

COP29: Global Advocacy Brief

Waves of Change

Amplifying the Voices of Women and Girls
on the Nexus of Climate Change and SRHR

Women Of the South Speak Out (WOSSO) is a consortium between

Funded by

WAVES OF CHANGE

Amplifying the Voices of Women and Girls on the
Nexus of Climate Change and SRHR

COP29: Global Advocacy Brief

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>. Any part of the text of the publication may be photocopied, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, or adapted and translated to meet local needs, for non-commercial and non-profit purposes. However, the copyright for images used remains with respective copyright holders. All forms of copies, reproductions, adaptations, and translations through mechanical, electrical, or electronic means should acknowledge ARROW as the source. A copy of the reproduction, adaptation, and/or translation should be sent to ARROW. In cases of commercial usage, ARROW must be contacted for permission at arrow@arrow.org.my.

ASIAN-PACIFIC RESOURCE & RESEARCH CENTRE FOR WOMEN (ARROW)

1 & 2 Jalan Scott, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 50470

Telephone	+603 2273 9913
Fax	+603 2273 9916
E-mail	arrow@arrow.org.my
Web	www.arrow.org.my
Facebook	ARROW.Women
X	@ARROW_Women
Instagram	@arrow_women
Youtube	@ARROWWomen
LinkedIn	arrowwomen

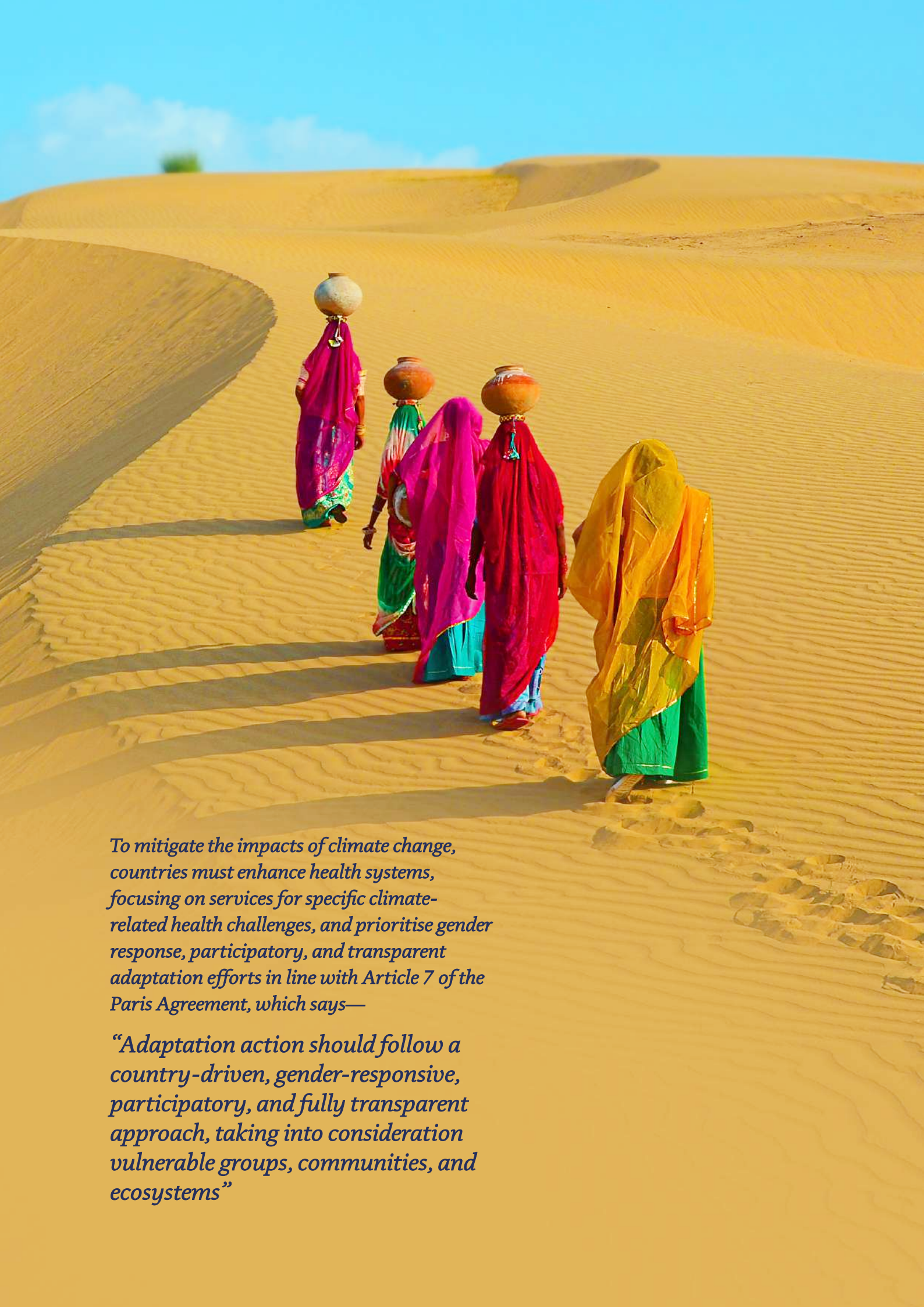
PRODUCTION TEAM

Contributors:	Anjali Sai Chalise, Danica Castillo, Fithriyyah Iskander, Menka Goundan, Nidhi Tiwari, Romielyn Nazareno, Sanskriti Shrestha
Publication, Coordination, and Review:	Anuj Bhandari, Danica Castillo, Menka Goundan and Sanskriti Shrestha
Copyedit:	Ivan Phell Enrile
Graphic Design:	Saurav Thapa Shrestha
Cover Photo:	Stockpexel/Shutterstock

This publication is produced by the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women as part of the Women of the South Speak Out Consortium funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom in partnership with COP29 NGO Coalition and Gender Hub Azerbaijan.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Linking Women’s SRHR and Climate Crisis: An Overview	2
Regional Situations	4
Pacific Island Countries	4
South Asia	5
Southeast Asia	8
East and Central Asia	9
Linking SRHR to Climate Action	10
Recommendations and Conclusion	10
Results: Survey on the impact of climate change on sexual and reproductive health and rights	11
References	16



To mitigate the impacts of climate change, countries must enhance health systems, focusing on services for specific climate-related health challenges, and prioritise gender response, participatory, and transparent adaptation efforts in line with Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, which says—

“Adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities, and ecosystems”

INTRODUCTION

The nexus of climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is an emerging discourse, particularly for indigenous women and girls with disabilities. Climate change impacts various aspects of SRHR, such as access to health services, maternal health, and exposure to gender-based violence. (ARROW, 2023)

Extreme weather events can destroy critical infrastructure, limiting access to SRHR services, leading to adverse health outcomes. Additionally, climate change can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, such as poverty and social exclusion, making it difficult for marginalised groups to access necessary health services.

