



for **FEMINIST POLICIES CLIMATE JUSTICE**

highlighting key
linkages between

**GENDER AND
CLIMATE**



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Each chapter is followed by a list of the organisations that have contributed to the particular chapter and its recommendations.

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INTRODUCTION

The climate crisis has already impacted countless of lives around the world. Climate change threatens ecosystems, water supply, food safety and people's health. It exacerbates and amplifies extreme weather, such as flooding and extreme droughts, which not only causes instant suffering, but increases poverty, disease, malnutrition and starvation. The effects of climate change also contribute to an increase in conflicts over natural resources, as well as migration flows and forced displacement. It is people living in poverty and conflict that are most affected by the effects of climate change. Among them, women, girls, older people, and marginalised groups, are particularly exposed. At the same time, they are the ones that have contributed the very least to the climate crisis and environmental degradation. Moreover, their perspectives, voices and knowledge often have been omitted or disregarded in the political debate on climate change.¹

The poorest half of the global population is responsible for only around a tenth of global emissions, while 50 percent of emissions can be attributed to the richest 10 percent of people around the world.² Meanwhile around a hundred large companies, including the world's leading oil, gas and coal companies, account for about 70 percent of global emissions.³ Historical greenhouse gas emissions data shows that much of the burden of climate change lies with rich countries, who built their economies burning fossil fuels. About half of Sweden's consumption-based emissions is taking place in other parts of the world.⁴

The Paris Agreement, which entered into force in 2016 and was signed by 194 countries, represents a landmark for the global climate efforts, since all nations agreed to undertake ambitious efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change. Through the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities the Paris Agreement also places greater responsibility on high-income countries.⁵ Together with the 2030 Agenda with its Global Goals for Sustainable Development, it provides us with a global platform to responding to climate change and to include gender equality and gender analysis in all political decisions driving sustainable development.

However, the clock is ticking. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emphasises the importance of radically reducing emissions within the next ten years in order



to avoid devastating consequences. Meanwhile, countries' commitments to the overarching goals of the Paris Agreement have so far been rather underwhelming. The period leading up to the UN Climate Change Conference in 2021 in Glasgow (COP26) will be crucial as all parties will submit a review of their commitments that underpin the agreement. Although the conference has been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, this must not result in a delay of measures that are urgently needed. All countries are still due to submit tougher climate plans, also known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), by 2020.

At the time of writing this report, the global community is grappling with the coronavirus pandemic, which is wreaking havoc on the lives of millions of people around the world, both with regard to health and the economy. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed entrenched inequalities and stark disparities in power, clearly illustrating how a global crisis like this impacts people differently depending on where they live, their gender, their age and their socioeconomic status. The consequences of this crisis for gender equality are devastating.⁶ Increasing cases of gender-based violence, and a reversal of advances in sexual and reproductive health and rights, are just two examples. While the negative effects of this pandemic are daunting, we can make an active choice to use the global efforts to recover from it as an opportunity to shape a society and a global economy that is truly sustainable, just and gender equal. For this to happen, recovery plans and investments must put people and planet first and fully embrace the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

Not enough attention has been given to the gendered dimensions and effects of the climate crisis. With this report, we seek to apply a feminist approach to the climate debate, and shed light on key links between gender and climate change. From a gender perspective, we will analyse challenges and issues that are hindering global efforts to reach climate justice⁷ to safeguard human rights for all. We will also examine to what extent existing policy frameworks take the gender and climate nexus into consideration, and give recommendations to Swedish policymakers to strengthen feminist policies for climate justice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to gender norms and uneven power dynamics cemented in social, economic and political structures, gender inequality persists in all spheres of public and private life. For these reasons, the climate crisis affects women and girls in unique and disproportionate ways. Furthermore, due to intersecting power relations, including sexual orientation and gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, age, disability, etc., climate change affects women and girls around the world differently. The issues listed below that will be dealt with in this report illustrate different ways in which gender and climate are intertwined, and how women and girls are affected by climate change. Handling these issues effectively will be key if we are to make real progress in responding to the climate crisis and achieve climate justice:

- Nationalists, anti-feminists, and climate change deniers all have a common interest in preserving existing power relations, and social, economic, and political structures. These forces, often financially and politically powerful, are posing serious threats to the change needed for an equal and sustainable future. Women and girls that are at the forefront of defending environmental and human rights often face threats and various forms of violence precisely because they are challenging these power structures. More boys and men need to engage and become part of the solution together with women, girls and persons of all identities.
- Unsustainable production and consumption patterns are key contributors to the climate crisis. Moving away from GDP as the main indicator for progress to a stronger focus on the well-being of the planet and people is one part of the solution. A just transition to reduced emissions and energy use is another. However, gender discrimination in the labour market, as well as within social safety systems, needs to be addressed for women and girls to fully participate in this transition.
- Climate change threatens ecosystems, water supply, food safety, and people's health. Its effects may also lead to conflicts, increased migration streams, and human rights infringements. Women and girls often bear the burden of providing food and water for their families and are in this regard most affected by climate change. When access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is limited, it also has enormous effects on women's and girls' lives. Hence, the effects of climate change must be regarded as a serious threat to human security.

Despite the links between gender and climate, mitigation and adaptation policies often fail to involve and consider women and girls and do not take gender aspects sufficiently into account. Our analysis shows that these linkages could also be strengthened in key Swedish policy frameworks. As such, Swedish policy makers should commit to applying a strong gender perspective when developing and reviewing climate policies and positions, in particular the next four-year action plan to the climate policy framework. Sweden should also prioritise strengthening the gender perspective in the revision of the EU's joint commitments to the Paris Agreement leading up to COP26. Moreover, it should push for concrete measures to involve women and girls, as well as integrate a gender perspective into all EU's climate efforts. In turn, Swedish feminist foreign policy must, to a much greater extent, address the nexus between climate and gender. Future action plans should promote climate justice and ensure an inclusive and a just transition, as well as include concrete measures to address linkages between gender, climate, environment, shrinking space, use of natural resources, conflict, etc. In international dialogues, Sweden should be a strong voice for a holistic approach on climate efforts promoting the wellbeing of the planet and human rights for all.



A young girl with dark hair in two braids, wearing a light-colored collared shirt, stands outdoors. She is holding a white sign with handwritten text. The image has a semi-transparent pink overlay.

PART

1

WHO TAKES THE FIGHT FOR THE CLIMATE?

STOP climate change
to secure future
of children

Nationalism and anti-feminism is on the rise and climate scepticism is still persistent despite increased global awareness about climate change in the last few years. The common ground of these movements is the will to maintain the status quo of existing economic and social structures and norms that are felt to be under threat. This push back on progress is a serious barrier for global climate efforts that require structural changes. Another important and interlinked obstacle to reaching climate justice are the discriminatory and patriarchal structures that exclude women and girls from climate change decision-making, and adaptation and mitigation efforts. Swedish policymakers, as well as private and civil society actors, all need to confront and challenge the actors, structures and destructive norms that are holding back change. Efforts at all levels are needed to be made so that women and girls have opportunities and resources to enhance their vital role in contributing to solutions of climate change and gender equality. More boys and men also need to become part of the solutions.

CHAPTER 1:

THE VOICES IN THE DEBATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In the last couple of years, we have seen an encouraging upsurge of climate activism around the world calling for the climate crisis to be taken seriously, and for climate justice. However, this push is challenged by the far-right nationalist, anti-feminist, and climate denial movements taking up public and political space. They are not only threatening an inclusive and equal society where women's and girls' rights are secured, but also hinder the structural changes required to tackle the climate crisis. Other voices in the climate debate – those who defend human rights, justice and gender equality – need to be given space and must be supported by policies.

CHAPTER 2:

WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE FRONTLINE – CLIMATE ACTIVISTS IN THE SHRINKING SPACE

Scarcity of natural resources as an effect of the climate crisis together with a continued increase in demand for those very same resources including oil, minerals, arable land and timber for production, have forced people, including women and girls, to stand up and defend their land and their rights. In doing so, they often face fierce opposition and violence. At the same time, young people across the globe, and girls in particular, are taking to the streets to defend environmental human rights. When challenging inequalities and injustice, women and girl environmental human rights defenders are exposed to gender-specific violence and threats. The linkages between the shrinking civic space, gender equality and the environment and climate justice need to be further strengthened and adhered to in Swedish foreign policy frameworks.

CHAPTER 1:

THE VOICES IN THE DEBATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In the subsequent chapters, we will explore key issues relating to the climate crisis and its links to gender equality. This first chapter will cover trends currently dominating the climate change debate, which we believe are hindering the structural changes needed to tackle the climate crisis and bring about climate justice. These dominant trends include the voices that deny the very existence of climate change and those who argue that any evidence of it found is not the result of human action; those that see population growth as the main driver of the climate crisis; and those that point towards technology development as the main (and only) mitigation and remedy needed to counter the climate crisis. Finally, we will present alternative strategies for countering climate change, which we believe need to be considered to a much greater extent by decision-makers. These take human rights, justice and gender equality into consideration in the understanding of, and solutions to, the climate crisis.

