

Policy Paper on:

Climate Change and Women in Yemen: Towards Integration into the Women Peace and Security Agenda.



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Researcher

Dunia Coca is a researcher and a trainer in climate change affairs

Review team

Dr. Nadia Al-Sakkaf – Peace Track Initiative board member and an expert in political and development research, with a specialization in gender policy in Yemen.

Nesmah Mansoor ALI– Senior Communication and Policy Officer at Peace an expert in gender and climate justice.

Mona Al-Hammadi – Consultant and activist in the fields of climate, gender, and environmental sustainability.

Nadia Ebrahim – Senior Coordinator of the Protection and Empowerment Program at the Peace Track Initiative; advocate and consultant with UAF-WHR and GSF, and member of the Advisory Board of CFPO-Africa.

Cover Photo

© All rights reserved to South24 Center — A woman working in salt extraction in the Areyout area, Al-Masilah District, Al-Mahra Governorate (August 24, 2024).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


This policy paper examines the impact of climate change on women within the framework of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, focusing specifically on women in the governorates of Aden, Hadhramaut, and Al-Mahrah.

The paper aims to explore the complex and reciprocal relationship between climate change and women, particularly how climate changes affect them within the context of the UN Resolution 1325, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other international conventions related to women.

It delves into both the direct and indirect impacts of challenges and difficulties faced by women due to climate change, highlighting specific instances such as cyclones or floods. The paper sheds light on the repercussions of climate change across various facets, such as economic and social aspects, and reviews national political responses and the role of international efforts in addressing this issue. It emphasizes the urgent need to formulate environmental policies that cater to women's specific needs, prioritizing their rights and safety amidst the escalating challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation. The paper concentrates on the challenges, difficulties, and impacts of climate change on women in the governorates of Aden, Hadhramaut, and Al-Mahrah.

Six focus group discussion (FGD) sessions were conducted in these regions to gather information and hear firsthand experiences from women and stakeholders about the effects of climate change on women. A total of 96 participants, including 33 men and 63 women, took part in these FGD sessions. The participants included government employees, representatives from civil society, individuals from local organizations, and government officials from various ministries. Specialists in education, health, agriculture, and environmental fields also participated, alongside women working in agriculture, fishing, and advocacy, as well as participants from institutions such as universities, meteorological centers, and cooperative unions. This diversity in expertise and experiences enriched the discussions on climate change and gender issues.






The paper showed that women in Yemen face multiple challenges as a result of the effects of climate change, which are exacerbated by armed conflict and humanitarian crises. The most prominent of these challenges is the increasing frequency of environmental disasters such as floods and hurricanes that lead to the destruction of homes and agricultural lands, which increases displacement rates and exposes women to the risk of violence. It also showed that women working in the agricultural and fisheries sectors face increasing pressures as a result of declining production.

Additionally, climate change deepens the exclusion of women and their exclusion from decision-making processes. The paper also highlighted shortcomings in the National Plan for Women, Peace and Security in Yemen, as climate change issues and their impacts on women were not included in the national plan, which calls for the need to update national frameworks to ensure the protection of women and their involvement in dealing with these increasing challenges.

The paper recommends the necessity of integrating the considerations of climate change and its impacts on women into the agenda of women, peace and security in Yemen. It also calls for developing the national plan for resolution 1325 to include climate issues, and the necessity of providing programs and projects that support this approach.





INTRODUCTION

In many fragile and conflict-affected countries, including Yemen, the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation often thwart efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability.


Various phenomena such as floods, deforestation, cyclones, reduction of arable land, and extreme weather events have led to the displacement of communities and the destruction of livelihoods. Although Yemen is not a major emitter of greenhouse gases, it is among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change due to environmental degradation, fragile infrastructure, and a limited capacity to respond and adapt to climate impacts.

Yemen ranks 171 out of 181 countries on the ND-GAIN¹ Index for 2022, placing it as the 22nd most vulnerable and 12th least prepared nation². According to recent estimates, floods that occurred between June and August 2024 killed at least 57 people and affected more than 34,000 families, as heavy rains devastated large areas, including Hodeidah, Taiz, and Marib.

According to IOM³ estimates, Al Hodeidah was one of the most severely affected areas, with floods displacing more than 6,000 families. The floods caused significant damage to infrastructure, including the burial of wells, destruction of agricultural land, and road blockages.⁴ Access to these affected areas remains a major challenge, further complicating relief efforts.

