

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS UNFPA and the Climate Crisis



WHY IS UNFPA ENGAGED IN CLIMATE ACTION?

Climate change is a major threat to the vision of people-centred sustainable development outlined in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, which was reinforced by the [Nairobi Summit on ICPD25](#) and its related [commitments](#), and was amplified by actions to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the Decade of Action. Climate change is a [multiplier of existing health vulnerabilities](#), through its impact on equitable access to both health care and education within resilient systems and its effect on adequate access to safe water, improved sanitation and food insecurity. Climate-related displacement and the consequent impact on livelihoods are equally challenging the [protection and the realization of human rights](#), including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

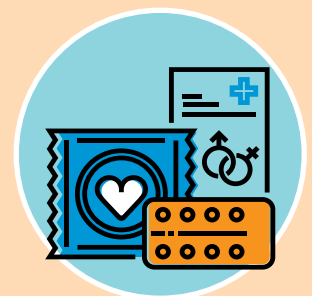
Current efforts to adapt to climate change are simply insufficient. They are not always designed to prevent a disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as other populations in vulnerable or marginalized situations. There is a strong basis for action, including the integration of gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the integration of SRHR into climate adaptation strategies. There is also widespread recognition of the life-saving importance of sexual and reproductive health issues and measures to address gender-based violence in emergencies. However, this progress has not been matched in the arena of climate change.

How does climate change affect the achievement of the three transformative results?

UNFPA has committed to achieving three transformative results by 2030:



ENDING
preventable
**MATERNAL
DEATH**



ENDING
unmet need
**FOR FAMILY
PLANNING**



ENDING
**GENDER-
BASED
VIOLENCE**
and harmful
practices

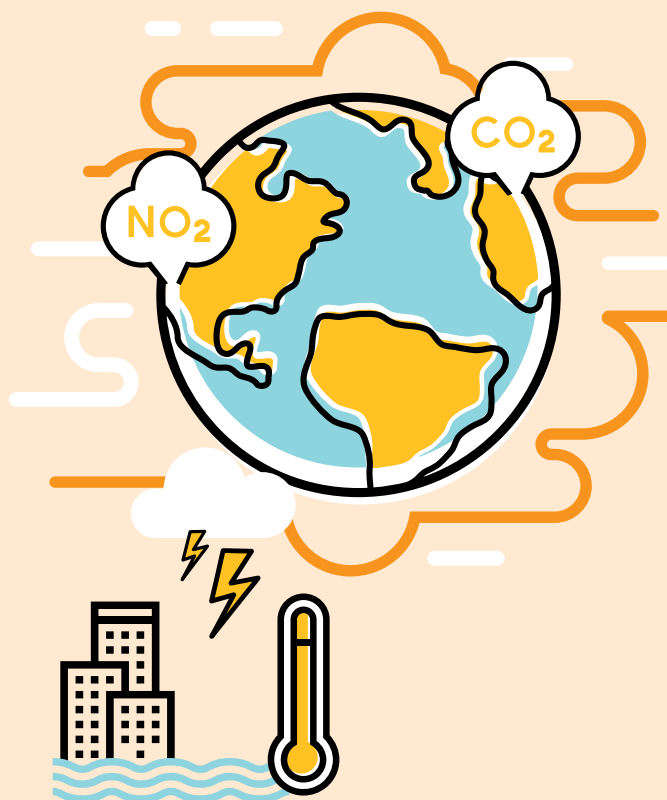
The rapid pace of climate change in the next decade will make each of the transformative results more difficult to achieve by constraining defined pathways. There are direct and indirect pathways of impact, which continue to be the basis of research and implementation. Heat worsens maternal and neonatal health outcomes, with research suggesting that an increase of one degree Celsius in the week before delivery corresponds with a six per cent greater likelihood of stillbirth.¹

Climate-related emergencies cause major disruptions in access to health services and life-saving commodities including the [nine bundles of sexual and reproductive health services](#). Climate-related loss or change of livelihoods, as well as displacement and migration, increase the risk of gender-based violence and affect household coping strategies. This can increase harmful practices including child marriage. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has noted the likelihood that both climate change and gender-blind climate-change interventions could worsen gender inequality.²

What is the evidence for the impact of climate change on SRHR?³

Climate change will directly and indirectly negatively impact SRHR. The realization of SRHR is fundamental to achieving gender equality and can help build resilience and the adaptive capacity of women, youth and their communities to the impact of climate change. Unfulfilled SRHR can limit women and girls' agency and in turn limit effective participation and engagement in climate action. Efforts to realize SRHR must therefore be included in climate action and policy.⁴

Climate change will adversely affect SRHR, with negative impacts on maternal health as a result of increases in heat,⁵ air pollution,⁶ climate-related diseases,⁷ food insecurity and increasingly salinated water.⁸ Climate-related events can jeopardize access to the clean water that is essential for safe births and personal hygiene, including menstrual hygiene.



