

CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN RIGHTS & CEDAW

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State Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. CEDAW, Article 3.

We are determined to ensure the full enjoyment by women and girls of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and take effective action against violations. 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration No.23

Climate change, however, is set to undermine basic human rights on a massive scale, in direct violation of human rights law based on the UDHR. It is a direct threat to the implementation of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

Right to life – survival, security & health

- Inferior energy sources and contaminated water sources lead to health risks.
- CC increases vector & water borne diseases, heat related mortality & illness.
- Older women tend to be more vulnerable to the effects of heat than older men. Women aged 75+, living on their own or in a care home, are at particular high risk of being affected during a heat wave.
- During natural disasters, often more women die than men because they are not warned, cannot swim or cannot leave the house alone.

UDHR 3; CEDAW 12,14-2b; BPfA 1,C.2

Right to participation— decision-making opportunities and information

- Increased responsibilities due to CC further limit women's participation in planning decision-making about CC adaptation activities.
- Women's lack of access to local communication networks denies their right to information regarding forecasted natural disasters, other hazards from CC, related relief services, and financial, technological, social resources essential to disaster preparedness & rehabilitation, mitigation & adaptation.

UDHR 21, 27; CEDAW 7, 8, 14-2 a, f, 15 BPfA G.1, K.1.

Right to sources of livelihood—food, water, energy, shelter, economic security

- CC increases the difficulty of accessing food, water, & sources of energy, typically the responsibility of women, & increases their cost. In Africa shrinking arable land, shorter growing seasons and lower crop yields will exacerbate malnutrition.
- CC brings a decline in quantity and quality of drinking water. Reduced water flow from mountain glaciers could affect up to one billion people in Asia by the 2050's
- Sea level rise is expected to exacerbate inundation and erosion and so to threaten settlements and facilities that support the livelihoods of island communities.
- In many societies, socio-cultural norms and increased care giving responsibilities due to CC prevent women from migrating to look for shelter and work when a disaster hits.

UDHR 25 CEDAW 13, 14-2g,h; BPfA F.1

Right to capacity development—education and income generation opportunities

- Increased responsibilities resulting from CC deprive women of opportunities to train for alternative sources of income generation.
- During or after disasters, such as long periods of drought, more girls drop out of school to reduce household expenses by saving on school fees, or to assist in the household with tasks such as fetching water, or because of early marriage.
- Reduction in agro-biodiversity is a threat to the livelihood of women, who are over represented in agricultural and informal sectors, which are more vulnerable to disasters.

UDHR 23, 26; CEDAW 10, 11, 14 1, 2 d, e; BPfA A.2, B.1, L.4

Information Sources

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