

TAKING STOCK:
**SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS**
in **CLIMATE**
COMMITMENTS

AN ARAB STATES REVIEW

Sexual and reproductive health and rights and rights-based approaches
in national climate documents: **A review of Nationally Determined
Contributions since 2020 in the Arab States**



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FOREWORD



Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge of our time. As outlined in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, it is a major threat to the vision of human-centred sustainable development. Climate change has emerged as one of the most complex and determining factors in the Arab States region, with dire impacts on water scarcity, food security and human health. The Arab States region contains 14 of the world's 20 most water-stressed countries, and current climate projections show that, by 2025, the water supply in the region will be only 15 per cent of levels in 1960. The region is also a hotspot for many of the world's conflicts and crises, hosting internally and externally displaced persons. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events exacerbates the drivers of instability and conflict by speeding up resource depletion and accelerating the rise of social vulnerability.

In the Arab States, climate change-related extreme events such as droughts and flooding impact sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV) risks by exacerbating existing gender inequalities and unequal social and gender norms. We know that the impacts of climate change are not felt the same by everyone. As climate change impacts access to resources and livelihoods, women and girls, especially those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, face heightened risks of GBV, including harmful practices, while extreme weather events and disasters may disrupt their access to prevention and response services. In effect, climate change, gender equality and SRHR are inextricably linked, and SRHR has to be considered a key component of climate adaptation, resilience action and climate justice.

In 2015, 196 countries adopted the Paris Agreement with the ambition of tackling climate change through voluntary national commitments, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This study, commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with Queen Mary University of London, aims to provide an overview of the integration of SRHR, GBV, harmful practices and other related themes within NDCs in the Arab States. At the core of the work on climate adaptation and resilience are the rights-focused, gender-sensitive and people-centred approaches that underpinned this review.

As the NDCs support the countries in a transformative shift towards a more sustainable future, they have the potential to create greater social inclusion and address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls. The findings, thus, provide an entry point for dialogue and action on the intersections between climate change and SRHR and needed actions for more meaningful inclusion of SRHR in national climate policy and action that deliver for women and young people. This places UNFPA in a strong strategic position to support countries in the next round of NDC updates in 2025, to begin shortly in some countries.



This study also comes at a critical time as we are celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the ICPD in 2024. It will guide us as we strive to bring climate adaptation and resilience priorities for women and girls into the ICPD process and ICPD priorities into climate action.

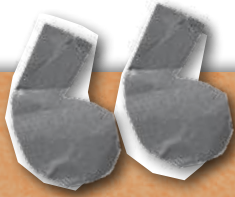
We must urgently empower women and young people to build resilient communities and safeguard their well-being and livelihoods in the face of climate change and its challenges for humanity. UNFPA will continue to deliver on its commitment to the communities we serve as we jointly strive towards achieving gender equality and fulfilling the human rights of all women and girls by creating a world where they can exercise their bodily autonomy and live up to their full potential, free from violence.



Laila Baker
Regional Director, UNFPA Arab States Regional Office

Abbreviations

ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
COP	Conference of the Parties
GAP	Gender action plan
GBV	Gender-based violence
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDP	Internally displaced person
iNDC	Interim Nationally Determined Contribution
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual and more
NAP	National adaptation plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund



The unprecedented emergencies of the climate crisis, pollution, desertification and biodiversity loss, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact of new and ongoing conflicts, have accelerated and intensified into widespread and interlinked crises that affect us all.

BUT NOT EQUALLY.

Everywhere, women and girls face the greatest threats and the deepest harm. Everywhere, women and girls are taking action to confront the climate and environmental crises. And everywhere, women and girls continue to be largely excluded from the rooms where decisions are taken.



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES,
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL



INTRODUCTION



Climate change has lasting impacts on human health and disproportionately affects women and girls.

Women, girls and marginalized groups who are largely dependent on natural resources for livelihoods are among the hardest hit by extreme weather patterns. These weather patterns limit their access to food, water, shelter, education and access to essential health services, including those that address sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender-based violence (GBV) and preventing harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Emerging evidence shows the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on women, girls and marginalized groups and their SRHR as well as on GBV and harmful practices. A number of studies find that heat has an adverse impact on maternal and newborn health outcomes, increasing the risk of still-birth (Kuehn and McCormick, 2017; Rylander, Odland and Sandanger, 2013; Olson and Metz, 2020; Poursafa, Keikha and Kelishadi, 2015; Cil and Cameron, 2017; Pacheco, 2020; Yüzen and others, 2023). Additionally, increased poverty and food insecurity driven by climate-related loss of livelihoods are impacting maternal health (IPCC, 2014). Air pollution (Bekkar and others, 2020), climate-related diseases and food insecurity also have adverse impacts on maternal and

neonatal health outcomes, which can be more severe for populations facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Climate-related events can jeopardize access to clean water and essential supplies for safe births and personal hygiene. One example of the adverse impacts of climate change on women in the Arab States is the multi-year drought that started in Syria in 2007 and led to the rural-urban migration of more than a million people, primarily men, seeking alternative livelihoods. The increased unemployment and poverty that ensued have been linked to varying degrees to the civil war that broke out in 2011 (Gleick, 2014; Kelley, 2015; Werrell, Femia and Sternberg, 2015). This forced many women to stay behind and suddenly become heads of household, where, unable to own land in their own name, they faced food insecurity, malnourishment and the eventual withdrawal of girls from school (CARE International, 2021). Waterborne illness, food insecurity and malnutrition present great risks for pregnant women, often resulting in adverse pregnancy outcomes (IPCC, 2022).

The risks of GBV and child marriage are known to increase in times of stress and scarcity and following extreme weather events and disasters (McLeod, Barr and Rall, 2019; Pope and others, 2022), and climate change exacerbates the drivers of child marriage.



GBV is a violation of human rights and has long-lasting impacts, including limiting women's ability to build resilience to climate change, impeding the capacity of survivors and their dependents to proactively and positively respond to and manage ongoing challenges and crises (Le Masson and others, 2019). Additionally, climate-related loss or change of livelihoods, as well as displacement and migration, increase risks of GBV and harmful practices, including child marriage and female genital mutilation (Ahmed, Haq and Bartiaux, 2019; McLeod, Barr and Rall, 2019; Pope and others, 2022).

Climate-related emergencies cause major disruptions in access to health services and life-saving commodities, including contraception (IPAS, 2022). The challenge climate change poses around access to SRHR services will be keenly felt by those who already face discrimination and marginalization (e.g. women, adolescents

and youth, LGBTQIA+ adolescents and youth, migrants, IDPs, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and coastal and rural populations), and in areas where access to services may already be limited (e.g. humanitarian settings and areas affected by conflict).

Failing to support the achievement of the full range of SRHR and prevention of GBV and harmful practices will hamper women's and girls' capacity to engage in climate action and policymaking and has direct implications for the achievement of human-centred sustainable development as outlined in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and reinforced by the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25. Gaps in the realization of SRHR can prevent women and girls from pursuing education, hinder livelihoods and reduce their ability to participate in household and community decision-making.





Girls forced to marry before completing their education – and those denied access to education, literacy and public life – may experience limited ability to receive and act on climate information and alerts from disaster early warning systems. The realization of SRHR and the right to be free from violence, particularly for those already facing discrimination, can empower people to exercise their agency and engage in climate action. For those affected by intersecting inequalities, realizing SRHR can allow marginalized groups' needs and priorities to be represented in climate action and policy processes.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report found that “the vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change differs substantially among and within regions [...] driven by patterns of intersecting socioeconomic development” and other structural inequalities (IPCC, 2022). These ongoing patterns of inequity are affecting women, girls and marginalized groups disproportionately.

It also recognizes that the current efforts to reduce global emissions need to be accompanied by scaled-up adaptation actions that aim at strengthening resilience at the local, national and global levels to support women, girls and the most vulnerable groups from the inevitable impacts of climate change.

Recent reviews of the inclusion of SRHR and gender issues in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) documents, including a review conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with Queen Mary University of London in 2021, identified significant gaps in national adaptation response and financing in critical sectors, such as health systems, protection systems and disaster risk reduction plans (McMullen and others, 2021). The report found that even where gender dimensions are incorporated and elaborated in the national climate documents, they lack clear adaptation actions and require resources as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure successful implementation. The review identified important gaps in the national climate policy integration of SRHR and GBV issues and in the identification of gender-transformative approaches that address the root causes of inequalities in various contexts.

To ensure no one is left behind, it is critical to review national climate policies, including the NDCs, and explore and address gaps related to SRHR and GBV. It is critical to engage with SRHR and recognize that it includes some of the most stigmatized and deprioritized yet fundamental dimensions of life. This is where we often see an acute concentration of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. If the climate crisis is a crisis of inequality, SRHR represents a key intersection in need of attention and investment. This is essential to building a better and more equal world.



Photo: © UNFPA Somalia





Photo: © UNFPA/Paula Seijo

UNFPA has committed to three transformative results by 2030: (1) ending preventable maternal deaths; (2) ending unmet need for family planning; and (3) ending GBV and harmful practices. The rapid pace of climate change over this decade will make each of these transformative results more difficult to achieve. UNFPA supports governments to ensure the incorporation of SRHR and GBV issues in the design of national climate policies and solutions, with women, young people and vulnerable groups at the heart of developing innovative solutions to improve climate resilience. This regional overview of references related to SRHR, GBV and harmful practices, health, gender, youth, human rights and population dynamics provides insight into the needs, priorities and gaps of countries around

SRHR in climate policies. This knowledge informs cross-country learning and supports action towards inclusion and representation of groups that are disproportionately affected.

