



DECLARATION OF INCLUSIVITY



MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSION

Committing to better representation of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and Global South women of faith in climate leadership roles and platforms. This will include quotas for women delegates, enabling them to set agenda items and lead discussions, thus incorporating them into the organizing and participation process.

Climate change is a gendered phenomenon that disproportionately affects women. The United Nations estimates that 80% of those displaced by the climate crisis are women and girls. They are also more likely to perish in natural disasters or suffer disease and violence in the aftermath. Consequently, it is women leaders who champion environmentalism. Studies have shown that more women in parliament results in [more stringent climate legislation](#).

However, advocacy for women in leadership must also consider the nuances of inequalities, such as race, geography, and religious affiliation. This is why we have chosen to focus our efforts on Global South and BIPOC women of faith. In addition, a study by [Columbia Climate School](#) observed that faith communities – comprising of 84% of the world’s population – are primarily located in the Global South, which are lower on carbon emissions but also in their adaptation capabilities. Religious communities, therefore, must be considered a vital component of climate justice and leadership.

In spite of significant advances, there is still room for self-reflection and introspection. At the last Conference of Parties (COP27), arguably the most prominent platform for climate negotiations and policymaking, women made up [less than 34%](#) of the negotiating teams – and this does not account for the representation of women of faith and BIPOC women.

FINANCING

Encouraging secular and religious financing and philanthropy of institutions led by BIPOC and Global South women of faith, and gender-responsive initiatives. This includes investing in climate education, capacity building, gender-responsive climate policymaking and aid for women of faith, specifically initiatives that are women-led.

The [Oxfam Climate Finance Shadow Report 2020](#) concluded that a mere 1.5% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) situated gender equality as a primary objective, of which 0.2% reached women-led and women's organizations, compared to 33% of projects for which it was not a significant objective. Capacity building for women of faith, which enhances their climate resilience, is conducive to increased resilience in the community as a whole. Studies have proven that both women and religion are crucial to social cohesion, and therefore key to implementation of climate policy. Empowered women of faith are likely to invest in educating their children, efficiently manage household resources, adapt family and community needs to environmental realities, and even deliver effective aid during natural disasters – for which they are often [first responders](#), according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

We urge and recommend faith communities and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to offer gender-sensitive financing and philanthropy that is responsive to the adaptation and mitigation needs of women. For instance, with up to one trillion dollars in zakat (Islamic alms), there is an incredible reservoir for climate financing for vulnerable communities available to Muslims, but –particularly in the Global South – very few means to channel these funds. This is in part owed to [lack of trust](#) in NGOs or government-led initiatives. Faith leaders, on the other hand, are well-positioned within the community to articulate the necessity of directing funds towards climate action. Initiatives such as the [UNHCR Refugee Zakat Fund](#), have proven to be successful implementations of religious philanthropy in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals. Another example is the [Laudato Si'](#) program, through which the Catholic Church has increased climate literacy among its members, greening their financial and physical assets in a drive to become carbon neutral by 2030.

AN ECOSYSTEM OF CONNECTION

Working to develop BIPOC women networks; connecting grassroots movements and organizations in the Global South and developing direct communication with organizations in the Global North with the aim of sharing resources, knowledge and forging alliances that enable them to ‘think globally, act locally’.

Women in the Global South are well-placed to deliver effective aid due to **deep networks** within their local communities, but – as previously discussed – often face scarcity of funding and access to corridors of policy and decision-making. In addition, FBOs and aid agencies in the Global North would benefit from liaising with women of faith within their local environment, who structure their work in accordance with the priorities and concerns of the local communities. Adoption of such coalition building strategies will likely result in more targeted, informed, inclusive, and therefore effective collaborative action.

It is vital that larger faith institutions place more emphasis on community-led solutions by local FBOs, ensuring that BIPOC and Global South women of faith are placed at the forefront of faith and climate diplomacy. This can be achieved by incorporating both organizational and community representation, and would strengthen grassroots participation and representation of grassroots faith groups, and synchronize international and local climate agendas.

EXPAND 'ADAPTATION'

Broadening our climate adaptation policymaking to incorporate community welfare, children and education, cultural and values-based approaches through the inclusion of BIPOC and Global South women of faith. And expanding research done on the intersection of climate change, women, and faith, and the efficacy of women-led faith-based climate action.

The international community's climate policymaking strategy was recently critiqued by the [UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment](#), stating that discriminatory practices are preventing participation, and putting women at greater risks. Despite longstanding criticism for 'masculinized' approaches to policymaking (prioritizing economic and technical solutions), women are still severely under-represented within leadership at the national environmental level. A direct result of this, traditionally 'feminized' domains such as healthcare, childcare, and community welfare – all crucial to a holistic, effective climate adaptation strategy – are ignored. This 'gender blindness' results in [exacerbated gender inequalities](#), which increase the risks posed by the climate crisis to women and girls. The inclusion of BIPOC and Global South women of faith will enable the development of adaptation mechanisms centered on collective morality and on values informed by rich faith traditions that emphasize coexistence with creation and nature, stewardship, and articulated spiritual relationships with the natural world.

The current parameters of climate adaptation policymaking and its stakeholders must be reimagined and reconfigured to make room for the immense resources and benefits women of faith can bring, as well as to take the increased risks they face into account. The moral impetus placed on social cohesion and community wellbeing by world religions, and by extension, women of faith, coupled with the [access and networks](#) they possess within their communities, grant them invaluable strength to enhance the understanding of social issues and negotiate social change, both vital to the development and implementation of sustainable and effective policies.

SCHOLARSHIP AND CAPACITY SUPPORT

Empowering BIPOC and Global South women faith leaders to incorporate environmentalism into their religious education and scholarship. Providing them access to resources and support in knowledge production.

During Faith For Our Planet's faith-based climate action workshops in the Global South, we observed a severe visibility and participation deficit of women faith leaders in both climate and societal leadership. For instance, out of the names of over one hundred faith leaders provided by the Council for Islamic Ideology of Pakistan, none were women. We noticed the same pattern in Bangladesh and, to a lesser extent, in The Gambia – although, still, the majority of prominent faith leaders there are men.

According to [Pew Research Center](#), approximately 83.4% of women worldwide identify with a faith group, compared to 79.9% of men. Despite this, women – particularly in the Global South – rarely lead faith organizations or are provided with platforms for scholarship on social issues at a global level. Concomitantly, women academics in the Global South have [scarce opportunities](#) to publish climate change literature – facing lack of funding and access to academic resources. Capacity building for women is emphasized in the [UNFCCC's Gender Action Plan](#), and requires urgent investment.