

WHERE WE STAND**CLIMATE CHANGE****Where Things Stand...**

Every day, on every continent, people feel the effects of [climate change](#). A drinking water source dries up or becomes saline, reliable subsistence resources fail to thrive, or disease spread unchecked. Rains come at the wrong time of year, or in unpredictable amounts, resulting in crops failing or washing away. A hydropower source becomes inadequate to generate electricity, or permafrost melts and infrastructure fails. Coastal erosion, flood, wildfire, or rising sea level destroys all a person owns, as well as their livelihood. A natural disaster forced people to migrate from their homes.

[The consensus of climate scientists is](#) that human activities are a likely cause of climate-warming trends over the past century, and the complicated effects of this global climate change are causing increasingly extreme and unpredictable weather events. Recognising the multiple threats to national security and to all aspects of sustainable development and achievement of the [2030 SDGs](#), nearly all UN [Member States agreed](#) to combat global climate change by reducing, and eventually eliminating, greenhouse gas emissions.

The adverse effects of climate change are inextricably linked to human rights. Multiple [reviews and studies](#) identify and describe the risks climate change pose to the rights to water, food security, highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, life and physical integrity, adequate housing, sanitation, self-determination, and sustainable development. The rights of [women and girls are especially threatened](#) by the adverse effects of climate change.

...And Where Things Need to Go**Fundamental Action**

Responding to climate change requires mitigation (reducing emissions); and adaptation (adapting to the climate change that is occurring now). Soroptimist International recognises that climate change exacerbates existing pressures on states, communities, and individuals everywhere, and believes urgent and [immediate integrated](#) responses to climate change with strategies to protect the interests of women and girls is necessary to ensure sustainable development. By submitting country-specific reports, Soroptimist International can critically engage with the reporting and monitoring processes of [UNFCCC](#), [CEDAW](#), [UPR](#), [the Sendai Framework](#), and [the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#), thus ensuring the voices of women and girls are heard, and inducing governments to act.

Additional Action

Governments, non-governmental organisations, civil society, the private sector, and other institutions and individuals who interact with women and girls must act in the following areas toward mitigation of and adaptation to climate change:

Raise Awareness of Climate Change. No woman or girl is immune to the reach of the effects of climate change, no matter how subtle or dramatic the environmental shift may be. Training programmes and capacity-building that target women and support their role in implementing climate mitigation and adaptation policy give women and girls an awareness of what climate change is and how to adapt one's life to a changing environment, which in turn gives women and girls power to recognise and chose options that improve their situation.

SI (SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL) LIMITED

www.soroptimistinternational.org

REGISTERED OFFICE: 8a ROMSEY TERRACE CAMBRIDGE CB1 3NH UK COMPANY NUMBER 08670477

In General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council, United Nations (ECOSOC); Operational Relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); Special List of the International Labour Organisation (ILO); Official Relations with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); Consultative Status with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); Consultative Status with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Conduct Research and Monitoring, Collect and Use Disaggregated Data. Systems to collect accurate and reliable qualitative and quantitative data that are disaggregated by place, gender, age, ethnicity, language, marital status, and other descriptors that are relevant to monitoring inequalities experienced by women and girls, must be developed and uniformly implemented to assist development of climate-change related policies, laws, and plans, and when designing, monitoring, and evaluating projects that provide aid and services to women and girls.

Provide Education and Access to Decent Work. Natural disasters disproportionately worsen the earnings and employment opportunities of women. Livelihoods may be lost in a single disastrous event; however, the insidious creep of temperature, precipitation, or sea level may present circumstances that slowly steal employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Educational programmes should equip women and girls with knowledge, skills, and flexibility to move to new or different employment or entrepreneurial opportunities as circumstances change.

Where Soroptimist International Stands

These are the principles that Soroptimist International strongly supports and will advocate for on behalf of women and girls:

States should fully implement their [Paris Agreement of COP21](#) commitments, to prevent global temperatures from rising, and compromising a vast range of human rights.

States, the private sector and NGOs should take care to protect the rights of women and girls, and empower them to be leaders, experts and agents of change.

States, the private sector and NGOs should provide for effective remedies to climate-related violations of human rights.

States, the private sector and NGOs should assess and provide information about the effects of climate change, to allow climate related decisions to be made with the participation of an informed public.

Each State should adopt a legal and institutional framework that assists those within its jurisdiction to adapt to the unavoidable adverse effects of climate change.

States must protect the rights of freedom of expression and association in relation to all climate actions, even when the rights are being exercised in opposition to projects supported by government entities.

“We have entered a new era of global cooperation on one of the most complex issues ever to confront humanity. For the first time, every country in the world has pledged to curb emissions, strengthen resilience and join in a common cause to take common climate action. This is a resounding success for multilateralism”. [UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, 2015](#)

Soroptimist International supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its Federations, Unions, Regions, Clubs, by working on the ground with partner organisations and UN agencies to Educate, Empower and Enable women and girls everywhere.