The impacts of climate change in the Arab States

The IPCC Sixth Assessment report highlights the Arab States as one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change impacts as it has the highest levels of water scarcity globally (IPCC, 2022). The region contains 14 of the world's 20 most water-stressed countries (UNDP, 2013), and current climate projections show that, by 2025, the water supply in the Arab States will be only 15 per cent of levels in 1960 (UNDP, 2018).



The IPCC estimates the Middle East and North Africa will see an increase in temperature of up to 2°C in the next 15–20 years, which, alongside lower precipitation levels, will result in a reduction in water run-off by 20–30 per cent in most of the region by 2050 (Middle East Institute, 2021).



Climate change is threatening food security as agricultural production is intricately linked to water availability. In 2019, more than 50 million people in the region were chronically malnourished, mostly in conflict-affected states and among displaced populations (FAO and others, 2021), and the region is not on track to reach the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of zero hunger. Conflict, weak food systems and fluctuating oil prices are cited as the main reasons for the slow progress in nutrition SDG targets (FAO and others, 2021).

The Arab States region is a hotspot for many of the world's conflicts and crises, hosting both internally and externally displaced people. In 2020, Arab countries hosted around 41.4 million migrants and refugees, representing almost 15 per cent of international migrants and refugees worldwide (ESCWA and others, 2021). In addition, the Middle East and North Africa hosted 15.7 million IDPs, which constituted 26 per cent of the global number of IDPs, the second highest concentration following sub-Saharan Africa (International Organization for Migration, 2021). These

numbers continue to increase due to ongoing and new crises. The causes of conflict, food insecurity and vulnerability to climate impacts are deeply interlinked, and climate change only exacerbates the drivers of conflict by speeding up resource depletion and accelerating the rise of social vulnerability. For example, climate change-related desertification has expanded in the Arab States, significantly increasing local populations' vulnerability (UNDP, 2018).

Income levels in the Arab States vary widely, with a mix of economies and both high and low rankings on the Human Development Index (HDI). The region is home to several of the world's poorest nations, which lack the financial resources required to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Arab States registered the world's highest unemployment rate at 12 per cent in 2022. More than one third of people in the Arab States live in poverty, which is expected to reach 36 per cent by 2024 (ESCWA, 2022). The repercussions of the war in Ukraine differ significantly for countries within the region, with some oil-exporting countries benefiting from higher oil prices. In contrast, oil-importing countries suffer from these prices, supply shortages and reductions in international aid and tourism (ESCWA, 2022).

Sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and harmful practices in the Arab States

Cultural, economic and social norms and traditions play a vital role in shaping sexual and reproductive health in a society. The Arab States represent a wide diversity of income levels, cultural norms and political systems. As well, continuous political unrest, armed conflict and resulting humanitarian crises overwhelm health-care systems while shifting priorities away from SRHR and GBV.





Furthermore, a wide assortment of health systems and providers means the provision of and access to SRHR and GBV services is highly heterogeneous across the region. One assessment of 11 Arab countries found that only Morocco and Oman provide the vast majority of essential SRHR services at the primary care level (Kabakian-Khasholian and others, 2020). This is reflected in health outcomes, as the maternal mortality ratio varies widely between countries, from seven deaths per 100,000 live births in Kuwait to 621 deaths in Somalia (WHO and others, 2023). This discrepancy must be addressed to achieve the first UNFPA transformative result: ending preventable maternal deaths.

In terms of the second transformative result, ending the unmet need for contraception, there is still a long way to go to achieve this in the Arab States. Family planning is critical for the health of women and their families, but 10 per cent of all women and girls aged 15–49 years and 15 per cent of married or in-union women in the region have an unmet need for family planning (UNFPA, 2022), with rates as high as 40.2 per cent in Libya (Kabakian-Khasholian and others, 2020).

Ending GBV and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child marriage, is the third transformative result. The Arab States region has shown rapidly declining rates of child marriage compared to other regions of the world. However, current regional rates show that about one in six girls are still married before the age of 18 (UNFPA, 2020). There is now increased concern that the fragility resulting from the multiple conflicts in the region may also significantly impact rates of child marriage. Nine of the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are considered fragile states. In January 2022, 17 League of Arab States members endorsed the Arab Declaration 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 (UN Women, 2022). The Arab Declaration recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the impacts of GBV in a region where 37 per cent of women have experienced physical or sexual partner violence, higher than the global average (UNFPA, 2020).

Climate action and the Nationally Determined Contributions

In 2016, 196 countries adopted the Paris Agreement, a legally binding agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that sets a target of keeping the rise in global temperature in the twenty-first century below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit it further to 1.5°C. As signatories, each country is required to prepare, communicate and maintain NDCs. Submitted every five years, NDCs are a key national climate policy document and include a description of how a country will work to mitigate and adapt to climate change in their territory. They lay out actions to address climate challenges at the national level and usually include sections on actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change through emission reduction as well as chapters on how to strengthen the resilience to climate change of individuals, communities or systems through adaptation actions. In 2020 and 2021, countries submitted the second round of NDCs showing progress from earlier NDCs, reflecting the highest possible ambition for each country, and including plans for monitoring and evaluation. Another round of NDC submissions will take place in 2025. As NDCs are required by all nations who are signatories to the Paris Agreement, they provide an opportunity to gain an overview of climate plans and challenges in each territory and an indication of levels of ambition over time. They also allow for cross-country and regional comparison.



METHODOLOGY



This report relays the findings of an analysis of the inclusion of SRHR and related thematic areas in NDCs from the Arab States published in and after 2020.

It adopts the broad definition of SRHR set out in the Guttman-Lancet report of 2018 (Guttman-Lancet Commission, 2018), which describes SRHR as a set of rights and essential services that meet public health and human rights standards. This package includes GBV. The review accounted for any references to SRHR and GBV and harmful practices, but also explored five other SRHR-related thematic areas: (1) health; (2) gender; (3) human rights, participation and vulnerable groups; (4) youth; and (5) population dynamics. These thematic areas may serve as important entry points for strengthening SRHR in climate action and achieving rights-based and gender-transformative change. These five related thematic areas were included in this review as they intersect with women's health and rights issues by nature of their definition and content and are relevant to addressing the unequal and disproportionate impacts of climate change on particular groups.

The research team reviewed references to **health** as health is core to SRHR and a component of the well-being of women and girls as it relates to their experience of violence, and because unequal access to and achievement of good health are also issues of justice and inequality. We reviewed references to **gender**

as gender mainstreaming and participation are key in achieving gender equality and access to SRHR services, including access to services for people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). In addition, we analysed any reference or considerations for **human rights**, as the realization of SRHR and the right to be free from violence requires human rights-based approaches, which means that all forms of discrimination must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. In this context, we also reviewed to what extent vulnerable groups were acknowledged or included in the NDCs. We reviewed any references to participation, empowerment and meaningful inclusion of **youth** due to their critical role as agents of change for SRHR in climate action. Finally, we included any references to **population dynamics** such as population size, migration and urbanization and assessed if these were presented in alignment with the human rights-based principles set out in the ICPD Programme of Action.

This systematic process of content analysis of SRHR and GBV and harmful practices and the five thematic areas was performed for each NDC, using the method developed for the review of 50 NDCs submitted before 2020 (McMullen and others, 2021).



The content analysis was conducted in three stages. In the first stage, references to all five thematic areas were gathered from each NDC into a spreadsheet. In the second stage, content specific to thematic areas was grouped together to identify the range of concerns or ambitions identified across countries in relation to the theme, i.e. health or gender. Finally, a country and cross-country analysis was undertaken to identify gaps and good practices in the NDCs in relation to each thematic area.

The content analysis focused on the extent to which the thematic areas were included in the NDC report. References to the thematic areas in the analysis may appear as part of a contextual aspect in the country's situational analysis, the acknowledgement of the impacts of climate change on that specific dimension or the provision of a policy or intervention response.

The region covered by the UNFPA Arab States Regional Office comprises 20 countries; however, only 15 were reviewed, as Algeria, Djibouti, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen did not have an NDC or an update published in 2020. See appendix 1 for a full list of countries and versions of NDCs included for review. The United Arab Emirates' second NDC, published in December 2020, was reviewed rather than the updated version published in September 2022, as that was published after the analysis was completed. For Sudan, an interim NDC (iNDC) published in May 2021, partially updating the country's first NDC, was reviewed.

To ensure the inclusion of youth perspectives, UNFPA selected six young people who were members of either the UNFPA Joint Youth Working Group on SRHR and Climate Change or YOUNGO (the youth constituency to UNFCCC) and were experienced in the NDC or a similar development processes. They were based in the five regions where UNFPA works. The youth reviewer in the

Arab States produced a short report providing his perspective on the NDCs and the climate crisis in their region as well as a reflection on how climate change impacts SRHR. This perspective is presented in the Youth Report section of this publication (see pages 24–26).

The results of this report will provide an opening for dialogue at regional, national and local levels in the Arab States region on the ways that climate change and SRHR and GBV intersect and identify entry points for climate action, highlighting gaps as well as opportunities and best practices to allow for greater and more meaningful inclusion of aspects of SRHR and GBV in climate policy. This includes identifying and focusing on region-specific entry points in national climate actions to ensure no one is left behind and to address underlying patterns of vulnerability and inequalities.

Limitations

NDCs relay a nation's priority actions in responding to climate change and are limited in their ability to unpack specific sectoral actions. Related national climate policy documents will contain more detailed action related to the thematic areas described in this report. Readers are encouraged to keep this in mind when reading the report. Not all countries have submitted an NDC since 2020. For those countries that submitted their first NDC before 2020, an updated NDC was included in the analysis. As we included only the most recent NDC submitted in or after 2020, it is possible that some information included in the first NDC may not have been relayed into the updated, second or interim NDC, and therefore have not been included in the analysis. Furthermore, many other documents relevant to SRHR and GBV were not included in the analysis, such as other national climate policies or gender action plans (GAPs), which are commonly referenced in NDCs. Our analysis is limited to the information included in the NDCs.



