

#SheLeadsInCrisis

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE ON THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES



The greatest inequalities in the world are reflected in the causes and consequences of climate change and humanitarian crises, which are driving leading global challenges – including gender inequality, hunger, forced displacement and conflict.

Women and girls in poorer countries are absorbing the brunt of these impacts. They are the last to leave their homes when disaster strikes, and the first to start picking up the pieces after extreme weather, droughts, floods and storms. They are hardest hit when crops fail, when food is short, and when water is scarce.

Women and girls in fragile contexts are also leading creative approaches to respond, adapt and recover, often acting as first responders, community organizers and peace-builders.

A gender-just response to climate change and humanitarian crises is within reach. It involves supporting women and girls on the frontlines of climate change and humanitarian emergencies, and answering their calls for more ambitious and gender-just responses to crises that are re-shaping our world.

**It is high time that we uphold women's and girls' rights where they are furthest behind:
on the frontlines of climate change and humanitarian crises**

The Problem

Climate change driving humanitarian need

Hunger: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization [warns](#) that climate change is reversing decades of decline in global hunger, which affected 821 million people last year. The Global Commission on Adaptation [predicts](#) that climate change could depress growth in global agriculture yields up to 30% by 2050. The 500 million small farms around the world will be most affected.

Displacement: The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [attributes](#) 87% of all forced displacement to weather-related hazards like flood and drought. Without strong preventive action, climate change could push the total number of permanently displaced people as high as [250 million](#) between now and 2050.

Conflict: Competition over increasingly scarce natural resources is driving instability and conflict. Data from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification shows an [overlap](#) between areas that have suffered droughts and desertification, and conflict in the last decade. A 5% change in rainfall in Sub-Saharan Africa is [estimated](#) to increase the likelihood of conflict in the following year by 50%.

Poverty: The World Bank [predicts](#) that, without urgent action, climate change could push an additional 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2030, eroding decades of progress in social and economic development.

Women and girls hardest hit

The poorest 1 billion people, of which the majority are women and girls, are [responsible](#) for just 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Yet developing countries are already [bearing](#) up to 80% of the costs of climate change, including through food insecurity, loss and damage, compromised livelihoods and instability.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the effects of climate variability and extreme weather events will likely [increase](#) existing inequalities and vulnerabilities between men and women. Women and girls are highly dependent on local natural resources, and are more likely to be vulnerable to climate variability impacts than men, due to social and cultural conditions that influence access to resources and division of labour, as well as lack of participation in decision-making. When food is scarce, for example, women and girls suffer most - often being the last to eat, and carrying an increasing burden as climate change impacts rural livelihoods

When migration becomes a way of coping with climate change, men and youth typically migrate to cities looking for new opportunities, leaving women, young children and the elderly behind to sustain increasingly precarious local economies. It is [estimated](#) that at least one in five women refugees in complex humanitarian settings has experienced sexual violence and its effects, including trauma, stigma, poverty, poor health and unwanted pregnancy.

Poor women and children are up to [14 times](#) more likely than men to die in climate-fuelled disasters such as hurricanes, typhoons or cyclones. Women and girls in emergencies are also at heightened risk of gender-based violence and trafficking, unintended pregnancy, maternal morbidity and mortality, unsafe abortions and child, early and forced marriage. More than 70% of women in crisis situations have experienced one or more types of [gender-based violence](#) in comparison to 35% of women globally. Every day, over [500 women](#) and girls living in emergency settings lose their lives from preventable causes related to reproductive health.

Women and girls severely under-resourced

Support for adaptation is critical for women bearing the brunt of the climate crisis, and must go hand-in-hand with efforts to limit global warming. Yet global climate finance remains woefully inadequate, and the proportion of that finance for adaptation makes up less than 20% of the total.

An estimated 67 million women and girls are in need of humanitarian assistance worldwide, yet only [3%](#) of humanitarian aid was directed to local and national organizations in 2017, with even less going to initiatives and organizations focused on girls and women.

Opportunity for Canadian Leadership

As global demand for humanitarian assistance continues to rise, more can be done to help communities withstand extreme weather events like drought, flooding and cyclones, and to recover more quickly after disasters occur. Since women and girls are the best representatives of their needs, this requires investing in women's leadership on the frontlines of climate change and humanitarian crises.

Gender-responsive climate action: Developed country parties to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goals have agreed to mobilize \$100 Billion per year by 2020 to help developing countries deal with the impacts of climate change, and for those resources to be balanced between adaptation and mitigation. The Canada-supported [Global Commission on Adaptation](#) has called for 2020 to be a Year of Action to Accelerate Climate Adaptation.

Canada can uphold its commitments by:

- Increasing public finance for climate action in developing countries with a view to reaching Canada's fair share as a proportion of GNI, estimated at \$1.8 billion per year (from \$800 million per year current commitment).
- Committing at least 50% of its international climate finance to adaptation and resilience before a disaster hits (up from 34% currently).
- Dedicating at least 15% of Canada's international climate finance to projects aimed at engaging local women's organizations in the design and implementation of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies.

Gender-responsive humanitarian action: [Grand Bargain](#) signatories have committed to provide 25% of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020. [The Whistler Declaration](#) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action commits G7 governments to increase accountability to affected populations throughout humanitarian action, including through support to local women's organizations.

Canada can uphold its commitments by:

- Channeling 25 percent of humanitarian funding to local organizations by 2020.
- Committing at least 15% of humanitarian funding to initiatives aimed at supporting women and girls' organizations on the front lines of crises.

Cyclone Idai-Bandua Camp, Mozambique

When the cyclone hit last year, it destroyed our house. It also took our cows, goats, chicken and farm from us. We only have a small piece of our farmland left where we grow maize, tomatoes, onion and other vegetables.

I leave at 4 am every morning and it takes me about three hours to get there. I depend on the harvest and the aid we receive from organizations. My husband lives in South Africa and works as a mechanic in order to support us.



MARTA TITOSS WITH HER 9-MONTH-OLD DAUGHTER JOAQUIM AUGUSTO



I now live in Bandua camp with my parents, sisters and two children. The youngest one is 9 months old and was born just before the cyclone hit. I was very scared to lose her because she was just a few days old and I only had one blanket to protect her when we were forced to flee.

After the storm, water had started entering our home when my father told us to leave and find shelter. I was scared my children would fall into the water and drown, the water was so high. All we could bring with us is a few clothes. My father had stayed in our house for four days, trying to save our home but it eventually got destroyed. He followed us to Bandua, where we moved because it's higher above river level and the land was dry. We want to continue living here because the risk of floods is lower.

Currently, we still live in a plastic tent but I am looking forward to building a house with the materials we received.