

4D

## Dialogue #6: Climate resilience for demographic dividend(s)

Government-Government Policy  
Dialogues on Demographic  
Diversity and Dividends



# INTRODUCTION

The climate crisis is one of the most pressing and far-reaching challenges of our time, with deep implications for sustainable development and a threat to harnessing demographic dividends. The consequences of the climate crisis are felt by all; however, developing countries are often disproportionately affected and have limited resources for adequate responses. On a deeper level, we see that climate change is not gender-neutral and can exacerbate existing inequalities. Destroyed infrastructure can prevent many children and youth from finishing their education, and limit girls' and women's access to health services. At the same time, gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices are likely to increase during times of stress and scarcity. These factors threaten the socioeconomic progress that is needed to improve people's well-being, strengthen resilience to crises, and foster the demographic transition. Nevertheless, there are ways to mitigate the impact, and even create opportunities in the process of adaptation and transformation in the context of climate change.



As policymakers develop climate resilience and adaptation measures, they must consider the needs of populations particularly at risk, such as women, young people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups to increase their ability to better cope with the risks stemming from climate change. Policymakers must also harness the potential of female leaders and young people's innovation.

On 8 September 2022, more than 120 participants, experts, and speakers attended the sixth edition of the Government-Government Policy Dialogue series on Demographic Diversity and Dividend(s) with the title 'Climate Resilience for Demographic Dividend(s)'. The 4D Series, jointly organized by the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Government of Germany, builds on conversations that started at the 2019 Nairobi Summit on ICPD25. The discussions centred around policies and practices that countries can apply in development planning.

**Four breakout sessions focused on key questions linking the challenges of climate change with the characteristics and opportunities of demographic trends. The goal of the four sessions was to share successful examples of integrated responses and discuss avenues for a way forward:**

- Gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights – key to climate adaptation and resilience
- Youth action in leadership and innovation on locally led climate change adaptation and resilience: opportunities for green jobs and alternative livelihoods
- Leave no one behind in data and research on climate change impacts
- Migration as a climate adaptation option? – Implications of poverty, gender, and socio-economic vulnerability

**This report provides an in-depth account of the discussions that took place during the event. It summarizes the views of the participants in their diversity and offers a comprehensive overview of examples from around the world that were shared during the event. The report also encourages further engagement with the issues at stake and suggests potential actions that could be taken to address the challenges discussed. An input paper prepared to inform discussions is available [here](#).**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is no longer a question of whether climate change will occur, but rather what its effects will be, and how well we are prepared to adapt and cope with them. To that end, governments must take swift and decisive action to slow down climate change and to ensure adequate preparation and protection as well as sustainable development. Investments in key areas for socioeconomic development such as inclusive employment, education, health, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) can help bolster climate resilience. Improving the quality of data available on vulnerable populations can provide better insights into their specific needs. It is essential to recognize that climate change is not gender-neutral and that successful mitigation efforts must put women and youth at the centre and enable them to act as agents of change.



Moreover, governments need to consider demographic dynamics in policy and adaptation measures to guarantee the well-being of all people and ultimately reap the rewards of demographic dividends.

The following section summarizes key action points suggested by the dialogue participants:

- Develop holistic strategies instead of silo-based approaches that address interlinkages between different fields impacted by climate change such as food security, access to education and health, including SRHR, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and economic empowerment. Integrating SRHR in national climate adaptation and resilience strategies
- Consider SRHR needs in planning while making sure that adaptation measures safeguard the bodily autonomy of women and girls.
- Not only ensure that women's and girls' needs are taken into account and addressed but give them a platform to become leaders of change.
- Include women in disaster management and build capacities to become resilient beyond immediate crisis response for long-term sustainable development.
- Strengthen youth engagement in business and climate change, and give young people more space to participate in political decision-making.
- Match innovative sustainable business ideas with access to finance and managerial know-how to bolster the establishment of a green economy.
- Fill data gaps on climate change impacts, particularly on vulnerable groups such as women and girls, people with disabilities, migrants, and indigenous communities.
- Improve funding for and strengthen the capacity of local research institutes, enabling a critical mass of researchers to emerge.
- Improve the coherence of climate and migration policies.
- Expand legal and safe migration pathways to enable migration as an option for climate change adaptation.