KEY FINDINGS BY THEMATIC AREA

The climate emergency imperils progress towards all our global goals, including achieving sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. Shifting temperatures and other climate consequences may lead to pregnancy losses or low birth weight. Natural disasters often disrupt provision of contraceptive services, which can lead to an increase in unintended pregnancies. Climate-induced disasters can also upend programmes to respond to gender-based violence, and where people are displaced, child marriages and other harmful practices also tend to rise.

DR. NATALIA KANEM,
UNFPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence and harmful practices

Of the 15 NDCs reviewed, five include issues related to SRHR and GBV (see figure 1). The majority of these references acknowledge the impacts of climate change on SRHR and GBV, while only a few outline specific interventions and/or initiatives to strengthen resilience to climate change through SRHR or GBV services. There are three references to maternal health, specifically to family health, and three references to GBV. One reference highlights the importance of SRHR information and awareness. None of the NDCs reviewed have a reference to harmful practices.

Maternal and newborn health

Three of the NDCs reviewed make some reference to maternal and newborn health, specifically in relation to supporting the capacity of the health workforce to deliver family health programmes. Tunisia includes a health adaptation measure to raise awareness of women's reproductive health, alongside a measure to improve regional disparities in human resources in the country in access to mother and child health programmes (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 66). While Sudan and Iraq both state the need to support family health programmes, these are wider in scope than maternal and newborn health programmes and are broader health-related adaptation measures (the Sudan iNDC, 2021: p. 8; Iraq NDC, 2021: p. 9).

FIGURE 1: Number of Nationally Determined Contributions that integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence and harmful practices issues out of the 15 Nationally Determined Contributions reviewed

5

**countries integrate
sexual and reproductive
health and rights**

out of **15**
**Nationally Determined
Contributions**

Other references to sexual and reproductive health and rights

Tunisia specifically references the importance of SRHR information and awareness (see table 1).

TABLE 1: Key references to sexual and reproductive health and rights in Nationally Determined Contributions in the Arab States	
Tunisia*	<p>“Measure 1: Improve health services and benefits for women through prevention, through educational promotion, the capacitation of the professionals involved in the organization of awareness campaigns for productive health and reproductive health of women, as well as to prevent and support women against domestic and gender-based violence.” (p. 66)</p> <p>“Measure 2: Specify adequate human resources policies in the health sector, able to reduce regional disparities, particularly in terms of access to health care, and rethink the programming of specialties and the assignment of specialists and mother and child health programs in the interior regions of the country.” (p. 66)</p>
Iraq*	<p>“Raise health awareness among communities exposed to climate change-related diseases and support the health and family programme.” (p. 9)</p>
The Sudan	<p>“Increasing health resilience to climate change related diseases and reducing the associated mortality by supporting families and school health programmes.” (p. 8)</p>

* Quotes from this NDC, in the table and elsewhere in the report, have been translated from its source language into English.

Gender-based violence

GBV is a key issue in the region that intersects with climate change, as referenced by three countries (see table 2). The NDC of Somalia states that 70–80 per cent of IDPs and camp-based refugees are women who are exposed to GBV (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 16), while both Jordan and Tunisia include measures to support women exposed to GBV in the health and social protection sector (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 53; Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 66).

TABLE 2: Key references to gender-based violence from the review of 15 Nationally Determined Contributions in the Arab States region	
Tunisia*	<p>“Measure 1: Improve health services and benefits for women through prevention, through educational promotion, the capacitation of the professionals involved in the organization of awareness campaigns for productive health and reproductive health of women, as well as to prevent and support women against domestic and gender-based violence.” (p. 66)</p>
Somalia	<p>“Climate change has exacerbated gender inequality in Somalia, with women and children affected more by climate change effects due to lack of access and control of critical resources, biased labour division and absence from decision-making processes from households to the national level. For example, reports indicate that 70–80% of those in IDP and refugee camps are women, who are exposed to gender based violence.” (p. 16)</p>
Jordan	<p>“Improving the existing social protection system to cope with climate change consequences and serve Jordanian segments of society including the poor, orphans, elderly, abused women and children among other vulnerable groups and individuals.” (p. 53)</p>

* Quotes from this NDC, in the table and elsewhere in the report, have been translated from its source language into English.



Harmful practices

None of the NDCs reviewed in the region mention harmful practices, despite global evidence pointing to the impacts of climate change in exacerbating drivers of child marriage (UNICEF, 2023; Pope and others, 2022). Evidence from the Arab States region highlights that socioeconomic fragility resulting from the multiple conflicts in the region, which are strongly related to climate impacts, can also be a risk factor for child marriage in certain contexts (UNFPA, 2020). There is very scarce and limited evidence on the impacts of climate change on female genital mutilation, but evidence that exists from Kenya suggests that climate impacts perpetuate female genital mutilation by widening gender inequalities and disempowerment of women and girls through a climate-related loss of livelihoods (Esho, 2021).



Health

Some reference to health was found in all 15 Arab States NDCs (see figure 2). Five countries describe increases in mortality due to climate change, most often linked to extreme weather events. Oman describes increasing numbers, duration and intensity of tropical cyclones, one of which in 2018 impacted 150,000 people and killed seven (Oman NDC, 2021: p. 11), as well as the ongoing risk to life in parts of Oman where “climate change is likely to cross the survivability threshold” (Oman NDC, 2021: p. 4). Jordan describes how it has been affected by climate-related disasters such as flash floods, landslides, rock falls and droughts, which are becoming more frequent and causing loss of lives every year (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 48). The United Arab Emirates provides an example of an adaptation measure to prevent mortality from heatstroke from rising temperatures by instigating a mandatory midday break for all outdoor labourers during peak summer and the introduction of a “Safety in Heat” programme (the United Arab Emirates NDC, 2020: p. 10).

FIGURE 2: Number of Nationally Determined Contributions that integrate health issues out of the 15 Nationally Determined Contributions reviewed

15

integrate health

out of **15**

Nationally Determined
Contributions

All 15 NDCs reference extreme weather events, and disaster risk reduction is a key theme in health-related adaptation plans. Countries commonly reference adopting and implementing strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030). The Sendai Framework, endorsed by the United Nations, recognizes that the state has a primary role to reduce disaster risk but that the responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders, including local government and the private sector. Pointing out a key intersection between gender and health, Lebanon, Somalia and Tunisia all acknowledge that women are more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters and describe measures to ensure gender mainstreaming of women’s concerns in disaster risk reduction. Lebanon commits to making disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation action gender-responsive (Lebanon NDC, 2020: p. 7); Tunisia mentions facilitating women’s access to official alert management mechanisms and disseminating health awareness information linked to the daily lives of women (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 65); and Somalia plans to strengthen the adaptive capacity of its most vulnerable groups (women, children, older persons and displaced persons) in disaster preparedness and management by strengthening social safety nets (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 10). Early warning systems

are also commonly included (nine NDCs) as an important tool to improve resilience to extreme weather events and to reduce injury, sickness and deaths (Egypt NDC, 2022: p. 27).

Water and food insecurity are prominent health-related themes in the NDCs, referenced by 14 and 12 countries, respectively. Most countries describe the negative impacts of climate change on water and food security, such as the State of Palestine explaining how the impacts of water insecurity may lead to significant health impacts on the population, including dehydration and heat stress (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 15), and Jordan describing how the decreased availability of water may lead to the consumption and use of contaminated water (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 46). Climate-related food and water insecurity leading to conflict and displacement are also referenced in various NDCs; for example, Somalia describes climate change-related droughts and floods causing the loss of agricultural production and destruction of livelihoods, which contribute to the number of IDPs and resultant humanitarian crises (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 5). Many countries include water and food security as adaptation pillars; however, only a few included budget lines for these adaptations (Egypt NDC, 2022: p. 33).

Most (11) countries reference climate-related diseases. Jordan, Morocco and the State of Palestine all describe the climate-related risk of the introduction and emergence of diseases and the consequent modification of water, air and food quality (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 46; Morocco NDC, 2021: p. 21; the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 13). Iraq highlights the vulnerability of certain groups to diseases by describing how “heat waves, droughts and sudden heavy rainfall has led to a marked increase in the number of asthma cases, particularly among children and the elderly, and the spread of diseases and cancers” (Iraq NDC, 2021: p. 6).



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Although no country makes specific linkages to diseases impacting SRHR or maternal health, the State of Palestine provides a key indicator that includes a gender aspect for at least a “30% increase in the awareness of people, particularly women, by 2030 about measures that they can take to help prevent major diseases related to water, sanitation and food” (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 50).

Ten countries reference the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly in relation to how the pandemic has affected the economic health of the country, and the subsequent uncertainty about the fallout of the crisis. Iraq goes further to speak about how COVID-19 has affected the country’s ability to address the risks of climate change now that most available resources have been diverted to dealing with the pandemic, leaving a significant burden on the health sector (Iraq NDC, 2021: p. 5). Tunisia describes how the pandemic has impacted the country’s economy and vulnerable groups, particularly women,

and how the health crisis has exacerbated existing inequalities (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 29–30). However, the State of Palestine (2021: p. 8) and Jordan (2021: p. 20) describe COVID-19 as an opportunity to “build back better” with greener post-COVID recovery approaches. Jordan describes how the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the high risk of spreading infectious zoonotic diseases from animals to humans through direct interaction under conditions of climate change and therefore highlights the importance of ensuring self-sufficiency of food security against similar emergency conditions and possible emerging pandemics (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 42, 45). The United Arab Emirates describes plans to strengthen surveillance of infectious diseases and their link to climate- and environment-related factors (the United Arab Emirates NDC, 2020: p. 10).