Understanding and exploring this nexus is crucial for developing inclusive policies and interventions that address the compounded challenges faced by these groups:

- 1. Access to Services:** Extreme weather events can destroy critical infrastructure like clinics and roads, hindering access to SRHR services.
- 2. Maternal Health:** Increased heat, air pollution, and saline contamination of drinking water can lead to poor maternal and infant health outcomes, including early births and maternal mortality.
- 3. Gender-Based Violence:** Scarcity of resources due to climate change can increase the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual assault and sex trafficking.
- 4. Early and Forced Marriages:** Financial difficulties caused by climate-related disasters may lead families to marry off young girls as a coping mechanism, increasing the risk of early pregnancy and associated health complications.

5. Mental Health: The stress and anxiety from climate-induced displacement and resource scarcity can negatively impact mental health, particularly for women and girls.

6. Food Security: Climate change can lead to food insecurity, which affects overall health and the ability to maintain a balanced diet, crucial for reproductive health.

These impacts highlight the need for integrated policies that address both climate change and SRHR to ensure the well-being of vulnerable populations.



LINKING WOMEN'S SRHR AND CLIMATE CRISIS: AN OVERVIEW

Corporate activities and the fossil fuel industry have triggered the rising sea levels, erratic weather patterns, and extreme temperatures that are now the global phenomenon that is the unprecedented climate crisis.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2022 that “human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming” (IPCC, 2023). Further to this in 2023, the World Meteorological Organization has reported that climate change indicators such as ocean heat, sea rise, and glacial retreat levels reached “record levels” (WMO, 2023a).

The climate crisis goes beyond planetary health, it is deeply intertwined with human health and affects the way of life. The World Health Organization even underscored that “Climate change presents a fundamental threat to human health” (2023).

Bearing the brunt of the impact are communities in the global south and especially for those living on the margins, women most notably.

In the **Asia Pacific**, for example, the home to 60% of the global population, is constantly at risk due to its geographic diversity covering all climate zones, making the region more susceptible to its impacts, such as flash floods, rise of sea levels, and being more prone to disaster (UNESCAP, 2023). The following examples from Philippines and Bangladesh illustrates the nexus between SRHR and climate crisis:

In the **Philippines**, food security and sources of livelihood among indigenous and rural communities are under threat, leading to hunger and poverty and thereby poor health among women and children, leading to stunted growth and underdevelopment impeding holistic growth.

In **Bangladesh**, water logging caused by sea level rise, attributed to climate change, disrupts land based productive systems. The sea level rise also affects access to clean water that causes severe skin diseases and gynaecological problems. Meanwhile, hunger and poverty have been largely observed in disaster affected coastal communities with increased cases of sexual trafficking and child marriages

(ARROW, 2024)

The 2023 IPCC report also highlighted that “vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected.” The report further explained that these vulnerabilities are more prominent in locations with poverty, conflict, and climate-sensitive livelihoods notable in west, central, and east Africa (IPCC, 2023).

The World Health Organization underscored that “Climate change presents a fundamental threat to human health”



The impact of the climate crisis is not gender neutral.

The ever-increasing heat waves across sub-Saharan Africa pose major health risks, such as maternal and child health that may lead to maternal haemorrhage and sepsis, prematurity, low birth weight, and neonatal dehydration (CHAMNHA, *n.d.*) Additionally, 2024 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) research reveals that “Domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa will triple by 2060 due to extreme heat epidemic” (2024).

Meanwhile, the state of climate in Latin America and the Caribbean as of 2023 marks the “double whammy of El Nino and long-term climate change,” according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as the region has been hardly hit by “drought, heat, wildfires, extreme rainfall, and a record-breaking hurricane,” with its warmest year on record (WMO, 2024b)

With this scale of the damage to environment, land, and resources, the poorest of communities in the region will find it doubly difficult to cope with and adapt to the worst impact of climate change due to a lack of resources and mechanisms. This situation may lead to food insecurity. In Nicaragua, women are forced to consume less food, which heightens health risks and reduces their productivity in agricultural work. This, in turn, leads to a loss of income and livelihood, ultimately leading to gender-based and domestic violence (Ramos & Dias, 2021).



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) research reveals that “Domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa will triple by 2060 due to extreme heat epidemic”

REGIONAL SITUATION

Pacific Island Countries

The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report reveals that Asia and the Pacific are highly susceptible to heavy precipitation, drought, intensifying cyclones, and other extreme climate events. The Pacific region is particularly vulnerable due to its geographical exposure (Corner, 2021). Vanuatu, for instance, ranks highest globally for disaster risk.

Around 56 per cent of the population in the Pacific is under the age of 25. Pacific youth have diverse needs, opportunities and experiences (SPREP Pride, 2021). This dynamic group of young people live in urban and rural areas, on remote islands and in large cities. They live diverse sexualities and gender identities.

A problem that unites many Pacific Island young people share is the disproportionate burden of poor sexual and reproductive health and rights. There are high rates of adolescent pregnancies, increasing cases of sexual and gender based violence, and a rising incidence of sexually transmitted infections. Restrictive laws around sexual orientation and gender identity, also prevent many young people from accessing their sexual and health rights. These SRHR issues are aggravated by the climate crisis.

Across the Pacific, up to 64% of women in countries like Fiji and the Solomon Islands experience gender-based violence from their intimate partners. Young women face high unmet needs for SRHR. Data shows that 28% of adolescent pregnancies are unintended, half of young women lack access to modern contraception, and one-third have encountered sexual and gender-based violence. Early marriage



28% of adolescent pregnancies are unintended, half of young women lack access to modern contraception, and one-third have encountered sexual and gender-based violence.

rates are also high, with 25% of women aged 20-24 married before 18 (Murphy et al., 2023).

Research reveals that, globally, violence against women and girls intensifies during and after disasters. (Whiitenbury, 2012). During post-disaster periods, women and girls face heightened risks of violence, limited access to education, increased workloads, and diminished food security.