- 1 Kuehn L., McCormick S. (2017). *Heat Exposure and Maternal Health in the Face of Climate Change*. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2017 Jul 29;14(8):853. doi: 10.3390/ijerph14080853. PMID: 28758917; PMCID: PMC5580557. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28758917/>
- 2 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2018). *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C Above Pre-industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways, in the Context of Strengthening the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change, Sustainable Development, and Efforts to Eradicate Poverty*.
- 3 UNFPA and Queen Mary University London. (April 2021). *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in National Climate Policy: A Review of 50 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Documents*.
- 4 UNFPA and Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) Report from April 2021, *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in National Climate Policy: A review of 50 Nationally Determined Contribution policy documents*.
- 5 Kuehn L., McCormick S. (2017). *Heat Exposure and Maternal Health in the Face of Climate Change*. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2017 Jul 29;14(8):853. doi: 10.3390/ijerph14080853. PMID: 28758917; PMCID: PMC5580557. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28758917/>
- 6 Bekkar B., Pacheco S., Basu R., DeNicola N. (2020). *Association of Air Pollution and Heat Exposure With Preterm Birth, Low Birth Weight, and Stillbirth in the US: A Systematic Review*. JAMA Netw Open. 3(6):e208243.
- 7 World Health Organization (2017). *Malaria in Pregnant Women*. Available at: https://www.who.int/malaria/areas/high_risk_groups/pregnancy/en/ Accessed on: October 25th, 2020.
- 8 Khan, A.E., Ireson, A., Kovats, S. et al. (2011). *Drinking Water Salinity and Maternal Health in Coastal Bangladesh: Implications of Climate Change*. Environ Health Perspect 119:1328–1332. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1002804>.

The El Niño-induced drought in Mozambique resulted in scarcity not only of clean water, but also of the absorbent plant used locally for producing menstrual products for girls and women.⁹

Gender-based violence (GBV) and child marriage are known to increase in times of increased vulnerabilities, constrained livelihoods and income disruptions, as well as following extreme weather events and disasters.¹⁰ GBV can limit women's ability to build resilience to climate change, impeding the capacity of survivors and their dependents to proactively and positively respond to and manage ongoing challenges and crises.¹¹

Climate change is predicted to increase the number of people living with HIV, with one study projecting between 11.6 and 16 million additional cases of HIV by 2050 in 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.¹² This modelled prediction is based on the finding that as temperatures increase in these countries, so too does male migration and increased risky sexual behaviour.

Extreme weather events disrupt health-care facilities and infrastructure and interrupt supply chains, directly limiting equitable access to SRH services.¹³ In addition, the economic consequences of climate-related shocks for households can indirectly limit affordability of SRH services where financial risk protection

mechanisms are not in place for vulnerable and at-risk population groups. Disruption of SRH services can have widespread effects on health, including increases in sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, maternal complications and death during childbirth.¹⁴ In addition, the impact of climate change can affect national investment in competing areas of development, including the health sector, by diverting funding for health and SRHR to climate-related responses.

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GBV AND CHILD MARRIAGE



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9 Fischer, A. (2016). "Hope Dries up? Women and Girls Coping with Drought and Climate Change in Mozambique." Care International. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004322714_cclc_2016-0134-006.

10 McLeod, C., Barr, H., & Rall, K. (2019). Does Climate Change Increase the Risk of Child Marriage: A Look at What We Know and What We Don't With Lessons from Bangladesh and Mozambique. *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 38(1), 96-146.

11 Le Masson, V., Benoudji, C., Sotelo Reyes, S. & Bernard, G. (2019). *How Violence Against Women and Girls Undermines Resilience to Climate Risks in Chad*. *Disasters*, 43(S3), S245-S27.