Economically, the floods have devastated agriculture, the primary source of income for many families, resulting in widespread loss of livelihoods.⁵ This economic impact has disproportionately affected women, who face dual challenges due to their responsibilities in providing food and water for their families, while also caring for children and the elderly.⁶

Moreover, women in these areas were the hardest hit by the disruption of basic services, including reproductive healthcare, and the difficulty in accessing relief centers, increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence during displacement.⁷



Before the war, resource scarcity in Yemen was already a driver of local conflicts, with nearly 4,000 people killed in these clashes.⁸ Now, as Yemen enters its tenth year of war, climate change—manifesting in recurrent droughts and flash floods—has further strained resources, exacerbating existing conflicts and creating new challenges. This demonstrates that climate change is no longer just an environmental issue, but has become deeply intertwined with the complexities of conflict and is directly impacting Yemen's path to peace .

At the international level, recent analyses by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) have shown that the security risks associated with climate change are highly context-dependent, shaped by local fragility and governance structures.⁹ Their findings suggest that deteriorating livelihoods are a key pathway through which climate change contributes to increased conflict risks. For example, in the Sahel and parts of East Africa, declines in agricultural production and pastoral livelihoods have intensified competition for resources, leading to violent clashes between communities.

In Yemen, women are disproportionately affected by the protracted war, experiencing displacement and its consequences, as well as deprivation of basic services.¹⁰ Climate change exacerbates this suffering, further complicating their access to essential services and limiting their opportunities for education and participation in social and, eventually, political life.¹¹

1 The ND-GAIN Index provides a summary of countries' exposure to climate change and other global challenges, as well as their ability to prepare to improve resilience to these challenges. The index aims to help governments, businesses and communities better prioritize investments to more effectively respond to the immediate global challenges ahead.

2 <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>

3 <https://mena.iom.int/news/floods-and-windstorms-devastate-yemen-iom-scales-response-assist-affected-communities>


4 *Ibid*

5 *Ibid*

6 https://south24.net/news/docs/Climate_Crisis_Impacts_on_Womens_Livelihoods_Yemen_Ar.pdf

7 <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/under-pressure-social-violence-over-land-and-water-yemen-java-issue-brief-2>

8 <https://berghof-foundation.org/library/climate-change-and-conflict-in-hadhramawt>



To support women in facing these challenges, many international organizations, including the United Nations Human Rights Council¹², the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change¹³, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women¹⁴, have emphasized the need to empower women in addressing these issues. Women possess valuable local knowledge that enhances efforts to adapt to climate change, and they must be supported to play a leading role in shaping climate policies aimed at mitigating its impacts.

Moreover, global studies show that women's participation in decision-making, particularly in managing climate crises and resource-related conflicts, improves the likelihood of achieving more sustainable and inclusive solutions.¹⁵ According to a study by Swedish researcher Desiree Nilsson, the involvement of civil society groups, including women's organizations, makes a peace agreement 64% less likely to fail.¹⁶ Therefore, empowering women and ensuring their active participation in these areas is crucial for achieving stability and adapting to climate change in Yemen and other affected regions.

9 https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/2023_sipri-nupi_insights.pdf

10 <https://www.undp.org/ar/yemen/blog/almrat-alymnyt-mwajht-altghyr-almnakhy-walqyadt-nhw-mstqbl-alymn>

11 Ibid

12 <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/225/15/pdf/g1922515.pdf>

13 <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/workstreams/the-gender-action-plan>

14 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no37-2018-gender-related>

15 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gove.12742>

16 Desirée Nilsson (2012) Anchoring the Peace: Civil Society Actors in Peace Accords and DurablePeace, *International Interactions*, 38:2, 243-266, DOI: 10.1080/03050629.2012.659139

Objective and Significance of the Paper:


The significance of this paper lies in its exploration of the interconnections between climate change, gender equality, and peacebuilding in Yemen, highlighting how each factor influences the others. It examines how climate change in Yemen deepens gender inequalities and how promoting gender equality can strengthen climate adaptation strategies. Additionally, it addresses the role of tackling climate challenges in enhancing peacebuilding efforts, particularly within the framework of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Yemen.

These issues are especially important at this critical juncture, as the risks associated with climate change are growing and require a comprehensive response that addresses the needs of women. Therefore, it is essential to integrate climate change considerations into future peace talks and agreements, ensuring that environmental challenges are accounted for in proposed solutions aimed at achieving peace and stability in Yemen. Women must be meaningfully involved in all stages of the process, with a focus on enhancing their protection and resilience to cope with the effects of both war and climate change. At this sensitive stage, it is crucial for all stakeholders to work together to build societies that are more resilient and adaptable to climate change, ultimately fostering sustainable security and peace in Yemen.