The climate crisis is particularly felt by Pacific youth, experiencing violations to their SRHR from limited access to information, community-driven restrictions, to discrimination against gender-diverse individuals. Disasters often intensify food, water, and financial insecurities, leading to increased risks of early marriage and transactional sex as survival strategies.

Pacific youth face overlapping challenges as they navigate both a worsening climate crisis and unmet SRHR needs. Addressing these issues requires integrating SRHR considerations into climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies, especially focusing on youth access to resources, support against GBV, and dismantling socio-cultural barriers in disaster responses. This integrated approach is crucial for fostering resilience and ensuring that Pacific youth's health and rights are upheld in the face of climate adversity.

South Asia

Climate change—the most immediate, urgent, and severe humanitarian challenge—is a ‘crisis multiplier’, with consequences that pose risks to global peace and security. While its effects are bound to be challenging for all, certain populations and geographies are at a disproportionately higher risk due to their socio-economic and geographical locations. In the case of South Asia, one or more climate-related disasters have affected over half of all South Asians, or 750 million people, across eight countries—Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka—in the last two decades (*World Bank, 2022*). On the other hand, 14% of the region’s urban population lives in low-lying coastal areas and delta regions less than 10 metres above sea level, making them increasingly vulnerable to climate change.

Apart from these vulnerabilities, factors like caste, class, ethnicity, and social structures play a vital role in determining the variation in added vulnerabilities and their varied impacts. With 70% of the world’s poor being women, the disproportionate impact of climate change exacerbates gender inequality (*Osman 2009*).

Births that are too early or have low birth weights, as well as problems during pregnancy, stillbirths, and higher rates of death for both mothers and babies (*Arunda et al., 2024*) are some of these problems.

Impacts of Climate Change on SRHR in South Asian Countries

Climate-related events (CRE) can lead to mass displacement of populations, conflict, and a rise in poverty and affect economic and social structures (*Banwell et al., 2018*). Azad et al. (2013) found that during and after flooding, nearly 46% of women in Bangladesh struggled with managing menstrual hygiene, highlighting a gap in resources for these basic healthcare needs. Nasreen et. al. (2017) identified that women in disaster environments commonly experience genital health issues such as



“More than half of all South Asians, or 750 million people in the 8 countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka – were affected by one or more climate-related disasters in the last two decades”
(*World Bank, 2022*)

irritation and itching in the vaginal area, abnormal discharge, and genital ulcers. Additionally, CREs can significantly increase health risks for pregnant women, leading to outcomes such as early pregnancy loss, birth defects, and preterm birth (*Nasreen et al., 2017*). In another study on climate change and its impact in Bangladesh, Asadullah et al. (2020) found a link between extreme heat and higher instances of child marriage, with data showing that girls and young women aged 11–23 were more likely to marry during or shortly after moderate or severe heat waves.

In another study, Trinh and Zhang (2020) examined how economic shifts due to rainfall changes influenced child marriages in India and Vietnam,



countries where dowry and bride price practices differ. They observed that in India, reduced rainfall led to lower household spending, which in turn was associated with fewer child marriages, likely due to high dowry costs. In Vietnam's bride price system, some families are facing economic pressure from rainfall deviations to marry daughters earlier, using marriage as a way to alleviate financial hardships. Extreme weather events can push families into financial distress, leading to early marriages which heightens the risks of early, forced, and complicated pregnancies, more susceptibility to placental tears, and maternal mortality (UNPF 2015).

According to a working paper by SLYCAN Trust (2020) in Sri Lanka, women's sexual and reproductive health and rights face heightened challenges in disaster and migration contexts. Even in disaster-induced migration, women often bear additional responsibilities, caring for children and the elderly, along with an increased threat of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. Unsecure shelters and unsafe migration expose women and girls to physical as well as mental risks; however, Sri Lanka's National Migration Health Policy does not connect mental health, migration, and climate change to women

(SLYCAN Trust 2020).

In the Maldives, in a scoping study by Huvadhoo Aid and ARROW on the effects of climate change on sexual and reproductive health rights, a majority of respondents identified increased work burdens and restricted healthcare access as significant challenges for women. Specifically, 52% of participants indicated additional work responsibilities from climate-related events would have strong negative impacts on women. Furthermore, 49% believed limited access to essential health services like immunisation, family planning, and reproductive healthcare during climate-related disasters would have very strong negative effects (Huvadhoo Aid & ARROW, 2015)

Nepal faces significant vulnerability to climate change due to factors such as its diverse topography, dependency on natural resources, and socio-economic challenges. These conditions particularly impact women and girls. Poudel et al. (2024) found that 64% of participants reported disruptions in antenatal and postnatal care visits with inaccessible health facilities during the rainy season, raising maternal mortality risks. Heavy floods also obstructed access to female community health volunteers, leading to increased child-birth complications. Additionally, 82% of women

expressed concern over the ability to protect children from risk after the climate event, and 21% reported experiencing gender-based violence during or after the climate disaster.

The ongoing conflict and instability in Afghanistan have worsened the effects of climate change. According to ActionAid, in the Shaiday refugee camp near Herat, – home to 42,000 families, 75% of whom have been displaced by recent climate disasters – parents who had lost everything due to severe flooding were resorting to seeking a “bride price” for girls as young as two, as they could no longer afford to care for them. (ActionAid, 2021).

In Pakistan, the impact of floods has left approximately 5.71 million women and girls in high-risk areas vulnerable to gender-based violence and lack of access to essential health care and lifesaving care. This situation has exacerbated their vulnerabilities, pushing many to resort to negative coping mechanisms due to limited or lost access to crucial physical and emotional support systems. A study published by the Sindh Community Foundation and ARROW (2024) highlighted the negative effects on reproductive and mental health, further emphasising that post-disaster recovery plans often fail to incorporate SRHR concerns, even during rehabilitation phases (Imran, 2024).

Conclusion

Progress on ensuring equitable access to affordable, quality sexual and reproductive healthcare has been insufficient, contributing to health inequities like high maternal mortality, morbidity, unsafe abortions, and so on. To mitigate the impacts of climate change, countries must enhance health systems, focusing on services for specific climate-related health challenges, and prioritise gender response, participatory, and transparent adaptation efforts in line with Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, which says, “Adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities, and ecosystems” (Women and Gender Constituency & SRHR Climate Justice Coalition, 2022).