The voices of climate change deniers

The anti-climate voices and movements today have a common ideological home for their actions and rhetoric. It is important to identify them and to analyse their arguments, in order to be able to dismantle them. What unifies them is a strong belief in the importance of upholding patriarchal power structures. Sweden's Chalmers University of Technology recently launched the world's first academic research centre to study climate denialism. For several years, these researchers have been examining links between climate change deniers and anti-feminist far-right groups. The common theme in the climate sceptic group is striking: "for climate sceptics ... it was not the environment that was threatened, it was a certain kind of modern industrial society built and dominated by their form of masculinity."⁸

As such, the common ground of these movements is a sense that their group identity is under threat from several directions, including increased gender equality, the #MeToo movement, and climate activists calling for behavioural and structural changes. Nationalism, anti-feminism and climate change denialism are, in other words, overlapping and feed off one another.⁹ Populist parties deny climate change, not necessarily because they do not believe in it – but to attract more people from their voter group.¹⁰

Such perspectives on climate change are part of a traditional patriarchal order where (male) human beings are seen as superior to nature and separated from it, and different experiences, interests, needs and capabilities are pitted against one another.¹¹ This promotes conceptions of challenges and solutions in a world based on division and competition rather than on holism, cooperation and collaboration. This belief system often encourages the commodification and use of people and nature as resources for economic growth without

much regard for human rights, the environment and the climate. Powerful political and economic actors back this cause and they use enormous resources to influence the global debate. Major players in the oil industry have since the Paris Agreement spent more than \$1bn on lobbying and branding activities. These have been criticised for being intentionally misleading and disruptive of political actions aiming to move away from the use of fossil fuels¹².

Other examples include the Trump administration in the US, which has backed away from policies from the Obama era that aimed to combat climate change, limit pollution and protect the environment. The Brazilian administration of President Jair Bolsonaro has rolled back protection for the Amazon rainforest, allowing large-scale deforestation, which has a particularly devastating impact on many indigenous groups living there. Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia denied for a long time that climate change was a contributing factor to the wildfires ravaging the continent during the summer of 2019 and 2020. These leaders have all repeatedly argued that climate change is not the result of carbon emissions and their rhetoric is strikingly similar. They have all lashed out against actors demanding action to tackle climate change, often with strong populist and nationalist undertones that fuel polarisation of society.

The voices of population growth alarmists

Central to a feminist agenda, and to the Swedish feminist foreign policy, is all people's right to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The debate around linkages between SRHR and climate change is influenced by a group we refer to as "population growth alarmists", who bear similarities to the groups mentioned above, in that they distance themselves from a rights-based and holistic approach to gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls, by suggesting that family planning is a key mitigation strategy for climate change. At an aggregated global level, fewer people does indeed mean fewer consumers and less emissions. However, the connection is much more complex than the population growth alarmists make it out to be, and the solution can never be to control the bodies of women and girls.

In 1994, the international conference on population and development marked a shift in global thinking on population and development away from "population control" towards an understanding of girls' and women's bodies, fertility and reproductive systems as a health and human rights issue.¹³ More than 25 years later, the population growth alarmists have brought the ideas about controlling women's and girls' fertility for higher purposes back to the agenda.¹⁴ These actors are pointing to global population growth and demographic scenarios in terms of their implications on emissions of greenhouse gases, where family planning is seen as a key mitigation strategy for climate change. In contrast to the climate

change denial movement, the population growth alarmists are often (biological) scientists. For instance, in November 2019, more than 11,000 scientists signed an article where family planning is presented as a way to lessen the impacts of population growth on greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss.¹⁵

To suggest that the solution is about controlling girls' and women's fertility, for example by investing in "family planning programmes", is not in line with a rights-based approach to development. A rights-based approach recognises that people have the right to make their own decisions about their bodies, contraception and childbearing. Such a stance is in stark contrast to seeing girls' and women's choices on childbearing as a tool to control populations and ultimately combat climate change. Historic examples of human rights violations in the name of population control are devastating. China's one-child policy is just one example thereof.

Further, some of the population growth alarmists focus on the urgent need to control the population in "poor" countries with high birth rates. But the very rationale of family planning in low income, high fertility countries leading to less greenhouse gas emission is highly questionable from a scientific point of view. Indeed, it is the richest half of the world's countries that emit 86 percent of global CO₂ emissions.¹⁶ The bottom half (low and lower-middle income countries, many of which have high fertility levels) only contribute to 14 percent of global CO₂ emissions.¹⁷ As a short and medium-term strategy, the focus on fertility levels in high-fertility countries to solve the acute climate crisis is extremely questionable and can downplay the will for making important structural changes in high-income countries.¹⁸

The voices of eco-modernists

Another perspective in the global climate discussion, the "eco-modern view", recognises that there are problems with the environment and the climate, but the measures proposed by this group are all based on existing social and economic structures. Proponents of this view suggest solutions featuring new and emerging technology as the main (and only) strategy needed, and include switching to electric cars or using renewable energy.¹⁹ In short, they strive to make changes within the limits of "business-as-usual". However, the same patriarchal divisions of power and hierarchies remain.

The eco-modern view pushes for mitigation on individual, state and global levels, but argues that this should be done in a "reasonable" timeframe so as not to affect economic growth, for instance. In this group, there is a tendency to look upon young people's climate activism as naive, while also pushing as many decisions and structural changes as possible to the next generation.

Climate change responses based on human rights, justice and equality – the ecological view

Human rights, equality and justice should be considered to a much larger extent in the environmental and climate change response. In a recent article on why the climate justice movement needs feminism published in September 2019, a young climate activist stated the following: “Feminism is an essential part of climate justice because it illuminates how our extractive, dominating relationship with nature stems from patriarchy.”²⁰ Real climate justice demands a radical transformation of how we, as human beings, treat each other and the non-human world. On the one hand this means recognising and dismantling the way current economic and social systems are shaped by patriarchy, while on the other hand de-looping the narrative and the structures for a just and sustainable system.

This brings us to yet another perspective on climate change. In the “ecological view”, humans and the rest of nature are understood to be interdependent and part of the same ecosystem, each with an intrinsic value.²¹ According to this approach, it is logical to work together for equality and sustainable development and to use technology to promote the transformation of the system, not to preserve it. As we will explore in further detail in Chapter 3, some political leaders are seemingly moving in this direction.

In order to fully address climate change denial, sexism, anti-gender movements, nationalism and population growth alarmism – a human-rights based, transformative and feminist perspective is needed.²² The Swedish Policy for Global Development (the Policy Coherence for development from 2003), the climate policy framework and the feminist foreign policy are key policy domains to develop a holistic view, bring a climate perspective into Sweden’s external policies, and to integrate a feminist perspective into policies and actions on climate change. However, Sweden’s action plans for feminist foreign policy up until 2018 have essentially neglected climate issues altogether. The action plan for objectives and actions for 2019 contained just a single reference to the climate. In the context of women’s and girls’ political participation and influence, it highlighted the importance of strengthening gender perspectives in global climate funds and adaptation measures supporting agricultural programmes. We are pleased to see that the most recent action plan for 2020 pays attention to the rights of women and girls in all climate-related work, the protection of female environmental activists, and the strengthening of support to promote gender equality. Examples thereof include the preservation of biological diversity, renewable energy and the sustainable use of natural resources.²³ Thus, some progress has been made in the last couple of years when it comes to addressing linkages between gender and climate in the feminist foreign policy. This work needs to be further developed as the gender and climate nexus should be an integral part of climate and foreign policies. Following this, Sweden has an important role to play in continuing to ensure a focus on gender equality in international climate debates, such as the COP, and in global climate and foreign policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Swedish government should apply a gender perspective to key Swedish climate policy positions and advocate for a gender perspective to be integrated into global climate processes, not least in the revision of the EU's commitments to the Paris Agreement leading up to COP26.
- The Swedish government must make sure that its feminist foreign policy includes a stronger focus on the climate crisis. This should be achieved by including a separate goal in its future annual action plans, starting in 2021. Such a goal should address the climate crisis through attention to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in specific climate actions, as well as through concrete measures for the promotion of gender and climate justice.
- Sweden must ensure that there is sufficient support for organisations and networks that promote women's and girls' rights, gender equality and climate justice in the context of climate change. Sweden should also continue to play a leading role in the support of organisations and networks that transform destructive norms of masculinity, engaging more boys and men for gender equality and climate justice.
- In all dialogue on climate, Sweden should take the lead in steering the SRHR and climate change discussion in a human rights-based direction. Sweden should make clear that SRHR, including access to contraceptives and family planning, are to be promoted in their own right, and that women's and girls' bodies must never be seen as instruments to reduce emissions and combat climate change.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TEXT:

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, MÄN, Plan International Sweden, PRO Global/Pensioners without Borders, The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU)

CHAPTER 2:

WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE FRONTLINE – CLIMATE ACTIVISTS IN THE SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Women and girls at the forefront of the defence of climate and environment

Due to discrimination and patriarchal structures, women and girls²⁴ are often excluded from climate change negotiations, as well as mitigation and adaptation efforts. At the same time, they bear a great responsibility for cultivating land, collecting water and firewood, and producing food to support their families, thus making them key agents for finding ways to stop climate change. In practice, women and girls contribute to both adaptation and mitigation efforts through creative, localised solutions.²⁵ Many of them are also land and environmental human rights defenders. It is essential that women's and girls' civic space is recognized, and that they have opportunities and resources that enable them to contribute to solutions for climate change.

