



AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH
TOWARDS **COMBATING**
CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a global crisis. Raising awareness is not enough; we must provide people with the information and tools to combat the effects of climate change. It is fundamental to engage in activism, campaigns, advocacy, organise dialogues and conferences to discuss how to reduce the effects of climate change. An inequality exists in society, infrastructure and systems. To be effective and truly transformative, respect for and promotion of gender equality, women's rights, marginalised groups, youth leadership and indigenous community, must be central to climate action.

LACK OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION AT GLOBAL CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS

We must understand how climate change impacts women, girls, young people and indigenous communities. Participation in climate and environmental decision making is a human right and the equal participation of people belonging to all genders, generates outcomes that are more effective and sustainable. Women are underrepresented when it comes to decision-making regarding climate negotiations. At COP 28, there were only 34 percent of women across all national delegations, compared to 31 percent at COP 14 in 2008. Only 2% of the delegations at COP 28 had an equal number of men and women, while 79% had more men than women, representing the ongoing disparity in women's participation in climate negotiations. Following a backlash, the president of Azerbaijan added 12 women to the previously all-male organising committee for the COP 29 global climate summit. The new panel which consists of 29 men and 12 women emphasises an urgent need to promote gender balance and inclusivity when it comes to addressing issues related to climate changes.

ACCOUNTABLE CLIMATE FINANCING

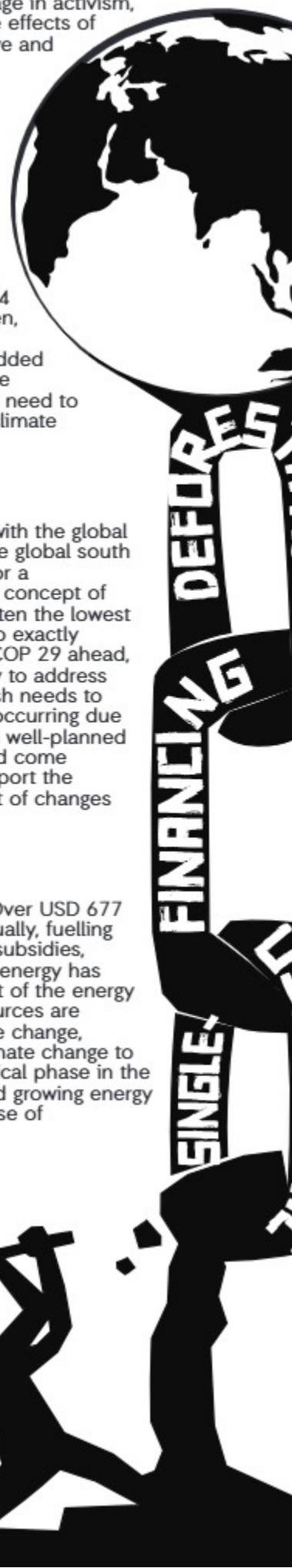
The SDG financing gap is estimated at USD 4 trillion annually for developing countries, with the global south being affected disproportionately. The climate finance received by countries in the global south is only a fraction of the subsidies going towards climate-destructive sectors. This calls for a reformation of the global financial structure. Loss and damage are closely related to the concept of 'just transition' and equity because the world's most climate-vulnerable countries are often the lowest contributors to climate change, yet heavily affected by it. This raises the question of who exactly should pay for loss and damage in poorer countries where resources are limited. With COP 29 ahead, there is an urgent need to agree on a new climate finance goal of USD 5 trillion annually to address climate loss and damage. To receive money from the Loss and Damage Fund, Bangladesh needs to prove that natural disasters such as torrential rain, floods, cyclones and heatwaves are occurring due to an increase in global temperature. This climate finance should be channelled through well-planned and targeted actions and provide transparency and accountability. Global leaders should come forward and commit to addressing issues needed to combat climate change and to support the countries that are more vulnerable and prone to natural disasters that are a direct result of changes in climate.

IMPACT OF FOSSIL FUELS

Fossil fuel burning must be prohibited to avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Over USD 677 billion in subsidies is being poured into fossil fuel and industrial agriculture sectors annually, fuelling greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries are the primary beneficiaries of these subsidies, which are contributing to global temperature rise and biodiversity loss. The demand for energy has increased worldwide due to economic advancement and development and a major part of the energy demand is met by fossil fuels. Although Bangladesh has remained resilient, natural resources are depleting rapidly and negatively impacting the environment which is accelerating climate change, therefore making it crucial to reduce the dependency on fossil fuels and slow down climate change to build a habitable world for future generations. Bangladesh is transitioning through a critical phase in the era of environmental damage, climate change, import-dependent financial pressures and growing energy demand. This route is plagued by fossil fuels and pollution, offering no significant promise of sustainability or social fairness.

