

# **Policy Brief: The Role of Women in Shaping Climate Policy**

## **Summary of Research**

Women are disproportionately affected by climate change, constituting an estimated 80% of global climate change refugees. This vulnerability stems from their roles in ensuring food security and agriculture, particularly in developing countries. Despite their heightened concern for climate issues, women's perspectives remain underrepresented in international climate negotiations. This research examined how increasing female representation in these forums influences environmental policy, arguing that women's meaningful participation is essential for addressing gender-specific concerns in climate policies. Drawing on Critical Mass Theory, empirical analyses demonstrate a significant correlation between the presence of women in decision-making roles and the inclusion of gender considerations in climate policies. This research highlights the importance of intersectional approaches and legislative measures to promote women's participation in shaping climate policy, ultimately leading to more comprehensive and equitable climate adaptation strategies.

Using data on the gender composition of delegations to international climate conferences from 2008-2023 and gender mandates in international climate policy, this argument was tested using linear regression models and a two-sample t-test for the difference between two means. Part of this data was provided by the Women's Environment and Development Organization which included data on the number of women present at and the number of female heads of delegations from UN climate processes. Additional data was gathered through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Decisions Catalog. Using the data, an empirical analysis was conducted to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Efforts to increase women's participation in international climate negotiations—measured as the presence of the Gender Action Plan—will increase the number of gender mentions.

H2: Increased female representation in climate negotiations—measured as the proportion of female delegates—will increase the number of gender mentions.

H3: Increased female leadership in climate negotiations—measured as the proportion of female heads of delegation—will increase the number of gender mentions.

The t-test resulted in statistically significant results, proving that as the number of women represented increases in climate negotiations, the mentions of gender also increase. Moreover, the linear regression models also showed statistically significant evidence that as the number of female leaders present in climate conferences increases, so does the number of gender mandates. Therefore, the presence of women does influence the contents and objectives of climate change, increasing the focus on gendered impacts. The role of women as leaders in climate conferences is also crucial towards creating policies that acknowledge gendered impacts.

The tests demonstrate that boosting female participation in climate negotiations significantly influences the substance and goals of resultant policies. Following the introduction of the Gender Action Plan (GAP), there was a notable rise in attention to the gendered impacts of climate change, evidenced by an increase in gender mandates. Moreover, while increasing female representation alone has an effect, elevating the number of female leaders yields even greater emphasis on gendered impacts in climate change discussions, as indicated by the linear regression tests.

These findings underscore the necessity of enacting legislation to encourage women's engagement in shaping climate policy within international political organizations. Such measures would enable the integration of gender-sensitive perspectives and enhance focus

on the gendered aspects of climate change, thereby fostering the creation of more effective and equitable climate adaptation strategies. For more information on this research's results and methodology, please view the [full research paper](#).

### **Policy Implications**

This research underscores the importance of considering the gendered effects of climate change in policy development. Women, who are disproportionately impacted and constitute a majority of climate refugees, face heightened risks such as forced marriage, human trafficking, and gender-based violence due to climate migrations. This necessitates governmental intervention to safeguard their rights and well-being. Recognizing women's critical roles in ensuring food and water security, especially in developing nations, and their distinct experiences of climate change highlights the need for measures promoting gender equality and resilience. By advocating for increased female participation in decision-making structures, this research suggests avenues for more comprehensive and responsible policy solutions. It calls for policies that actively advance the role of women in shaping climate policies through international political bodies, facilitating the incorporation of gender-sensitive ideas and enabling attention to the gendered dimensions of climate change for more effective and equitable adaptation strategies.

### **Policy Recommendations**

1. **Gender-Responsive Climate Policy Framework:** Develop and implement a comprehensive framework for gender-responsive climate policy that integrates gender considerations into all aspects of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building efforts.
2. **Gender Mainstreaming in Decision-Making Processes:** Ensure gender mainstreaming in all levels of decision-making processes related to climate policy, including national, regional, and international forums. This includes promoting women's participation and leadership in climate negotiations and decision-making bodies.
3. **Capacity Building and Training:** Provide capacity-building programs and training opportunities to enhance the skills and knowledge of policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders on integrating gender perspectives into climate policy development and implementation.
4. **Gender-Disaggregated Data Collection:** Enhance data collection mechanisms to gather gender-disaggregated data on climate change impacts, vulnerabilities, and responses. This will enable evidence-based decision-making and monitoring of the gendered outcomes of climate policies.
5. **Financial Support for Women's Climate Initiatives:** Allocate dedicated funding and financial resources to support women-led climate initiatives, including grassroots organizations, women's cooperatives, and community-based projects focused on climate adaptation and resilience-building.
6. **Gender-Responsive Climate Finance:** Ensure that climate finance mechanisms and instruments are gender-responsive, meaning they consider and address the specific needs and priorities of women in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.
7. **Strengthen International Cooperation and Partnerships:** Foster international cooperation and partnerships to exchange best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches for integrating gender perspectives into climate policy across borders and regions.
8. **Monitor and Evaluate Gender Outcomes:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress on gender equality outcomes in climate policy implementation. This includes regular reporting on gender-sensitive indicators and conducting gender impact assessments of climate interventions.