

CONCEPT NOTE



THE 66TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN:

Side Event:

*Empowering Women against Increasing Climate
Risks: Lessons Learned from WFP*

March 24th, 2022

15:00-16:30 CET/ 10:00-11:30 EST



Registration [Link](#)

Background

The pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5) is central to fulfilling WFP's mandate of saving lives and changing lives while ending global hunger, while showcasing the transformative power of strategic partnerships (SDG 17) that bring together WFP's food assistance programmes and the expertise of other organizations to enhance gender equality results.

The set priority theme for CSW66 in 2022 **"Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes"** has direct links / alignment with WFP's programmes and policies, as well as the upcoming updated gender policy 2022. Mirroring WFP's new [strategic plan 2022-2025](#), the gender policy 2022 commits to "aligning approaches with WFP's other cross-cutting themes" and ensures "gender equality impacts and opportunities are integrated into WFP's programming on climate change, economic shocks and peace."

Building on existing achievement and progress in advancing gender equality the empowerment of all women and girls and seizing the momentum of a fresh iteration of the gender policy, a side event at CSW66 provides the strategic opportunity to highlight the link between gender equality and food security, and showcase concrete examples of partnerships in promoting diversity, inclusion and gender equality in the field.

2022 Theme: Women & the Climate Crisis

Due to their disadvantaged status in many societies around the world, women and girls are at a higher risk than men and boys of experiencing devastating effects of the climate crisis. Studies have consistently shown that extreme weather events and climate change disproportionately impact women and girls because they tend to be poorer than their male

counterparts and more dependent on threatened natural resources.¹ Women also have less access to and control over resources such as land, credit, training, agricultural inputs and extension services, as well as to decision-making processes within communities, enterprises and beyond, than men, which undermines their ability to adequately participate in mitigation and adaptation to climate change. As a result, women and girls face greater risks of becoming displaced by climate shocks and stressors - having to abandon their homes, whether temporarily or permanently - in search for a more liveable environment that is less affected by increasing temperatures and extreme weather events.

Globally, 80 percent of persons displaced due to climate-related disasters are women.² When households and infrastructure are damaged or destroyed by extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storms, women and girls are forced to abandon their homes and communities and flee to temporary displacement camps, where they are often exposed to gender-based violence (GBV). Further, for displaced women and girls in humanitarian settings, the lack of access to health services is one of the leading causes of death.³

In addition to essential services for women and girls, such as their access to education, social welfare and protection against GBV is also disrupted by climate-related events. A recent report by the Malala Fund estimated that in 2021 alone, the impacts of climate change affected the level of education of 4 million girls in low- and middle-income countries. This figure could increase to 12.5 million by 2025 if the underlying drivers are not addressed.⁴ Particularly in rural communities where climate shocks and stressors affect agricultural yields and subsequently incomes and livelihoods, families are faced with hard choices about how to use limited resources. Often this results in girls being pulled out of school and an increase in the risk of child labour and child marriage as coping mechanisms. The climate crisis acts as a risk multiplier and can increase the threats of gender-based violence, create greater economic difficulties for women and girls, erode progress in girls' education and reinforce gender inequalities.

Side Event: Lessons Learned from WFP

Empowering women to ensure their full participation in climate change adaptation decisions and frameworks is crucial for achieving a more sustainable world. Women have been severely underrepresented in important decision-making processes regarding solutions for climate action. At the 2019 UN Climate Change Conference (COP25), approximately 80% of the heads of delegations were men.⁵ The lack of fair representation of women in intergovernmental processes on climate change leads to solutions that do not accurately respond to the different needs of the diverse groups of people affected by the climate crisis. CSW66 is an opportunity to demonstrate the potential and achievements of women in climate action and resilience building, while at the same time making a call to action for the increased participation of women in leadership roles.

WFP prioritizes both cross-cutting themes of gender and climate resilience in its path to achieving zero hunger. This side event will explore how WFP programming for climate action—from eastern and southern Africa to Latin America and the Caribbean—is empowering women against climate shocks and stressors and contributing to the advancement of zero hunger and gender equality. The event will feature panellists from Guatemala, Kenya, Lesotho, and regional representatives from WFP’s Southern Africa region and Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Objectives

- Enhance visibility of WFP’s progressive work to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of climate change resilience and adaptation work.
- Demonstrate the value-added nature of women’s contributions to climate risk management through WFP’s work
- Emphasize the importance of women’s leadership and decision-making climate resilience and adaptation fora.
- Highlight WFP’s coordinated approach to programme design and implementation in these two important cross-cutting sectors: gender equality and women’s empowerment and environmental sustainability.