In Pakistan, the impact of floods has left approximately 5.71 million women and girls in high-risk areas vulnerable to gender-based violence and lack of access to essential health care and lifesaving care.

Southeast Asia

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Report identified economic losses in coastal cities, extreme heat for extended period of time, increased undernourishment rate, and displacement caused by climate disasters (cyclones, floods, and typhoons) as some of the crosscutting impacts of climate change in the Southeast Asia region (*Shaw et. al., 2024*). Among the most affected peoples and communities, women disproportionately bear some of the more severe impacts of the climate crisis on various aspects of their lives including those related to women's SRHR.

Despite tremendous strides in addressing long-standing development problems in the region, climate change is threatening to reverse these gains because of its amplifying effect on pre-existing inequalities. For instance, traditional social expectations of women to be casted into particular roles in the domestic, reproductive, economic, and community spheres create gendered impacts of the climate crisis.

Women in Southeast Asia contend with various challenges to accessing their SRHR. In the agricultural sector, which has the largest share of female employment in Southeast Asia, women disproportionately experience more negative economic impacts from climate change trends, which in turn impedes them from accessing their other rights, particularly SRHR. Outside of agriculture, women are also more likely to lose their jobs in their productive age due to the effects of climate change in Southeast Asia, in addition to women's shift from paid employment to unpaid child-care work (*ASEAN Secretariat PEGD, 2024*).

Climate change has also been thought to exacerbate the drivers of child marriage and adolescent birth, such as loss of resources, disruption of education infrastructure, and displacement of communities (*UNFPA, 2021*). Environmental crises cause economic shocks, particularly for rural communities that are most dependent on the environment for their

livelihoods. In the face of such crises, people see child marriage as a way to secure the family's economic future.

Girls and women in child marriage and adolescent birth are at risk of losing their access to SRHR. Moreover, climate change and social burdens work together in causing women to experience more SRH issues in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), including in Southeast Asia. Three of the SRH issues identified were higher risks of STIs, including HIV/AIDS, increased unmet need for contraception, and reduced access to family planning services (*Burns and Mutung, 2024*).

During climate-induced-humanitarian crises, women in the region are more likely to experience physical harm (*Caballero-Anthony et. al., 2023*), hindering them from accessing their SRHR.

Lastly, especially in the context of LMIC, it is crucial to identify the various groups of people most affected by their inability to access SRHR due to climate change such as newborns, women of reproductive age, people living in climate disaster-impacted areas, vulnerable women, people living with HIV, , migrants and Indigenous Peoples (*Arunda et. al., 2024*).



East and Central Asia

East and Central Asia is a vast and diverse region. East Asia covers 4.5 million square miles with a total of 1.6 trillion population (RCCC, 2021). Central Asia has a total land mass of 400.8 million hectares and home to over 75 million as of 2023 (UNCCD, 2023)

Both east and central Asia are marked by mountainous terrain. However, the former has the densely populated urban centres of China and Japan, while in central Asia, where most of the region is landlocked, 60% of its population is in rural areas, making it the main source of economic activities.

Meanwhile, the United National Environment Programme (UNEP) has noted in 2021 that the health of 92% of the population in east asia are at risk due to air pollution, a leading environmental cause of death and illness (UNICEF, 2021). Issues of deforestation, irrigated lands, and enhanced water extraction for industrial and domestic purposes have been major environmental issues in the region (UNCCD, 2023).

East and Central Asia face significant challenges related to both climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This paper briefly explains the intersectionality of SRHR and climate justice in the region, emphasising how climate change disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable populations, particularly the youth, women, and grassroots communities.

Climate Change Impact on SRHR

Climate crises negatively affect healthcare systems, making it difficult for women to access sexual and reproductive health services. In climate-affected regions, essential resources like contraception, maternal care, and protections against gender-based violence (GBV) become harder to come by, particularly in remote or geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. During natural disasters or periods of prolonged environmental stress, such as extreme droughts or massive flooding, women and girls often face



The United National Environment Programme (UNEP) has noted in 2021 that the health of 92% of the population in east asia are at risk due to air pollution, a leading environmental cause of death and illness (UNICEF, 2021).

heightened health risks, bearing a disproportionate share of these impacts.

Climate change has intensified hardships for vulnerable groups—especially women, youth, and marginalised communities—due to environmental crises and socio-political inequalities (UNFPA, 2022; Kabeer, 2021). Indigenous, rural, and refugee communities experience several climate-related challenges. In regions with rising early marriage rates, particularly Central Asia, rural women and girls face higher risks of health and social inequities due to combined climate and gender-related vulnerabilities (UN Women, 2020; Oxfam, 2022). Recent data from UNICEF shows high prevalence rates of early marriage in Turkey, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. During severe economic crises, many families resort to early marriage as a means to alleviate financial burdens or safeguard family honour, leaving young girls particularly vulnerable (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2024; UNFPA, 2022). Early marriage is more common in humanitarian situations because of limited access to education, unstable economies, and social issues (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2024; UNFPA, 2022).

Case Studies of SRHR Challenges

Mongolia's Desertification and Early Marriage

In Mongolia, nearly 77% of the land has experienced worsening desertification, affecting crop production, food security, and the economic

well-being of rural families who depend on agriculture (*UNCCD, 2023*). As a consequence, some families have resorted to early marriage for their daughters. As a preventive measure, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and local NGOs provide SRHR education in remote areas and advocate against early marriage through community engagement.

Kyrgyzstan's Flooding and SRHR Services

Changes in weather patterns have repeatedly caused severe flooding in Kyrgyzstan, displacing families and disrupting access to maternal and reproductive health services. Women and children are particularly affected, with limited availability of contraceptives and maternal care. Data from UNFPA estimated that around 40% of rural health facilities lack stable infrastructure to support maternal health during climate-related emergencies (2022).

Climate Refugees and Reproductive Health in Central Asia

Environmental crises, such as water scarcity in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, have fueled migration across Central Asia, resulting in many climate refugees. Displaced women and girls face serious reproductive health challenges in refugee settings. Organisations like Population Services International (PSI) help by integrating SRHR support into their humanitarian programs, providing education, safe delivery kits, and counselling to refugees and resettled communities (*PSI, 2021*).