□ Methodology:

This paper employed a descriptive methodology, combining a desk review of published literature on various topics, including the impact of climate change on women and its broader effects on Yemen. In addition to reports from international organizations, the review covered relevant regional and international frameworks, national reports, Yemen's National Plan for Women, Peace, and Security (2020–2022), and international studies focusing on the intersection of climate change and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

To ensure accurate documentation of the challenges, both primary and secondary data were collected. The study is based on six focus group sessions, with two sessions conducted in each of the three targeted governorates: Aden, Hadhramaut, and Al Mahrah. In each governorate, one session was held with active and affected women, involving 15 participants, while the second session included stakeholders and relevant authorities, with 15 men and women participating.




In total, 96 people took part in these sessions, with participants selected from diverse backgrounds. In the stakeholder sessions, relevant government agencies were invited, including the Meteorological Center, the Ministry of Water and Environment, local authorities, and the women's affairs offices in the governorates. Women from various sectors also participated, including those from civil society, academia, and women working in agriculture and fisheries.

The diversity of participants contributed to gathering a broad range of information and experiences, which helped raise awareness among the male participants about the specific challenges facing women in these governorates due to climate change. Additionally, four interviews were conducted with government experts from the Ministry of Water and Environment and other relevant agencies to discuss the effects of climate change and its specific impacts on women. All data were collected and analyzed using reliable sources.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations of the Research Methodology

This paper followed a descriptive methodology aimed at documenting the challenges posed by climate change and its effects on women in Yemen, while adhering to a set of ethical considerations to protect the safety and rights of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the focus group sessions before discussions took place. The objectives of the study and how the data would be used were clearly explained, with an emphasis on the voluntary nature of participation. Measures were also implemented to ensure confidentiality, keeping participants' identities and the information they shared private, thus minimizing any social or personal risks.

However, the research methodology faces certain limitations. The sample size of 96 individuals may not fully capture the diversity of the population in the targeted governorates, potentially leaving underrepresented voices, such as rural women or minority community members, unheard. Qualitative data can also be influenced by subjectivity and group dynamics, which may affect the results. Additionally, the study relies on existing literature and reports, which may carry biases, and there may be gaps in information about the local context. Security concerns and ongoing conflicts also posed challenges to accessing some data, limiting the comprehensiveness of the findings.



Paper Themes

This paper is structured around three key themes:

- ❶ First: Factors Influencing the Issue. This section explores the context, dimensions, and underlying causes of the problem.
- ❷ Second: Public Policies Addressing the Issue. This section examines relevant legal frameworks and various mechanisms in place.
- ❸ Third: results and recommendations. This section presents proposed solutions and actionable recommendations.

First Theme: Factors Influencing the Issue


Paper's Terminology:

The Impact of Climate Change on Women Within the Framework of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

□ **Impact:** Referring to the results or consequences, in the context of climate change discussed in this paper, it denotes the negative effects that climate change exerts on human societies and ecosystems.

□ **Climate Change:** This term describes alterations in the Earth's climatic characteristics due to current increases in the concentration of gases produced from combustion processes in the atmosphere. These changes are driven by human activities that elevate atmospheric temperatures. Key gases involved include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxides, and chlorofluorocarbons. Among the most significant manifestations of climate change are variations in precipitation patterns and amounts, which subsequently affect hydrological processes and lead to rising temperatures.

□ **Women, Peace, and Security Agenda:** In 2000, the United Nations initiated the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, comprising a series of ten resolutions that serve as a comprehensive framework advocating for the protection of women and ensuring their full and equitable representation and participation in peace processes and security efforts.




The first resolution from this agenda was adopted in October 2000—UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)—which acknowledges that men and women experience conflict differently. This resolution is considered the cornerstone of what is referred to as the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. It is articulated in a document consisting of 18 articles that encompass four fundamental pillars:

□ **Protection:** Resolution 1325 emphasizes that women and girls are among the most vulnerable groups affected by armed conflict and its repercussions on all levels. While reaffirming this reality, the resolution highlights the necessity of addressing the implications of violence against women for achieving security and stability. It also underscores the need to ensure their protection and activate accountability mechanisms for rights violators.

□ **Participation:** The resolution stresses that societal imbalances in power between men and women should not serve as a justification for denying women effective participation in decisions impacting society as a whole. Consequently, Resolution 1325 includes provisions calling for an increase in women's representation in decision-making roles, particularly those related to peacekeeping and security operations. It mandates states to enhance women's representation at all levels of decision-making within national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms aimed at conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

□ **Prevention:** Although preventive measures—particularly those related to awareness-raising and education—may take time to yield results and are often deemed inadequate for addressing the effects of conflicts while they are occurring, they play a crucial role in alleviating tensions and establishing peace and security in post-conflict phases. In this regard, Resolution 1325 calls for a range of measures, some educational and awareness-based while others are practical, aimed at addressing the root causes of conflicts before they erupt or mitigating tensions during post-peace agreement phases.