12 Baker, R.E. (2020). *Climate Change Drives Increase in Modelled HIV Prevalence*. *Climatic Change*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-020-02753-y>

13 Benjamin, G. (2016). *Shelter in the Storm: Health Care Systems and Climate Change*. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 94(1), 18-22.

14 Behrman, J., & Weitzman, A. (2016). *Effects of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake on Women's Reproductive Health*. *Studies in Family Planning*, 47(1), 3-17.

The table below shows a summary of selected key intersections between SRHR and climate change.

Summary of key intersections: Sexual and reproductive health and rights, and climate change

Access to essential services



Climate change can have direct and indirect effects on access to essential SRHR services:

- Extreme weather events can disrupt health facilities and infrastructure and medical supply chains.¹⁵
- Reduced access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care as well as to contraception and safe abortion services can result in increases in maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as increases in sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies.¹⁶
- Effects of climate-related shocks on household economic resources can indirectly limit access to SRH services by limiting affordability when the population is required to pay for health services.
- For groups already navigating an intersection of barriers that reduce ability to access high-quality SRH services, climate change may further exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Maternal and neonatal health¹⁷



- The role of heat and air pollution in maternal and neonatal health is being rapidly established and includes higher rates of miscarriage, preterm birth and poorer neonatal outcomes.^{18, 19}
- Increased poverty and food insecurity, driven by climate-related loss of livelihoods, also impacts maternal mortality.
- Global heating impacts the patterns of vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, with negative outcomes such as maternal illness and low birth weight.²⁰
- Access to fresh and clean water has implications for maternal health care and is required for safe births and pregnancies. The negative impacts of salinized water intake on pregnancy outcomes has also been documented.²¹
- Women and girls play a critical role in ensuring families have safe and clean water, and in providing the family care functions, they often deprioritize their own SRHR needs.

15 Benjamin, G. (2016). *Shelter in the Storm: Health Care Systems and Climate Change*. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 94(1), 18-22.

16 Behrman, J., & Weitzman, A. (2016). *Effects of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake on Women's Reproductive Health*. *Studies in Family Planning*, 47(1), 3-17

17 Nathalie, R. et al. (February, 2021). *Maternal and Newborn Health Risks of Climate Change: A Call for Awareness and Global Action* <https://doi.org/10.1111/aogs.14124>

18 Kuehn L, McCormick S. *Heat Exposure and Maternal Health in the Face of Climate Change*. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. Jul 29;14(8):853. doi: 10.3390/ijerph14080853. PMID: 28758917; PMCID: PMC5580557.

19 Bekkar, B., Pacheco, S., Basu, R., DeNicola, N. (2020). *Association of Air Pollution and Heat Exposure With Preterm Birth, Low Birth Weight, and Stillbirth in the US: A Systematic Review*. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2020;3(6):e208243.

20 World Health Organization. (2017). *Malaria in Pregnant Women*. Available at: https://www.who.int/malaria/areas/high_risk_groups/pregnancy/en/ Accessed on: October 25th, 2020.

21 Khan, A.E., Ireson, A., Kovats, S. et al. (2011). *Drinking Water Salinity and Maternal Health in Coastal Bangladesh: Implications of Climate Change*. *Environ Health Perspect* 119:1328-1332. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1002804>.

Gender-based violence



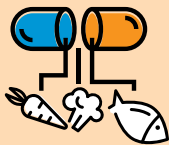
- The stress, scarcity and humanitarian crises brought on by climate change increase gender-based violence (GBV).^{22, 23}
- GBV, child, early and forced marriages, and trafficking have been seen to increase following disasters and extreme weather events.^{24, 25}
- When women and girls need to travel further distances to gather basic necessities such as water and firewood they can also be at increased risk of physical and sexual violence.²⁶
- Stress on livelihoods due to disruptions in access to natural resources can also result in violence. Women who are environmental defenders have also been assaulted, raped and killed while defending environmental commons.^{27, 28}

Early, forced and child marriage



- Pressure on families due to floods, droughts, disasters and other climate impacts can also result in early, forced and child marriage.^{29, 30} In circumstances where there are not enough resources to support the family, marriages can be seen as a way to reduce pressure and secure resources for the family or the child.
- Early and child marriage is sometimes linked with female genital cutting and other harmful practices.^{31, 32}