During 2019, it became impossible not to take notice of children, and particularly girls, taking action against climate change. While Greta Thunberg became the front figure of school strikes for the climate movement, she is only one of many girls across the globe taking the lead on actions to defend environmental human rights. Girls in the frontline offer a new type of intersectional and dynamic leadership, but also face specific risks and challenges as environmental human right defenders, due to the intersection of gender and age, as well as other power differentials, such as ethnicity. Youth-led organisations, and their initiatives for social change, have faced a shrinking civic space, exposing them to normative resistance, threats and violence. Consultations with children indicate that the most common challenge to children's safe and meaningful engagement relates to adults, and their resistance to children speaking out. Children also highlight safety, fear of repercussions and direct threats as concerns.²⁶

Threats against women and girl environmental human rights defenders

Those fighting for democracy, environmental protection and human rights face increasing risks of threats and violence.²⁷ Front Line Defenders recorded the killing of 304 human rights defenders in 2019, of whom 40 percent were working on land, environmental and indigenous peoples' rights.²⁸ Violence against women and girls who are human rights defenders follows the same upward trend. About 13 percent of the environmental and human rights defenders

who were murdered in 2019 were women.²⁹ Women and girl environmental human rights defenders challenge the status quo of injustice and existing power structures and are, as a consequence, often met with opposition and violence from both state and non-state actors. They are subject to the same risks as other human rights defenders, but are also targeted for, or exposed to, gender-specific violence and threats, in part due to the fact that their actions challenge existing gender norms.³⁰ Moreover, risks faced by women and girls may be further increased due to their ethnicity, livelihood, age and socioeconomic status.

Small-scale farmers in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South and East Asia, holding less than five hectares of agricultural land, are responsible for around half of the food produced globally.³¹ Women farmers from these regions report that they increasingly need to protect their land and the environment. Strong economic interests and a growing demand for products such as timber, palm oil and minerals require large areas of land. This expansion of areas to be used for agriculture and forestry has contributed to an increase in net greenhouse gas emissions, the loss of natural ecosystems (e.g. forests, savannahs, natural grasslands and wetlands) and declining biodiversity.³² When people living on these lands take a stand against this, they are running high risks of being harassed, threatened or attacked by companies' private security firms, state forces or contract killers. Women affected by, or involved in, these land conflicts are facing an impossible choice to either lose their livelihood and way of life, or resist, thereby often putting their lives at stake.³³

According to statistics, men appear to be the ones most exposed to physical attacks and they are overrepresented in terms of murdered environmental human rights defenders. However, such figures are uncertain as many attacks on women and girls go unreported. Front Line Defenders highlights that women are at least as likely to experience physical attacks as their male counterparts. Women also tend to be subjected to sexual harassment, threats, verbal abuse and surveillance to a greater extent.³⁴ There is no statistical data on the situation for girl human rights defenders.

As stated by the UN's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, "women defenders often face additional and different risks and obstacles that are gendered, intersectional and shaped by entrenched gender stereotypes and deeply held ideas and norms about who women are and how women should be."³⁵ Women human right defenders are also more likely to face threats and attacks in the private sphere and against their families and loved ones. Another common tactic to intimidate and silence women human rights defenders is through public shaming and attacks on their honour and reputation, attacks that are often of sexual nature, involving insinuations about their sexuality or sexual orientation. Women are often subjected to attacks and threats online, including threats of sexual violence and doxing^{36, 37} Moreover, violence against women and girl environmental human rights defenders is often carried out in a context of impunity, strengthening those who wish to silence them.³⁸

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

International policies

The Paris Agreement states that parties should respect, promote and consider their obligations on human rights when taking action to address climate change. However, no direct reference to environmental human rights defenders, nor their protection, is explicitly included in the agreement.³⁹ Similarly, the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) also lacks direct references to environmental human rights defenders, and women and girls are not specifically mentioned beyond their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.⁴⁰ Likewise, the Lima work programme on gender and the subsequent gender action plan developed to “advance women’s full, equal and meaningful participation and promote gender-responsive climate policy” in the implementation of the UNFCCC, also fail to address environmental human rights defenders.⁴¹

The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity and its Aichi targets only pay specific attention to women by recognising “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity” and by affirming “the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation”.⁴² Hence, the rights and protection of women and girl environmental human rights defenders are not recognised in neither international climate policy nor the global biodiversity framework.

The best reference and guidance within the UN framework is found in the Human Rights Council’s resolution 40/11.⁴³ This landmark resolution has multiple references to women environmental human rights defenders. It also stresses the important role of environmental human rights defenders in supporting states to fulfil their obligations under the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. The resolution recognises the responsibility of states to protect environmental human rights defenders, and further calls upon them to provide a safe and empowering environment for children’s initiatives defending human rights relating to the environment. Another momentous treaty is the Escazú Agreement negotiated under the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which includes binding provisions for the protection and promotion of people, groups and organisations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters. It aims to target inequalities and discrimination, focusing on persons and groups in vulnerable situations.⁴⁴ In addition, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and specifically the General Recommendation No. 37 from 2018 on gender-related dimensions of climate change, highlight the need for states to ensure that “human rights of women and girls are respected, protected and fulfilled in accordance with international law”⁴⁵ in responding to climate change. Among environmental human rights defenders, indigenous people are particularly at risk, as they often inhabit areas of interest to the forestry, mining

and agricultural sectors. Meanwhile, indigenous people have special rights under international law according to the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. This principle is incorporated in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO 169) which has not yet been ratified by Sweden.

Swedish policies

Gender equality as well as climate change are considered top priorities in policy coherence for development, the Swedish Policy for Global Development. Nonetheless, neither the action plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda nor the Swedish Policy for Global Development acknowledge the linkages between women's central role in food production and environmental justice. The action plan also fails to recognise the important role of indigenous people in protecting the earth and counteracting climate change.⁴⁶

In the policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance from 2016, environmental human rights defenders are not referred to specifically. However, it states that a gender perspective and an environmental and climate perspective should be mainstreamed at all levels in Swedish development cooperation. It also highlights the role of human rights defenders, stressing that attention must be paid to women human rights defenders, and that promoting women and girls' rights is important in "mitigating environmental and climate related problems".⁴⁷ The policy also establishes that "Sweden will work to strengthen women's participation in decision-making processes related to the environment, climate and sustainable use of natural resources".⁴⁸

The strongest reference to women and girl environmental and human rights defenders can be found in the Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation for global gender equality and women's and girls' rights 2018-2022, where women and girls are described as central actors against climate change.⁴⁹ The strategy emphasizes the vital role of women and girls as environmental human rights defenders, as well as their work for the sustainable use of natural resources and food security. In the 2019-2022 action plan for Swedish feminist foreign policy, women environmental human rights defenders are also highlighted as a group for whom Sweden needs to strengthen security and protection.⁵⁰ The Swedish feminist handbook states that Sweden has indeed done so, but fails to say how. When reporting on feminist foreign policy and the efforts made so far in a government communication to the Swedish parliament women environmental human rights defenders were not mentioned at all.⁵¹

The strategy for Sweden's development cooperation in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law⁵² describes the trend of a shrinking democratic space, and how it restricts people's rights and freedoms. It mentions environmental degradation and exploitation of natural resources as problems that can be partially explained by the suppression of the rule of law, abuse of power, arbitrariness and corruption. Gender equality, and the empowerment and

rights of women and girls, are also clearly highlighted, and the strategy states that environmental and climate perspectives, as well as gender and conflict perspectives, should be systematically integrated into Sweden's development cooperation. However, despite providing a good foundation, no specific mention of women and girl environmental human rights defenders is included, nor does it include any deeper analysis of how these perspectives intertwine.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To protect indigenous women and girl human rights defenders and legitimise their struggle, the Swedish government should ratify the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO Convention 169).
- The Swedish government should appoint a commission of inquiry to explore a binding law regarding the responsibility of private companies in Sweden to respect human rights throughout their production and supply chains, both in Sweden and abroad.
- Sweden should engage in bilateral dialogues, build alliances with progressive states and cooperate with the UN special rapporteurs to draw attention to women and girl environmental human rights defenders and the trend of a shrinking civic space.
- Sweden should play a key role in advancing the international legal framework for the promotion and protection of women and girl environmental human rights defenders, including binding provisions to increase their legal protection, building upon existing frameworks such as the Human Rights Council's resolution 40/11, the Escazú Agreement for Latin America and the Caribbean and the process of developing a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- The Swedish government should pay more attention to linkages between gender equality, the environment and the civic space in its feminist foreign policy by including concrete measures in its future action plans. These linkages should also be addressed in Sweden's development policy and development cooperation.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TEXT:

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Sweden,
the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), Rädde Barnen, We Effect

A woman wearing a traditional conical hat and a long-sleeved shirt stands in a field. She is looking towards the left. In front of her is a large, tangled pile of branches and roots. The background shows a field and a body of water under a warm, orange sky. The entire image has a monochromatic orange tint.

PART

2

HOW TO
MINIMISE
OUR GLOBAL
EMISSIONS
THROUGH
A FEMINIST
CLIMATE
POLICY

One of the central goals of the Paris Agreement is to minimise the greenhouse gas emissions in order to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. When we go through this necessary transition into a net zero carbon society that requires us to challenge our unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, it is central to free women and girls from existing power structures. In this second part of the report, we have identified two areas that we believe are intrinsic if we are to succeed in moving away from the devastating unsustainable use of natural resources and shape a more gender-equal society, free from the harmful treatment of nature and the exploitation of human beings.

CHAPTER 3:

BEYOND GDP - A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY FOCUSING ON THE WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE AND PLANET

Economic growth measured by a country's gross domestic product (GDP) has been the uncontested main way to assess and compare countries' progress for decades. At a time when a lowering of emissions is urgently required, criticism is directed towards this strict liberal economic model in that its stringent focus on economic growth requires a constant increase in production, which is viewed by some as incompatible with the wellbeing of the planet. Concurrently, initiatives to create alternative ways of reaching and measuring sustainable and inclusive development and wellbeing for all are emerging. Sweden has developed new measures for wellbeing to complement GDP in 2017, but these have had a limited impact on policy development thus far. Swedish policy makers should take the necessary steps from a gender perspective to challenge existing power relations and the purely growth-centred economic model still influencing Swedish climate economic and foreign policies.