□ Relief and Recovery:

In relief and recovery operations, it is essential to ensure that all members of society—men, women, children—have access to safety, food, healthcare, housing, and other basic needs. Often in these processes, beneficiaries are viewed as a homogeneous group without consideration for their differing societal roles shaped by factors such as gender, age group, disability, race, etc.

Therefore, Resolution 1325 advocates for integrating a gender-sensitive approach throughout all stages of relief and recovery efforts. This integration reflects the diverse nature and extent of needs among beneficiary groups. In armed conflicts, needs, concerns/risks, priorities, responsibilities, and coping mechanisms vary significantly from one group to another. For instance, men and boys constitute the majority of direct victims of armed conflicts involving forced recruitment and arbitrary detention. Meanwhile, women bear the burden of managing households subjected to various forms of gender-based violence during emergencies. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable during such crises; they face heightened risks of malnutrition due to limited access to resources. They often work additional hours to increase household income or access essential services.

The Women Peace and Security Agenda in Yemen (WPS)

In December 2019, Yemen adopted its National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security (WPS)¹⁷. To enhance women's participation in peace processes, preventing conflicts and sexual violence, countering extremism, strengthening protection of women from violence, and meeting their humanitarian needs through a gender-sensitive approach.

Civil society efforts, particularly the Women's Solidarity Network, played a prominent role in advocating for the adoption of this plan through consultations with women leaders and civil society organizations in 2016, which resulted in the National Agenda for Women, Peace and Security.¹⁸

¹⁷ <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/yemen/>

¹⁸ <https://peacetrackinitiative.org/en/resources/103>



The National Action Plan to Implement UN Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security 2020- 2023

Despite the direct focus of the National Action Plan on protection issues, especially from sexual and gender-based violence, it failed to provide a sufficient institutional framework for delivering essential protection services to women. These services remain scattered among public sector institutions and do not cover all regions. Additionally, the National Action Plan did not mention any budget allocations or resources necessary for implementing its objectives.

An analysis by Peace Track Initiative¹⁹ revealed several shortcomings in the National Action Plan, including the absence of comprehensive gender analysis frameworks and the omission of important international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, which emphasized enhancing women's participation in all decision-making spheres, were also disregarded.

The National Action Plan demonstrated weaknesses in responding to women's actual needs, particularly regarding economic empowerment and social justice. It lacks clear commitments to compensate women affected by war or address emerging violations such as torture and rape. The plan also lacks mechanisms to protect human rights defenders and provide necessary support to women in civil society occupying decision-making positions. The implementation of the National Action Plan suffers from strategic ambiguity due to the lack of clear resource allocation and effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms, further compounding challenges in linking it to international humanitarian response plans.

Finally, when the National Plan for Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) was adopted, the impact of climate change on women was not considered, despite the plan's focus on addressing their humanitarian needs from a gender perspective. These needs, however, did not include protection from the effects of climate change or measures to safeguard women against its impacts.

¹⁹ <https://peacetrackinitiative.org/en/resources/109>



Chapter 2: Context of the Issue

Yemen is experiencing extreme climate changes that are impacting various sectors and communities. According to the World Bank, Yemen is among the countries most severely affected by climate change globally, due to its dry climate and scarce water resources. Over the past decade, the country has become increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather events, including severe floods, droughts, rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, and more frequent and intense storms²⁰.

The severity of these changes is evident when examining rainfall levels from last August. The central highlands, Red Sea coastal areas, and southern highlands witnessed unprecedented rainfall exceeding 300 mm, as reported in the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Early Warning Bulletin for the period between August 21 and 31, 2024.²¹

Key manifestations of climate change in Yemen include the following:

Changes in Rainfall Patterns:


Changes in rainfall patterns are one of the most significant indicators of climate change in Aden Governorate, particularly due to successive rainy cycles in 2019, 2020, and 2022, during which the region experienced heavy rainfall. However, due to the ongoing war, the infrastructure was ill-prepared to handle these rains, especially given the increasing phenomenon of unregulated construction in flood-prone areas. Districts such as Al-Mualla and Al-Qalua were severely impacted by the floods, which caused rockslides that damaged homes and blocked roads.²²

The floods significantly worsened the state of the infrastructure, particularly sewage, electricity, and water networks in some districts. For instance, during the floods that hit Aden in April 2020, the Sira (Crater) district and Al-Qati'a neighborhood were particularly affected.

