



DELIVERING A GENDER-JUST TRANSITION | WEDO INSIGHTS

Towards gender-just Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

A screening tool and resource guide
for policy-makers





About

This brief is the first in a series of tools, case studies and analysis from WEDO on developing the data, policy, institutional and movement landscape to [deliver on a gender just transition](#).

Introduction

As the main anchors of national climate planning and policies, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) determine the course of climate action and ambition under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Historically, NDCs have shown considerable variation in their scope, length, and content. However, a common theme in assessments of NDCs is the significant implementation gap between the ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement and the actual policy commitments and means of implementation. As countries work to ratchet up ambition for the next set of NDCs - expected to be submitted by 2025 and outline countries' next decade of climate action - it is critical that policy-makers dramatically scale up ambition and scope of NDCs, and critically, ensure processes for engagement in outlining these plans that are inclusive, equitable, and which work to deliver a gender just transition at national level.

This resource offers a framework for policy-makers towards the development of NDCs that center gender justice, with key questions for consideration across six key areas: **1) Process, 2) Principles, 3) Ambition, 4) Data, 5) Coherence, and 6) Accountability.**

Elements of Consideration for Gender-Just NDCs

1 **PROCESS:** NDCs should ensure inclusive, participatory, consultative climate planning, policymaking, and programming processes.

NDCs offer the opportunity for national climate policies to be developed and implemented alongside the communities of those impacted most by climate crisis, and with most to gain from ensuring that transitions across sectors are implemented in a manner that does not further exacerbate inequalities, including gender inequalities. As NDCs are the main mechanism for national climate policies and planning, they must be inclusive of, shaped by and accountable to those who are most impacted, and must be reflective of the intersections that shape how people are impacted, including race, gender, age and socio-economic status. The participation of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, people with disabilities, women, and youth in all their diversity, LGBTQIA+ people, as well as a range of nationally specific affected communities in climate and other policy planning processes is vital for ensuring that the voices of those most affected by decision-making are included.

Specifically, countries should be intentional in outreaching to women’s rights and gender expert groups and collectives in their countries, which can often be informal networks, as well as working across Ministries and with national gender machineries, in order to ensure their views and insights are central to driving and shaping climate solutions. The highest levels of ambition rely on the perspectives, research, lived experience and technical support of these communities. Participatory and iterative consultative processes for civil society and rights-holders are critical to ensuring this iteration of NDCs meets national and global climate priorities and contribute to a gender-just transition.

Enabling meaningful participation of civil society and rights-holders should include building their technical capacity to engage in decision-making processes, establishing communication mechanisms around the NDC and climate action, and establishing legislative and policy measures where necessary to ensure full participation in NDC formulation.

Key Questions

1. Does your NDC development and engagement processes ensure opportunities for inputs from civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and other rights-holders in their formulation? Are the mechanisms to share inputs accessible, with clear timetables, expected outcomes and accountability to those who engage?
2. Do you have explicit outreach strategies to engage with women and gender groups as well as with national gender machineries?
3. Does the NDC clearly illustrate how the perspectives of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and other rights-holders have influenced the formulation of the final document?

Resources

- See an analysis of community level participation on NDCs: [Climate Plans for the People: Civil society and community participation in national action plans on climate change](#) (Oxfam International, 2024)
- [A useful guide to implementing national policies with participation at the center: Participatory Governance Toolkit](#) (CIVICUS, 2015)
- Review feminist analysis of your country’s NDC development process as described in previous NDCs: [Gender Climate Tracker Country Profiles](#)
- See how to enhance participation by centering [Rights Holders & Duty Bearers](#) (Women and Gender Constituency, 2017)

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PRINCIPLES: NDCs should outline the steps towards ensuring a just transition with gender justice and human rights at its center.