CHAPTER 4:

ENSURING AN INCLUSIVE JUST TRANSITION

A just transition is based on the idea that the major transformation we are undergoing to create low-emission societies should incorporate environmental and social justice. This needs to challenge existing gender inequalities in order to address discriminatory and harmful conditions in the labour market and exclusion from social protection systems. If approached from an intersectional gender perspective, the transition can be an opportunity to challenge gender norms, power dynamics and structural weaknesses, and promote an inclusive just transition. This should be a priority for Sweden's feminist foreign and climate policies.

CHAPTER 3:

BEYOND GDP - A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY FOCUSING ON THE WELLBEING OF PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

GDP – the main marker for progress

In 1934, a new index, the gross domestic product (GDP), was developed to measure the monetary value of what a country produces.⁵³ GDP was intended to communicate the total value of the annual output of goods and services produced within a nation's borders. Since its introduction, GDP has been the main index for countries to measure and compare progress. The assumption has been that an increase in economic growth based on “market expansion” and measured by GDP leads to wealthy countries with benefits for the whole population.

However, today we can see that this is a flawed assumption, as a country's GDP can appear to rise while experienced poverty can increase among the population due to the unequal distribution of wealth.⁵⁴ The quest for an ever-increasing GDP has also led governments to adopt policies that are directly detrimental to the climate and the environment.

Inequality and domination as integral parts of the economic and social system

Fundamentally, the climate crisis is social as well as economic in nature, in that it involves structures of power and inequality, reflecting notions of the domination of mankind over nature. These structures are seldom acknowledged, analysed or adequately addressed. Similarly, gender inequality is a result of social conditioning and cultural habits that foster hierarchical social relationships between people.

Unpaid labour is a good example of both economic and social inequality. Much of the unpaid care and domestic work predominately carried out by women and girls is not incorporated into the calculation of GDP or reflected in other macroeconomic indicators. As macroeconomic policies do not account for the disproportionate cost of unpaid labour to women and girls, they reinforce the undervaluation and marginalisation of their work⁵⁵, and thus actively promote the persistence of gender inequality. In many parts of the world, women are economically active primarily within the informal sector, or are encouraged to take up employment in specific sectors where wages are intentionally kept low for the country to achieve quick export-oriented growth. In emerging market economies in Asia, Europe and Latin America

for example, the low wages of women employed in labour-intensive export-oriented sectors is seen as an advantage from the perspective of competitiveness. Therefore, keeping women's wages down has been a strategy applied in certain countries to achieve quick economic gains through export-oriented growth.⁵⁶

Economic growth and the exploitation of natural resources

In the current strict neoliberal economic theory, natural resources have been assumed to be endless and the planet is presumed to have an infinite capacity to absorb all our waste and pollution. This model has allowed the market to determine prices for energy, raw materials, labour and waste disposal. Consequently, these prices do not reflect the real social or environmental cost of these goods or services.⁵⁷ The devastation on the natural world brought forth by the economic development in the past fifty years is hard to fathom. Humanity has wiped out 60percent of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles since 1970.⁵⁸ The main driver is the destruction of ecosystems for agriculture. Chemical pollution, human consumption, and an appetite for cheaper production costs and lower standards, are other factors that fundamentally put our current way of life at odds with the physical boundaries of the natural world. The transformation towards a more circular economy is necessary for reducing overconsumption of natural resources, as well as the understanding of measuring a product's life cycle.⁵⁹ In the Swedish national action plan for the 2030 Agenda, one focus area is "a socially beneficial, circular and bio-based economy".⁶⁰ Yet many argue that there is a need to have a more systemic approach since new innovation and the circular economy will only get us so far.

The strategy to decouple economic growth from the depletion of our natural resources through a circular economy and a more sustainable way of producing and recycling goods⁶¹ has shown little sign of being able to solve the climate crises alone.⁶² In fact, the global use of key materials including plastic, aluminium and cement is increasing faster than GDP. Plastic in particular has increased more than three times faster than GDP. Similarly, the extraction of mineral resources has increased markedly and at a faster rate than economic growth.⁶³ Since renewable energy sources use more metals than energy production from fossil fuels, growth in renewable technologies must also be weighed against the environmental damage it incurs.

Recently, many environmental and other organisations have begun to use the concept of "overshoot" to indicate when during the year we have used up the planet's resources. Globally, Earth Overshoot Day is in August while in Sweden it occurs during the first week in April.⁶⁴ In addition to helping us understand the scale of our overconsumption, the concept of overshoot also clearly shows that it is the wealthy countries of the world that bear most of the global responsibility for climate change and the depletion of natural resources. The rich countries must actively transition to reduce energy production and usage, as well as excessive consumption, while supporting low and middle-income countries to reach a sustainable level of wellbeing.⁶⁵

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

International policies

Due to its recognition of the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental sustainability, the 2030 Agenda can provide a strong action and accountability framework. However, a criticism of the agenda is that it does not question the primacy of economic growth and neglects to adequately incorporate the concept of wellbeing. The challenge is partly that there is no global consensus on how to define sustainable progress and partly that in some parts of the world, growth is still needed. However, this does mean that many implementing actors do not perform a systems analysis, and rather seize upon targets such as Global Goal 8.2 for higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.

There are also potentially significant conflicts between goals and their targets. This includes Global Goal 8.4 on global resource efficiency in consumption and production (“...and endeavouring to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation...”) and Global Goal 9.2 on the promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrialization (“...significantly raising industry’s share of employment and gross domestic product...”). These challenges aside, the 2030 Agenda is based on the primacy of human rights and the commitment of leaving no one behind, and should in that way be used to spur the discussion on alternative measures of progress for sustainable development.

The OECD and a few other countries are exploring various options for more meaningful measures of progress with Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy and the UK having introduced indicators to measure wellbeing or welfare, though only as a complement to GDP⁶⁶. Other countries such as New Zealand, Finland, Scotland and Iceland have gone a step further in trying to become “wellbeing economies”.⁶⁷ New Zealand is at the forefront, having replaced GDP as a main indicator of economic progress with a budget that instead measures wellbeing. All new spending must go toward five specific wellbeing goals: bolstering mental health, reducing child poverty, supporting indigenous peoples, moving to a net zero carbon economy, and flourishing in a digital age.⁶⁸ Sweden introduced welfare indicators as an appendix in its 2018 national budget to complement the GDP indicator, but these have neither been further developed nor evaluated since then. The question of deemphasizing growth and GDP in favour of other measures has despite these examples not been seriously entertained in high-level policy circles thus far.

The European Green Deal – the EU’s new roadmap for making its economy sustainable with the goal of reaching zero net emission of greenhouse gases in 2050 – is an important

step forward for the EU's climate efforts. However, although the Green Deal emphasises the need for an inclusive and just transition, and the protection of the EU's natural capital and wellbeing of its citizens, it entirely relies on the idea that growth can be decoupled from the use of resources.⁶⁹ As argued above, there is little evidence that this will be enough if we are to combat the climate crisis and reach sustainable development for all within planetary boundaries. Instead, a policy coherence on development that places global and inclusive sustainable development at the top of the agenda should be a guiding principle. This would also require further action, such as developing alternative targets and indicators for wellbeing; transforming tax systems towards taxation of pollution; and aligning national budgets and investments with climate and sustainable goals.⁷⁰

Swedish policies

Since addressing the climate crisis requires social and political solutions rather than only technical ones, the EU and Sweden must open new democratic spaces to ensure citizens have a voice in the socio-economic transition that is needed. The Swedish government's proposed action plan for the climate policy framework does acknowledge the need for engaged citizens to reach climate goals, but is criticised by the Swedish Climate Policy Council for not having a clear strategy for how to involve citizens and social actors in the transition to a fossil free future.⁷¹

Sweden must also work towards broadening the global forum for discussion to allow indigenous organisations, and particularly indigenous women, to take part and be heard. Many indigenous communities, not least their older members, have important knowledge and practices on how to make a livelihood and ensure wellbeing and quality of life while protecting the environment. Some have developed ideas of what determines a "good life" that go beyond material possessions. These experiences and alternative narratives can be used as inspiration when developing alternative ways of measuring progress.

We welcome the inclusion of climate issues for the first time in the Swedish government's 2019-2022 action plan for its feminist foreign policy. The action plan for objectives and actions for 2020 emphasises important issues like increased security for women climate activists, strengthening gender perspectives in multilateral environmental and climate funds, and ensuring women's and girls' influence in all efforts to address climate change.⁷² Nevertheless, in order to bring about lasting and sustainable change for women and girls, and for equality in the world, a feminist foreign policy must be radical, holistic and transformative in its approach. This includes critical analyses of economic policies and the underlying power structures that affect the climate and use of the planet's natural resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Swedish government should take a holistic and more transformative approach to gender equality and climate change by strengthening the economic analyses underlying its feminist foreign policy. This includes applying a critical view of economic growth as the principal way in which to improve conditions and living standards for women and men, girls and boys, and non-binary people globally. This should be reflected in future action plans for the feminist foreign policy.
- Sweden should follow the example of New Zealand and revise the domination of the concept of GDP in order to promote qualitative economic progress based on notions of wellbeing that encompass the common good, the welfare of each person, our globe and its natural resources. The welfare indicators that were developed in the 2018 budget should be evaluated and further strengthened so that they not only complement the GDP indicator. In this work, a strong intersectional analysis of power and gender will be needed.
- Within the EU, Sweden should be pushing for a political agenda centred around wellbeing and sustainable development. This entails challenging the strict economic growth narrative still dominating the European Green Deal and replacing GDP as the main marker for progress.
- Swedish policy makers must develop a clear strategy on how to open new democratic spaces for the engagement and actions of citizens from all groups in society, including women and girl environmental human rights defenders, for their meaningful participation in decisions on how to tackle the climate crisis, and how to measure wellbeing and sustainability.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TEXT:

IM Swedish Development Partner, PRO Global/Pensioners without Borders

CHAPTER 4:

ENSURING AN INCLUSIVE JUST TRANSITION

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

A gendered just transition – but what does it mean?

