

Mainstreaming VAWG Prevention into the Climate Sector

Integrating violence against women and girls (VAWG) prevention into climate and environmental action strengthens outcomes by enabling women's participation and building community resilience. Climate change and environmental degradation increase VAWG risks, while VAWG limits women's engagement, reducing both access to sustainable practices and the effectiveness of programmes.



For every \$1 invested in women's participation in disaster risk management and climate action, there is a **corresponding benefit of \$4.40**.¹

Why mainstream VAWG prevention?

- **Delivers more effective programmes and emergency responses:** Enabling women's participation unlocks access to vital local and Indigenous knowledge systems, improving the design, uptake and impact of climate and environmental initiatives.
- **Protects climate investments and strengthens investment returns:** Preventing VAWG reduces unforeseen costs and supports community buy-in, lowering financial risk. A wetland restoration project in Uganda tried to stop wetland farming through alternative livelihoods. These livelihoods increased women's exposure to violence, driving them back to wetland farming, where they felt safer.² Addressing GBV would have increased uptake of alternatives.
- **Builds and sustains community resilience:** Addressing VAWG as a structural barrier improves women's safety, agency and access to resources, enabling households and communities to better anticipate, adapt to and recover from climate shocks.
- **Supports a just transition:** Addressing drivers of VAWG allows women to safely access green jobs, resources and decision-making spaces, ensuring efforts towards a low-carbon economy benefit from women's expertise and that the benefits of the transition are shared equitably.
- **Delivers on international commitments:** Prevention supports coherent delivery across climate and gender equality commitments, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

¹ Australia Pacific Climate Partnership (2024) [The economics of acting early: Evidence of climate and disaster actions in the Pacific](#). Australian Aid.

² Clugston, N., Rhodes, F., Nneli, O., Fraser, E. (2024) [Gender Based Violence: Addressing the overlooked barrier to effective climate action](#). What Works to Prevent VAWG: London UK.

Key actions to mainstream effectively

- 1. Leverage climate finance to embed VAWG prevention across investments.** Coordinate donors to mainstream VAWG across climate and environment portfolios, research and relevant sectors, scaling effective approaches through multi-year, adaptive funding. Provide long-term, flexible core funding to local climate groups and women's rights organisations (WROs) working at this intersection, supporting inclusive, intersectional approaches.
- 2. Integrate VAWG prevention into national climate policy.** Conduct meaningful consultations with diverse civil society organisations and VAWG specialists to integrate prevention across National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
 - **Design programmes with communities to address the root causes of VAWG.** Ensure programmes include VAWG prevention throughout, including allocating funding for long-term, multi-component VAWG prevention within programme design and implementation, including robust data collection, analysis and risk mitigation. A wetlands restoration programme in Uganda worked with a local WRO, CEDOVIP, to design and implement a multi-year VAWG prevention programme to improve women's uptake of sustainable livelihoods. Funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, the programme introduced a prevention curriculum, working with local community members and leaders to promote shared decision-making, social norms change and sustainable farming practices.
- 3. Support women's leadership and participation in climate and environmental action.** In Cambodia and Lao PDR, 42% of women environmental and human rights defenders (WEHRDs) surveyed identified safety concerns as the primary barrier to their participation, while 73% witnessed or experienced VAWG in their natural resource management work.³ Supporting activist networks, leveraging diplomatic influence and funding protection measures can foster an enabling environment for WEHRDs operating in high-risk contexts.
- 4. Champion VAWG prevention in global climate and environmental policy spaces, including UNFCCC.** Ensure that language on addressing VAWG is consistently integrated into negotiations on finance, adaptation and the just transition, aligning this with existing commitments that recognise the GBV-climate intersection. Strengthening the implementation of existing gender-responsive climate and disaster frameworks, including the Lima Work Programme, Gender Action Plans and Sendai Framework, also ensures climate, environment and gender equality commitments are translated into effective action.

Further resources

- Clugston, N., Rhodes, F., Nneli, O., Fraser, E. (2024) [Gender Based Violence: Addressing the overlooked barrier to effective climate action](#). What Works to Prevent VAWG: London UK.
- IASC (2015) [IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action](#)
- IUCN and UN Women (2022) [Addressing violence against women and girls in the context of climate crisis and environmental degradation](#)
- WHO (2019) [RESPECT women – Preventing violence against women](#)

³ IUCN (2023) [COP28: Funding for tackling gender-based violence amid climate change surpasses \\$14 million following pledge by Norwegian government](#). IUCN.