The health sector is commonly recognized (nine NDCs) as vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. To combat this, strengthening health systems and increasing health surveillance are key themes of health-related adaptation. A key action in the health sector for the State of Palestine is to improve the capacity for disease prevention by training 300 health professionals in disease prevention by 2025, and by ensuring a 50 per cent increase in the capacity of the Ministry of Health to monitor the safety of water, food and sanitation by 2030 (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 13).

Five countries refer to the importance of health information and awareness campaigns to build resilience in the health sector. For example, both the Sudan iNDC and Iraq NDC describe the importance of raising the health awareness of communities in areas vulnerable to climate change-related diseases (the Sudan iNDC, 2021: p. 8; Iraq NDC, 2021: p. 9), while Morocco describes developing community training programmes aimed at health personnel at risk of climate change impacts (Morocco NDC, 2021: p. 27).



Photo: © UNFPA Syria



Gender

The majority of countries (11) make some reference to gender (see figure 3). However, the detail of gender references within the NDCs varies considerably. Some mention the term gender without further consideration, while others address gender as a real focus within policies, initiatives and indicators.

Only seven NDCs recognize women as disproportionately vulnerable to climate change, and of these only Jordan, Somalia and the State of Palestine describe specific vulnerabilities. As mentioned in the previous section on SRHR, and demonstrating the cross-cutting nature of the thematic focus areas, Somalia describes how climate change has exacerbated gender inequality in the country, with women and children more affected due to lack of access and control

of critical resources, biased labour division, and their exclusion from decision-making processes that extends from the household to the national level (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 12). Jordan describes how women are particularly disadvantaged as their access to information and knowledge is frequently constrained (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 24). The State of Palestine acknowledges that the climate crisis is intensifying existing vulnerabilities by intersecting with multiple social, economic and political inequalities (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 30). It also describes specific vulnerabilities, such as how carbon taxes could have greater impacts on women if they are imposed on energy products for domestic use on which women tend to spend a higher share of their disposable income (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 36).

FIGURE 3: Number of Nationally Determined Contributions that integrate gender issues out of the 15 Nationally Determined Contributions reviewed

11

integrate gender

out of 15

Nationally Determined Contributions



Nine NDCs include a reference to gender mainstreaming or gender responsiveness, and while some mentioned specific examples, actions or policies, others simply state this as an area of importance. Jordan includes an analysis of the current and potential impacts of climate change on women as an adaptation measure (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 53–54), while the State of Palestine provides a key performance indicator that “by 2030, at least an additional 30% of the population, particularly women, [are] aware of measures that they can take to support adaptation and mitigation efforts” (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 30).

Women’s participation is mentioned in eight NDCs. For most, this is a statement of women’s participation in policy development or action. However, the United Arab Emirates describes efforts made to engage women in climate decision-making and governance, which has resulted in women now having a high representation in the United Arab Emirates climate and energy community (the United Arab Emirates NDC, 2020: p. 14). Tunisia describes supporting the full participation of women to become key agents of change, consumers, small and medium business owners and key decision makers (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 66).

Four NDCs reference capacity-building and women’s empowerment, with agriculture and energy common means of achieving this.

The Sudan describes measures to increase women’s resilience to the impacts of climate change through women’s saving groups, diversified livelihood sources and income and food opportunities such as household gardens (the Sudan iNDC, 2021: p. 8; see box 1), while Somalia intends to enhance participation of women in activities related to adaptation and environmental conservation in order to empower them and enhance their adaptive capacity (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 11). Tunisia describes its plan to support the empowerment of women and young people through tourism (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 66), and Iraq mentions the use of technology to support rural women and reduce poverty (Iraq NDC, 2021: p. 8).

Women and agriculture are referenced more broadly in six NDCs. Although most of these references are more generalized adaptation measures, Morocco gives an example of an initiative to help women’s cooperatives through its Cacti Planting Program, and provides an estimated cost of US\$ 3.1 million for this initiative (Morocco NDC, 2021: p. 31). The State of Palestine also provides a concrete implementation action for 50 per cent of farms to apply gender-sensitive climate-smart agriculture by 2040, alongside stating an indicative cost of US\$ 229 million (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 53).

The interim Nationally Determined Contribution of Sudan highlights the importance of targeting capacity-building for women as a vulnerable group:

BOX 1:

“Empowerment of women facing increased occurrence of severe droughts and degradation of natural resources, scarcity in water and loss of livelihood sources:

- women empowerment and promotion of gender mainstreaming approach in all interventions
- women saving groups, women income and food opportunities (household garden), diversified livelihood sources.” (p. 8)

Population dynamics, human mobility and urbanization

Most countries (13) make some reference to population dynamics (see figure 4). Eight countries reference migration, urbanization or human displacement (see figure 5). The State of Palestine describes how rapid population growth and urbanization contribute

to cities' sensitivity to climate-related impacts, such as poor road infrastructure (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 19). Morocco provides an example of an intervention, the Date Palm Program, which aims to alleviate the rural exodus of young people at an estimated cost of US\$ 353 million (Morocco NDC, 2021: p. 30; see box 2).

FIGURE 4:

Number of Nationally Determined Contributions that integrate population dynamics issues out of the 15 Nationally Determined Contributions reviewed

13

include references to population dynamics

out of **15**

Nationally Determined Contributions

FIGURE 5:

Number of Nationally Determined Contributions that integrate migration and urbanization issues out of the 15 Nationally Determined Contributions reviewed

8

include references to migration, urbanization and human mobility

out of **15**

Nationally Determined Contributions

The Nationally Determined Contribution of Morocco describes an initiative to reduce the migration of young people from rural areas:

BOX 2:

“Date Palm Program (Slice 1): Plantation of 3 million date palms in order to improve the productivity of the oases and to fight against desertification and the rural exodus of young people. Cost US\$ 353 million.” (p. 30)

Note: This text has been translated from French into English.

Four countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Somalia) refer to conflict-induced human displacement. The NDC of Somalia notes how climate change-related droughts, intermittent floods and desert locust infestations result in loss of livestock and agricultural production and, consequently, the loss of many livelihoods, as more than 70 per cent of the population are employed directly or indirectly in agriculture, which continues to increase the number of IDPs and resultant humanitarian crises (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 1).

Lebanon states that it has been dealing with a crippling humanitarian crisis due to the displaced Syrian population since 2011 (Lebanon NDC, 2020: p. 1). Jordan also describes the unprecedented influxes of refugees due to the Iraqi and Syrian crises (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 6).

Increasing the resilience of IDPs is a key population dynamics-related adaptation measure, reflected in the NDC of Somalia, which aims to enhance awareness of the impacts of climate change in the context of human settlements, promoting sustainable land management systems and climate-sensitive human settlement developments, and facilitating the provision of and access to adequate, affordable and climate-sensitive shelter for vulnerable groups, including IDPs (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 11). Jordan mentions a project to increase the resilience of displaced persons and host communities to climate change-related water challenges, with an estimated cost of US\$ 7 million (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 76).

Egypt uses the terminology of population growth management as a key sustainability enabler to accelerate the way forward to Horizon 2030 (Egypt NDC, 2022: p. 7–8).



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Youth

Eleven countries mention youth in their NDCs (see figure 6), most commonly (seven NDCs) in reference to youth as a vulnerable group. Jordan notes that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI) situates Jordan at medium-high risk and calls for child-sensitive climate planning as a key element in NDC implementation and future climate policy and programmes in the country (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 24). Tunisia advises the collection of data disaggregated by age for better analysis and effective decision support (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 47).

Three countries (Iraq, Morocco and the State of Palestine) describe youth as vulnerable in relation to health. The State of Palestine describes youth as vulnerable to certain climate-related health impacts such as heat stress and dehydration caused by

higher temperatures and reduced rainfall (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 13). Morocco refers to cold spells and flooding from climate change that will cause diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases in children (Morocco NDC, 2021: p. 27).

Six countries reference youth participation. In four NDCs this is combined with capacity-building and empowerment programmes. The United Arab Emirates launched the Emirates Youth Climate Strategy in 2019 to develop youth capacity (the United Arab Emirates NDC, 2021: p. 14). Somalia aims to enhance youth participation in activities related to adaptation and environmental conservation (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 11). Tunisia describes empowerment through the creation of jobs in the tourism industry, training young people in the media space, and hosting networking events to strengthen the negotiating and decision-making power of youth (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 63–67). Egypt describes an adaptation

FIGURE 6: Number of Nationally Determined Contributions that integrate youth out of the 15 Nationally Determined Contributions reviewed

11

integrate
youth issues

out of 15
Nationally Determined
Contributions



measure to encourage youth to participate in the green transition through skills training, research and innovation and incentives while also facilitating access to business incubators and accelerators to support green entrepreneurship and link to creative financial institutions (Egypt NDC, 2022: p. 29).

Two countries describe educational or awareness strategies aimed specifically at youth. Qatar describes two initiatives: the National Program for Conservative and Efficient Use of Water and Electricity, which is generating awareness of the issues of water and energy wastage and seeing reductions in consumption, especially among youth (Qatar NDC, 2021: p. 5); and the Eco School Program, which promotes environmental education and awareness in schools and non-educational institutions to raise levels of responsibility about climate change among youth (Qatar NDC, 2021: p. 8). Various channels can be used to increase awareness and engagement of climate issues among children and young people, such as social media, schools and youth centres, which Jordan is using for its new common entry-level education curriculum (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 54; see box 3).

