



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and  
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly  
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and  
peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Hellenic Association of Political Scientists and Kallipatira, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

Climate change is undoubtedly one of the most pressing global challenges. Manifesting itself in ways such as extreme shifts in temperature, sea levels and precipitation – which, in turn, lead to severe environmental degradation – climate change is a real threat to all countries' sustainable development. Hundreds of thousands of climate-related deaths have been forecasted to occur annually from 2030 to 2050, due to consequences of climate change. The aforementioned consequences often intertwine with other crises, including armed conflicts and pandemics, resulting in the interaction of various risks' effects that further complicate response and recovery.

Disaster-related research and feminist analysis of women's experience in situations of humanitarian emergencies have pointed out the gendered dimension of vulnerability; women and girls bear the main consequences of a war, a natural disaster or a health pandemic due to gender inequalities and discrimination. Making use of their special consultative status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists and the Panhellenic Women's Sport Association KALLIPATIRA submit the present statement on gender-responsive climate action, addressing the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Economic disruption following climate-related emergencies tend to hit women more than men. A reason why this is the case can be found on statistics. Women make the majority of world's poor and are statistically expected to remain in poverty longer than men. At the same time, women are also faced with societal restrictions that deprive them from their right to equal education, work, mobility and information. Consequently, they are less likely to be included in efficient measures to deal with the impacts of climate change on their communities. More specifically, inequitable societal norms and policy restrictions observed in many states impede women farmers by limiting access to already limited productive land, energy, water and resources. Women comprise a significant percentage of global agricultural labour force. Climate-related disasters usually further deteriorate their constrained agricultural productivity reaffirming the importance of bridging the gender gap in the agricultural sector.

The Hellenic Association of Political Scientists and KALLIPATIRA encourage the expansion of women agricultural entrepreneurship and education. Agribusiness is growing as a promising field for women farmers that have the chance to create networks, sell their products and expand their range of activity beyond ensuring income for their household to also contribute to the food production of their countries. This is of considerable importance in the light of the increasing global demand for food and the food security crisis. Development interventions that aim to bring women closer to sustainable energy technologies have been proved effective in empowering women in countries such as Kenya and Rwanda. It arises that climate finance distribution such as green bond, both on a national and international level, should be more broadly conducted from a gendered perspective to enable the formalization of women's activity in green production, improve rural women's access to training, knowledge and information and enable the development of sustainable technologies that are adjusted to local needs and conditions.

Both the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists and KALLIPATIRA believe that embracing a local-turn approach is of great relevance given the valuable input that traditional knowledge offers for national and international climate governance. For example, the traditional role of women as caregivers is often expressed – especially in developing areas - in women's' engagement with water collection and

wood fuel. In this context they develop skills related to the better management of those resources and are seen more likely to possess generational wisdom, regarding early warnings of disasters and the mitigation of their impacts. By passing on that valuable knowledge, they contribute to the enhancement of the adaptability of their community. Thus, local knowledge should be reported and considered when risk assessment is conducted and resilience measures are taken.

Further reflecting on this observation stimulates a dynamic approach to gender mainstreaming. Acknowledging the importance of actual participation in climate action, the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists advocates the notion of active ownership. Despite their vulnerable state, women should not be solely considered as victims of the climate crisis but also as active agents and promoters of climate adaptation and mitigation. Women should be also considered as agents of change, as capable participants in the decision-making system, on a local, national and international level, and should be effectively engaged in the process of planning and management of resources. Impactful participation of women with diverse backgrounds in climate decision-making needs to be ensured. Inclusive Peace literature and practice could constitute an inspiring reference point regarding modalities of women inclusion in official negotiations. Including women in climate negotiations and policy making implies agency to influence terms under talks and determine their implementation on a gender-responsive manner.

Moving beyond financial security and women's inclusion in climate negotiations, physical and psychological wellbeing of women should be also prioritized when forming gender-responsive climate policies. Climate change effects have been also associated with increasing gender-based violence against women. In areas suffering from environmental degradation, lack of natural resources or a climate disaster, women and young girls are regularly exposed to risks such as domestic violence, forced prostitution, trafficking, sexual assault and rape in their effort to meet their basic needs. Additionally, as natural disasters affect food supply and production families resort to child marriages as a way to abate food scarcity and ensure survival. As the humanitarian emergencies become more and more frequent and extensive, including climate-related crises, gender-based violence should be expected to rise too – as proved by the recent outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic –. In other words, climate change gives prominence to the longstanding need of women and girls for access to protection and support mechanisms that can help them escape and recover from violent experiences. Risk management stakeholders should aim to disaster risk management and reduction on the basis of gender indicators and provide for gender disaster training projects.

Gender equality is with certainty a determining factor for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Thus, it inevitably constitutes a crucial component of climate crisis management and the development of a sustainable future for all. Women should be empowered to help in blueprinting a low-carbon future with equal rights and opportunities for all. Broadly speaking, the integration of women's rights and gender-responsive policies in all structures, institutions and mechanisms of global climate action should lead the way toward a more gender sensitive approach. A primary goal of national, local and supranational climate initiatives should be to lift the additional social, economic and political barriers that maintain gender inequalities and exacerbate the vulnerability of women, harming their potential to become active participants in climate decision-making and action.

The Hellenic Association of Political Scientists and the Panhellenic Women's Sport Association KALLIPATIRA are grateful for having had the opportunity to express their views on the topic of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.