20 <https://www.undp.org/ar/yemen/publications/tathyr-tghyr-almnakh-ly-altnmyt-albshryt-fy-alymn>

21 <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-agrometeorological-update-september-issue-ref-44-01-31-august-2023-enar>

22 Information from an interview with Prof. Dr. Marouf Aqaba, Geological Survey Consultant, Yemeni Ministry of Oil and Minerals.



The floods completely submerged the Al-Marsaba neighborhood, tragically leading to the death of a family of four. In Al-Mualla district, around 100 families were displaced due to the floods. As a result, electricity was cut off in the affected areas for 48 hours, and water services were halted. Moreover, the stagnant water left behind by the floods contributed to the spread of diseases such as dengue fever, malaria, and others.²³

□ Increased Frequency of Hurricanes and Atmospheric Depressions:

The increasing frequency of cyclones and tropical depressions is one of the most significant indicators of climate change in the Hadhramaut and Al Mahrah Governorates. The most notable cyclones and depressions that have impacted these areas include Cyclone Chapala in 2015, Cyclone Megh in 2015, Cyclone Sagar in 2018, Cyclone Mekunu in 2018, Cyclone Luban in 2018, a deep tropical depression in 2019, Cyclone Gati in 2020, and Cyclone Tig in 2023.

These cyclones, occurring between 2002 and 2023, have resulted in significant damage and loss of life. In Hadhramaut Governorate alone, more than 171 people lost their lives, around 69,500 people were displaced, and approximately 7,700 homes were destroyed. Additionally, the infrastructure suffered extensive damage, with hundreds of kilometers of roads and bridges affected. The region also experienced widespread water and electricity outages, and agricultural losses were estimated in the millions of dollars with each incident.²⁴

23 <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/yemen/yemen-flash-floods-flash-update-no-3-30-april-2020-enar>

24 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Anis Al-Salami, Director of Ash Shihri Chamber, Local Authority, Hadhramaut

Third: Magnitude of the Problem: (Manifestations of Impact)

Climate change directly or indirectly affects women, particularly concerning the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

□ **Direct Impacts:**

Climate change has a clear and immediate effect on women through disasters such as floods and hurricanes or rising temperatures that threaten their health and safety while destroying their homes. These conditions affect their access to food, water, and personal necessities while exposing them to diseases and epidemics like malaria and dengue fever.

Impact of Climate Change on Women's Protection:

Women are among the most vulnerable groups to the impacts of climate change globally, a reality that is particularly evident in Yemen. Environmental disasters, such as floods, have destroyed homes and agricultural lands, leading to a surge in mass displacement. This displacement has heightened women's vulnerability to gender-based violence, including sexual and domestic violence, and has contributed to rising rates of child marriage²⁵ as families face worsening conditions. In Yemen, which has endured more than a decade of war, over two million women live in displacement camps²⁶. With the intensification of climate change, incidents of violence against women, including sexual violence, have escalated as displacement becomes more frequent due to war and environmental disasters.

Displaced women face dual hardships—displacement and climate-induced disasters—which increase their susceptibility to various risks. They experience a severe lack of protection and are exposed to a wide range of dangers, including diseases and difficulties in accessing basic health services.

25 <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/girls-face-double-threat-of-climate-change-child-marriage->

26 <https://www.undp.org/ar/yemen/blog/almrat-alymnyt-mwajht-altghyr-almnakhy-walqyadt-nhw-mstqbl-alymn>

In displacement camps, women often lose physical and psychological security, and even their dignity, living in unsafe conditions far from adequate care. The spread of diseases like dengue fever and malaria, caused by stagnant water and poor sanitation services, presents an additional challenge for displaced women.

In one session, a group of marginalized women in Al Mahrah recounted how Cyclone Tig in 2023 destroyed their homes and lands, leaving them vulnerable to violence, harassment, and neglect of their specific needs during displacement. They shared their difficult experiences, describing how they were arbitrarily placed in school classrooms without consideration for their dignity.


Additionally, women from both Hadhramaut and Al Mahrah governorates described the severe health and psychological effects they experience each time they hear of an impending cyclone.

“Every mother in the house, as soon as she hears about the approaching cyclone, begins to worry and fear what will happen and what she should prepare,” participant from Ghaydah .

They bear the responsibility of protecting their families and preparing their homes to minimize damage during climate disasters. Other women in Al Mahrah with limited income explained that their homes, often poorly constructed, could not withstand the floods and collapsed, leading to their displacement. As a result, incidents of sexual harassment and extortion increased during their displacement, with some women being exploited for food and shelter.