Linking SRHR to Climate Action

These multiple challenges underscore the need to make sexual and reproductive health services both resilient and integrated into climate response frameworks. Organisations like the UNFPA advocate for integrating SRHR within climate resilience planning, emphasising its role in forwarding gender equity and protecting vulnerable communities during climate-related

crises (*UNFPA, 2022*). Integrating SRHR services into climate policies ensures that gender justice and essential health needs remain prioritised, as seen in initiatives by PSI, which focus on delivering SRHR support to communities affected by displacement and environmental stress (*PSI, 2021; UNFPA, 2022*).

Recommendations and Conclusion

Climate change exacerbates gender inequality, especially in how it impacts sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), affecting women and marginalised groups the most. Women, youth, and those in vulnerable communities face increased risks to their health and safety as climate-induced events increase.

Collaboration among local and international organisations is crucial for reaching remote and displaced communities.

Advocating for legal reform at the regional level is also equally critical. Laws that protect reproductive rights, especially in the context of climate-related migration and displacement, help secure women's access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities amidst multiple crises (*Kabeer, 2021; UNFPA, 2022*). These integrated approaches help foster resilience, gender justice, and improved health outcomes in climate-affected communities.

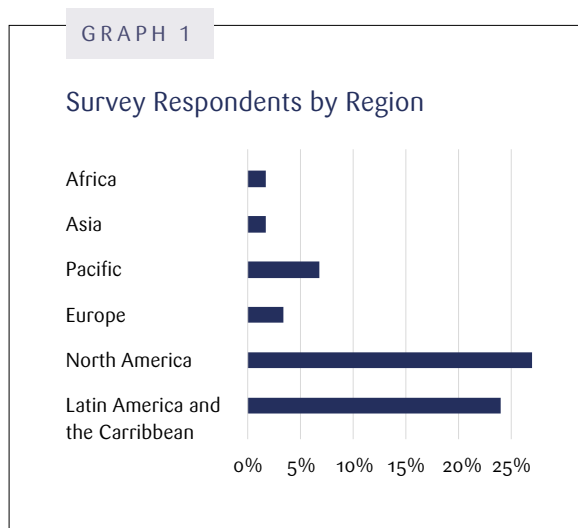
As climate change reshapes East and Central Asia, multi-pronged strategies to address SRHR alongside climate action can help achieve a more resilient and equitable future. By adopting policies that link climate justice and reproductive health, governments and civil society can advance both gender equality and environmental resilience.



RESULTS

Survey on the impact of climate change on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In October 2024, the Asia Pacific Research and Resource Centre for Women (ARROW), through the COP29 NGO Coalition, disseminated a global survey on the “impact of climate change on sexual and reproductive health and rights.” The survey was instrumental in gathering global opinions on this significant issue that is critically latent in the climate and health agenda. The survey was implemented from the 9th to 18th of October and garnered 59 responses from around the world. Graph 1 represents the regional breakdown of survey respondents.

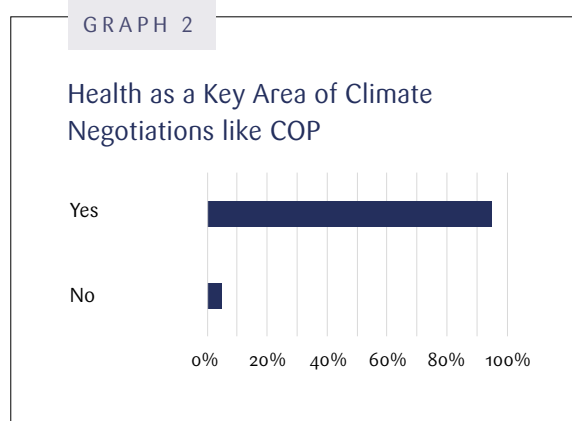


Climate and Health

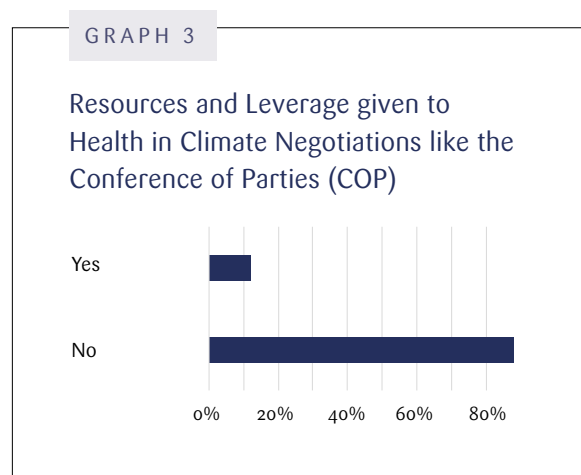
According to UN Women’s estimates, in a worst-case climate scenario, by 2050, as many as 158 million women and girls may be pushed into extreme poverty as a direct result of sustained increases in global temperatures. The correlation of this to health, particularly sexual

and reproductive health, is glaring but often understated. As one respondent stated, “Climate change has significantly impacted access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls in vulnerable communities. Rising global temperatures, more frequent natural disasters, and changing weather patterns have disrupted healthcare services, making it harder for women to access essential care. For instance, extreme weather events like cyclones have destroyed health facilities and supplies, limiting access to contraception, safe abortion, and post-abortion care.”

While we understand that health and SRHR are important intersections of climate justice, this intersectional approach does not translate into action in COP spaces. When respondents were asked if they thought health was a key area of climate negotiations like COP, 94.9% responded “yes” (Graph 2). But when asked if enough resources and leverage were given to health in climate negotiations like COP, 86.4% of respondents stated “no” (Graph 3).



“Due to the remoteness of our islands, accessing health services is very difficult. Even the health services have inadequate medication to support the growing population, and since our government has diverted our health funding, more women and children are also suffering from a lack of money to pay for medicines at the pharmacies.” —Survey Respondent



“In the Garo Indigenous communities of Bangladesh, to which I belong, chaotic weather—a flood and drought—is directly affecting the livelihoods of the community people, especially women. Climate-related disruptions reduce household incomes, making families increasingly vulnerable and reducing their ability to access healthcare services, including SRHR. Moreover, apart from destruction, extreme weather events reduce health facilities or render them unreachable due to broken roads, cutting off women and girls from critical maternal care, contraceptives, and safe delivery services.” —Survey Respondent

When asked how has climate change affected access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls in vulnerable communities,, all respondents agreed that there were significant impacts.

One respondent stated that “climate change

significantly affects access to SRH services, especially for women and girls in vulnerable communities, including those with disabilities. Extreme weather events disrupt healthcare infrastructure and supply chains, limiting access to essential SRH services. Displacement and crises also increase the risk of gender-based violence, while making it harder to access support and medical care.”