To achieve the 2030 Agenda, it is pivotal that a transition to a net zero carbon society brings policies that also promote social justice and gender equality. Only a transition that tackles systems of exclusion and discrimination can be a just transition. However, there are many barriers left to break.

One of the most pressing social and economic challenges facing the global community today is closing the gender gap in the labour market. The current share of the global labour force participation rate for men is 75 percent – compared to 48.5 percent for women.⁷³ Women are likely to be overrepresented in low-wage, poor-quality jobs. In developing economies, where informal employment is widespread, the share of women working informally, e.g. as domestic workers and home-based workers, is larger than the share of men. Even where women find themselves in a decent work situation, they continue to be paid less than men for work of equal value. It is estimated that women globally earn on average 20 percent less than men, with many retiring into poverty.⁷⁴

Research points out that environmental and climate-related problems and hazards often disproportionately impact the health and economic opportunities of workers, people with low incomes, women, children, youth, indigenous people and other marginalised groups. The intersection of gender and age often means that girls and women of all ages will feel the greatest impact of climate change as they do not have equal access to things like education, financial resources, and natural resources (e.g. land, water, and food) to adapt to or cope with the consequences. Some of the most common coping mechanisms for households in low and middle-income countries to deal with the negative effects of climate-induced disasters are to take girls out of school and/or to marry them off.⁷⁵ Already here girls are falling behind in the transition to a green economy. As such, a just transition should recognise and support girls moving from childhood to adulthood. Inclusive education and training therefore needs to be promoted, especially during and after disasters.

The rationale for a just transition comes from evidence showing that the transformation towards a cleaner and sustainable economy will require some sectors, such as energy extraction and production, manufacturing, agriculture and forestry, to undergo dramatic restructuring. Significant periods of economic restructuring in the past have often taken place in

a chaotic fashion, leaving ordinary workers, their families and communities to suffer from unemployment, poverty and exclusion. Although urgently needed, a dramatic restructuring – without social considerations that challenge gender norms and power dynamics – will affect people in different ways. It is likely that women and adolescent girls, already being subjected to a more precarious situation in the labour market and more disadvantaged in social protection systems, will suffer an even more severe impact.

Key areas for action

The challenges may seem daunting. Even so, climate change policies are also an opportunity to advance gender equality. Seizing this opportunity requires a detailed and gender-sensitive assessment of the climate impacts of every country, identifying who is critically affected by the impacts, and developing strategies for how countries can ensure sustainable development. Supporting women and adolescent girls to develop and manage green and renewable energy and technologies, and have ownership over land and agricultural practices, can strengthen national mitigation and adaptation plans, provide new employment opportunities, and promote women's and girls' empowerment. Three target areas, within the framework of an inclusive just transition, can be identified:

■ Gender norms

Perceptions of gender roles, biased views of employers, for example in recruitment, the lack of access to career information, relevant networks, and a lack of role models are among the identified barriers for women to enter male-dominated sectors. The information available indicates that men outnumber women in conventional energy industries, especially with respect to technical, policy-making and managerial positions.⁷⁶ There is evidence that the growing renewable energy sector is highly gendered.⁷⁷ Hence, there is a need to deconstruct discriminatory gender and social norms that hinder women and girls in navigating the transition to a green economy and, thereby, open pathways to new jobs in new sectors. Collective bargaining is an important mechanism for implementing gender equality across sectors and in workplaces, for example in addressing the gender pay gap and facilitating the participation of women.⁷⁸

■ Investments, labour market policies and access to energy

Sound investments in low-emission and job-rich sectors and technologies – respecting human and labour rights, and decent work principles – can advance gender equality. Estimations point out that the number of new jobs in the renewable energy sector will almost triple by 2050. However, it will require strong public policy to support women of all ages, not least through training and education, to obtain a growing share of employment in the sector.⁷⁹ Other ways forward are to deploy and encourage Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs)⁸⁰ that from an intersectional approach seek to increase employability of groups in situation of vulnerability, as well as to adopt gender budgeting strategies incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process.

By shifting to green solutions that are accessible, even in rural areas in low and middle-income countries, energy poverty⁸¹ and the vulnerability of girls and women can be reduced. For example, more time spent finding energy sources such as wood, dung and crop waste means less time available for schoolwork and paid work, and also increases the risk of girls and women being exposed to violence and sexual violence. Further, a shift to green solutions decreases health risks, such as indoor pollution from cooking stoves. Finally, by ending energy poverty, the work-life balance for women and young girls, and the quality of and access to educational services and health services, including sexual and reproductive health, could improve.⁸²

■ Skills

Making our society environmentally sustainable will require new skills to carry out new tasks. Consequently, there are a few areas of development that need to be addressed, including identifying skills shortages that can hamper the transition and mapping out skills needed in coordination with environmental policies. Relevant training must also be introduced. One way forward is to use available TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training.⁸³ By paying extra attention to women’s participation in these training programmes that provide knowledge and skills for employment, a better gender balance in male-dominated sectors can be created.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

International policies

A just transition is today a mainstream policy tool, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) now has specific guidelines on it.⁸⁴ The imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs is also pointed out in the Paris Agreement.

The Silesia Declaration, initiated at COP24 in 2018 and signed by the Swedish government, reaffirms that serious attention must be given to the social dimension of a transition to a low greenhouse gas emission society, but pays less attention to gender aspects.⁸⁵ The UN Climate Action for Jobs Initiative is also a relevant starting point that the Swedish government has committed to. The initiative calls on countries to formulate national plans for a just transition, while creating decent work and green jobs.

At the EU level, the European Green Deal sets out how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. It is indeed an important policy framework, not least because social dimensions of the transition to an environmentally sustainable society are included and the importance of a just transition is discussed. However, the Green Deal is alarmingly gender-blind, and there is an urgent need to ensure the consideration of gender in relation to its policies and measures.

Swedish policies

Sweden has demonstrated leadership with regards to social dialogue, as for example through the Global Deal initiative. Trade unions are important stakeholders, and dialogue between trade unions and governments is crucial for achieving a just transition. Swedish policy-makers have a tradition of constructive dialogue between trade unions and decision-makers, and can play a role in promoting and supporting such dialogue in settings where it is lacking. Scrutiny of civil society organisations can also be useful in tracking whether policies are addressing persistent gender inequalities. Civil society can also play a role in raising awareness of gender and just transition.

The Swedish feminist foreign policy and the Swedish climate policy framework⁸⁶ are important components for promoting a just transition. Climate change and the implications of changing how we produce, consume and live require us to work with these policy areas in a coordinated manner. Greater cohesion and coordination, in line with policy coherence for sustainable development, is needed. The government's 2019-2022 action plan⁸⁷ for the climate policy framework gives reference to the importance of gender equality. That said, it lacks a strong gender analysis when addressing transition measures. The action plan mentions just transition when addressing the European Regional Development Fund, but there is still room for improvement with regards to how to work for an inclusive just transition in Sweden and abroad.⁸⁸ Particular attention must be paid to girls' education, and to inclusive, quality, and gender transformative education, including TVET, with the aim of ensuring that women and girls have equal opportunities to develop skills and access jobs in the green economy.

On a per capita basis, Sweden was the world's largest donor to the climate funds in 2018. Leading up to the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, Sweden announced new contributions to the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and the Least Developed Countries Fund, and will for example double its contribution to the Green Climate Fund to 8 billion SEK for the period 2020 to 2023. Sweden played a key role in the development of the Gender Policy of the Green Climate Fund,⁸⁹ and could use its leverage to make sure these climate funds are implemented with a strong gender focus, as for example that commitments in the fund's gender policy are materialised and include efforts for a just transition. This is in line with the 2019-2022 action plan for feminist foreign policy in which the government commits to accelerate gender work in these climate funds.⁹⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Sweden should ensure that the European Green Deal, also when just transition is addressed, advances gender equality. This entails using specific measures to increase women's and girls' roles in the transition, and in line with its "do no harm" principle, prevent disproportionate negative impacts on women and girls.
- Sweden should make full use of global initiatives, such as the 2030 Agenda, the Global Deal, the Silesia Declaration and the UN Climate Action for Jobs Initiative, and take leadership in making sure a gender perspective is mainstreamed in this work, and that trade unions and civil society are made strong partners.
- Sweden should ensure that global climate funds, e.g. the Green Climate Fund, and development assistance, are used to advance gender equality through a just transition, not least via training and education. It should also make full use of its experience in applying Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) as one of the tools to promote transitions.
- The Swedish government should develop an analysis on how to ensure an inclusive just transition that will feed into the 2023 action plan for the climate policy framework. Attention should be given to girls' education specifically, and to inclusive, quality, gender transformative education and skills necessary to achieve equality in the workplace in net zero carbon societies.
- The Swedish government should also include commitments on how Sweden will contribute to an inclusive just transition in its external relations in future annual action plans of its feminist foreign policy.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TEXT:

Olof Palme International Center, Plan International Sweden, Union to Union



PART

3

**BUILDING GLOBAL
RESILIENCE THROUGH
A FEMINIST CLIMATE
POLICY**

A central commitment of the Paris Agreement is to strengthen the ability of countries, particularly developing countries, to deal with the impacts of climate change. Indeed, it is women, girls and marginalised groups living in poverty and conflict that are most affected. If adaptation and climate resilience programmes lack an intersectional gender perspective, and fail to involve women and girls in decisions and planning, they will not have the anticipated effect. Even worse, women and girls can face even greater suppression, violence and insecurity. A Swedish feminist foreign policy needs to consider these gender aspects in adaptation and climate resilience efforts.