# 1. GENDER EQUALITY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS – KEY TO CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Climate change is a global issue that affects every aspect of life, including gender equality and SRHR. By exacerbating existing inequalities, the effects of climate change can be particularly detrimental to women and girls. Climate-induced disasters can lead to an increase in maternal health risks, gender-based violence (GBV), child marriage, and other harmful practices. While men tend more to leave areas impacted by crises and conflict, women and girls often have little choice but to stay behind and cope with disaster. When women do migrate from climate-affected rural areas to cities, they may become less able to access affordable health care, including family planning. Therefore, climate adaptation plans must be gender-sensitive and must bridge the current gaps between key sectors, including health, food security, education, WASH, and economic empowerment. Governments must ensure that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector are included in discussions of potential responses. Additionally, women must be given key roles as leaders to ensure that their voices are heard. Capacity building and collaboration with faith-based actors may also help to bridge gaps between climate change resilience, demographic dividend, and reproductive health efforts.

Participants of the breakout group “Gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights” underlined just how essential it is for climate change adaptation measures to take into account the impact of climate-induced disasters on SRHR. Most importantly, they found a gap between national climate adaptation plans and SRHR. Multi-sectoral approaches that jointly consider population, health, and environment (PHE) issues are critical. The discussion highlighted the value of an integrated approach addressing, for example, SRH and conservation practices. Ensuring access to effective contraception, achieving desired family size, practising sustainable agricultural practices to ensure food supply, and meeting women’s and children’s needs are all connected issues. Seeing these as intertwined fields for action creates synergies and spillovers which improve planning capacities and the effectiveness of policy outcomes.

▶ Both **Ghana** and **Kenya** are currently making efforts to promote reproductive health and climate change adaptation. Ghana is developing a more holistic joint policy approach that addresses the interlinkages between inequalities in health and the effects of climate change as well as other factors that influence climate resilience such as education.

Kenya established a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism on the integration of PHE. The country’s PHE strategy and guidelines include the integration of family planning, SRH and environmental change interventions. Various PHE programmes are under implementation across the country. The goal is to break down sectoral silos and spearhead the integration of SRH and climate change interventions by establishing multi-sectoral technical working groups.





“ Climate change has a more severe impact on women and girls. Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of droughts or floods and causes slow onset processes such as desertification and glacial retreat. Secondary impacts are less obvious, but damages of roads or health facilities often result in women and girls not being able to access health care. Climate change also negatively impacts maternal health and can create conditions that result in increasing gender-based violence and harmful practices such as child marriage. However, most national climate strategies are silent on how climate change impacts women and girls. We need to build leadership, agency and economic empowerment for women and girls as part of climate change adaptation.”

Edirin Aderemi, Regional Advocacy Specialist, Nigeria, Pathfinder

The group stressed the importance of a rights-based approach in all efforts to build resilience to climate change and adaptation measures to ensure they don't lead to restrictions of women's and girls' bodily autonomy. They also highlighted the risks of neglecting the linkage between climate and gender justice. Disaster management structures in some countries have no women in leadership positions. The group agreed that women need to have a seat at the table wherever climate change interventions are discussed to ensure their specific needs are always considered.



## 2. YOUTH IN ACTION IN LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION ON LOCALLY OWNED CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREEN JOBS AND ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

To actively fight climate change, governments and institutions need to maximize the potential of young people and their ideas to address climate change and foster sustainable socioeconomic development. Yet, their potential is often limited due to external factors. The participants of the breakout group “Youth in action in leadership and innovation on locally owned climate adaptation and resilience: opportunities for green jobs and alternative livelihoods” pointed out that in business development there is often a lack of trust in products created by African companies and people tend to purchase American or European brand products instead, creating a structural barrier for new local African businesses. This lack of trust in African brands also leads to global supply chains with unnecessarily high CO2 emissions.