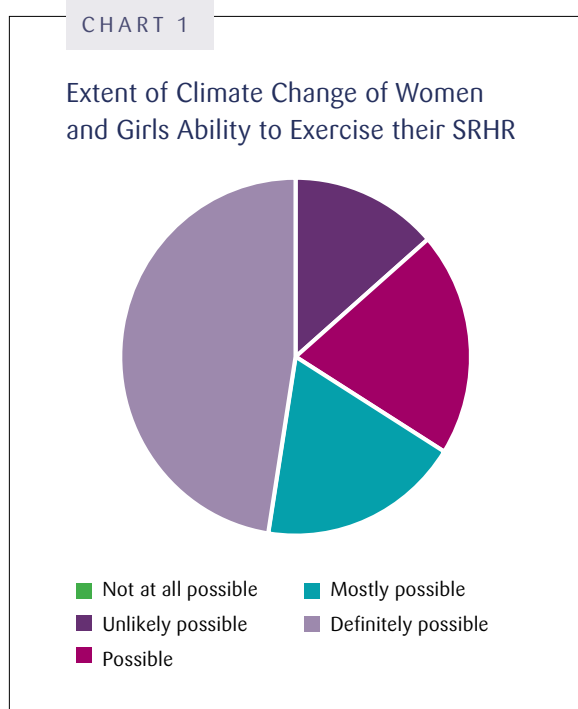
This was evident in responses from across the world, with one respondent from Asia highlighting the situation in Tamil Nadu, India, “where temperatures can soar to 40-42°C during peak summer, climate change is taking a severe toll on women workers in garment factories. The extreme heat coupled with high temperatures in these facilities exacerbates health issues such as dehydration and fatigue and even causes recurrent cases of piles, urinary tract infections, vaginal rashes, and other health issues. Low-wage Dalit women and interstate migrants have been the worst affected. Adding to these challenges, there has been a significant rise in gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) and domestic violence during days of extreme heat. For example, reporting of such cases increased by over 20% between March and May 2024 in our union.

Unfortunately, healthcare service providers and employers have not adequately responded to this situation. Similarly, a respondent from Africa stated that it is very evident how climate change has further exacerbated the sexual and reproductive health service gap that did exist on the continent. One respondent from the Caribbean further highlighted that “access to services can be difficult to reach, such as waiting for the right weather to sail to the mainland}”.

Climate change can deteriorate the weather and make transportation between islands less frequent.” In the Pacific, where coastal villages are being actively relocated inland, one respondent stated that “relocation of villages occurred and placed women further away from basic services like healthcare.”

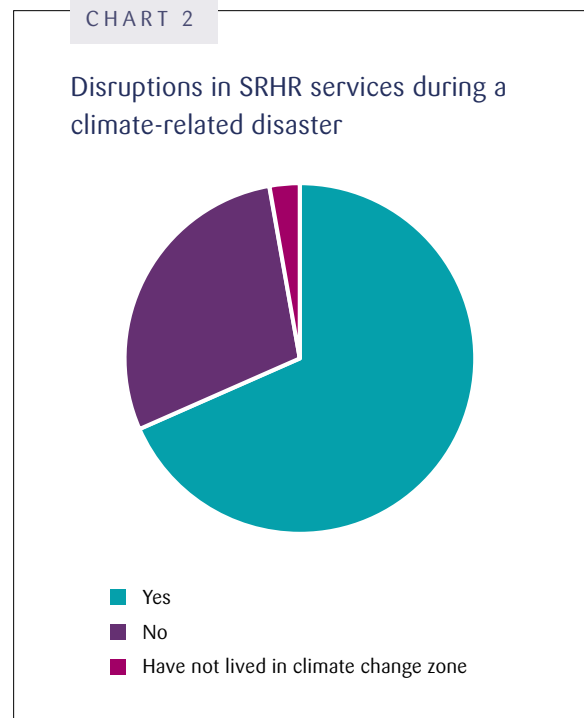
Climate and SRHR

A total of 47.5 respondents stated that climate change definitely (possibly) impacted women and girls ability to exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights (Chart 1).

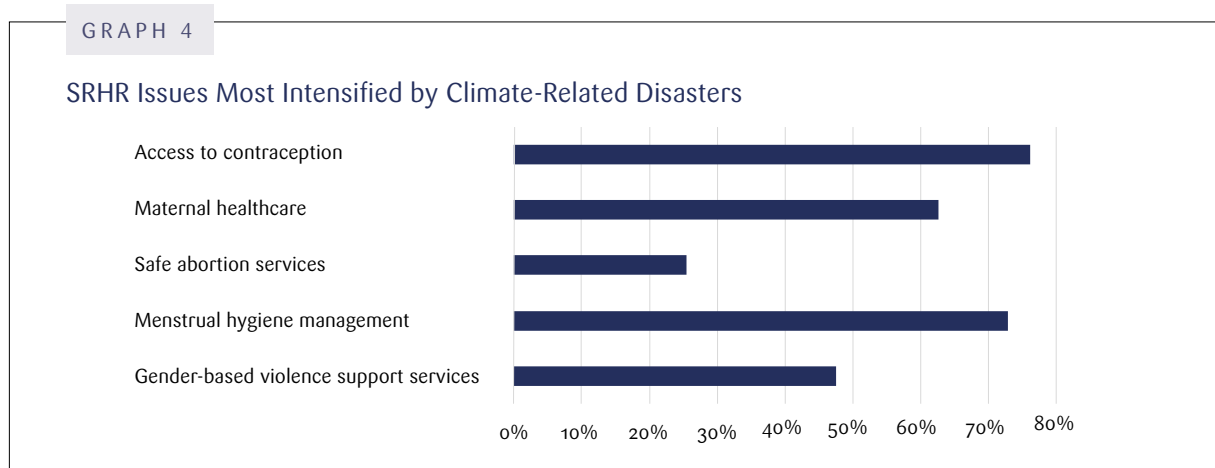


When respondents were asked which specific issues of SRHR they believed were most intensified by climate-related disasters, 76.3% stated GBV support services, followed by 72.9% who stated maternal healthcare (Graph 4).

A total of 68.4% of respondents agreed that their community faced disruptions in SRHR services during a climate-related disaster (Chart 2).

