

FROM THE PANDEMIC TO 2030: FEMINISTS WANT SYSTEM CHANGE PROTECTING THE PLANET AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

In 2015, the world agreed to a roadmap to sustainable development made up of 17 goals: the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). If achieved, we would live in a more just world with respect for and protection of the [land](#) and [oceans](#) and concerted action to end the [climate crisis](#). With this roadmap, achieving [gender equality](#) would be a goal in and of itself and a cross-cutting guide necessary to achieving the whole Agenda.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, however, countries were [not on track](#) to achieve the Agenda, with a status quo rooted in systems of oppression that prevent redistribution of power, wealth, resources, and that obstructs serious climate action. **Patriarchy, white supremacy, extractivism, militarism, and neoliberalism** are all pervasive, oppressive logics that dominate global governance and social and economic structures and create and maintain environmental and climate injustices, and inequalities now exacerbated by the climate crisis.

The rise of **corporate, capitalist power** – from fossil fuel companies to industrial agriculture – has led to the exploitation of people and the

“Women were already having to deal with surplus demands from family members during lockdown: cooking, cleaning, washing, tending to the sick, helping children with homework, weaving to cover for pay cuts, calling for family prayers, managing family conflict, and so on. Now they were faced with having to deal with the unexpected arrival of [Tropical Cyclone] Harold: facilitating the move to evacuation centres, preparing and cooking food for the family for the cyclone period, ensuring elderly and young members of the family were in safe locations. Not to mention its exit: immediately cleaning up, assessing

damage, facilitating relocation of family members, feeding the family, and keeping up with family demands. All this, while making sure that family members kept to strict hygiene rules because of COVID-19.”

– Ofakilevuka (‘Ofa) Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Tonga



environment in the pursuit of profit. **Land grabbing**, often done for industrial agriculture or infrastructure and driven by corporations, leads to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and widespread human rights violations, including women and Indigenous Peoples' **right to land**.

Corporate capture of military and governmental powers exacerbates the climate crisis because they push extractive economic models over regenerative ones that threaten ecosystem viability, Indigenous sovereignty, and further limit the potential for community-led, democratically-controlled, sustainable environmental governance, and strengthening of social protections. As the climate crisis exacerbates natural disasters, such as the cyclones in the [Pacific](#) and [Asia](#) that occurred in the middle of the pandemic, it also magnifies social inequalities and disparities in access to social services.

This impacts the genders unequally because **patriarchy** creates gender norms that assign women and girls particular roles that increase their vulnerability and marginalization, and prevents their equal participation and leadership. Women and girls bear disproportionate responsibility for managing waste and natural resources, gathering water and fuel for the house, and finding food. To complete this **domestic and care work**, women and girls often rely on public commons – because they do not have, or are prevented from having, their own land. When women and girls lose access to common land, including forests, because of land grabbing, their responsibilities do not disappear. Instead they have to spend more time and go farther – at greater cost and risk to themselves – in order to complete their work.

For other themes, please see the full series. WMG also has a set of cross cutting recommendations that can be found separately, within the series.

When **disasters** strike – which is now more frequent because of climate change and land degradation – research shows that [women are more likely to be killed](#) and are killed at younger ages than men, due to prevailing **gender inequalities** that frame access to resources and information, as well as the **sexual division of labor**. For example, caregiving responsibilities may make it difficult to seek or find appropriate shelter while restrictive gender norms may limit their ability to move freely in public, including leaving to seek shelter. In general, the wealth gap, wage gap, and gendered division of labor create higher levels of poverty among women, which prevents their ability to build economic resiliency and financially recover from disaster and catastrophic changes in environment-dependent labor.

Solutions that do not consider human rights, responsibilities, resources, and opportunities with a comprehensive gender-lens, informed by disaggregated data, will replicate and even exacerbate existing inequalities and perpetuate the unjust social and environmental regimes that have catalyzed the climate crisis and exacerbated the COVID-19 crisis.

WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below, along with the other recommendations in this series, offer the type of holistic solutions we need. By following these recommendations, we can emerge from the COVID-19 crisis able to build a just and equitable future and achieve the 2030 Agenda.

- Drastically increase all efforts to end the climate crisis and embed gender-responsive climate action into all COVID-19 recovery packages to ensure a **gender just transition and recovery**.
- **Demilitarize and end fossil fuel subsidies**. Instead support holistic, gender-responsive, transformative solutions that are rooted in human rights, gender equality, and a systemic approach to ending the climate crisis.
- Include conditionalities for **environmental and human rights protections** into all recovery packages.
- Prioritize the needs of communities and workers in all recovery packages over the interests of corporations, especially fossil fuel companies. When companies are supported through these packages, prioritize **care or low-carbon infrastructure industries**.
- During the crisis, continue to **enforce environmental regulations** aggressively and implement new regulations after the crisis ends that will accelerate action to end the climate crisis and achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- Promote **secure land tenure, respecting and restoring land rights**, including communal land rights, and protecting environmental and women human rights defenders from all forms of intimidation, harassment, and violence so that women and Indigenous communities can safely manage their lands.
- Protect the human rights of **environmental, land and women human rights defenders**, including the right to information, freedom of assembly and speech, as well as protection from harassment, intimidation, and violence. Hold all state and non-state actors accountable for any human rights violations.