CHAPTER 5: THE GENDERED EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE STRAIN ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Women and girls living in poverty are not only uniquely and disproportionately affected by climate change, they are also the ones who directly deal with and have to find local solutions to problems related to the consequences of climate change on a daily basis. Through development cooperation and engagement at the EU level and via other multilateral initiatives, Sweden should step up adaptation and climate resilience efforts that break gender barriers and increase women's and girls' access and rights to land and other natural resources.

CHAPTER 6: ACCESS TO GENDER RESPONSIVE WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION

Impacts of the climate crisis such as droughts, severe floods and unpredictable weather patterns directly affect the accessibility to clean and safe water. Women and girls living in situations affected by poverty, conflict and instability already face disproportionately limited access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, exposing them to discrimination and violence, and limiting their rights. Access to resilient, inclusive and gender-responsive water, sanitation and hygiene should be at the centre of adaptation and climate resilience strategies, which Sweden should contribute to through its development cooperation and engagement in international climate funds.

CHAPTER 7: CLIMATE CHANGE, GENDER AND CONFLICT

Climate change is, and will increasingly become, a factor behind migration and scarce resources, which can in turn lead to conflict. From a human security perspective, long-term effects of climate change are as much of a security threat as war and armed conflict. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to these threats, as for example with respect to sexual and gender-based violence. Swedish policymakers need to make sure that climate and foreign policies to a larger extent address the linkages between climate, gender and conflict and that this is prioritised in Sweden's international engagement.

CHAPTER 5:

THE GENDERED EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE STRAIN ON NATURAL RESOURCES

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The climate crises and the effect on female farmers

There are 736 million people living in poverty in the world today.⁹¹ Data from the 89 countries who have sex-disaggregated statistics shows that 4.4 million more women than men live in extreme poverty.⁹² Further, approximately 75 percent of people living in poverty live in rural areas.⁹³ The majority are women, often farmers of whom many are older due to the migration of younger people, and they are heavily dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods and survival.

Due to the impacts of climate change, farmers face a decline in land productivity, greater land degradation, limited access to water, increase in pests, deforestation, destruction of crops and so on. However, the impact of climate change affects people differently. As a result of gendered norms and patriarchal structures, women are often allocated less fertile land than their male counterparts, and further often face additional burdens of trouble accessing water, or using and implementing energy-saving solutions.⁹⁴ Effects of climate change and natural hazards such as flooding, droughts and cyclones exacerbate existing inequalities, thus often contributing to a disaster. Statistical analysis shows that socially constructed gender-specific vulnerabilities lead to higher female mortality rates in disasters, with women of low socio-economic standing being particularly exposed.⁹⁵ Despite this, gender aspects are still weak in disaster risk reduction and preparedness, and women are often not involved in the decision-making processes regarding disaster risk reduction or in the making of action plans to improve climate resilience.⁹⁶

In many communities, women are responsible for agricultural production, but their right to own and control farming activities is often violated. Women are commonly used as informal labour working the fields, but are far less likely to be landowners. Their share ranges from 0.8 percent in Saudi Arabia to 51 percent in Cape Verde, with an overall global share of less than 13 percent.⁹⁷ In cases where women have secure access to and ownership of land, it is still often tied to a male family member.

The fact that most female farmers do not own or control land often means they are excluded from benefitting from agricultural inputs and subsidies, as well as from technical training

and financial services offered to farmers by farming organisations and others. This exclusion means that women are less able to implement mitigation strategies, and they are hindered to share and refine their existing adaptation strategies. This makes women more vulnerable to climate change effects, but it also has implications for global food security. Estimates from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) show that if men and women had equal access to productive resources in agriculture in developing countries, food production would increase by between 2.5 and 4 percent – enough to pull 100-150 million people out of hunger.⁹⁸

Responses to these abovementioned barriers for women must be adjusted to local contexts and need to be appropriate for all levels. However, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) there are reliable designs and policies for bringing women out of disproportionate vulnerability. These include financial transfers to women under the auspices of anti-poverty programmes, spending on health, education, training and capacity building for women, subsidised credit and programme dissemination through existing women's community-based organisations.⁹⁹

The climate crises and its effect on women in fishing communities

Another important sector that is highly affected by climate change is fisheries. About 800 million people are directly or indirectly dependent on fisheries, and in many low-income countries fish is often the only source of affordable protein and micronutrients.¹⁰⁰ About 90 percent of the approximately 120 million people involved in fisheries are small-scale producers.¹⁰¹ Whereas men usually engage in direct fishing, women are mainly involved in post-harvesting activities, such as fish processing and the collection of shellfish in near-shore areas. When the whole fishing cycle is accounted for, women account for 47 percent of the workforce.¹⁰² The gendered division of labour in the fishing communities is typically associated with women's reproductive responsibilities, which limits their mobility and time available for productive work. In addition, women are disadvantaged by insufficient access to financial, human, social and physical capital to engage in actual fishing. Cultural norms and values further ascribe women to roles specifying what they should or should not do.¹⁰³

The effects of climate change on oceans and coasts are increasing. One example is the destruction of coral reefs due to warmer temperatures. Sea levels are rising, and extreme weather conditions and floods are also seen more frequently. Small island developing states and coastal areas in the south are especially affected. The latest IPCC-report¹⁰⁴ further warns that declines in the abundance of fish and shellfish stocks, due to direct and indirect effects of global warming and biogeochemical changes, have already contributed to reduced catches. Changes in fish abundance have severe negative consequences for health and wellbeing, especially for communities dependent on fisheries. These effects relating to climate change

also hit women the hardest. Household duties and childcare impact women's ability to collect shellfish further away from home.¹⁰⁵ This, coupled with lack of equipment such as boats, makes it difficult for women to reach more distant areas of the seascape. In addition to this, competition increases as fisheries resources decline. Given women's limited access to a broad set of capital, they are often at the losing end. This jeopardises not only women's income, but also household food security. Furthermore, while many men leave to seek employment elsewhere, women tend to be the ones who stay behind trying to adapt to life with rising sea levels and desertification.¹⁰⁶

Despite these inequalities, policies relating to agriculture, marine and fisheries issues are gender-blind in most countries. By not acknowledging women's roles and lived knowledge, management strategies are based on statistics and information from only half the population.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, when gender is integrated and women are empowered, this leads to better and more sustainable natural resource management. For example, a study about forest conservation in India and Nepal found that groups with a high proportion of women as the principal decision-makers showed significantly greater improvements in forest condition. All-women groups also had better forest regeneration and canopy growth, despite receiving smaller and more degraded forests.¹⁰⁸ In other words, long-term solutions to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss should to a much larger extent integrate a gender analysis. Likewise, women must also be included in decision-making regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation. Studies show that there is a positive correlation between women in top positions and ratifications of decisions regarding environmental issues.¹⁰⁹ Despite this, only 15 percent of all fisheries ministers in 2019 were women.¹¹⁰

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

International policies

The Beijing Platform for Action is a key policy framework for the advancement of women's rights in all areas including their right to land, as for example paragraph 61 (b), where governments agreed to "undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies". At a global level, however, little progress has been made in advancing these commitments.¹¹¹ Reforms related to property ownership and inheritance are the most difficult to pass, especially in economies where social norms dictate how assets are passed to surviving spouses and children. Efforts therefore need to go beyond the legislative and administrative level, and more work to transform norms is needed.

There is also an urgent need for a global commitment to protect sustainable agriculture and the right to land and seeds, since that gives recognition to people working in rural areas. The Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas adopted in 2018 is an important step in this direction as it aims to protect the rights of “any person who engages in small-scale agricultural production”.¹¹² The declaration offers key tools to support sustainable and accessible food production for all. Sweden was lamentably among the seven countries that voted against the declaration out of a total 119 votes.¹¹³

In 2014, the voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication (SSF Guidelines)¹¹⁴ were adopted. This is the first internationally negotiated instrument dedicated to important though often neglected small-scale fisheries. One of the guiding principles is gender equality and equity, calling for recognition of the vital role women play in fisheries and the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Gender equality and equity is covered in depth in another chapter, but is further mainstreamed in all other chapters, as for example in those on tenure, sustainable management, social development, value chains and climate change. Although some progress has been made, these guidelines are far from implemented in national fisheries policies or at the EU level in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), specifically in the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements between the EU and third countries. Thus, concerted efforts are needed to ensure that gender equality becomes the norm in small-scale fisheries development, at all levels. The SSF guidelines are a powerful tool for such change to be enacted.