▶ In **Morocco**, the Local Conference of Young People (LCOY) brought together young activists from across the country to reflect on solutions for climate change. The conference aimed at empowering youth and including their voices in political decision-making processes. As an outcome of the conference, participants prepared and shared a statement with Morocco’s Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation. On a global scale, the statement was discussed at the International Conference of Youth that took place ahead of COP27, the 2022 UN Climate Change Conference.

The group acknowledged the important role that young people play in transforming economies towards a greener future. Participants of the group identified several opportunities to ensure young people are at the forefront of this transformation, such as creating a more receptive environment within governments for youth engagement in the field of business and climate change, as well as giving young people more space to participate in political decision-making and providing access to financing opportunities for their businesses.



To facilitate this, forums like the Youth Climate Council Global should be implemented to connect political decision-makers with young entrepreneurs and youth-led civil society organisations. Additionally, more investment in education in the areas of management, finance, business administration, and environmental protection is needed to empower motivated young leaders to become actively engaged. Young people benefit from networks, harnessing the collective intelligence of like-minded researchers and policy counterparts who share the same vision and values. To support this, the group recommended creating an innovation-friendly environment where an inventive spirit can take off and be scaled up, boosting the economy while making it greener.

“What young people need now is youth empowerment. Young people need to be aware of climate change. That means environmental education or climate education. Besides that, we need climate finance. Young people are trying to innovate, come up with different solutions, and are founding start-ups. But the problem is financing their projects and ideas. We should create platforms where we can share financing opportunities for young people.

Delphin Kaze, Founder and CEO of Kaze Green Economy (KAGE) and Burundian Climate Activist

### 3. LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND IN DATA AND RESEARCH ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

It is not possible to effectively plan and implement climate change interventions if there is no disaggregated data available about the impact on specific populations. While research on the impact of climate change has increased in recent years, its focus has primarily been on countries in the Global North. For Africa, especially, there is a lack of localized data on climate change impacts, especially when it comes to vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, urban migrants, and indigenous communities, and how their needs can be addressed. Existing biases in funding prioritize large international institutes typically based in high-income countries, while overlooking smaller institutions, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.



► In Kenya, spatial planning is decentralized requiring the 47 county governments to plan and implement development measures locally. However, counties often lack qualified urban planners and knowledge of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). To address this gap, the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) supported the Kisumu County government by training staff in key elements of spatial planning for sustainable development, with a focus on addressing climate change and population needs at the local level and to leave no one behind.



As a consequence there is a lack in localized data on how climate change does and will impact different populations in Africa, and researchers on the continent are not being funded sufficiently to address these data gaps.

Discussions in the breakout group “[Leave no one behind in data and research on climate change impacts](#)” focused on how a lack of data poses additional challenges for decision-makers in their quest to mitigate the consequences of climate change. A key takeaway from the discussion was the need to capture population dynamics and include this information in policy dialogue and planning. Especially the most vulnerable groups must be included in data collection and analysis. For example, it is critical to research and understand how extreme weather events impact people with diverse disabilities, and to take into account their needs during an evacuation and after the event in terms of properly equipped shelters and appropriate medical facilities. Some participants of the discussion suggested that beyond including data on vulnerable groups in research studies, establishing partnerships between marginalized groups and local research institutions can boost mutual exchange and advocacy. A necessary precondition for obtaining more local research is the establishment of appropriate structures. National institutes and local governments must receive adequate funding to bring in their local expertise and develop context-specific data. Strengthening local institutions to collect and analyze data can help build a critical mass of African researchers on climate change to ensure no one is left behind.