Youth report: a youth perspective on the Nationally Determined Contributions

Around the world, young people are extremely worried about climate change, with 75 per cent of the world's youth population fearing the impacts of climate change on their lives, livelihoods and opportunities (Hurley, Dalglish and Sacks, 2022). Many young people report fears about forming families and having children due to the existential threats presented by the climate crisis (UNICEF, 2022).

Climate and health impacts will be most severely felt by marginalized children and adolescents, including Indigenous adolescents, refugees and adolescents with disabilities (UNICEF, 2022). Direct and indirect impacts on mental health are unequally distributed (WHO, 2022) and are expected to worsen in children and adolescents, particularly girls, with increasing temperatures (IPCC, 2022). Four million girls in low- and lower-middle-income countries will be prevented from completing their education because of climate-related events (Malala Fund, 2021). While young people face unique climate-related risks, they have been integral to bringing public attention to the crisis and leading the way in analysis, action and in demanding accountability.

The Nationally Determined Contribution of Jordan proposes actions to use the education curriculum as a means to engage and empower young people:

BOX 3:

“Raising awareness and engagement through formal and informal education means in climate change, environment and sustainable development in the community and among children and young people.

Developing an enhanced, unified, common entry-level education curriculum that includes new themes on climate change and environment... with contextualized materials for Jordan to be disseminated through a) social media b) informal settlements, c) schools d) youth centers and youth innovation incubators.” (p. 54)

A key component of the climate work undertaken by UNFPA is to empower adolescents and young people to build resilient communities, safeguard their well-being and protect their livelihoods.

For this review, UNFPA consulted with young people from the UNFPA Joint Youth Working Group on SRHR and Climate Change and YOUNGO. The aim of the consultation was to bring in young people's lived experiences from the region to capture youth perspectives on the NDCs and the climate crisis. Through analysis of five selected countries, youth reviewers presented their perspectives on progress towards, and recommendations for, better inclusion of SRHR, youth and gender in the NDCs.

The youth reviewer in the Arab States region is Dr. Ahmed Owda, a young climate change expert and climate action advocate. He also practises as a medical doctor in Egypt. He joined the task force of the UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States on gender violence during COVID-19. He was a member of the Youth Task Force of Stockholm+50 and is a member of the global coordination team of the Sustainable Consumption and Production youth platform of the Major Group for Children and Youth. Dr. Owda reviewed five countries' NDCs in the Arab States region: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Somalia and the State of Palestine.

Findings

All the countries analysed are dealing with the impacts of the climate crisis, including water and food insecurity, which will affect SRHR, including maternal health. The reports lack gender integration and youth engagement, while SRHR is absent from most NDCs. There is a significant gap in the youth sections of the Egypt and Iraq NDCs, which only mention education and do not include young people in national consultations or policymaking. Jordan, the State of Palestine

and Somalia show involvement of youth as well as some proposed actions indicating government commitment. Iraq, Jordan and Somalia reference SRHR, which can be further strengthened. In Somalia, for example, more than 80 per cent of the population are youth, and half of them are female. Somalia mentions that climate change is exacerbating GBV against women; women are suffering from a lack of resources and access to resources, as they have no decision-making power at the household level, and an increasing number of women in refugee camps are exposed to GBV. The NDC of Somalia recognizes the significant role that youth can play in helping the country adopt effective climate action.



Photo: © UNFPA Syria



Photo: Dr. Ahmed Owda / United Nations Environment (UNEP) at United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) 5.2

Key quotes: Ahmed Owda, MD

“There are some updated NDCs that do not mention youth and gender, which makes me, as a youth, disappointed because we can play a very important role accelerating development in our countries and implementation of the SDGs. We have the vision to make our countries and regions better, but we don’t have the opportunity to share it.”

“I became a climate activist because I saw how climate change was affecting my life and that of my community through heat waves and dust storms. I saw that my community did not have the information or awareness that climate change is contributing to the frequency and intensity of these, and felt that this needed to change.”

Taking action

1. Ensure that subsequent NDC processes are youth-inclusive and gender-responsive by engaging youth networks at the national level across all phases of NDC discussions and updates, ensuring that the NDCs address youth, SRHR priorities and gender rights.
2. Support youth-led NDC implementation projects by establishing a fund or a window under an existing fund that includes small grants for youth to support NDC implementation through relevant projects and support by providing technical guidance to governments on effective youth engagement and ensuring youth are key stakeholders in urban and rural programmes.
3. Strengthen health systems by including skilled young people to ensure robust maternal health services and accessible family planning services during climate-induced disasters, as most countries facing climate change or conflict will suffer from disruption to these services.
4. NDCs must address the climate education needs of children and youth, including comprehensive sexuality education, and provide opportunities for green jobs.

Photo: © UNFPA Somalia



Leaving no one behind: human rights, participation and consideration of vulnerable groups

FIGURE 7: Number of Nationally Determined Contributions that integrate human rights, participation and consideration of vulnerable groups out of the 15 Nationally Determined Contributions reviewed



The majority of NDCs (11) include vulnerable groups of society as an important consideration in the development of the NDC or its mitigation and adaptation pillars. Seven countries consider women as a vulnerable group, while other groups are also included to varying degrees (see figure 7). For example, Jordan includes children, refugees, the unemployed and persons with disabilities as core vulnerable groups to consider in NDC implementation (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 54; see box 4), while Tunisia includes farmers (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 21), the State of

Palestine includes women, children and the poor (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 9) and Saudi Arabia acknowledges those with marine livelihoods as vulnerable to climate change and coastal erosion (Saudi Arabia NDC, 2021: p. 7). Tunisia notes that the vulnerability of groups changes with context; in rural areas, female farmers, children and farmers with little land are considered the most vulnerable to water scarcity, whereas in urban and peri-urban areas the poor, unemployed and older persons are the most vulnerable groups (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 28).





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One of the key principles of the NDCs is a participatory approach whereby initiatives are developed based on a consultation with key stakeholders from both public and private sectors as well as civil society (OHCHR, 2022). References to participation in climate policy, including NDC development, are included by nearly all (14) countries (see figure 7). For most, this is a simple statement of a participatory process or engagement of relevant stakeholders, with only a few countries providing a more detailed description of how engaging this process was and who was included. The State of Palestine and Tunisia mention Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), a term adopted by UNFCCC to denote work under Article 6 of the Convention and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement with the overarching goal of empowering all members of society to engage in climate action.

However, very few countries describe specific programmes under way to increase civil society participation in climate policy, such as the Human Capability Development Program in Saudi Arabia (Saudi Arabia NDC, 2021: p. 11).

Eleven countries describe various participatory initiatives in natural resource management as an important adaptive strategy to climate change. Many countries refer to participatory strategies for vulnerable marine livelihoods, such as the coastal resilience policies of the United Arab Emirates (2021: p. 11) and Tunisia (2021: p. 67), the coral reef restoration programme of Saudi Arabia (2021: p. 7) and the mangroves restoration programme of the Sudan (2021: p. 8). Forestry is another key area where participatory approaches are being adopted, such as efforts by Tunisia to involve civil society in a reforestation initiative (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 71).

Three NDCs refer to human rights. Morocco and Jordan both reference human rights and gender equality as fundamental to their NDCs (Morocco NDC, 2021: p. 4; Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 23; see figure 7), while Tunisia describes its status as “a vanguard country in the Arab world in terms of human rights, women’s rights and her emancipation” (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 30). Some NDCs make reference to SDG 5 (gender equality), such as Lebanon, which considers this inherent to the successful achievement of its adaptation priorities (Lebanon NDC, 2020: p. 7).

Policy initiatives in the Nationally Determined Contribution of Jordan that consider the intersection of poverty and climate change impacts:

BOX 4:

“Adopting poverty fighting programmes fostering providing housing for poor people and supporting micro-projects for poor communities in light of the unusual severe seasonal cold and hot weather conditions prevailed in the last decade.” (p. 53)

DISCUSSION

Sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence and harmful practices

This review found that five NDCs integrate SRHR and GBV, which includes three references to maternal and newborn health and GBV and one to SRHR information and awareness. There are, however, no references to harmful practices. The way the NDCs address SRHR issues varies – some NDCs acknowledge the impacts of climate change on SRHR and GBV and others include adaptation measures to address these impacts.

Examples of best practice include Tunisia, which demonstrates the inclusion of an intervention targeting SRHR with a measure to improve women's health and health services (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 66). The Sudan highlights how SRHR in health systems strengthens measures to support family and school health programmes (the Sudan INDC, 2021: p. 8). Jordan includes a measure targeting women who have experienced GBV that cross-cuts with vulnerable groups (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 53).

GBV is known to increase during situations of stress and scarcity, often related to economic instability, food insecurity and exacerbated gender inequality (van Daalen and others, 2022). The impacts of climate change and weather-related disasters can also indirectly exacerbate GBV through climate-induced migration (Castañeda and others, 2020). The Arab States NDCs reflect

the impacts of climate change on GBV, with Tunisia and Jordan both describing measures to address the increasing risks.

While there are encouraging signs that the impacts of climate change on SRHR and GBV are gaining recognition in Arab States NDCs, a wider and more systematic and meaningful recognition of the impacts on SRHR is required. Measures that can be taken to strengthen the integration of SRHR in NDCs include building national-level evidence on the impacts of climate change on SRHR and GBV, which is required to develop tailored interventions, yet is not described or planned in any of the NDCs reviewed. Such evidence could come in the form of the collection of data disaggregated by age, sexual orientation, disability and migration status and vulnerability assessments that incorporate SRHR and GBV issues. Furthermore, none of the five NDCs that include SRHR and GBV provides cost estimates, indicators or mechanisms of implementation and action for SRHR and GBV measures, which is essential for policymaking and should be integrated into the next round of NDCs.