In Hadhramaut, one participant shared that she was harassed and extorted by a taxi driver during heavy rainfall. In Al Mahrah, female farmers described how their burdens have multiplied due to the impact on their families' food security, as well as the discrimination and violence they face, which intensify with each successive climate disaster.²⁷ They explained that they are on the front lines, shouldering more responsibilities during these crises because of their primary roles in caring for their families.

²⁷https://south24.net/news/docs/Climate_Crisis_Impacts_on_Womens_Livelihoods_Yemen_Ar.pdf




Meanwhile, female fishermen in Aden, particularly those working along the Amran coast, reported that rising sea temperatures and the scarcity of fish near the shore have forced them to spend more time fishing. This has increased their workload, as well as their exposure to violence and harassment during their fishing trips.

□ Impact of Climate Change on Prevention:

Although the National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security aims to enhance prevention against violence and conflicts while providing protection for women, the risks posed by climate change remain largely overlooked despite their significant impact on women and society. The plan inadequately addresses the prevention of potential conflicts over natural resources or the mitigation of natural disasters. According to the outcomes of the focus group sessions, women in the three governorates have been notably affected by climate change, which has hindered their access to support, healthcare, and basic necessities such as food and water during disasters. In the long term, participants noted that recurring droughts, rising temperatures, and declining rainfall have exacerbated food insecurity, contributing to heightened tensions due to resource scarcity. Women are particularly affected as they are on the front lines of managing these crises.

The women participants affirmed that natural disasters, such as hurricanes and floods, have obstructed their access to preventive services and healthcare. One of the primary reasons for this is the lack of education and training on rescue and safety measures in the face of disasters. For instance, one woman mentioned that they lacked sufficient knowledge to implement safety procedures or even swim to reach shelters during floods, a situation exacerbated by cultural traditions that hinder women's education on how to cope with climate-related risks.



□ **Impact of Climate Change on Relief and Recovery:**

Recurring environmental disasters in Yemen have devastated infrastructure and hindered the delivery of relief and humanitarian aid, particularly in remote and rural areas directly impacted, with women bearing the brunt of the consequences. Participants from Al Mahrah Governorate reported that areas like Al Masila, one of the hardest-hit by the recent Cyclone Tig, do not receive regular aid and lack essential healthcare facilities.

This shortage of medical services has posed significant health risks, especially for women's reproductive health. Pregnant women face dire challenges due to the difficulty of accessing health centers, as road closures caused by floods and cyclones prevent transportation. Areas such as Al Masila, already geographically isolated, suffer from continued economic marginalization, which exacerbates the situation during disasters. The ongoing conflict in Yemen has also disrupted development, leaving vulnerable areas with inadequate infrastructure, unable to withstand the scale of such destruction.

Women in Al Mahrah shared their painful experiences following Cyclone Tig, which destroyed homes and properties, leaving many without their primary source of income—agricultural lands. In Hasween, for instance, the cyclones wiped out homes and livelihoods, displacing families and leaving them in a fragile economic and social position.

□ **Indirect Impacts:**

Climate change indirectly affects women through less apparent but nonetheless serious long-term consequences, such as increased poverty, reduced incomes, especially for women working in fishing and agriculture, rising migration and displacement of women who are often exposed to gender-based violence risks, and growing marginalization of women and their exclusion from decision-making related to climate adaptation and climate- crisis management.

□ **Impact of Climate Change on Women's Participation in the Peace Process:**


The effects of climate change further complicate violence against women and hinder their participation in decision-making and social life. As conflicts over scarce resources increase, women are often excluded from decision-making and crisis management processes, including negotiations over resource distribution. This marginalization diminishes their opportunities for political participation and involvement in peace and security decisions. In Yemen, where attention has shifted toward urgent resource management issues, women have been systematically sidelined from negotiations and influence since the war began ten years ago.

Environmental disasters such as floods, hurricanes, rising sea levels, and drought have exacerbated resource depletion, including the reduction of groundwater and agricultural yields, leading to increased competition for scarce resources.

Participants from focus sessions confirmed that Yemeni women continue to face marginalization in decision-making processes at both the family and community levels. Many women emphasized that their involvement in climate action negotiations is often restricted. For instance, a woman from Aden reported being consistently excluded from external climate-related events despite possessing the required expertise.

“I was excluded from many external climate action events, even though I have all the necessary expertise” - Participant from Aden

Women in Hadramaut also highlighted that local customs and traditions play a significant role in limiting their rights, including their right to own land or engage in key family and community decisions. This exclusion not only widens the gender gap but also restricts women's capacity to contribute to peacebuilding efforts and resolve conflicts over resources.