The impacts of pollutants and toxins on SRHR



- When the climate crisis is combined with related nature and pollution crises there are further impacts on SRHR.
- Pollutants and toxins impact the ability to maintain the safe and sanitary conditions required for life by impacting the food and water systems necessary for human health. Toxins can impact endocrine systems, disrupting fertility.³³
- Changes in the use of fertilizers and pesticides without proper training and protection can also have adverse health impacts, including impacts on reproductive health.³⁴

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- 22 Sorensen, C., Murray, V., Lemery, J., & Balbus, J. (2018). *Climate Change and Women's Health: Impacts and Policy Directions*. PLoS medicine, 15(7), e1002603. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002603>
- 23 UNFCCC (2019) *Climate Change Increases the Risk of Violence Against Women*. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-increases-the-risk-of-violence-against-women>
- 24 McLeod, C., Barr, H., & Rall, K. (2019). *Does Climate Change Increase the Risk of Child Marriage: A Look at What We Know and What We Don't With Lessons from Bangladesh and Mozambique*. Columbia Journal of Gender and Law, 38(1), 96-146.
- 25 Masson, V.L., Lim S., Budimir, M., Podbo, J.S. (2016). *Disasters and Violence Against Women and Girls Can Disasters Shake Social Norms and Power Relations?* Working Paper. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/583c0c744.pdf>
- 26 Global Gender and Climate Alliance. (2016), *Gender and Climate Change: A Closer Look At Existing Evidence*, Available at: https://www.srhr-ask-us.org/themencode-pdf-viewer-sc/?file=https://www.srhr-ask-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Gender_ClimateChange-1.pdf&settings=001101111&lang=en-US#page=&zoom=auto&pagemode=
- 27 Castañeda Camey, I., Sabater, L. Owren, C. and Boyer, A.E. (2020). *Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality*. Wen, J. (ed.). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.
- 28 Global Witness. (2020). *Defending Tomorrow: The Climate Crisis and Threats Against Land and Environmental Defenders*. Available at: <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/defending-tomorrow/>. Accessed: November 1, 2020.
- 29 McLeod, C., Barr, H., & Rall, K. (2019). *Does Climate Change Increase the Risk of Child Marriage: A Look at What We Know and What We Don't With Lessons From Bangladesh and Mozambique*. Columbia Journal of Gender and Law, 38(1), 96-146.
- 30 CARE UK. (2015) *To Protect Her Honour: Child Marriage in Emergencies, the Fatal Confusion Between Protecting Girls and Sexual Violence*. https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2017RH_FGMC-ChildMarriage.pdf
- 32 Alston, M., Whittenbury, K., et al (2014). *Are Climate Challenges Reinforcing Child and Forced Marriage and Dowry as Adaptation Strategies in the Context of Bangladesh?* Women's Studies International Forum. Vol. 47, Part A, 137-144 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.08.005>
- 33 United Nations Environment Programme. (2020). *Global Environment Outlook 6: Technical Summary*.
- 34 Piazza, M.J., Urbanetz, A.A. (2019). *Environmental Toxins and the Impact of Other Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals in Women's Reproductive Health*, JBRA Assist Reprod. 2019 Apr-Jun; 23(2): 154-164.

HIV



- Access to health services, including impacts on supply chains, can interfere with adherence and management of HIV infection, while reductions in food security can compromise the nutrition required for the adherence to and therapeutic effects of medications to maintain good health.^{35, 36}
- Climate-related events may also enable situations where people are at greater risk of contracting HIV, for example, young women aged 15 to 24 in areas affected by drought were more likely to engage in sexual activity, risky sexual behaviour or transactional sex and were less likely to stay in school.³⁷
- Coupled with reduced access to reproductive health supplies, such as condoms, HIV transmission is more likely.

Sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics



- People with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and sex characteristics, such as lesbian, gay, transgender and LGBTQIA+ individuals may be at increased risk of poor outcomes due to climate impacts.³⁸
- This is as a result of their pre-existing social marginalization, legal status and the lack of recognition of specific health and social needs in service provision, such as disaster preparedness.³⁹

Population dynamics



- Aspects of population dynamics, including urbanization and population growth, have been described as drivers of climate change by the IPCC and as a driver affecting the health of the planet by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Environment Outlook 6 (GEO-6)^{40, 41} which describes 'unequal access to education and lack of empowerment of women, as well as women's lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, contributing to high birth rates' (Geo-6, pg 9).
- A large unmet need for contraception remains a global challenge and access to voluntary rights-based family planning services is an important component of achieving SRHR.
- Bodily autonomy and human rights are a cornerstone of resilient communities and recognising SRHR in relation to climate change is essential for ensuring just responses and building resilience and adaptive capacity to intensifying threats and impacts.
- Wealthy and more consumptive nations are the most responsible for global emissions and the burden of mitigating climate change and support for adaptation should reflect this.
- Linkages between population growth and climate change should be treated with major scepticism and SRHR defended in its own right (Kanem, 2017).

35 Young, S., Wheeler, A. C., McCoy, S. I., & Weiser, S. D. (2014). *A Review of the Role of Food Insecurity in Adherence to Care and Treatment Among Adult and Pediatric Populations Living with HIV and AIDS*. *AIDS and Behavior*, 18 Suppl 5(0 5), S505–S515. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-013-0547-4>

36 UNAIDS and UNEP. *Climate Change and AIDS: A Working Paper*. Available at: <https://www.uncclearn.org/wp-content/uploads/library/un aids01.pdf>

37 Low, A. J., Frederix, K., McCracken, S., Manyau, S., Gummerson, E., Radin, E., Davia, S., Longwe, H., Ahmed, N., Parekh, B., Findley, S., & Schwitters, A. (2019). *Association Between Severe Drought and HIV Prevention and Care Behaviors in Lesotho: A Population-Based Survey 2016-2017*. *PLoS medicine*, 16(1), e1002727. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002727>

38 Friends of the Earth Scotland (2020) *Why Climate Change is an LGBTQIA+ Issue*. Available at: <https://foe.scot/why-climate-change-is-an-lgbtq-issue/>

39 Gaillard, J.C., Gorman-Murray, A., Fordha, M. (2017). *Sexual and Gender Minorities in Disaster*, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24:1, 18-26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2016.1263438>.

40 United Nations Environment Programme.(2020). *Global Environment Outlook 6: Technical Summary*.

41 **Fifth assessment - insert ref. MISSING REFERENCE**

Below are other key recent summaries of evidence produced by other agencies:

- NAP Global Network & Women Deliver (2020). The Link Between Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights <https://womendeliver.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Climate-Change-Report.pdf>
- Women Deliver (2021). *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Processes: Exploring a pathway for realizing rights and resilience to climate change.*
- Arrow (2015). *Women's sexual & reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and climate change. What is the connection?* https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Climate-Change-and-SRHR-Scoping-Study_Bangladesh.pdf
- *A greener, fairer future: why leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education.* https://assets.ctfassets.net/0oan5gk9rgbh/OFgutQPKIFoi5IfY2iwFC/6b2fffd2c893ebdebee60f93be814299/MalalaFund_GirlsEducation_ClimateReport.pdf
- *An Advocacy Brief: Post 2015 Development Agenda Climate Change and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights.* <http://feministallianceforrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Climate-Change2.pdf>
- IPPF (January, 2021). *The climate crisis and sexual and reproductive health and rights.* https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/IPPF%20position%20paper%20The%20climate%20crisis%20and%20sexual%20and%20reproductive%20health%20and%20rights_Jan2021.pdf

What is UNFPA's position on population and climate mitigation?

When looking at the relationship between Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and climate change, the claim that population is the most important driver of climate change is not only too simplistic, but is not supported by facts. It is evident that emissions are not equally distributed across the world's population.⁴² Some populations are more responsible for climate change than others. With the richest 10 per cent of the global population responsible for 52 per cent of cumulative GHGs, and the richest 1 per cent contributing a full 15 per cent, it becomes clear that countries with high and rapid population growth are neither responsible for creating, nor should be held responsible for, solving climate change.⁴³

