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# Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

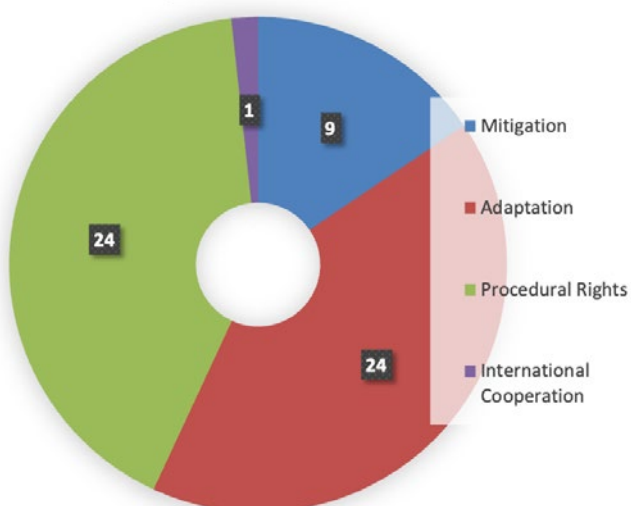
## Synthesis of Statements on Climate Change

2023 Update

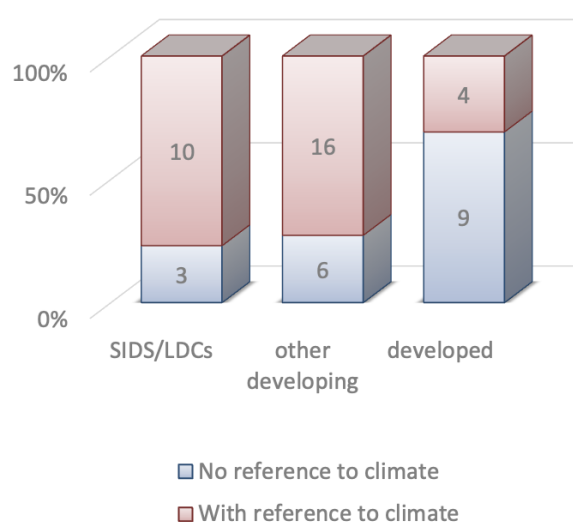


*This note reviews the outputs of the CEDAW related to climate change in 2022 and complements [our previous note](#) dedicated to such outputs up to 2021 ([bit.ly/HRTBsclimate2022](https://bit.ly/HRTBsclimate2022)).*

Themes addressed by the CEDAW in the State  
review procedure in 2022



Outputs of the CEDAW in 2022,  
by country category



In line with 2020 and 2021, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was the committee that issued the highest number of climate-related outputs in its State reporting procedure work in 2022 — including Concluding Observations (COBs), Lists of Issues (LOIs), and Lists of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPRs). It made climate-related recommendations or asked climate-related questions to more than half of the States that it considered (thirty out of forty-nine). Twenty-three out of the thirty climate-related recommendations or questions addressed developed countries.

**Disaster risk reduction and adaptation** were mentioned in all climate-related outputs. When addressing this dimension, the Committee emphasized the need for greater participation of women in processes, programs, and policymaking (e.g., COBs to Belgium and Uganda), often recalling the CEDAW's [General Recommendation No. 37 \(2018\) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change](#). The CEDAW also regularly focused on the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the State party's framework for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (e.g., COB to Saint Kitts and Nevis, LOI to France). Increasingly, the CEDAW also refers to **addressing the aftermath of climate disasters**, not only in immediate post-disaster response, relief, and recovery (e.g., COB to Saint Kitts and Nevis and COB to Costa Rica), but also longer-term rehabilitation (e.g., COB to Uganda and COB to Belgium) and specific strategies in that context (e.g., LOI to Timor Leste).

The Committee continued to give greater attention to disaster risk reduction and adaptation instead of **mitigation** policies, which the Committee only referred to in nine outputs. This is in line with the previous years' trend, when very few outputs referred to mitigation.

The Committee issued two strong statements on **fossil fuels extraction**. In its COB to Uganda, the Committee urged the State party to “[s]wiftly undertake an assessment of the situation of women affected by the mineral and oil and gas exploration sectors and climate change-related natural disasters, implement gender-responsive programmes for their rehabilitation and for securing their livelihoods and provide information on such measures in its next periodic report.” The Committee expressed concerns about Namibia's policies regarding the extraction of fossil fuels, especially with regard to the lack of information on “(a) [t]he measures taken by the State party to ensure that climate change and energy policies, and specifically the policy on the extraction and export of oil and gas, take into account the differentiated and disproportionate impact of climate change and environmental degradation on women, especially on rural and indigenous women; (b) [t]he insufficient measures taken to ensure that the authorization of oil and gas exploration and development in the Kavango region does not violate the rights of rural women and girls to access to clean water, food and health care.” It thus recommended environmental and human rights impact assessments in relation to oil and gas exploration activities in Namibia, and ensuring that “any decisions on oil and gas exploitation in the Kavango region are subject to the full, prior and informed consent of local communities, including women and girls.”

### CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls

In October 2022, the CEDAW adopted its [General Recommendation No. 39 \(2022\) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls](#). The General Recommendation (GR) aims to provide guidance to States on the measures they should take to ensure full compliance with their obligations under the Convention to respect and protect the rights of Indigenous women and girls. The GR also addresses climate change. It highlights that “Indigenous women and girls...are heavily affected by existential threats connected to climate change, environmental degradation, the loss of biodiversity and barriers in gaining access to food and water security,” and that “[e]xtractive activities carried out by business enterprises and other industrial, financial, public and private actors often have a devastating impact on the environment, air, land, waterways, oceans, territories and natural resources of Indigenous

Peoples and may infringe the rights of Indigenous women and girls.” The GR states that climate change is relevant to a wide range of rights, including the right to effective participation in political and public life; the right to culture; the rights to land, territories, and natural resources; and the rights to food, water, and seeds. It also affirms that the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment “encompasses a safe and stable climate.”

The GR contains specific recommendations on climate across the various chapters. It recommends “[e]nsur[ing] that economic activities, including those related to...extraction, mining, climate mitigation and adaptation programmes, and conservation projects are only implemented in Indigenous territories and protected areas with the effective participation of Indigenous women, including full respect for their right to free, prior and informed consent and the adequate consultation processes.” The Committee recommends that State parties “[r]equire the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous women and girls before authorizing economic, development, extractive and climate mitigation and adaptation projects on their lands and territories and affecting their natural resources” and “design free, prior and informed consent protocols to guide these processes.”

The GR also contains various recommendations related to the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, to ensure:

- that relevant laws and policies “reflect the specific impacts of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation and harm, including the triple planetary crisis;”
- that Indigenous women and girls can meaningfully participate in the decision-making process;
- that “effective remedies and accountability mechanisms are in place to hold those responsible for environmental harm accountable, and ensure access to justice for Indigenous women and girls in environmental matters;”
- free, prior, and informed consent, including for “including any proposal to designate their lands as a protected area for conservation or climate change mitigation purposes or carbon sequestration and trading or to implement a green energy project on their lands, and any other matter having a significant impact on their human rights.”

The Committee has referenced its General Recommendation No. 37 several times in its State reviews when discussing the gender dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate. It can therefore be expected that the Committee will increasingly build on the new GC when issuing future questions and recommendations.