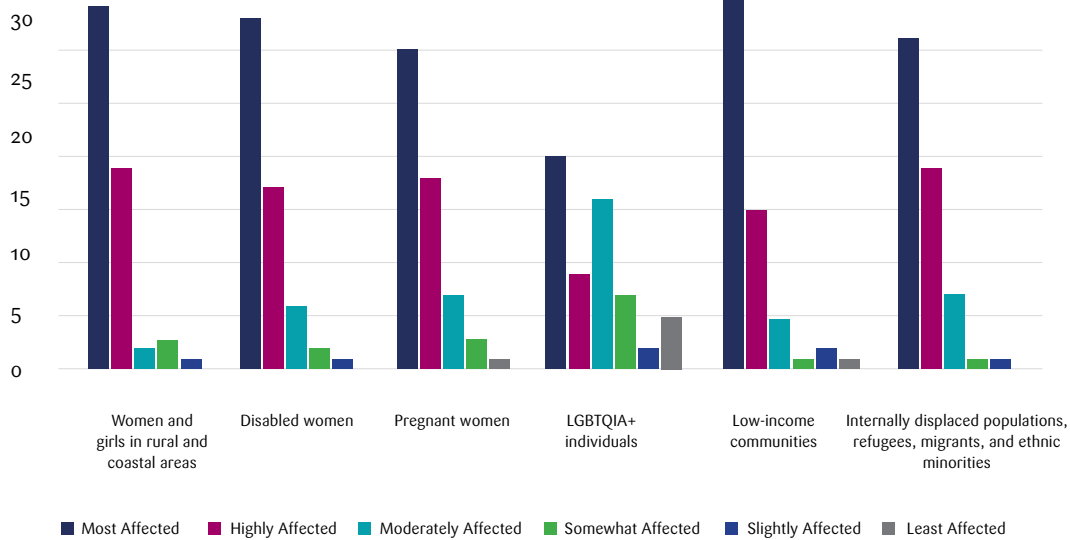


“Climate change disrupts access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for women and girls in vulnerable communities by damaging healthcare infrastructure, forcing displacement, and increasing gender-based violence. In crisis settings, SRH services like contraception and prenatal care become scarce, while strained resources and economic hardships further limit access. These factors underscore the need for resilient healthcare systems to ensure ongoing support for SRH amidst climate challenges.” —Survey Respondent



GRAPH 5

Access to SRH of Marginalised Women



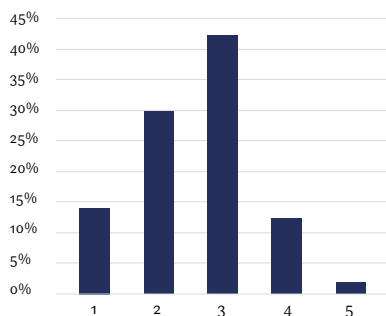
Respondents from all regions consistently agreed that marginalised people who are further exacerbated either by geography, displacement, income, disability, or pregnancy face the greatest challenge in accessing SRHR services during climate-related emergencies (Graph 5).

Climate Change and SRHR Policies

A total of 42.1% of respondents stated that international agreements or frameworks (e.g., Paris Agreement, SDGs) incorporate the intersection of climate change and SRH, particularly for women and girls (Graph 6).

GRAPH 6

International Agreements and SRH



However, they did identify gaps like limited explicit mentions of SRH in climate agreements, insufficient attention to climate-related displacement and migration impacts on SRH, inadequate funding for climate-resilient SRH services, a lack of clear indicators and metrics to track SRH progress in climate contexts, and limited or no engagement of SRH experts in climate decision-making processes.

In addition to this, some policy improvements suggested by survey respondents are:

- Integrate SRH into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).
- Develop specific climate-SRH indicators and monitoring frameworks.
- Increase funding for climate-resistant SRH services and infrastructure.
- Enhance the participation of SRH experts and women’s organisations in climate decision-making.
- Address climate-related displacement and migration impacts on SRH.

“The Paris Agreement recognises gender equality and the right to health. But there is no specificity. It could incorporate SRHR into the Gender Action Plan, financing mechanisms, adaptation indicators, etc.”

—Survey Respondent

Survey respondents made some policy recommendations to enhance the inclusion of SRHR in climate justice:

- Strengthening the language on SRHR in future climate agreements.
- Developing guidance on integrating SRHR into climate policies and programs
- Supporting research on climate-SRH intersections and impacts
- Fostering collaboration between climate and SRH communities
- Ensuring inclusive, gender-responsive climate decision-making processes

“International agreements often lack direct SRHR measures. Improving this requires clearer integration of SRHR needs during climate emergencies, especially for marginalised groups, with better funding and healthcare access.” Survey Respondent