WATER COOPERATION

In Bangladesh, 40% of the population lack access to safe water, highlighting the urgent need for action. It is crucial to acknowledge how vulnerable population, particularly women are disproportionately affected by water-related crises. Women often bear the burden of inadequate water management. They are responsible for water collection, sanitation, and hygiene practices within their households, placing them at the forefront of climate impacts. When water becomes scarce or contaminated, women's burdens multiply as they spend more time and effort securing water, especially safe drinking water for their families, often at the expense of their health. They have to sacrifice educational and economic opportunities. Addressing water management issues is not only an environmental imperative but also a matter of gender equality and social justice.



INVOLVING WOMEN, GIRLS AND GENDER MINORITIES

Women, girls and gender minorities frequently face the most difficult consequences of climate change. With limited access to resources and decision-making power, women have to encounter challenges which are different in nature from those met by men. It is reported that women starve during a disaster when there is a crisis and food shortage in order to feed their children and other family members. Women are exposed to new forms of risks when they have to move to flood or cyclone shelter. Displaced women and girls who move to temporary shelters or embankments are in even higher risk categories with reports of child marriage or victims of trafficking. Women cannot start green businesses or green jobs if they are tied down with care work. The lack of affordable childcare is also a hindrance. Women's empowerment in climate action is crucial for creating effective and sustainable solutions. Involving women in developing funding criteria and resource allocation helps prioritise projects that directly benefit communities, enhance resilience and adaptive capacity. When women and gender minorities participate actively in shaping technologies and solutions, we foster creativity and innovation that are essential for tackling climate challenges. This needs to happen at global climate discussions and at national levels.

SHAPING A FUTURE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Involving the youth in addressing issues to combat climate changes is also essential. In the recent disastrous floods Bangladesh experienced in Noakhali, Cumilla, Laxipur, Feni, Chattogram, and Moulvibazar, youth took the lead in organising rescue efforts and gathering funds for the victims. Within hours of the disaster students from Dhaka, Chattogram and districts in between, arranged trucks and speedboats, gathered life jackets, food and other necessities and set off to help the flood affected areas. Their unique perspectives and experiences can lead to innovative approaches that address the diverse impacts of climate change on different communities. Equity and youth leadership are important for the future and the government should plan to invest in these areas.

INCLUDING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND MARGINALISED GROUPS

Indigenous communities deeply connected to the land suffer disproportionate impacts, highlighting the importance of indigenous knowledge and rights in conservation efforts. People with disabilities also face unique challenges in climate related disasters, necessitating inclusive emergency planning and infrastructure to address accessibility barriers and health conditions worsened by environmental changes. Empowering marginalised groups enable their meaningful participation in decision making process and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. Through this approach, we not only gain valuable insight into the knowledge of minority groups but also promote more inclusive policies.

SOLUTIONS

Bangladesh has been resilient in the face of formidable climate challenges. There is no question that collaborative spirit unites Bangladesh to protect and strengthen communities against climate adversities. However, the inclusion and integration of different perspectives into national policies and sustainable development plans must be focused on, in order to guarantee that the needs and knowledge of the underrepresented are recognised and addressed, leading to more equitable and effective climate interventions.

NDCs embody governments' commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. If designed effectively, NDCs, alongside voluntary NAPs, can provide an effective framework to guide gender-responsive national climate action, including in relation to DRR and disaster response. Unfortunately, we have found when we dived deeper that most climate strategies across the South Asia region remain gender-blind, pointing to the stark reality that as climate disasters drive increasing devastation across the region, women, girls, youth and other marginalised groups continue to be overlooked, excluded and left behind in government responses.

We need to ensure an intersectional approach to climate action that incorporates the needs and priorities of women and girls, youth, marginalised groups, and indigenous community. Existing policies should reflect and address issues of climate justice in terms of budget and allocation that is gender sensitive and gender responsive. Incorporating gender considerations along with the insights of youth, indigenous and

marginalised groups into new climate policies and frameworks, will pave the way to foster synergies between gender equality, climate action, and sustainable development, leading to more cohesive and effective policy responses. In the face of climate change, governments, civil societies, international organisations, the private sector, and world leaders must collaborate and provide solutions to deal with the dire consequences of global warming.

We are convinced that in the face of the ever-increasing impacts of climate disasters, fostering gender-responsive and women-led, youth-led responses will drive effective outcomes for the most vulnerable and climate-affected communities.





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