The transition away from fossil fuels towards a renewable, low-emissions economy must also serve as a transformative vehicle for advancing social justice. Without centering gender justice, human rights, and Indigenous sovereignty, the transition risks entrenching existing inequalities. By pursuing a just transition that enables the equitable phase-out of fossil fuels, challenges the economic barriers faced by women, gender-diverse people, and the full spectrum of the LGBTQIA+ community, and invests in social protections and the life-sustaining industries of care, health, and education that all communities rely on, there is immense opportunity to build a new rights-based economy.

If national just transition planning only focuses on, for example, jobs held in the fossil fuel or broader energy sectors - which men have disproportionately held - existing economic inequalities faced by women and gender diverse people will only be carried into a new energy economy, with no attention paid to the existing low-emissions, unpaid and undervalued care work that powers every economy. Without stronger integration of, investment in, and recognition of care work, any transition will leave women, gender-diverse people, and those of other intersecting marginalized identities disproportionately tasked with care behind.

In addition, a rights-based framework that integrates Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is critical for ensuring a transition is not pursued through resource, land, and minerals grabbing. Aligning an NDC with human rights and resource justice¹ is fundamental to protect the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples and environmental and human rights defenders.

Key Questions

1. Does the NDC embed principles around gender equality, gender-responsive climate finance, etc. fundamental to a gender-just transition?
2. Does the NDC outline how it will integrate frameworks around human rights, Indigenous sovereignty, resource justice, etc. for a just transition?
3. Does the NDC demonstrate how principles of a gender-just transition will be integrated in sectors beyond energy, including care work, agriculture, and beyond?

Resources

- [For a structural overview of the principles and pathways encompassing a gender-just transition, see *Gender-Just Transition: A Path to Systems Change* \(WEDO, 2023\)](#)
- Spotlight on Just Transition in an NDCs: [Chile's NDC](#)
- See examples of how to execute [Free, Prior and Informed Consent Analysis for Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru](#) (WECAN, 2023)
- Reference [Women and Gender Constituency Submission on Just Transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement through NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs](#) (WGC, 2024) for further integration of gender just transition principles through national processes

1. See Oxfam America, [Natural Resource Justice](#) (n.d.) and Emilia Reyes/WEDO, *Degrowth for the Global North, harmful sectors and concentration of wealth* (2024, forthcoming)

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AMBITION: NDCs should catalyze action that meets the scale and ambition that science and justice demand.

This iteration of NDCs must go further to meet the agreed goals of the Paris Agreement. Globally, communities need greater emissions cuts, more substantive climate finance, and a substantive increase in resources to enable a gender-just transition. As the key national climate action plans, NDCs should comprehensively consider mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, finance, and just transition measures, at the scope and scale necessary. This iteration of NDCs must both close the massive implementation gap from the previous iteration, and step forward in recognition of the deepening demands.

Climate finance is fundamental to fulfilling ambition and ensuring that NDCs actually guide policy and implementation. Global North countries must meet their historical and ongoing obligations to provide climate finance that is predictable, accessible, and new and additional to existing flows. NDCs should be costed to the extent possible, and clearly indicate which steps are conditional on receiving adequate finance where applicable.

The next round of NDCs must be guided by the 2023 Global Stocktake (GST), which comprehensively collects and synthesizes wide-ranging information from a multitude of stakeholders, including directly affected people and communities, to produce targeted recommendations every five years. The GST outlines exactly where ambition needs to increase to enable collective progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. The NDCs are a key instrument to both indicate commitment and implement policy change towards this aim.

Key Questions

1. Does the NDC demonstrate a significant progression beyond the previous one, reflecting the findings of the [IPCC Sixth Assessment report](#) and the recent Global Stocktake?
2. Does the NDC reflect the highest possible contribution this Party can make toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement?
3. Does the NDC outline climate finance commitments and needs? For developed countries, does the NDC commit to climate finance in line with their Fair Share? For developing countries, are plans that are conditional on climate finance specified separately from unconditional commitments?

