

The Network for  
Religious and  
Traditional  
Peacemakers



## CSW66 Parallel Event:

### Faith Actors Addressing Gendered Impacts of Climate and Conflict Emergencies

#### Concept Note

#### Background and Aim

Climate change is not gender neutral. Gender is a strong determinant of vulnerability, hence the risk associated with climate change. An estimated 8 in 10 people who have been displaced by the effects of climate change are women.<sup>1</sup> Today, many women and girls face increased unpaid care and domestic work due to climate-related shortages of food, fuel, and water. There are also strong links between environmental stress and gender-based violence, often leading to climate-induced and forced migration, which disproportionately impacts women in poverty, and particularly women from marginalized, indigenous and caste communities. Often, women and girls in all their diversity face increased risks, including restricted access to sexual and reproductive health services, and sexual and gender-based violence, and trafficking and forced labor, especially after natural disasters. All of these harms are now being further exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate justice seeks to acknowledge that climate change can have differing social, economic, public health and adverse impacts on underprivileged populations,

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP. "Gender and Climate: Overview of linkages between gender and climate change." 2016.  
<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/UNDP%20Linkages%20Gender%20and%20CC%20Policy%20Brief%201-WEB.pdf>.

including women and girls. Climate justice and peacebuilding are therefore closely interlined and compliment each other.

Faith leaders and faith institutions are critical partners in addressing these harms and barriers to women and young women in all of their diversity within the climate justice movement and within peacebuilding. In 1995, the Parliament of the World's Religions offered the world a declaration expressing the ethical commitments held in common by the world's religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions. The initial declaration, "Towards a Global Ethic," calls for a change of consciousness and articulates four ethical directives that describe a commitment to a culture of respect for life, economic justice, truth and compassion, and women's rights. In 2018, the Parliament added a further component to the core values and principles in the Global Ethic — a fifth directive that describes its commitment to sustainability and care for Earth and nature.<sup>2</sup> Just recently at COP 26, Pope Francis urged political and economic leaders to show courage and long-range vision in saying, "cry of the poor, united to the cry of the Earth....I encourage all those who have political and economic responsibilities to act immediately with courage and farsightedness. At the same time, I invite all persons of good will to carry out active citizenry to care for the common house."<sup>3</sup>

Both SDG 13 and SG 16 are interlinked and must reinforce each other. Both can be advanced through rights-based approaches. Climate justice helps reduce potential violent conflict over limited natural resource exploitation or stress due to environmental crises and faith actors are critical messengers of peace within this space. Research has shown that religion influences many environmentally relevant behaviors, including whether individuals see climate change as human-caused, or related to forces beyond human control, consumption patterns, and their willingness to take actions to abate environmental degradation.<sup>4</sup> The contribution by faith leaders and faith actors are instrumental towards socially transitioning to climate neutrality and developing innovative solutions to combat the climate crisis.

In line with the priority theme of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on advancing, "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and

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<sup>2</sup> UNEP. "Faith for Earth: A Call to Action." 2020.

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/33991/FECA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>3</sup> "Pope to politicians: Be courageous, show vision on climate." National Catholic Reporter. November 15, 2021.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/politics/pope-politicians-be-courageous-show-vision-climate>.

<sup>4</sup> Skirbeck, Vegard, Alexander De Sherbinin, and Susana Adamo. "How Religion Influences Our Relationship with the Environment." *Columbia Climate School*. October 15, 2020.

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/10/15/religion-influences-relationship-environment/>.

programmes,” the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Feminist Action for Climate Change, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, Christian Council of Mozambique, the International Network for Engaged Buddhists, Lutheran World Federation, Resilience Research Training and Consulting, and World Vision International will highlight examples of faith actors leading the way in fighting the climate crisis and its specific impacts on women and girls and how this contributes to sustainable peace.

### **Format**

This will be an online NGO-CSW parallel panel event that will present best practices and lessons learned through case study examples of how faith actors are combating climate emergencies that are particularly impacting women and girls and how in doing so, is also contributing to broader peace efforts.

There will be brief welcoming remarks and introductions and then the speakers are charged with presenting their specific case study examples. There will be time for questions and answers at the end of the session.

Types of questions raised:

- What climate issue is creating environmental stress or potential conflict in your community
- How does this issue impact women and girls?
- How are women and girls contributing to mitigating the impact of the climate issue?
- How either as a faith actor or your work in collaboration with other faith leaders, actors or institutions worked toward addressing this issue?
- What challenges do you face in engaging both women and girls and faith leaders and networks in your work?
- How can faith actors further help in advancing the climate justice movement in their communities in collaboration with others, with a special emphasis on addressing the impacts on women and girls?