Health

All 15 NDCs reference health; however, a minority articulate the need for strengthening health systems as an adaptation to climate change. Even fewer describe the need for a resilient health system to ensure continuity of maternal, reproductive, neonatal and child health services. All NDCs mention disasters and/or extreme weather events and three countries recognize the intersection between disasters and gender.

Tunisia is aware of the intersection of gender and health with its measures to ensure gender mainstreaming of women in disaster risk reduction (Tunisia NDC, 2021: p. 65). Water security is also a prominent health-related theme, and commitments by the Sudan to empower women facing water scarcity through capacity-building opportunities demonstrates another important intersection between gender and health (the Sudan INDC, 2021: p. 8). Health represents a strong entry point for SRHR in climate policy.

Gender

Approximately two thirds of NDCs (11) mention gender, but with varying levels of detail. While nine NDCs include an element of gender mainstreaming and/or sensitivity, most of these only include it as a term, whereas a minority demonstrate it throughout the NDC. The NDC of the State of Palestine provides an example of good practice in gender mainstreaming with its gender-sensitive

indicator in monitoring and evaluation of an implementation action to empower women. This states that 50 per cent of farms are to apply gender-sensitive agriculture by 2040, with an indicative cost of US\$ 229 million (the State of Palestine NDC, 2021: p. 53).

Population dynamics and human displacement

Although 13 NDCs include references to population dynamics, not all of these are linked to climate change, and some are simple descriptions of population size and structure. Only eight NDCs refer to human migration, urbanization or displacement, with three of these referring to conflict-induced human displacement. Somalia highlights the importance of protecting the rights of displaced persons with a measure to facilitate the provision of and access to adequate, affordable and climate-sensitive shelter to vulnerable groups, including IDPs (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 11).





Morocco details a costed initiative targeted at reducing young people's migration from rural areas: the Date Palm Plantation, with an estimated cost of US\$ 353 million (Morocco NDC, 2021: p. 30). Migration is a highly gendered issue as women do not have the same access to assets and adaptation options to migrate as men (McOmbler, 2020). This increases women's vulnerabilities, including the risk of GBV, as the NDC of Somalia notes (Somalia NDC, 2021: p. 12). This review found that, while many NDCs address climate-related migration, only a few include measures to tackle future challenges and none of the NDCs present actions on gender and migration, including gender inclusion in resettlement and research activities.

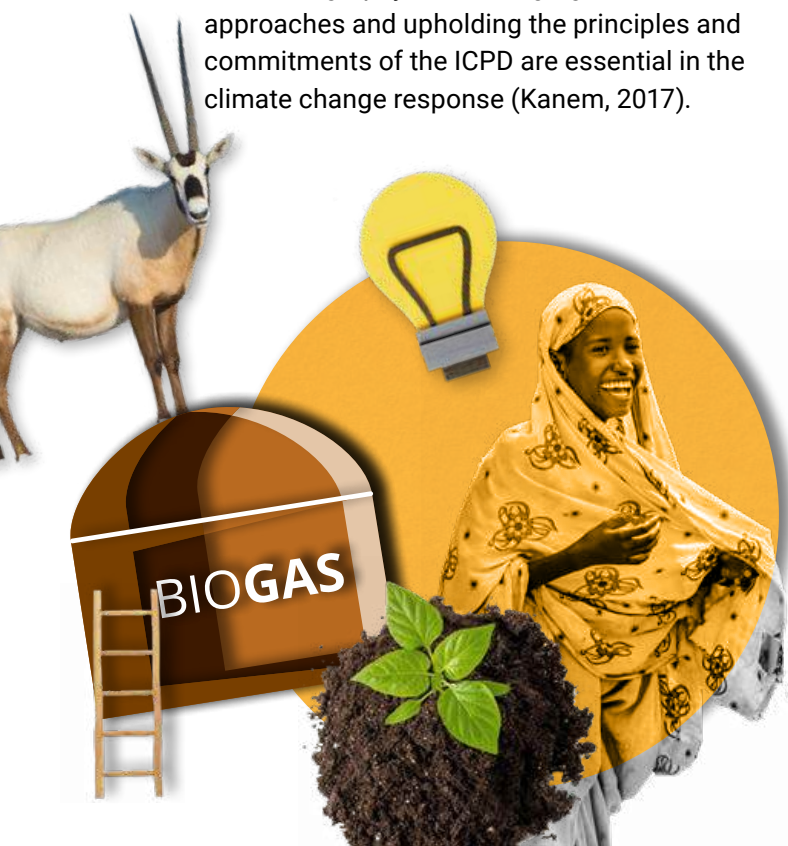
In this context, there is a need to ensure that language and policy around the relationship between population and climate change used in the NDCs align with the principles of the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action and to underpin climate policy with a rights-based voluntary approach to reproductive choices. Countries with the highest population growth tend to have the lowest emission levels (Ritchie, 2023). Identifying the accurate relationship between aspects of climate change and demography, reinforcing rights-based approaches and upholding the principles and commitments of the ICPD are essential in the climate change response (Kanem, 2017).

Youth

The majority of NDCs (11) integrate youth to some degree. Seven acknowledge the disproportionate impacts of climate change on youth, of which three are in relation to health, six describe youth participation and four include empowerment and capacity-building measures for youth. Overall, few NDCs describe youth in relation to policy and practice. Some NDCs, such as that of Tunisia, highlight examples of youth-centred policies such as the creation of jobs in the tourism industry, training young people in the media space and hosting networking events, alongside the importance of strengthening the evidence base on the impacts of climate change on youth by collecting age-disaggregated data (Tunisia NDC, 2021: pp. 47, 64–67). Youth participation in policymaking contributes to the creation of child-sensitive policies that are rights-based, holistic, multisectoral and inclusive. Children and young people should be engaged and empowered in all levels of climate processes to ensure youth mainstreaming in climate policy and action.

Leaving no one behind: human rights, participation and consideration of vulnerable groups

Most NDCs (11) describe segments of their population as particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, most commonly women, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and displaced persons. Alongside describing the most vulnerable sections of society, many countries include measures to reduce this vulnerability and increase the resilience of vulnerable populations.



Jordan demonstrates how vulnerable groups can be prioritized in climate adaptation strategies by its description of four core groups (children, refugees, unemployed and persons with disabilities) and describing interventions to address their respective vulnerabilities, such as the development of green infrastructure in urban areas that includes options accessible to persons with disabilities (Jordan NDC, 2021: p. 25).

Nearly all NDCs (14) mention the participation of the population in climate policy and/or NDC development. Although most NDCs describe their development process as participatory, far fewer provide details on this process. Still, 11 NDCs describe various participatory initiatives in natural resource management, such as coral reef and mangrove restoration, fisheries and forestry, while three NDCs refer to human rights. Although some countries reference ACE, far fewer describe specific programmes under way to increase

civil society participation. Many platforms exist that should be used for stakeholder engagement (e.g. youth dialogues, regional workshops, engagement with gender and youth councils) when implementing the NDCs to ensure gender-responsive programming and/or to conduct thematic discussions, for example, on SRHR and GBV.

The UNFCCC recognizes the adverse impacts of climate change on the effective enjoyment of human rights and calls on states to ensure respect for human rights in their climate actions in the Cancun Agreements (UNFCCC, 2010). The preamble to the Paris Agreement calls upon states to “respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights” (UNFCCC, 2015). As only three NDCs mention human rights, strengthening the inclusion of human rights-based language and actions in Arab States NDCs is crucial to achieving SRHR, eliminating GBV and achieving gender equality.



RECOMMENDATIONS

General recommendations

Data and evidence

- 1. Strengthen the national-level evidence on the impacts of climate change on SRHR, GBV and harmful practices.** This should include improving data systems to better account and forecast for the differentiated impacts of climate change on SRHR, GBV and harmful practices, including through the conduct of gender-related climate vulnerability and risk assessments that integrate SRHR and GBV. Detailed country-level research, preferably led by local researchers, on the intersections between climate, SRHR and GBV is required to better support communities at the local and national level but also to contribute to the global evidence base.
- 2. Scale up efforts to collect and use disaggregated data and account for the differentiated impacts of the climate crisis.** The demonstration of such efforts in the NDCs is encouraging. Gender-disaggregated data supports the identification of groups that are more vulnerable to climate impacts and can help mobilize more sensitive and accurate climate action. This better represents the differentiated impacts of the climate crisis while supporting research, data, planning and intervention to reach better outcomes. This also enables gender-sensitive budgeting, including for components related to SRHR and GBV.

Financing and accountability

- 3. Increase support, funding and evaluation for adaptation and resilience-building efforts, including within NDCs and in the development of climate policies.** While adaptation sections are increasing in frequency and detail within NDCs, greater support, evaluation and financing are required to ensure these policies reflect the needs of underserved populations and topic areas, such as SRHR and GBV.
- 4. Strengthen the integration of costed SRHR and GBV interventions across sectors in climate policy and action.** Include SRHR and GBV issues in domains such as gender and health, as these represent entry points for their inclusion in national climate policies. Costed action, tied to monitoring and indicators that reflect impacts on gender, health and SRHR and GBV, requires more financial and technical support. Many existing interventions, particularly related to gender and health, could begin to provide or increase the integration of programming on SRHR and GBV.
- 5. Strengthen health systems' resilience to climate change by ensuring the inclusion of SRHR and GBV.** This includes ensuring the inclusion of SRHR and GBV in vulnerability risk assessments, disaster preparedness plans and health information management systems. Ensure appropriate human resources are available for health, monitoring and evaluation indicators, the allocation of funds and a coordination mechanism.