REFERENCES

- ActionAid. (2021, July 22).** Women and children are most at risk as climate change and conflict drive migration in Afghanistan. Retrieved from <https://actionaid.org>
- ASEAN. (2021).** ASEAN State of Climate Change Report. Retrieved from https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ASCCR-e-publication-Correction_8-June.pdf
- ASEAN Secretariat PEGD. (2024).** ASEAN Gender Outlook: Achieving the SDGs for all and leaving no woman or girl behind. Retrieved from https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/2024/ASEAN-gender-outlook_2024.pdf
- Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) & NIDWAN. (2023).** Scoping study Nepal: Amplifying voices of indigenous women and girls with disabilities on the nexus of climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). ARROW. Retrieved from <https://arrow.org.my/publication/nepal-scoping-study-amplifying-voices-of-indigenous-women-and-girls-with-disabilities-on-the-nexus-of-climate-change-and-srhr/>
- Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) & Katutubong Lilak. (2023).** Philippines Scoping Study: Exploring the Nexus of Indigenous Women's SRHR and Climate Change. ARROW. Retrieved from <https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Scoping-Studies-Philippines.pdf>
- Arunda, M. O., Sorcher, R., Canabarro, A. P. F., Svallfors, S., Endler, M., Gemzell-Danielsson, K., et al. (2024, August 24).** Climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights research in low-income and middle-income countries: A scoping review. *BMJ Public Health*, 1(2), e001090. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjph-2024-001090>
- Asadullah, M. N., Islam, K. M. M., & Wahhaj, Z. (2020).** Child marriage, climate vulnerability, and natural disasters in coastal Bangladesh. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021932020000442>
- Azad, A. K., Hossain, K. M., & Nasreen, M. (2013).** Flood-induced vulnerabilities and problems encountered by women in northern Bangladesh. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 4, 190-199. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13753-013-0020-z>
- Burns, P. A., & Mutunga, C. (2024).** Addressing the impact of climate change on sexual and reproductive health among adolescent girls and young women in low- and middle-income countries. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, 12(1), 1-9. <https://www.ghspjournal.org/content/ghsp/12/1/e2300374.full.pdf>
- Caballero-Anthony, M., Trajano, J. C., Cook, A. D. B., Nanthini, D., Sambanthan, O. T., Ma, J., Montesclaros, L., Landicho, K. P., & Goh, D. L. (2023).** Climate Change and Its Impact on Peace and Security in Southeast Asia. Retrieved from <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/UN-Report-RSIS-Climate-Change-and-Its-Impact-on-Peace-and-Security-in-Southeast-Asia-Online-Version.pdf>
- Corner, S. P. (2021).** The sixth major IPCC assessment report and its implications. *Weather*, 77(2), 70-71. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wea.4132>
- Nasreen, M., Azad, A., Hasan, K., & Hossain, K. (2017).** Sexual and reproductive health during emergencies. Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies.
- CHAMNHA Climate. (n.d.).** Heat and maternal and neonatal health in Africa. Global Heat Health Information Network. Retrieved November 13, 2024, from <https://ghhin.org/resources/chamnha-climate-heat-and-maternal-and-neonatal-health-in-africa/>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2023, October 12).** Climate change. Retrieved November 13, 2024, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2024, September 5).** Domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa will triple by 2060 due to extreme heat epidemic and stalling development. Retrieved November 13, 2024, from <https://www.unfpa.org/press/domestic-violence-sub-saharan-africa-will-triple-2060-due-extreme-heat-epidemic-and-stalling>
- European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. (2022).** Kyrgyzstan: Health system review. Retrieved from <https://www.euro.who.int>
- Huvadhoo Aid (HAD) & Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW). (2015).** A scoping study: Interlinkages of climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women in the Maldives.
- Imran, N. (2024).** Forum of Dignity Initiative 2024: Climate change and women, how SRHR is compromised in humanitarian crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.asiapacificalliance.org/our-publications/climate-change-and-wom>

en-how-srhr-compromised-humanitarian-crisis

International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2024).

Gender-responsive climate action and the importance of SRHR integration in East and Central Asia. Retrieved from <https://www.iisd.org>

International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2024).

Gendered impacts of climate change: An analysis of early marriage in high-stress environments. Retrieved from <https://www.iisd.org>

Kabeer, N. (2021). Gender, climate change, and development:

Re-thinking gender inequality and climate justice. *Gender and Development*, 29(1), 37-56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2021.1892110>

Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Health. (2022). Disaster response and

health services in climate-displaced communities in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz Ministry of Health Report.

Lee, H., & Romero, J. (Eds.). (2023). Climate Change 2023: Syn-

thesis Report. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Murphy, N., Azzopardi, P., & Bohren, M. A. (2023). Safeguard-

ing youth sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of increasing climate-related disasters in the Pacific: A scoping review of policies and responses. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 86, 103561. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2023.103561>

Osman-Elasha, B. (2009). Women...In the shadow of climate

change. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 51(6), 14-17. In Nos. 3 & 4, Vol. XLVI, Special Climate Change Issue.

Oxfam. (2022). The impact of climate change on vulnerable

populations in Central Asia: Gendered implications. Oxfam. Retrieved from <https://oxfam.org/climate-change-central-asia>

Pope, D. H., McMullen, H., Baschieri, A., Philipose, A., Udeh,

C., Diallo, J., & McCoy, D. (2022). What is the current evidence for the relationship between the climate and environmental crises and child marriage? A scoping review. *Global Public Health*, 18(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2022.2095655>

Poudel, K., Karki, S., Lamichhane, K., Timilsina, A., Dijkerman,

S., & Ghimire, J. (2024). Perception of climate change vulnerability and its impact on sexual and reproductive health and rights in Khutiya and Banganga River Basins. *Journal of Nepal Health Research Council*, 22(62), 25-33.

Population Services International (PSI). (2021). Addressing

sexual and reproductive health needs in climate-displaced communities. Retrieved from <https://www.psi.org/climate-justice>

Ramos, E. P., & Dias, K. M. (2021, October 11). Gender, migra-

tion, climate change and disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Sangwan, G., & Brahmachari, D. (2023). Climate change dis-

asters and impact on women in South Asia. In *International*

Handbook of Disaster Research (pp. 2113-2126). Springer.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8388-7_146

Shaw, R., Luo, Y., Cheong, T. S., Abdul Halim, S., Chaturvedi, S., Hashizume, M., Insarov, G. E., Ishikawa, Y., Jafari, M., Kitoh, A., Pulhin, J., Singh, C., Vasant, K., & Zhang, Z. (2022). Asia. In *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (pp. 1457-1579). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009325844.012>

Handbook of Disaster Research (pp. 2113-2126). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8388-7_146

SLYCAN Trust. (2020). Climate change and human mobility in Sri Lanka: Impacts and actions across sectors. SLYCAN Trust.

The Asia-Pacific Riskscape: How do the changes in weather, climate and water impact our lives? (2023, March 23).

ESCAP. Retrieved November 13, 2024, from <https://www.unescap.org/blog/asia-pacific-riskscape-how-do-changes-weather-climate-and-water-impact-our-lives>

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

(2023). Desertification, land degradation, and drought in Mongolia. Retrieved from <https://www.unccd.int>

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2021). Child

Marriages and Environmental Crises: An Evidence Brief. Retrieved from https://esaro.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/child_marriage_and_environmental_crises.pdf

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2022). Impact of

climate change on SRHR in vulnerable regions. Retrieved from <https://www.unfpa.org>

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2020). Climate

change and early marriage: A gendered response in Mongolia. UNFPA Mongolia.

United Nations Population Fund. (2015). Girlhood, Not Mother-

hood: Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy. New York: United Nations Population Fund.

UN Women. (2020). Climate change and women's rights in East

and Central Asia. UN Women. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/feature-climate-change-and-womens-rights>

Whittenbury, K. (2012). Climate change, women's health,

wellbeing, and experiences of gender-based violence in Australia. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 207-221). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5518-5_15

Women and Gender Constituency & SRHR & Climate Justice

Coalition. (2022). Issue Brief: Climate Justice and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO). (2024a). State of

the Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean 2023. UN.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO). (2024b). State of

the Global Climate 2023. UN.