Second Theme: Public Policies Addressing the Issue

First: Legal Frameworks:

A) International Conventions:

Yemen has been a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since 1996 and to the Kyoto Protocol since 2008 as a non-Annex I party. The Environmental Protection Authority serves as the national focal point for the implementation of both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, working to meet its obligations under these frameworks. With support from international development partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank, and the Netherlands, Yemen has initiated the development of legislation, institutional, and policy frameworks to fulfill the requirements of these international agreements.

Additionally, Yemen ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change on November 23, 2016, which emphasizes the protection of human rights, particularly for vulnerable groups, in the context of climate change. The country is also a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified on May 30, 1984, which advocates for equality and justice. This treaty further supports the protection of women from the impacts of climate change and promotes their involvement in environmental and climate policy-making at both regional and international levels.

Yemen also adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security in December 2019, by developing a national action plan to implement its objectives.

□ National Legal Frameworks:

In 2009, Yemen established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change (IMCCC) to improve institutional coordination and provide political leadership on climate-related issues.

The IMCCC is supported by a technical committee composed of representatives from relevant agencies, which offers technical expertise to inform climate-related decision-making. Although Yemen's constitution does not contain explicit provisions on climate change, certain articles can be applied to protect women during disasters. For instance, Article 24 guarantees state care for citizens in disaster situations, and Article 55 ensures health care for all.

However, a mapping by the Peace Track Initiative²⁸ highlighted significant gaps in coordination and detail within Yemen's current environmental and climate policies. These legislations often overlook the specific needs of women and fail to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on them.

Best Practices in Addressing Climate Change Impacts on Women Security and Peace:

Case 1: IOM's "Women in Environmental Crises" Initiative

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has launched programs in climate-affected regions—including East and Southeast Asia, Central America, the Middle East, and West Africa—to address the displacement of women due to environmental crises. A central component, the "Women in Environmental Crises" project, strengthens women's resilience by improving access to health care, providing disaster management training, supporting displaced women, and promoting their participation in decision-making related to climate adaptation and peacebuilding.²⁹

28 <https://peacetrackinitiative.org/en/resources/135>

29 <https://www.iom.int/women-peace-and-security>

Case 2: Morocco's National Plan for Rural Women and Climate Resilience

Morocco is the only Arab country that has focused on rural women in its National Action Plan for WPS, according to the 2023 ESCW A report.³⁰

The plan aims to find ways to enhance the resilience of rural women through measures designed to mitigate the impacts of climate change on their livelihoods and well-being. This inclusive and gender-responsive approach, which integrates rural women's needs into national WPS and climate policies, is an often overlooked but critical dimension of climate resilience.

30 <https://www.unescwa.org/ar/publications/أجندة-مرأة-سلام-أمن-منطقة-عربية>

*Note: No official copy of the NAP has been obtained.

Chapter 3 : Paper's Key Findings

The focus group discussions across Aden, Hadramaut, and Al Mahrah revealed the clear and direct effects of climate change on Yemeni communities. Key impacts include rising temperatures, increased flooding, drought, and sandstorms. These extreme weather events have severely damaged infrastructure and worsened economic and health conditions, particularly affecting the most vulnerable groups such as women and children. The destruction of livelihoods, agriculture, and restricted access to basic resources like water and food have exacerbated the already dire circumstances in these regions.

Disproportionate Impact on Women and Marginalized Groups:

The sessions highlighted that the adverse effects of climate change disproportionately affect women, presenting them with additional challenges compared to men. During floods and other disasters, women struggle more due to their lack of swimming skills, and even when they survive, they face significant hurdles in accessing essential resources such as food, water, and healthcare. Climate change has also limited their opportunities for education and training, weakening their ability to manage resources and navigate crises. These findings underscore the need for a targeted focus on women and marginalized groups within public policies to mitigate the heightened risks they face.

Increased Burdens on Women's Health:

The research emphasized the additional responsibilities women bear during climate crises, such as protecting their families and preparing homes to minimize damage. These burdens impact their physical and mental health, particularly among women working in agriculture and fishing, whose responsibilities double as they struggle to secure the needs of their families. The additional pressure has severe consequences for women's overall well-being.



Rise in Gender-Based Violence:

The discussions revealed that climate change, including disasters like floods and displacement, has led to an increase in gender-based violence (GBV), particularly harassment against women in temporary shelters or during displacement. Women in fishing and agriculture reported heightened risk of harassment, confirming the correlation between climate change and the escalation of GBV in Yemen.

Direct Impacts on Women

Women face disproportionate suffering from climate-induced environmental disasters such as floods and hurricanes. These events destroy homes and agricultural lands, increase displacement rates, and expose women to heightened risks of GBV. Displaced women in Al Mahrah and Hadramaut have reported difficulties in accessing reproductive health services and increased instances of harassment and extortion during these crises.


