenure and labour protection.
- Gender roles and relations significantly affect women's and men's decisions to migrate and experiences of migration in the context of climate change.
- Gender is a key analytical tool when looking for adequate and durable responses to environmental migration that are mindful of differentiated gender needs and impacts.
- Gender-equality concerns must be integrated into international negotiations and discussions on climate change mitigation and adaptation to ensure that policies are effective, fair and implementable on the ground, and that they do not exacerbate existing inequalities and vulnerabilities or create new ones.
- In that respect, it is vital that the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (Excom/WIM) and its Task Force on Displacement, work to integrate gender issues to its human mobility, migration and displacement work programme. This could potentially include:
  - Mainstreaming gender concerns throughout the new Taskforce on Displacement workplan.
  - Requesting technical partners of the Taskforce to analyze/gather and share knowledge and data on specific gender issues related to migration and displacement.
  - Supporting general awareness-raising with UNFCCC Parties on gender and migration issues.
  - Highlighting and promoting the adaptive know-hows of women to climate change, especially indigenous women.

## IOM in the field: Lessons learned

- **Poorly-designed field interventions can overburden women.** Some projects systematically make women beneficiaries without considering the impacts on their daily lives. Project activities, such as attending training or taking on new roles and responsibilities, can be time consuming. Often the design of the projects does not consider existing domestic burden and obligations on women.
- **Mainstreaming gender does not necessarily lead to more empowerment.** Considering that women very often do not have access or rights to resources, interventions that seek to empower women to cope with climate change impacts need to be more transformative and consider existing cultural, political and social structures that are a barrier to women's empowerment.
- **Women climate migrants are very often "hidden".** Speaking to women migrants or women left behind can be very problematic because of social and cultural barriers. Their stories are often not being heard and it is difficult to include their perceptions and experiences in programme design and implementation.
- **Understanding and respecting women's priorities is key.** It is important to consider that women in target communities may not want to be involved in certain activities, such as business creation/income generation and that they might have different objectives, such as focusing on providing food for their families. Furthermore, capacity building interventions that focuses on development of human capital (e.g., awareness, knowledge and planning capacities) can lead to women beneficiaries' fatigue. Therefore, it is necessary to devise nonmonetary incentives (e.g., exchange visits, audio-visual training aid, etc.) to sustain beneficiaries' interest.
- **Women migrant workers are often excessively vulnerable.** In that respect, there is a need to promote a right-based approach to natural resources based labour-migration (agriculture and fisheries) with a specific focus on gender. This includes considering the gender implications of health rights (including reproductive and sexual health), labour rights, social rights and environmental rights.
- We lack understanding on how the **lack of access of rural women to natural resources**, including water, hinders their resilience to adapt to climate change. Another gap in terms of programme development and implementation and policy development is the lack of gender disaggregated data.
- Migration can represent in some cases an adaptation strategy to cope with the adverse effects of climate change. However, this is contingent on **creating an enabling environment for women to meaningfully participate**. For instance, for women left

behind in communities vulnerable to climate change impacts and receiving remittances, there is a need to customize capacity building interventions to contribute to sustainable behavioral change. This includes having the flexibility to alter implemented activities in line with feedback received from women throughout the project.

### **Resources**

A gender approach to environmental migration - IOM Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (p103 -107)

<https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/iom-outlook-migration-environment-and-climate-change-1>