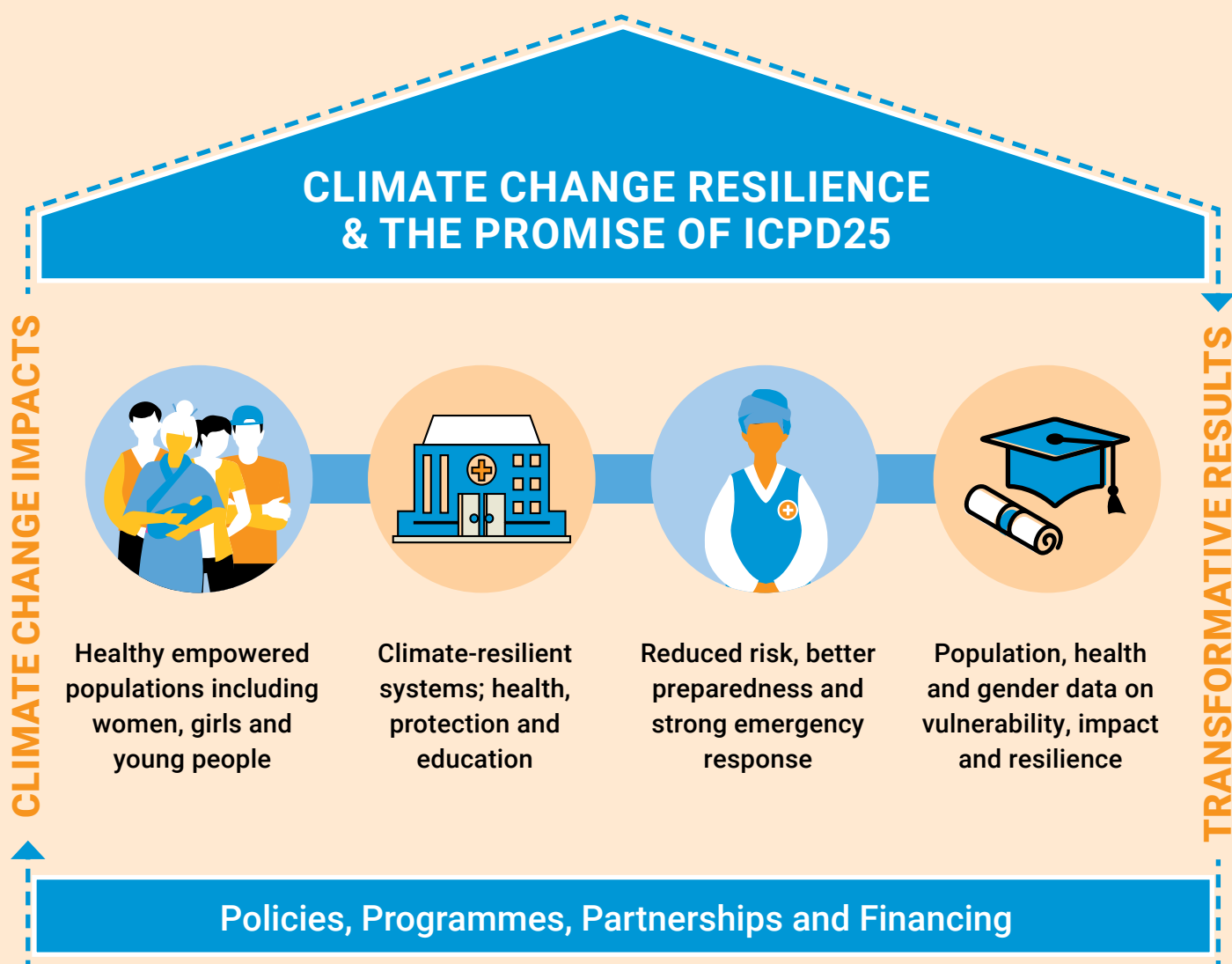


42 Kanem, N. (2017). *Population and Climate Change*. Available at: <https://www.climate2020.org.uk/population-climate-change/>

43 Oxfam. (2020). *Confronting Carbon Inequality*. Available at: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621052/mb-confronting-carbon-inequality-210920-en.pdf>. Accessed: October 28, 2020.

How can UNFPA support countries to implement its approach to climate resilience?

UNFPA's programmatic framework has four pillars of engagement connecting the promise of ICPD25 and the achievement of climate change adaptation and resilience.



Healthy empowered populations, including women, girls and young people: integrate SRHR, gender equality, and population and development into climate adaptation actions to achieve resilience.

Climate-resilient systems; health, protection and education: strengthen the capacity of health systems to protect and improve population health in an unstable and changing climate.

Reduced risk, better preparedness and strong emergency response: meet the SRHR needs of those impacted, displaced, and at risk of climate crises, including protection, prevention and response to gender-based violence.