In agriculture and fisheries, women experience added burdens as declining production in these sectors amplifies the pressure on them. In times of crisis, women in vulnerable positions are often exploited, including through practices like child marriage, which is used as a coping mechanism for worsening economic conditions.

Indirect Impacts on Women's Participation in the Peace Process:

Climate change has further marginalized women politically by excluding them from negotiations related to resource allocation and conflict management over dwindling natural resources. Focus group participants noted their limited participation in decision-making on climate action, with cultural traditions playing a significant role in diminishing women's influence in crisis management.

Conclusion:

This paper illustrates the numerous challenges Yemeni women face due to the impacts of climate change, further compounded by ongoing armed conflict and humanitarian crises. These challenges include both direct and indirect impacts, highlighting the urgent need to better integrate climate change considerations into Yemen's National Plan for Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).



Recommendations

The recommendations were put in the different WPS Agenda pillars, this was done in order to start the conversation on the important of synergies between Climate Action and WPS Agenda

1. Participation: Strengthening the Role of Women in Climate and Peace Processes

□ **Effective Participation in Negotiations:** Women must have meaningful roles in climate and peace negotiations, ensuring their voices are integrated into decisions on climate-related conflicts and peacebuilding strategies.

□ **Incorporating Climate Change in Peacebuilding:** Peacebuilding plans must explicitly consider the risks posed by climate change, as environmental factors often exacerbate conflict.


□ **Representation in Decision-Making Bodies:** Women should be represented in decision-making roles at all levels, including local councils, governmental bodies, and climate committees, which manage environmental challenges and conflicts.

□ **Promoting Leadership:** Promote women's leadership in addressing climate risks and peace processes, ensuring they play active roles in crisis response and adaptation strategies.

□ **Legal Framework Review:** Conduct a comprehensive review of relevant legal frameworks, with the inclusion of women, to ensure laws address women's needs during environmental and climate disasters.

2. Protection: Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Linked to Climate Change and Conflict

□ **Prioritizing Protection in Climate and Peace Policies:** Gender-based violence and women's protection must be core components of climate and peace policies.



□ **Creating Safe Spaces:** Establish secure environments for women in displacement camps and disaster-prone areas, along with legal frameworks to protect women from GBV during crises.

□ **Addressing Women's Needs:** Support women displaced by conflict and climate change by addressing their unique needs and vulnerabilities, including health and reproductive care.

□ **Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** Enhance local legal frameworks and community networks to combat GBV, ensuring accountability for exploitation or violence during climate-related crises.

3. Prevention: Tackling Root Causes of Conflict Exacerbated by Climate Change

□ **Climate-Sensitive Conflict Prevention:** Develop conflict prevention approaches that integrate climate resilience strategies, particularly in resource-scarce regions.


□ **Mediation over Natural Resources:** Conflicts over land, water, and other natural resources must be addressed as part of broader peacebuilding strategies, particularly where these conflicts arise due to climate change.

□ **Women's Communication Channels in Emergency Response:** Establish communication channels for women within meteorological offices, civil defense agencies, and disaster management bodies to ensure emergency plans are sensitive to women's needs.

□ **Raising Awareness:** Educate communities on the risks of climate change, with special focus on protecting women during environmental disasters.

□ **Capacity Building for Women:** Train women to confront and adapt to climate change, and equip them to serve as mediators in conflicts over natural resources.

□ **Legal Framework Review:** A comprehensive review of legal texts, involving women in drafting policies that consider their needs during climate crises.





4. Relief and Recovery: Gender-Responsive Climate Adaptation in Humanitarian Efforts

□ **Gender-Sensitive Relief Programs:** Humanitarian programs must be designed to meet women's needs, focusing on health care, shelter, and livelihood support during climate-related crises.


□ **Economic Recovery Support:** Provide economic recovery programs aimed at women affected by climate change and conflict, helping them regain economic stability.

□ **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:** Build infrastructure that is resilient to climate change and offer sustainable development programs that specifically benefit women, aiding post-conflict reconstruction.

□ **Integration of Climate Relief with Reconstruction:** Relief programs must integrate climate adaptation and disaster recovery, ensuring communities recover sustainably while preparing for future challenges.

□ **Empowering Women in Recovery Plans:** Women should have prominent roles in recovery and reconstruction, including through training programs to enhance their skills or economic support to compensate for losses caused by disasters. This empowerment strengthens women's ability to recover and contribute effectively to their communities.

□ **Comprehensive Climate Response:** Promote collaboration between humanitarian actors to deliver an integrated response that addresses both immediate disaster relief and long-term climate adaptation, building more resilient societies capable of facing future climate challenges.



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