Swedish policies

The action plan for the Swedish climate policy framework recognises women as vulnerable to the effects of the climate crises such as increasing droughts, flooding, extreme weather, crises, conflict and migration.¹¹⁵ It argues that Sweden should show leadership that goes beyond reducing emissions at both the EU level and internationally. It is also positive that the Swedish feminist foreign policy emphasises Sweden’s role in strengthening the gender perspective and women’s participation in climate and environmental actions, and that the cooperation on climate-adjusted agriculture is highlighted in particular.¹¹⁶ While these Swedish policy frameworks provide a good platform for action, the Swedish government needs to live up to the commitments made, and it must take more concrete actions and do so from a feminist and intersectional perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Sweden should, through its development cooperation, bilateral dialogues and engagement on global and EU levels, advocate for stronger efforts to fulfil the promises made and the strategic objectives in the Beijing Platform for Action and step up adaptation and climate resilience efforts that break gender barriers and increase women's and girls' access and rights to land and other natural resources. The review process of the Beijing Platform's first 25 years of implementation is a key opportunity for Sweden to raise this issue and provide suggestions of suitable measures.
- Sweden should advocate for UN, EU and international climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund's Readiness Programme, to increase development cooperation and adaptation funding for sustainable rural development that strengthens women's and girls' economic, social and political empowerment, with a special focus on small-scale female farmers and fish workers and their participation in local adaptation and mitigation action plans and programmes.
- Sweden should reconsider its "no" vote on the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and instead vote for "yes" in support of the declaration.
- In its multilateral and bilateral development cooperation, Sweden should advocate for recognising nearshore harvesting and processing as fishing activities in policies, programmes, and regulations, and track and monitor data on nearshore harvesting and processing at community and national levels.
- At the EU level, Sweden should support the implementation of the voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication in the EU common fishery policy, and specifically ensure participation of women in the negotiation, implementation and evaluation of EU partnership agreements on sustainable fisheries with third countries. Sweden should also support their implementation in low-income countries through its development cooperation and engagement on EU development cooperation.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TEXT:

Afrikagrupperna, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), We Effect

CHAPTER 6:

ACCESS TO GENDER RESPONSIVE WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The effects of climate change on resilience and water security

Water scarcity is one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century.¹¹⁷ For the 2.2 billion people around the world who do not have safely managed drinking water services, the 4.2 billion people who do not have safely managed sanitation services, and the 3 billion who lack basic handwashing facilities¹¹⁸, climate change further exacerbates their vulnerability. This also hits women and girls even harder as, globally, women and girls living in poverty face disproportionately limited access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

To understand how climate change, gender equality and access to water, sanitation and hygiene services are linked, one main answer lies in the fact that billions of people live in areas where most do not have access to a toilet and are forced to defecate in the open. When heavy rain falls, these areas are immediately exposed to health risks from human faeces swept into floodwater and contaminating drinking water sources. The problem is exacerbated if there is limited knowledge and a lack of means to undertake safe hygiene practices, such as handwashing with soap. The first line of defence against diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid and coronavirus, is thus severely impeded. Likewise, droughts can mean that precarious coping strategies based on unimproved surface water or shallow groundwater are no longer viable, which increases the number of people exposed to water insecurity. The vulnerability of communities to increased floods and droughts is compounded by the fact that climate change may also damage existing water supply and sanitation services. In the context of climate change, building resilient and gender-responsive services for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is an increasingly urgent priority.

How is access to water, sanitation and hygiene connected to resilience and gender equality?

Despite the centrality of water, sanitation and hygiene to climate resilience and adaptation, the links are not widely recognised by government, donors, or various technical communities focusing on water, climate and infrastructure. The same goes for gender-responsive solutions for water and sanitation in homes, in health care facilities and schools. These interventions are often seen as belonging to the domain of development and thus separated

from climate adaptation strategies. This has implications for the prioritisation of women's health, empowerment and security. Access to WASH is fundamental to development, but it is also a critical climate adaptation strategy for poor and vulnerable communities and marginalized groups within those communities, including women and girls.

In many low-income countries, the absence of safe and sufficient water supplies and decent sanitation facilities has disproportionate negative effects on the lives of women and girls for three main reasons. Firstly, women and girls usually bear the responsibility for collecting water, which is often very time-consuming and arduous. Secondly, women and girls are more vulnerable to abuse and attack, in particular gender-based violence, while fetching water or using a toilet or open defecation site. Thirdly, women and girls have specific hygiene needs for reproductive health during menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and child rearing that includes access to clean water and hygienic materials.¹¹⁹ Without a private place to urinate and defecate, many women and girls adjust to only going at night, when the risk of assault, sexual harassment, violence or animal attacks is increased. This is the daily reality of life for many women and girls in low and middle-income countries.¹²⁰ On the other hand, when women and girls have better access to climate-resilient resources and technologies, they devote more time to activities such as education, paid work, political and public participation, and leisure activities, which enhance the quality of life for them and their entire communities.¹²¹

Access to WASH and the right to health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and education

In 2019, the World Health Organisation listed climate change and the lack of hygiene and sanitation in health care facilities among the top ten threats to global health.¹²² The impacts of climate change, in particular an increased frequency of flooding and prolonged droughts, worsen already unsafe situations in many hospitals in low and middle-income countries. One million deaths each year are associated with births in unsanitary conditions, while infections account for 26 percent of neonatal deaths and 11 percent of maternal mortality. It is clear that hygienic conditions in health care facilities have life-saving impacts.¹²³ Equipping health care facilities with adequate, resilient WASH services is crucial to preventing infections, reducing antimicrobial resistance and the spread of viruses, and providing quality care, particularly for safe childbirth.¹²⁴

WASH plays a significant role in the quality of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) service delivery and the realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Where WASH facilities and services are weak or missing from SRHR systems and services, negative effects on a range of SRH issues can be seen, including contraception, pregnancy, childbirth, safe abortion, sexually transmitted diseases or menstrual hygiene.¹²⁵ Due to climate-related effects such as frequent droughts and floods, it will be increasingly challenging to

provide SRH services, including WASH, safely in many areas. Adaptation resources to specifically safeguard access to SRHR need to be allocated to areas affected and at risk. Without climate-resilient sexual and reproductive health services, women's, girls' and newborns' lives and wellbeing are being put at risk.

Lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene systems already keeps many girls around the world from going to school. For example, many girls spend hours each day collecting water, which can affect their attendance and performance at school. Girls may also miss school when they start to menstruate as a result of a lack of separate and safe sanitation facilities and menstrual health supplies. Globally, 31 percent of schools do not have clean water and 34 percent lack decent toilets.¹²⁶ Progress toward gender equal and resilient societies can be made through expanding access to inclusive, gender-responsive water, sanitation and hygiene in schools.¹²⁷

In order to safeguard women's and girls' rights to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health, governments and other actors need to embed inclusive and equal access to safe water and sanitation in national climate adaptation plans and national determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.¹²⁸ It is also important to ensure that women and girls have an equal role to play in the design, management and monitoring of policy and programming related to both climate and WASH. WASH services can also be a strategic platform to contribute to gender equality through including women in decision-making, challenging gender-stereotypical roles in households and the community, while improving inclusiveness and the quality of WASH outcomes.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

International policies

A good example of a national policy that makes strong linkages between water security, access to WASH, gender and climate is Canada's feminist international assistance policy. Their policy clearly frames the connections between gender and WASH in terms of both climate crises and conflicts, positing that "Women and girls are particularly at risk when it comes to scarcity of resources in the wake of these challenges—in particular, the lack of clean drinking water—coupled with a gender-based imbalance in household responsibilities. (...) As water scarcity can be a source of tension and conflict, tackling water challenges is also important for our actions on peace and security."¹²⁹

At the international policy level, the World Health Assembly resolution from 2019 on water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities is of utmost importance for women's health,

as it states that all health care facilities should have access to safe water and sanitation.¹³⁰ It is also a landmark policy document in that it takes note of the fact that global driving forces, including climate change, can significantly affect the availability, access and quality of water and sanitation services, and that there is an urgent need for addressing the links between climate, energy, WASH and health.¹³¹

The levels of global climate finance directed to the WASH sector are currently very low¹³², which reflects the poor recognition of the role of WASH in climate resilience and for gender equality. Climate finance for gender responsive WASH must be increased, and existing and supplemental funding must be better targeted. Access to gender-responsive water, sanitation and hygiene is not sufficiently recognised as a critical adaptation tool for communities within the climate funds. Similar weakness can be seen in relation to Sweden's engagement in international adaptation policies and climate funding frameworks. Without emphasising these perspectives and their interlinkages there is little chance that Sweden's contributions to the Global Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, for example, will secure women's rights and reach the women and girls most affected by climate change.

Swedish policies

It is promising that the policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance¹³³ as well as the last few yearly action plans for the Swedish feminist foreign policy¹³⁴ have recognized the importance of access to water, sanitation and hygiene within maternity- and reproductive health care.