Photo: © UNFPA Somalia/Luis Tato

Gender equality and representation

- 6. Scale up and strengthen gender-transformative climate action through the inclusion of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices issues.** This includes the appointment and strengthening of the role of a National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point (NGCCFP) to be placed in the relevant ministry, as recommended by a decision of the 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25); the review of existing gender-related climate policies; and the integration of gender-transformative approaches in all aspects of climate change policies and programmes/interventions, based on a solid foundation of context-specific analysis.
- 7. Recognize the impacts of climate change on the drivers of GBV and harmful practices.** Support the development of best practices for responding to GBV and harmful practices, and for ensuring the resilience, including financial, of essential services to prevent and respond to GBV. This can be achieved through partnership with gender and rights actors such as organizations of persons with

disabilities, women-led organizations, Indigenous peoples, youth-led organizations and front-line responders.

- 8. Ensure inclusion and a minimum standard of representation in the development and implementation of climate policy at multiple levels.** This includes women, people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), youth, Indigenous peoples, older people, persons with disabilities and others as relevant.

Human rights and leaving no one behind

- 9. Improve the understanding of the impacts of climate change on SRHR and GBV for people with diverse and underrepresented SOGIESC.** There is insufficient understanding and recognition of the impacts of climate change on people with diverse SOGIESC. Increasing this understanding will require specific, local and sensitive action that is participatory, accountable and calls on existing best practices.
- 10. Mobilize and support young people.** Support youth climate networks and establish a permanent youth engagement mechanism on climate change at the national level to ensure the mainstreaming of youth priorities across the design and implementation of national climate policy and action.
- 11. Take an intersectional approach to develop, review and implement climate policy that recognizes the structural drivers of inequality and accounts for multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.** Climate policy and action must recognize how many of the people who already face barriers to SRHR and GBV services and the realization of their reproductive rights are likely to be disproportionately affected by climate change.

12. Enhance recognition of climate change impacts on GBV and harmful practices in NDCs and relevant climate policies.

National climate policies should more meaningfully account for the delivery of GBV services during climate-related events. This includes strengthening the engagement with national gender/GBV-focused mechanisms (e.g. ministries, parliamentary caucuses, civil society networks) as well as climate-focused national mechanisms to present regional and national analysis of the interlinkages between climate change, GBV and harmful practices and collectively develop a consensus on policy advocacy and programming strategies and interventions. This could be achieved through the creation of a common platform for meaningful dialogue, with key mechanisms, networks and leaders engaged in addressing GBV and climate change.

13. Ensure that climate policies are based on human rights and reflect the principles of the ICPD Programme of Action, including protecting the rights of women, children, refugees, displaced persons and persons with disabilities, in climate policy development. A human rights-based approach that supports individuals to make the reproductive choices that best suit their personal circumstances is core to achieving SRHR. Population dynamics are relevant for climate policy and planning and the NDCs reflect on urbanization, changing population size and structure and the need for population dynamics analysis for forward planning.

Region-specific reflections

14. Wider and more meaningful recognition of the impacts of climate change on SRHR, GBV and harmful practices is required across the national climate policies of the Arab States region. While there are some references to SRHR and GBV in NDCs from the region, there are few details, no indicators and no costing or mechanisms for tangible implementation and action. There is also no mention of harmful practices.

15. Strengthen the gender-responsiveness of the NDCs and commit to meaningful action to support women and girls.

Across the global review, the Arab States had the fewest references to gender and most references were not supported with meaningful descriptions of action. Many references reflected the language from the Paris Agreement but were not followed through with country-level inclusion.

16. Increase gender-responsiveness in climate action related to water and food security. Food and water insecurity is highlighted as a challenge for the region, but the differentiated impacts on groups with increased vulnerabilities, such as women and children, are not considered.

17. Protect the rights of displaced persons.

Although three countries refer to conflict-induced human displacement and many consider refugees a vulnerable population, only Somalia provides measures to increase the resilience of IDPs. NDCs should increase their recognition and commitment to protect the rights of persons displaced due to conflict. This includes providing – and ensuring access to – high-quality SRH and GBV services.



CONCLUSION

Climate change is the single biggest threat to our planet and this is not a secret. For the women of the world who experience drought, floods and extreme heat and are displaced as a result, the impact is felt more deeply. It is our collective responsibility to ensure the protection of their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, wherever they are to ensure a sustainable future for humanity.

LAILA BAKER, REGIONAL DIRECTOR,
UNFPA ARAB STATES REGIONAL OFFICE



This regional review of 15 NDCs in the Arab States found that just five reference SRHR and GBV issues and none reference harmful practices.

While some countries only refer to aspects of SRHR and GBV in their country's situational analysis, others acknowledge the impacts of climate change on SRHR and GBV but without addressing any specific programmatic dimensions. A few others not only acknowledge the impacts of climate change on SRHR and GBV, but also propose substantial and multiple interventions to address these impacts.

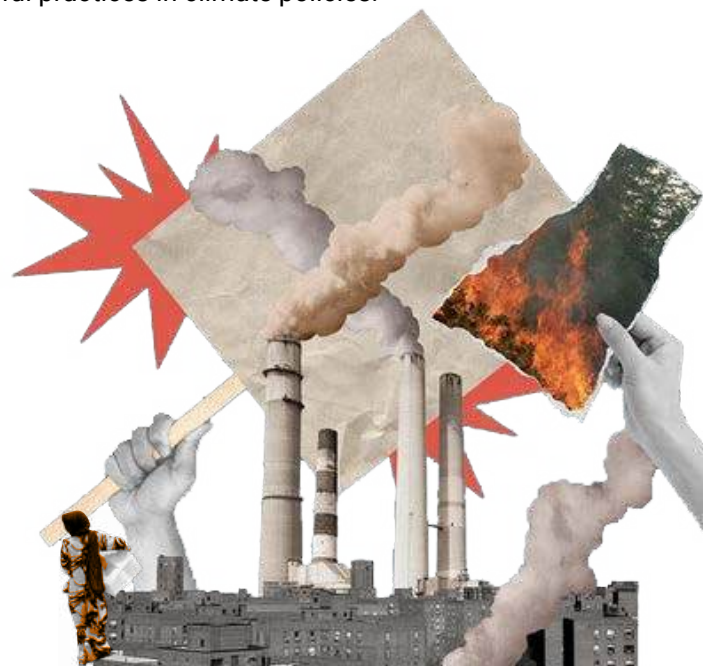
This is a call to action for UNFPA and other advocates of SRHR and GBV prevention and response, including policymakers, parliamentarians, researchers, service providers, and civil society organizations to enhance their engagement with climate change mechanisms and advocate for a better understanding of the interlinkages between climate action, SRHR and GBV. There are opportunities to ensure more meaningful climate action that addresses vulnerability, inequality and the importance of leaving no one behind. SRHR and interventions to address GBV and harmful practices are cornerstones of resilience and adaptation, and realizing SRHR is an indicator of a healthy and equal society. As the climate crisis intensifies, greater investment, engagement and prioritization of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices are needed to ensure no one is left behind and that inequalities are not further exacerbated.

As the next round of NDC submission approaches in 2025, there are opportunities for engagement with relevant stakeholders to address the intersection of SRHR and climate change more broadly in national

climate policies and, equally, to address climate change in national SRHR, GBV and harmful practices policies through people-centred, rights-based and gender-transformative approaches. This engagement should go beyond the NDCs to engage national policy-level ecosystems, including national climate policies, as well as GAPs, national adaptation plans (NAPs), health sector plans, the commitments around the Summit of the Future and other relevant plans. Civil society and public engagement and consultation should be meaningful and externally assessed to ensure that data and feedback collected during consultations are reflected in NDCs.

Taking action

The results of this report will provide an opening for dialogue at global, regional and national levels on the ways that climate change, SRHR, GBV and harmful practices intersect and to identify entry points for climate action. Highlighting gaps as well as opportunities and promising practices allows for greater and more meaningful integration of aspects of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices in climate policies.





Below are some suggested avenues for further engagement with climate, SRHR, GBV and harmful practices policies in your region or territory:

Create a platform for stakeholder involvement at all levels and work across sectors to ensure the integration of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices in relevant policy and programming.

- Disseminate the findings of this report among relevant stakeholders, including colleagues, ministerial actors, fellow activists and other interested parties in your region. Organize a discussion forum or workshop to facilitate an exchange of ideas and perspectives on the intersections between SRHR, GBV, harmful practices and climate impacts within your local context. This platform will provide an opportunity to explore how these findings align with and enhance the understanding of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices in relation to climate change in your specific region.

Specific ideas to strengthen the discussion include:

- Invite experts, researchers and practitioners working in SRHR, GBV, climate change and environmental justice to share their insights and experiences.
- Encourage participants to share local case studies, success stories, challenges and innovative approaches to address SRHR, GBV and harmful practices in the context of climate change.
- Facilitate group discussions and brainstorming sessions to identify key priorities, gaps and potential strategies for integrating SRHR, GBV and harmful practices into climate policy and action.
- Conduct a comprehensive mapping of climate policies in your country, going beyond the NDCs. Explore and identify other

relevant climate policies, such as GAPs, NAPs or any other national policies that provide opportunities for the inclusion of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices.

Specific ideas to strengthen the mapping process include:

- Collaborate with local research institutions, civil society organizations and relevant government agencies to gather information and analyse the existing climate policies.
- Examine the extent to which these policies address issues of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices and identify potential entry points for integration.
- Highlight good practices and successful initiatives within climate policies that address SRHR, GBV and harmful practices and showcase them as examples to inspire further action.
- Actively engage in national consultations on climate policy, including the updating of NDCs and the development of NAPs and GAPs. Stay informed about the processes and timelines related to these consultations, and proactively seek opportunities to participate and contribute your insights and perspectives.