Resources

- ➔ See country phase-out years for oil, coal, and gas and accompanying mitigation reduction goals, drawing from the IPCC's Low Energy Demand pathway, here: <https://www.equityreview.org/>.
- ➔ Calculate mitigation reduction expectations in line with the IPCC's Low Energy Demand Pathway and per capita fair shares of global costs as part of Climate Equity Reference Project: <https://calculator.climateequityreference.org/>
- ➔ See the [US Fair Shares NDC](#) as a model for climate finance commitments toward a fair share of emissions reductions, adaptation, and addressing loss and damage.

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DATA: NDCs should catalyze the collection of sector-specific data on gender-differentiated experiences, impacts, and needs, and the use of such data to inform policy making.

Data must shape all national climate policies and planning, and the collection, analysis and use of data must be gender-differentiated, intersectional and sector-specific to ensure that these policies account for a multiplicity of experiences. Gaps in data make inequalities difficult to assess and address, resulting in policies that are not inclusive or capture the nuanced impacts of climate change. NDCs should utilize sector-specific and gender-differentiated data across economic sectors, including care-related industries, to understand the experiences of climate and economic challenges faced and how they intersect with existing social injustices. There are [clear examples](#) of countries implementing comprehensive sex-disaggregated national household and individual surveys across economic activities, resulting in information that is context-specific and inclusive. Including this information in an NDC can help enhance its gender-responsiveness and its contribution to a gender-just transition at national level.

Key Questions

1. Does the NDC reference intersectional gender data as a priority for shaping the development of its actions and activities?
2. Does the NDC provide a methodology for continuing / scaling up the collection of sector-specific, intersectional and gender-differentiated data to shape policies and implementation?
3. Does the NDC include gender-differentiated indicators to clearly monitor implementation and enhance accountability for a gender-just transition?

Resources

- ➔ Reference policy recommendations on: [Gender Data for Climate Action: COP28 and Beyond](#) (Data2X, IISD, IUCN, WEDO, 2023)
- ➔ Re-engage with how to ensure gender-responsive integration through: [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Updated and New Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#) (WEDO, 2020)
- ➔ See additional resources on gender and environment data via the [Gender and Environment Data Alliance: Member Resources](#)

5**COHERENCE: NDCs should encourage coherence with existing gender and climate planning and policymaking processes and documents.**

As the central, anchoring documents for outlining targets for national climate policies and planning, NDCs cannot be siloed from adjacent and related documents, such as National Adaptation Plans, mitigation strategies, and both economic and environmental policy to support a just transition. It is essential that targets are aligned across policies, to enable better monitoring, implementation and accountability of progress towards priorities. A true gender-just transition must take a whole-of-government approach and include implementation measures across energy, transport, care, agriculture and beyond, ensuring coherence and connectivity across existing multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder processes and documents.

Key Questions

1. Does the NDC work to advance policy coherence and align its activities and goals with other national climate and related policies and plans, such as National Adaptation Plans?
2. Does the NDC work to advance policy coherence and align its activities and goals with other commitments, processes, and national policies and plans related to environment, economic development, gender equality, and human rights, such as under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 2030 Agenda, and others?

Resources

- See the NAP Global Network's series of briefs on alignment across the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework on Loss on Damage, outlining how alignment can increase coherence as well as efficiency and effectiveness: [Alignment to Advance Climate-Resilient Development](#)
- Access the dozens of country-level action plans on gender and climate change from the past decade on the [Gender Climate Tracker: National Gender and Climate Change Plans](#) webpage

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ACCOUNTABILITY: NDCs should facilitate advocates' ability to hold governments accountable for their processes, data use, adherence to principles, coherence across processes and policy, and impact towards a gender-just transition.

With such a large implementation gap from the last iteration of NDCs, it is more critical than ever that effective and transparent mechanisms exist for both governments and civil society to monitor the implementation and progress towards targets outlined in NDCs. It should be clear to advocates what avenues exist for monitoring national governments' progress, as well as how governments are tracking progress. These accountability mechanisms must include considerations of inclusive processes, what and how data is used to inform policies and planning, effective adherence to principles, and coherence across other national policies.