Population, health and gender data on vulnerability, impact and resilience: ensure that climate-related vulnerability assessments and actions take into account sexual and reproductive health, as well as gender-based violence risks and protective measures, and that they are informed by disaggregated population data.

WHAT HAS UNFPA'S WORK BEEN TO DATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

Symposium on SRHR, gender and climate change resilience

Ahead of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) Nairobi Summit of 2019, the UNFPA East and Southern Africa regional office organized an [International Symposium on SRHR, Gender and Climate Change Resilience](#) to share knowledge and identify programmes to reduce the impact of climate change and to build the resilience of communities in vulnerable settings.

The symposium, which brought together people from diverse groups and backgrounds, including youth climate activists, produced the Future Africa Call to Action, which outlined the impact of climate change on the achievement of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and the contributions that the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) community can make to building climate resilience.

Climate change, gender and adaptation signature session at the Nairobi summit

The Future Africa Call to Action was presented at the ICPD25 in Nairobi and has been used as the foundation of the UNFPA approach to integrating climate change in its work. At the Nairobi Summit, 13 commitments relating to climate change in emergencies and four commitments relating to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus were made by a range of partners, including countries facing high risks and emergencies, donor countries and global, regional and national NGOs. For more information on the Symposium on SRHR, Gender and Climate change Resilience please see the Symposium Report: <https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/publications/srhr-gender-and-climate-change-resilience-symposium> and Symposium webpage where the Future Africa Call to Action is located: www.climatechangesrhr.info.

THE SYMPOSIUM

which **BROUGHT TOGETHER PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE GROUPS AND BACKGROUNDS**, including youth climate activists, produced the Future Africa Call to Action



Value proposition on climate change

Recently, UNFPA launched its value proposition on climate change, which outlines the UNFPA approach and builds staff capacity to integrate climate change components across all of UNFPA's work. It puts forward a programmatic framework with four pillars connecting the promise of ICPD25 and the achievement of climate change adaptation and resilience.

For the link to the UNFPA Value Proposition on SHRR/Gender and Climate change please see here <https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/publications/unfpa-and-climate-crisis>.

UNFPA LAUNCHED ITS VALUE PROPOSITION



on climate change, which **OUTLINES THE UNFPA APPROACH AND BUILDS STAFF CAPACITY** to integrate climate change components across all of UNFPA's work

UNFPA review of SRHR in NDCs

In the lead up to COP26, the majority of our UN Member States will submit revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). These NDCs will drive implementation of the Paris Agreement for the next five years. There is an opportunity to influence the national commitment on adaptation to ensure that countries reflect crucial language on SRHR, gender, and resilience of the most vulnerable groups in their NDCs. This will give a strong foundation for partnerships and implementation at national level.

Understanding the first NDCs, and any existing gaps, submitted by countries is an important part of achieving this aim. In light of this, UNFPA recently commissioned a study by Queen Mary University London, which reviewed 50 NDCs in five UNFPA regions in 2020. The report, detailing the UNFPA review of SRHR in the first NDCs can be found [here](#).

Creation of joint youth working group on SRHR, climate change and population

Empowering young people to drive this agenda is crucial. A Joint Youth Working Group (JYWG) has recently been established, bringing together youth activists across climate change, health and SRHR spaces to ensure SRHR is integrated into climate adaptation. It aims to provide a platform that regularly brings together a strong and diverse network of young climate change and SRHR advocates from diverse backgrounds. It will also cross-fertilize and share ideas and knowledge from the different youth networks and areas of expertise that will be part of the JYWG to develop further areas of engagement on this important nexus.

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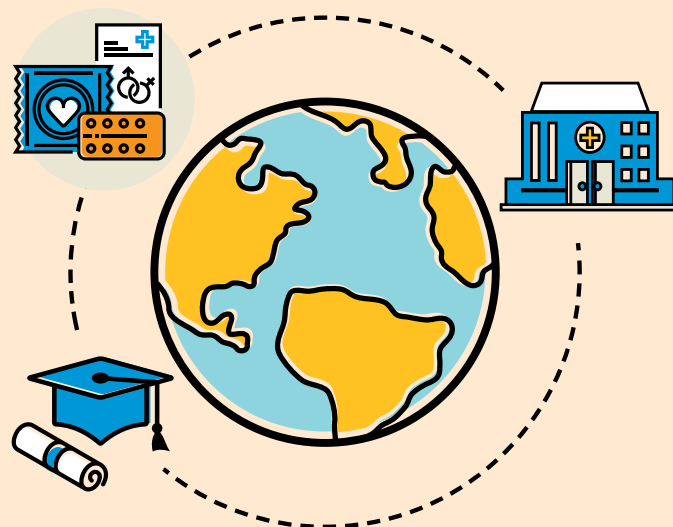
STRONG AND DIVERSE NETWORK

of **YOUNG CLIMATE CHANGE AND SRHR ADVOCATES FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS**