Sweden supported the adoption of the 2019 World Health Assembly resolution on water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities. In the international donor community, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is leading on menstrual hygiene management that includes access to water and sanitation in schools. However, in spite of these important steps, the Swedish government and Sida has not made enough progress in sufficiently aligning gender responsive WASH with SRHR or climate adaptation strategies. It is now time for implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- As an important contributor to the Green Climate Fund, Sweden should advocate for the fund's Readiness Programme to sufficiently promote women's and girls' access to gender-responsive WASH, and support national governments on gender-responsive WASH in their national adaptation programmes.
- Capacity strengthening should be ensured at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of the Environment, as well as Sida, for better coordination on the linkages between climate change adaptation, access to water, sanitation and hygiene, and gender.
- Sweden should take inspiration from Canada's feminist international assistance policy action and in its 2021 action plan for the feminist foreign policy address the nexus between climate change, WASH and gender with concrete measures for its advancement in climate resilience and adaptation efforts.
- Sweden should support governments and accredited partners in low income countries to develop climate-resilient and gender-responsive WASH programmes.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TEXT:

The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), WaterAid

CHAPTER 7:

CLIMATE CHANGE, GENDER AND CONFLICT

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

How climate change triggers violence

Climate change is, and will increasingly become, a factor behind migration and scarce resources, which in turn can lead to conflict.¹³⁵ A useful concept to understand this is “human security”. Human security aims to take the discussion on security from the narrow definition of “state security” to a broader understanding that encompasses all human beings’ perception of being safe. In this sense, peace is not only the absence of “hot violence”, like war and armed conflict, but also absence from what can be labelled as “slow violence”, which can for example include the long-term effects of climate change. Such effects, like rising sea levels, higher temperatures and extractive industries, would in this regard be just as much of a security threat as weapons in war. By including “slow violence” in the discussion, we can broaden our understanding of how climate change affects women differently than men. Indeed, climate change, patriarchal power structures, gender and conflict are highly interlinked, and it is important to recognise these relations in order to deal with climate change in an effective and peaceful way.¹³⁶

One example of how natural catastrophes affect men and women differently is the tsunami that hit several countries in Asia in 2004. Even though the tsunami was not related to climate change, we can learn from it. Four times as many women and girls as men and boys died in some places. There were various reasons for this, but all related to gender roles. For example, in one village in India men were out at sea fishing while the women were waiting at the shore for the fishing boats to come in. The tsunami was relatively calm at sea in deep water and passed under the boats, while it grew larger as it approached the shore.¹³⁷ After Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, women and girls were exposed to sexual and gender-based violence in the evacuation centres, in part due to a breakdown in essential services, poor emergency shelter design and inadequate coordination by disaster responders.¹³⁸

Natural catastrophes such as Typhoon Haiyan are the kind of immediate disasters that will become more frequent as the climate continues to change, and we will see how women and girls are affected differently than men. This is also true for “slow violence” that is the result of rising sea levels or droughts, for example, that force people to migrate. In sub-Saharan Africa, the intensity and duration of droughts have increased. This has meant that women, who often have the responsibility to take care of the household, have to travel further to find water and food.¹³⁹ This puts women and girls in a particularly dangerous situation as they are more exposed to sexual and gender-based violence.¹⁴⁰

Even though there is still little research showing a direct connection between climate change and “hot violence”, in the form of war or armed conflict, existing research suggests that we will see more evidence in the near future. The indirect link between climate change and “hot violence” is on the other hand already demonstrated. The UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) has, for example, estimated that at least 40 percent of all intrastate conflicts in the last 60 years have had a direct link to natural resources. As many fragile states are now experiencing additional shocks and stresses associated with climate change, including increasing resource scarcity and food insecurity, the risk of aggravating existing tensions or generating new conflicts is overwhelming.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, there is considerable evidence showing how “slow violence” is a consequence of climate change, as discussed above. As the linkages between climate change and these two forms of violence is becoming more and more evident, it is clear that a gender perspective needs to be added to the discussion. The UN Security Council’s Women, Peace and Security Agenda would offer a good policy platform as it promotes the concept of human security.¹⁴²

The connection between climate change and conflict also includes how armed conflicts can in themselves contribute to environmental degradation and climate change. This may be by land contamination, the destruction of forests, the plunder of natural resources, pollution from weapons and ammunition, and the collapse of management systems.¹⁴³ In Yemen, attacks on water and agricultural infrastructure affect efforts to address cholera and food security.¹⁴⁴ In Libya, repeated attacks on water and energy infrastructure were possible and sustained by the availability of weapons.¹⁴⁵ Even in non-conflict settings, military activities have negative effects on the environment and climate. As an example, the US military is now the institutional player that consumes the most fossil fuels in the world (hydrocarbons).¹⁴⁶ Emissions correspond to what 140 countries consume all together.¹⁴⁷

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

International policies

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from 1995 is considered to be the most important and progressive blueprints for advancing women’s and girls’ rights. It is also one of the first global policy frameworks to discuss gender, conflict and the environment. Strategic goals on women and armed conflict were defined, as were goals on women and the environment.¹⁴⁸ It discusses global warming from a gender perspective and the section on “the environment and women” also highlights several challenges that are today considered to be related to climate change and women, security and human rights. The Beijing Declaration also highlights the fact that armed conflicts contribute to environmental degradation by stating that “natural disasters and, in addition, the destruction of resources, violence,

displacements and other effects associated with war, armed and other conflicts, the use and testing of nuclear weaponry, and foreign occupation can also contribute to environmental degradation.”¹⁴⁹

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 from 2000 and its following sister resolutions, together referred to as the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, could as suggested above be a central policy framework that can allow for connecting gender, conflict and climate based on its “human security” approach. In the preamble to one of the WPS resolutions, UNSCR 2242,¹⁵⁰ the impact of climate change on the global context of peace and security is acknowledged. Advocates have started making attempts to link the political principles of WPS to climate change¹⁵¹, but the UN Security Council is still yet to discuss climate issues in relation to gender.¹⁵²

The momentum of anniversaries of the WPS, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action in 2020 presents an opportunity for increasing diverse perspectives, including the WPS, in the push for the 2030 Agenda, with its Global Goals for Sustainable Development.¹⁵³ Climate change should be included in the WPS as a security threat in terms of both immediate and long-term effects on women’s lives. In the same way, as the agenda calls for inclusion of women in peace negotiations, it could be extended to also include building climate peace and building climate-resilient communities, where women’s expertise and insights are as important as men’s.

The Paris Agreement emphasises the impact that climate change has on sustainable development,¹⁵⁴ but does not include a specific conflict or human security perspective. To mitigate the agreement’s very weak gender approach, a gender action plan was established in 2017 and updated in 2019. However, just as the Paris Agreement, the gender action plan does not include a conflict perspective.

In 2018, the EU adopted its strategic approach to women peace and security,¹⁵⁵ as well as an action plan to implement it six months later.¹⁵⁶ The council conclusions on the strategic approach highlight the need to take a holistic approach to conflict resolution and that conflict prevention is “one of several ways to prevent conflict related and calamitous security, economic, environmental and social consequences of violent conflict on women, men, boys and girls”.¹⁵⁷ It is further stated that “climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, desertification and drought are drivers of conflict which can particularly affect women”.¹⁵⁸ In other words, the link between climate change, gender and “hot violence” is clearly identified. While no concrete actions have been suggested to address this link, a few of the indicators highlight the ambition to monitor EU actions linked to gender, conflict and climate change. We can therefore see a focus on “slow violence” here. For example, one indicator looks at activities addressing the different WPS-related impacts of climate change such as land degradation,

desertification and drought.¹⁵⁹ Bearing in mind that these are recently adopted documents, this is in fact a good starting point, but the linkages between the WPS agenda and climate change need to be further addressed.

Swedish policies

As for the main policies at the Swedish level, connections between climate, gender and conflict are only partly made and there is a general lack of concrete commitments to address these linkages. Swedish climate legislation is focused on national regulations to reduce carbon emissions and lacks both a gender and conflict perspective.¹⁶⁰ In the government's action plan on the Swedish climate policy framework, there is a specific section focusing on Sweden's contributions to implement the Paris Agreement. This mentions the connection between climate, gender and conflict, but only in broad terms along with several other focus areas such as poverty eradication and human rights.¹⁶¹

The Swedish Policy for Global Development mentions women in relation to resilience and building strong sustainable societies, and the need for policy areas to be coordinated. The coordination between policy areas such as the environment, climate, health, equality and foreign affairs, however, fails to mention security and defence policies, and while the policy states the aim to integrate work on climate change, human rights, democracy and gender equality, it fails to concretise how or provide links to peace and security.¹⁶²

The Swedish feminist foreign policy action plan for 2020, together with the Swedish handbook for feminist foreign policy from 2019, highlights that gender discrimination is also reinforced by discrimination and vulnerability linked to other factors such as poverty, conflict, migration, climate change¹⁶³, but there is no reference to climate under Objective 3, which focuses on the promotion of women's and girls' participation in preventing and resolving conflicts.

Sweden's national security strategy includes combating climate change, and contributing to peace and global development as important aspects of Sweden's security.¹⁶⁴ In spite of this, the Swedish defence budget for 2020 is five times higher than the budget for climate and protection of the environment.¹⁶⁵ In practice, the Swedish armed forces now consume as much fossil fuels as a medium-sized Swedish city.¹⁶⁶ The armed forces are repeatedly exempted from Swedish climate and environmental regulations and are also excluded from the requirements for carbon dioxide emissions restrictions.¹⁶⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Swedish government should further develop its analysis of the linkages between gender, climate and conflict, which should feed into the 2023 action plan for the climate policy framework.
- The Swedish Climate Policy Council should in its yearly evaluation include the climate effect of the Swedish armed forces. In addition, the Swedish Armed Forces should start to publicly report on their emissions.
- The Swedish government should introduce a broader definition of security to include how “slow” and “hot” violence are linked with climate change in the ongoing review of Sweden’s national action plan on 1325. Sweden should also promote a new WPS resolution at the international level that links gender, conflict (including “hot” and “slow” violence) and climate change.
- Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Sweden should push for updates and revisions of the 2019 gender action plan and should seek to include a conflict perspective. This should also be linked to the WPS agenda.
- In the revision of the EU Gender Action Plan, Sweden should advocate for a stronger integration of climate change, and how “slow” and “hot” violence that comes from climate change and environmental degradation affect women and girls.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TEXT:

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Sweden,
The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, Operation 1325, PMU

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