Specific ideas to strengthen your engagement include:

- Reach out to relevant government agencies, United Nations entities and civil society organizations involved in the climate policy development process, expressing your interest in participating and contributing.
- Prepare position papers or policy briefs highlighting the importance of integrating SRHR, GBV and harmful practices into climate policy and action, and share them with key stakeholders.



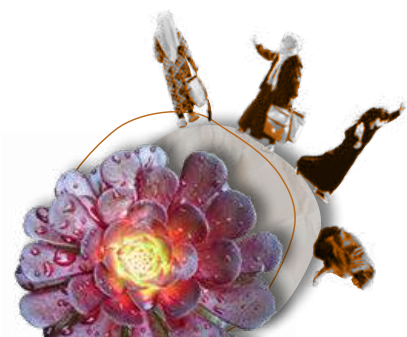
- Advocate for the inclusion of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices in the discussions, emphasizing their critical role in addressing the climate crisis and ensuring the well-being and rights of all individuals, particularly those most vulnerable to climate impacts.
- Collaborate with like-minded organizations and activists to amplify your collective voice and advocate for meaningful inclusion and action on SRHR, GBV and harmful practices in climate policy at the national level.

Contribute to the national dialogue and strengthen NAPs and specific interventions to include delivery of SRHR and GBV services for women and girls as well as prevention of harmful practices.

- Learn about the NDC and NAP development or update process in your country or region:
 - Research and gather information about the specific steps and timeline involved in the development or updating of NDCs and NAPs in your country or region.
 - Identify the key government agencies or bodies responsible for coordinating these processes and reach out to them to request information or guidance on how to engage effectively.
 - Attend workshops, webinars or information sessions organized by government agencies or climate-related organizations to learn about the requirements and expectations for engaging in the NDC and NAP development or updating process.
 - Connect with local civil society organizations, research institutions or advocacy groups that have experience or knowledge about the NDC and NAP processes to gain insights and guidance.

- Advocate for the meaningful inclusion and engagement of stakeholders:
 - Advocate for the meaningful inclusion and active engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders in the development and implementation of NDCs and NAPs. This includes local groups, young people, women's groups, Indigenous peoples, underrepresented groups and other relevant stakeholders.
 - Engage with decision makers, government officials and relevant institutions through letters, petitions or direct meetings to emphasize the importance of inclusive and participatory processes.
 - Collaborate with local organizations and networks that represent the interests of marginalized or underrepresented groups to amplify their voices and advocate for their meaningful inclusion.
 - Highlight the benefits of diverse perspectives and experiences in crafting climate policies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by different groups.
 - Provide concrete suggestions and recommendations for ensuring inclusive engagement, such as organizing targeted consultations, creating dedicated spaces for marginalized groups to voice their concerns and establishing mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and feedback.

By actively engaging in the NDC and NAP processes and demanding inclusive participation, you can contribute to the development of more comprehensive and equitable climate policies that reflect the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders.





Strengthen the evidence base for the interlinkages between climate change and SRHR, GBV and harmful practices in your country and region.

- Gather information in your country, region or territory:
 - Conduct research and gather information on the intersections between SRHR, GBV, harmful practices and climate impacts in your specific context. Look for existing studies, reports or data that highlight these connections and provide insights into the challenges and opportunities for addressing them.
 - Engage with local research institutions, universities or non-governmental organizations working on climate change, SRHR, GBV and harmful practices to explore possibilities for collaboration and knowledge sharing.
 - Participate in relevant meetings, workshops or conferences that focus on climate change, SRHR, GBV or harmful practices to learn from experts and practitioners in the field and gather valuable information.
 - Incorporate SRHR, GBV and harmful practices as areas of interest:
 - Advocate for the inclusion of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices as specific areas of interest in relevant research undertakings, meetings, data-gathering activities and programmes. Emphasize the need to understand and address the intersections between these issues and climate impacts.
 - Collaborate with researchers, organizations or institutions working on climate change to explore opportunities for joint research or data-collection initiatives that incorporate SRHR, GBV and harmful practices as key components.
 - Engage with local or regional climate change platforms, working groups or task forces to raise awareness about the importance of addressing SRHR, GBV and harmful practices and advocate for their inclusion in discussions and decision-making processes.
 - Raise questions and ensure accountability:
 - Participate actively in relevant forums, such as policy dialogues, conferences or community meetings, where climate change and related issues are discussed. Raise questions and highlight the intersections between SRHR, GBV, harmful practices and climate change.
 - Engage with duty bearers, policymakers and government representatives at the national and regional levels to hold them accountable for considering the intersection of these issues in their work.
 - Request transparency and accountability in national and regional climate change strategies, policies and programmes, urging decision makers to integrate considerations of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices into their approaches.
 - Collaborate with local and regional advocacy groups, women's rights organizations, youth networks and other relevant stakeholders to amplify your voices and jointly advocate for the recognition and inclusion of these intersections in climate change policies and actions.
- By gathering information, incorporating these issues in relevant activities and demanding accountability, you can contribute to raising awareness and promoting the integration of SRHR, GBV and harmful practices considerations into climate change agendas in your country or region.



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Selection of Nationally Determined Contributions in the Arab States for review

Country included	Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) reviewed	Submission date	Original language
Bahrain	<u>Updated NDC</u>	18 October 2021	English
Egypt	<u>Updated NDC</u>	8 June 2022	English
Iraq	<u>First NDC</u>	15 October 2021	Arabic
Jordan	<u>Updated NDC</u>	12 October 2021	English
Kuwait	<u>Updated NDC</u>	10 December 2021	English/Arabic
Lebanon	<u>Updated NDC</u>	16 March 2021	English
Morocco	<u>Updated NDC</u>	22 June 2021	French
Oman	<u>Second NDC</u>	29 July 2021	English
State of Palestine (the)	<u>Updated NDC</u>	10 October 2021	English
Qatar	<u>Updated NDC</u>	24 August 2021	English/Arabic
Saudi Arabia	<u>Updated NDC</u>	23 October 2021	English
Somalia	<u>Updated NDC</u>	31 July 2021	English
Sudan (the)	<u>Interim updated NDC</u>	31 May 2021	English
Tunisia	<u>Updated NDC</u>	10 May 2021	French
United Arab Emirates (the)	<u>Second NDC</u>	29 December 2020	English/Arabic

Country not included	Reason for exclusion
Algeria	Submitted first Nationally Determined Contribution before 2020 (20 October 2016) with no update since
Djibouti	Submitted first Nationally Determined Contribution before 2020 (11 November 2016) with no update since
Libya	No Nationally Determined Contribution submitted
Syrian Arab Republic (the)	Submitted first Nationally Determined Contribution before 2020 (30 November 2018) with no update since
Yemen	Submitted interim Nationally Determined Contribution before 2020 (23 November 2015) with no update since

Appendix 2: Summary tables

Table 1: Sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence and harmful practices references across the Arab States Nationally Determined Contributions

Region (number of Nationally Determined Contributions)	Maternal and newborn health	Family planning and contraception	Abortion and post-abortion care	Menstruation and menstrual hygiene	Gender-based violence	Adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights	Early, forced child marriage	HIV and AIDS and sexually transmitted infections	Sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics	Sexual and reproductive health and rights information and awareness	Other
Arab States (15)	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 2: Human rights, participation and vulnerable groups references across the Arab States Nationally Determined Contributions

Region (number of Nationally Determined Contributions)	Vulnerable groups				Participation of population in:			Human rights
	As main pillar/strategy	Communities dependent on natural resources	In relation to health	In relation to gender	Nationally Determined Contributions development	Local resource management	In relation to gender	
Arab States (15)	13	7	7	7	14	12	9	3

Table 3: Population dynamics, human mobility and urbanization references across the Arab States Nationally Determined Contributions

Region (number of Nationally Determined Contributions)	Any reference to population dynamics	Migration, urbanization, human mobility
Arab States (15)	13	9

Table 4: Youth references across the Arab States Nationally Determined Contributions

Region (number of Nationally Determined Contributions)	As vulnerable group	Participation	In relation to health	In relation to education/awareness	Consideration of future generations
Arab States (15)	7	7	3	4	2

Table 5: Gender references across the Arab States Nationally Determined Contributions

Region (number of Nationally Determined Contributions)	Mainstreaming	Vulnerability	Rights	Participation	Empowerment	Health	Energy	Agriculture	Water/food security
Arab States (15)	9	7	4	6	4	3	2	6	2

Table 6: Health references across the Arab States Nationally Determined Contributions

Region (number of Nationally Determined Contributions)	Mortality	Diseases	Air pollution	Waste	Surveillance	Access service/supplies	Food	Water	Research	Information/campaigns	COVID-19	Disasters	Budget line
Arab States (15)	5	11	8	11	9	2	12	14	2	5	11	15	8



Appendix 3: Overlapping themes by country

Country	Sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence and harmful practices	Gender	Health	Population dynamics	Vulnerable groups	Participation	Human rights	Youth
Bahrain			●	●	●	●		
Egypt		●	●	●	●	●		●
Iraq	●	●	●	●	●			●
Jordan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Kuwait		●	●	●		●		
Lebanon		●	●	●	●	●		●
Morocco		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Oman			●	●		●		
State of Palestine (the)		●	●	●	●	●		●
Qatar			●	●	●	●		●
Saudi Arabia			●		●	●		●
Somalia	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Sudan (the)	●	●	●			●		
Tunisia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
United Arab Emirates (the)		●	●	●	●	●		●



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