Accountability necessitates strong measures of transparency and access to information, to enable civil society to shape and measure the process, content and implementation of NDCs. This must include language accessibility that enables full inclusion of all languages spoken in a country, as well as culturally relevant modes of communication and consultation and consideration of needs to guarantee disability justice.

Key questions


1. Does the NDC articulate clear mechanisms and methodology for implementation, including planned and/or adopted legislation, decision-making bodies for directing plans and policies, and policy development and implementation processes?
2. Does the NDC explain the mechanisms for monitoring, including identifying governance bodies, targets and indicators, how often progress will be reviewed and reported, and where such information will be publicly available and in what languages?
3. Does the NDC provide mechanisms and processes for accountability that are not financially burdensome for all levels of all climate actors, including locally-led initiatives?

Resources


- [Integrating Human Rights in Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\): TOOLKIT FOR PRACTITIONERS](#) (Center for International Environmental Law and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2022)
- [Recognition of Indigenous Peoples in Nationally Determined Contributions](#) (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs - IWGIA, 2022)
- UNDP's [interactive dataset](#) on "Advancing Gender Equality in NDCs: Progress and Higher Ambitions" and [Gender Analysis and Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\): SHORT GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS](#) (2019)
- NDC Partnership (2021): [Building Gender-Responsive NDCs](#)
- [The SDG Accountability Handbook](#) (by Transparency, Accountability, and Participation (TAP) Network et al, 2021) offers a useful guide to which rights-holders should be consulted in national policy processes and how.

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|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Process | Does your NDC development and engagement processes ensure opportunities for inputs from civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and other rights-holders in their formulation? Are the mechanisms to share inputs accessible, with clear timetables, expected outcomes and accountability to those who engage? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Do you have explicit outreach strategies to engage with women and gender groups as well as with national gender machineries? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC clearly illustrate how the perspectives of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and other rights-holders have influenced the formulation of the final document? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Principles | Does the NDC embed principles around gender equality, gender-responsive climate finance, etc. fundamental to a gender-just transition? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC outline how it will integrate frameworks around human rights, Indigenous sovereignty, resource justice, etc. for a just transition? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC demonstrate how principles of a gender-just transition will be integrated in sectors beyond energy, including care work, agriculture, and beyond? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ambition | Does the NDC demonstrate a significant progression beyond the previous one, reflecting the findings of the IPCC Sixth Assessment report and the recent Global Stocktake? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC reflect the highest possible contribution this Party can make toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC outline climate finance commitments and needs? For developed countries, does the NDC commit to climate finance in line with their Fair Share? For developing countries, are plans that are conditional on climate finance specified separately from unconditional commitments? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Data | Does the NDC reference intersectional gender data as a priority for shaping the development of its actions and activities? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC provide a methodology for continuing / scaling up the collection of sector-specific, intersectional and gender-differentiated data to shape policies and implementation? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC include gender-differentiated indicators to clearly monitor implementation and enhance accountability for a gender-just transition? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Coherence | Does the NDC work to advance policy coherence and align its activities and goals with other national climate and related policies and plans, such as National Adaptation Plans? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC work to advance policy coherence and align its activities and goals with other commitments, processes, and national policies and plans related to environment, economic development, gender equality, and human rights, such as under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 2030 Agenda, and others? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accountability | Does the NDC articulate clear mechanisms and methodology for implementation, including planned and/or adopted legislation, decision-making bodies for directing plans and policies, and policy development and implementation processes? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC explain the mechanisms for monitoring, including identifying governance bodies, targets and indicators, how often progress will be reviewed and reported, and where such information will be publicly available and in what languages? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Does the NDC provide mechanisms and processes for accountability that are not financially burdensome for all levels of all climate actors, including locally-led initiatives? | <input type="checkbox"/> |



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