► Extreme weather events due to climate change are becoming more frequent in [Senegal](#) as well. In July and August 2022 its capital, Dakar, received twice as much rain as usual, resulting in flooding. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is trying to respond to the changing climate in the best way possible. It has produced national planning documents that consider the impact of climate change on different economic sectors and is working closely with researchers to develop evidence-based policy. For instance, the Ministry collaborates with the ‘Consortium Régional Pour La Recherche En Economie G n rationnelle’ (CREG), the first NTA Center of Excellence in Africa, to incorporate a perspective on demographic dividends in their planning.



## 4. MIGRATION AS A CLIMATE ADAPTATION OPTION? – IMPLICATIONS OF POVERTY, GENDER, AND SOCIOECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

Rising temperatures cause changes to topography and landscapes. This can lead, for example, to an increase in water levels or periods of drought, which affect people's livelihoods and in turn, can result in climate-induced migration. While migration can be a way of escaping a difficult situation, it can come with negative side effects, particularly for vulnerable groups. A large number of people leaving a village, for example, can make this particular community less habitable for those who remain, resulting in an effect called "hollow villages". Climate-induced migration from rural to urban areas often leads to people living in even more precarious conditions such as informal urban settlements. At the same time, the groups most vulnerable to climate change impacts tend to have fewer options for migration as an adaptation strategy: women, older persons, low-income households, youth, children, and people with disabilities.

The breakout group "[Migration as a climate adaptation option? – Implications of poverty, gender, and socioeconomic vulnerability](#)" evaluated the risks and challenges associated with migration and the role population development plays in this dynamic. Speakers in the group agreed that migration can potentially

▶ The EU-funded HABITABLE project — a research project bringing together 21 partners from 18 countries — looks at the interlinkages between climate change impacts, migration and displacement patterns. The research is centred around the notion of habitability and aims to improve the understanding of how environmental disruptions might potentially trigger major social changes. The HABITABLE project delivers data collected from five primary case study countries (Ghana, Mali, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Thailand) and two secondary case study countries (Senegal and South Africa) which underline the importance of an adaptation of place and migration as a necessary choice when trying to create climate resilience.

increase resilience to climate impacts by reducing exposure to climate hazards, giving people an opportunity to regain livelihoods and food security. Environmental shocks may temporarily impede the ability of people to respond, but in the long run, safe and secure migration becomes increasingly likely as an adaptation measure. The group recommended acknowledging that migration is not a new phenomenon and supporting it as a powerful way for people to respond to climate change impacts. Governments and policymakers should improve the coherence of policies and include a view on migration in climate policies. Early warning and protective systems are key to responding to the needs of diverse groups. Investment in research on climate vulnerabilities and migration drivers would help to preemptively act and understand the causes. Investment in rural and urban development, along with an expansion of legal and regular migration pathways should be considered to enable migration as an option. The Global Compact on Migration serves as a starting point for this.



“Even though contexts differ, there is a common finding. When given an array of options to respond to onset hazards or slow-onset climate change impacts, migration tends not to be the first option people choose. But if they are able to choose migration and plan for it proactively and organize household resources around it, it can be a very positive outcome not just for the migrants themselves but for the community back home and their household members.”

Julia Blocher, Project lead “HABITABLE: Linking Climate Change, Habitability and Social Tipping Points: Scenarios for Climate Migration”

## CONCLUSION

Climate change-induced disasters will become increasingly frequent in the coming years and decades, and governments must be better prepared to meet the ensuing challenges. Regional and national policymakers need to develop plans for ensuring continued access to health services even in times of crisis, empowering young entrepreneurs to create green sustainable economies, improving the availability of disaggregated population-specific data, and facilitating safe and self-determined migration. By adopting gender-sensitive and equity- and human rights-based adaptation approaches, global and national leaders can reap demographic dividend(s) in their efforts to strengthen climate resilience. Depending on actions taken now, sustainable development is either at risk of falling short or the starting point to meet the challenges posed by the climate crisis and improve livelihoods around the globe.



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