Empower young people through integrated CSE and climate change education

UNFPA in East and Southern Africa has implemented the Safeguard Young People (SYP) Programme to scale up comprehensive interventions for adolescents and young people in Southern Africa through a multi-sectoral approach, touching on policy, integrated HIV and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, sexuality education for in and out-of-school youth as well as youth empowerment. As part of the partnership with Queen Mary University of London, an integrated module on Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Climate Change was developed and will be piloted in selected countries in the East and Southern Africa Region.



Supporting disaster risk reduction in humanitarian settings

With the increasingly cyclical nature of climate change-related weather events, risk reduction among vulnerable groups is important as recurrent events strain government and partner response capacity. UNFPA's East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) engages in various regional disaster risk-reduction capacity initiatives and hosts the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) in East Africa. CADRI is a global partnership comprising 16 UN and non-UN organizations that works towards strengthening countries' capacities to prevent, manage and recover from disasters. The CADRI partnership draws upon the diversity of expertise of its members to offer a unique combination of knowledge, experience and resources to support countries implementing the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction.

Supporting the delivery of SRHR and GBV services in humanitarian settings

UNFPA remains a major source of essential reproductive health kits and GBV supplies during emergencies. Prompt delivery of reproductive health kits and dignity supplies is essential to reduce the impact of emergencies on women and children. UNFPA is working with countries to build up this pillar of preparedness.

Supporting better data systems and vulnerability assessments

Early warning and response for all relevant sectors should be built on strong evidence and data systems, national and subnational projections, responsive planning and the ability to support the flow of data and information through climate-related impacts and crises. UNFPA is currently supporting the development of climate-related vulnerability assessments for SRHR and supporting data availability to support emergency responses.

Others

As a UN organization with a developmental, humanitarian and peace mandate, working before, during and after crises in the most urgent climate hotspots in the world, UNFPA will continue working to ensure that:

- Our transformative results can be achieved and sustained amid the climate crisis.
- Through our mandate we are contributing to building the climate resilience of the individuals and communities we serve, and the systems we help to strengthen.
- As the world seeks to reduce climate emissions, the links between population and emissions are correctly understood and addressed, based on the principles of human rights and equality, including gender equality, embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ICPD Programme of Action.
- UNFPA's operations and programming have as low an environmental and climate change footprint as possible, in line with UNFPA's [Environmental Efficiency Initiative](#) and [Social and Environmental Standards](#).

WHAT IS THE COST OF INACTION?

Current efforts to adapt to climate change are simply insufficient. They are not always designed to prevent disproportionate impacts on women and girls, as well as other populations in vulnerable or marginalized situations. There is a strong basis for action, including the integration of gender and sexual and reproductive health in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the widespread recognition of the life-saving importance of sexual and reproductive health and measures to address gender-based violence in emergencies. However, this progress has not been matched in the arena of climate change.

While gender and climate change has been a significant area of work under the formulation and implementation of the Paris Agreement, much of the focus of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Gender Action Plan has been on increasing women's participation, while the substantive and sectoral issues that are central to ensuring gender-responsive adaptation have been missed. A recent review of gender in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – the primary national instrument for implementing the Paris Agreement – shows significant gaps in many critical sectors such as disaster risk reduction, agriculture and climate finance.

Health is an important component of both NDCs and adaptation plans, yet the most common frameworks give limited attention to maternal and child health. The strategic emphasis has focused on air pollution and health benefits from climate change mitigation. According to a World Health Organization (WHO) review, health adaptation commitments in current NDCs lack the comprehensive range of actions needed to build climate-resilient health systems.

Without scaled-up action to address gender and health inequalities in climate change financing, already disproportionately impacted populations will continue to be left behind.



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