

**Commission on the Status of Women**  
**Sixty-sixth session**  
**14–25 March 2022**

**Report of the Secretary-General on**  
**Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the**  
**context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies**  
**and programmes. Commission on the Status of Women ([E/CN.6/2022/3](#))**

## **References pertaining to Indigenous Women**

### ***II. Climate, environment and disaster trends and gendered impacts***

*4. Climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, land degradation, pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated and intensified into widespread and interlinked crises. Climate change has caused increasingly frequent and severe disasters, disrupted ecosystems and contributed to biodiversity loss. The interlinked crises threaten the full realization of human rights, in particular the rights to life and dignity, development, a life free from violence and discrimination, an adequate standard of living, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, water and sanitation, a healthy environment and others, with acute impacts on women and girls, in particular in rural, indigenous and migrant contexts.*

*5. Increasing greenhouse gas emissions, largely produced by burning fossil fuels, are 62 per cent higher than in 1990, when international climate negotiations began, and are likely to far exceed the global target of well below 2°C by the end of the century if global warming continues at the current rate. The current nationally determined contributions submitted by parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change place the world on a dangerous pathway of above 2°C. The consequences for humans and ecosystems are spiralling: warming, acidifying and deoxygenating oceans; melting ice caps and rising sea levels; extreme weather events associated with floods, droughts and wildfires; loss of habitats and flora and fauna; and threats to agricultural production, food security and human settlements and health. Human influence has unequivocally warmed the atmosphere, oceans and land, while climate change exacerbates poverty and inequalities, in particular those relating to gender, age, race, class, caste, indigenous status, migration status and disability, putting at risk all human and non-human life on earth.*

*6. Human pressures will push 1 million species to extinction in the coming years, with the catastrophic risk of losing 30–50 per cent of all species by 2050. Globally, indigenous peoples, local communities, the urban poor and women and girls disproportionately suffer the effects of biodiversity loss ([E/CN.6/2020/3](#)). Between 2019 and 2020, deforestation of primary rainforest, which is critical for biodiversity and carbon storage, increased by 12 per cent, and that pace was maintained in 2021. Parts of the Amazon now emit more carbon than they absorb, although protected conservation areas and indigenous territories, home to 80 per cent of biodiversity on land, remain carbon sinks*

15. *The shadow pandemic of violence against women and girls during COVID-19 exemplifies the surge of gender-based violence that occurs in crises and disasters. Women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in particular are subject to violence and exclusion. The increase in femicide and threats and violence against women environmental human rights defenders, including indigenous women, is alarming. In 2020, at least 331 environmental defenders were killed, including 44 women, 69 per cent of whom were defending land rights, the rights of indigenous peoples and environmental rights and 28 per cent of whom were defending the rights of women (A/HRC/46/35).*

### **III. Normative and policy frameworks**

20. *The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognized the centrality of gender equality, the empowerment of women, intergenerational equity and human rights, including the rights to health and development and the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations (FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1). More recently, the Glasgow Climate Pact emphasized gender equality, the empowerment of women and the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in climate action (FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/L.16).*

31. *Women's, in particular young women's, civil society organizations face multiple barriers to participation and leadership, from shrinking democratic space and diminishing funding to threats to the physical security of their members. The situation is even more acute for indigenous women, women of African descent, LGBTIQ+ persons, persons with disabilities and those living in rural, remote and disaster-prone areas, given the difficulties of access and communications. However, these groups have deep knowledge of community needs and priorities and are key to combating climate change and environmental degradation, reducing disaster risk and building resilience at all levels.*

### **VII. Building the resilience of women**

46. *Appropriate caution must be taken regarding the contradictory and detrimental economic, social and environmental impacts of large-scale agricultural, forestry, energy and infrastructure development on women and girls, indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities, as well as on ecosystems and habitats, including projects with climate and environment goals. The expansion of biofuel plantations for renewable energy based on land acquisition on a vast scale has accelerated deforestation, reduced biodiversity and increased, rather than decreased, carbon emissions while displacing local and indigenous communities and depriving women and their households of livelihoods. Extensive reforestation initiatives have had similar negative consequences when designed and implemented without the free, prior and informed consent of those affected, in particular poor and indigenous women. Lithium extraction for batteries to meet spiralling demand for renewable energy and green technologies requires huge quantities of water, often in desert regions, and chemical leaks from mines pollute water sources, leading to reproductive health problems and significantly heightened stress on women's time and labour with regard to providing clean water and food. No programme, large or small, can be considered to be sustainable or contributing to resilience if it increases, rather than decreases, the unpaid care and domestic work of women and girls.*

### **X. Conclusions and recommendations**

(o) *Promote lifelong learning, training and education, including in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, for women and girls, and leverage the ancestral knowledge and practices of indigenous*

*peoples and local E/CN.6/2022/3 22-00062 19/19 communities for gender-responsive climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and disaster risk reduction;*