Online ISSN 1759-2917
Print ISSN 1759-2909

Working Paper

ODI Global

Gender equality and the climate crisis: champions and backsliders

Reflections from UN climate change negotiations

Brianna Craft and Donya Khosravi, with Evie Browne and Amy Cano Prentice

April 2026

Abstract/ Key messages

Multilateralism is facing unprecedented challenges. International cooperation on gender equality and climate action provides an instructive lens to examine changing dynamics.

The United Nation's climate change negotiations recognise the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on women and the necessity of a gendered response.

The Alliance of Small Island States, the Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Environmental Integrity Group and the European Union championed gender language at COP30.

The Arab Group and the Like-Minded Developing Countries opposed gender-based approaches to just transition pathways at COP30, while Argentina, the Holy See, Iran, Paraguay, Russia and Saudi Arabia backslid on agreed gender language.

Some actors – such as African constituencies – could strengthen broad alliances to progress gender equality and climate action within multilateral processes.

ODI Global, 4 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA, United Kingdom

Online ISSN 1759-2917
Print ISSN 1759-2909

How to cite: Craft, B. and Khosravi, D. with Browne, E. and Cano Prentice, A. (2026) Gender equality and the climate crisis: champions and backsliders. ODI Global Working Paper. London: ODI Global (https://odi.org/en/publications/gender-equality-and-the-climate-crisis-champions-and-backsliders/)

Acknowledgments

The authors thank colleagues across ODI Global for their support in developing this working paper. We are especially grateful for the direction of Sarah Colenbrander and Ayesha Khan. Hannah Murray provided communications and publication support. Jo Fottrell provided editorial support.

We also acknowledge with thanks the work of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), specifically their Gender Climate Tracker (https://genderclimatetracker.org/), which tracks references to gender equality in the United Nations (UN) climate change negotiations. Our research benefits from this resource and builds on its findings.

Thank you to Sandra Epal-Ratjen of the International Commission of Jurists, as well as Alexandria Gordon and Tara Daniel of WEDO for their valuable feedback and peer review.

Finally, we are grateful to Fondation Chanel whose partnership makes this research possible.

About the authors

Brianna Craft is a Senior Research Associate within ODI Global's Climate and Sustainability programme.

Donya Khosravi is a Research Officer in the Climate and Sustainability programme at ODI Global.

Evie Browne is a Research Fellow in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion programme at ODI Global.

Amy Cano Prentice is a Senior Research Officer in the Climate and Sustainability programme at ODI Global.

Contents

Display items

Tables

Abbreviations and acronyms

ABU	Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay
AGN	African Group of Negotiators
AILAC	Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
CBDR-RC	common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	civil society organisation
EIG	Environmental Integrity Group
EU	European Union
GAP	Gender Action Plan
G7	Group of Seven
G20	Group of 20
G77	Group of 77 and China
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LGBTQ+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer plus
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LMDCs	Like-Minded Developing Countries
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal
NDC	nationally determined contribution
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization

Executive summary

Since the 1940s, international cooperation has shaped a more stable, prosperous and inclusive world. Multilateral institutions provide a foundation for countries to work together towards peace and security, to establish common rules and processes around trade and financial flows, and to reach a shared understanding of human rights. Most essentially, multilateral institutions embed the idea that collective challenges require collective solutions – a critical proposition for meeting the challenge of the climate crisis.

Multilateral institutions are under extraordinary pressure in 2026. This is caused, in large part, by a crisis in the international rules-based order, which is leading many to question its relevance or to openly disregard it. Geopolitical relations are increasingly fraught, with great powers undermining sovereignty, human rights and the norms underpinning economic cooperation. Among the most consequential shifts is the broad change in policy in the United States: its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and from the underlying UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2026 signal a retreat from international cooperation and commitments.

This working paper examines the positions that blocs and countries have taken on gender equality within the UNFCCC process from 2022 to 2025, supported by observations of negotiations on just transition and on gender at the thirtieth Conference of the Parties (COP30) held in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025. Understanding which alliances champion climate action and gender equality in this space and which are backsliding on agreed language may help progressive actors navigate the changing multilateral landscape.

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), the Environmental Integrity Group (EIG) and the European Union (EU) championed gender language in the negotiations we observed. The Arab Group and the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs) spoke against gender-based approaches to just transition pathways at COP30, while we saw Argentina, the Holy See, Iran, Paraguay, Russia and Saudi Arabia backslide on agreed gender language.

Our review points to actors who could strengthen broad coalitions of the willing to progress gender equality and climate action. In the UNFCCC negotiations, the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group intervened to further the need for gender-responsive climate finance. Expanding broad and well-informed coalitions will be critical to counter pushback in multilateral institutions, and to support and build on the work of feminist civil society organisations (CSOs) already driving the agenda on gender-responsive climate action.

Diplomats, CSOs and feminist actors operating within and around multilateral spaces may benefit from our recommendations and suggested areas for further research. Several questions remain to be addressed that are crucial to strengthening gender-responsive climate action within the UNFCCC and multilateralism at large.

Key recommendations:

1. In the UNFCCC negotiations, a powerful set of actors are rejecting multilateralism (e.g. the US), opposing gender-based approaches to just transition pathways (e.g. groups whose membership includes China and India), and explicitly backsliding on agreed gender language (e.g. Russia and Saudi Arabia). The multilateral system, wherein every country has a seat at the decision-making table, faces unprecedented challenges. As such, similarly unprecedented solutions are required to advance international commitments and implement previous decisions to address gender equality and climate action.
2. In response to these challenges, broad coalitions are seeking to gather strength in numbers. Stakeholders should seek out: 1) middle-ground countries, including African constituencies (e.g. members of the AGN and the LDC Group), 2) countries that consistently champion gender in their UNFCCC submissions (e.g. the Philippines), and 3) recent COP presidencies (e.g. the United Arab Emirates, Brazil and Australia) to strengthen coalition-building.
3. The formation of spaces parallel to the UNFCCC negotiations creates opportunities and challenges. Stakeholders should build on coalitions of the willing, for example at the first conference on transitioning away from fossil fuels. They must also proactively articulate how parallel discussions will further the inclusive decision-making of the UNFCCC rather than detract from the legitimacy of the multilateral system.
4. The UN climate change negotiations recognise that the climate crisis disproportionately impacts women and that climate action requires a gendered response. For stakeholders engaging with the negotiations, a baseline understanding of previously agreed language is important to challenge backsliding, especially in spaces where gender is explicitly discussed less often.
5. Our study focuses on gender and climate, just transition and gender-responsive climate finance, but agreed gender language appears across UNFCCC negotiation tracks. Dedicated and coordinated advocacy is needed throughout the UN climate negotiations to advance international commitments and implement previous decisions.

1 Introduction

The UN Charter, adopted in 1945 and binding for all Member States, affirms commitment to 'universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all' (UN, 1945: Art.55.c). Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights elaborates these principles, recognising 'the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family' (United Nations, 1948: preamble).

There has been tremendous progress towards this vision in subsequent decades. Dozens of countries have achieved independence, while billions of people have gained suffrage and improved their living standards to a level unimaginable 80 years ago (UN, n.d.-a; World Bank, 2022; Nord et al., 2025). International cooperation has shaped a more stable, prosperous and inclusive order that has enabled these economic and social gains.

The establishment of multilateral institutions provided a foundation for countries to work together towards peace and security, to establish common rules and processes around trade and financial flows, and to reach a common understanding of human rights. Importantly, the UN system is based on the principle that every country has a seat at the table and should be accorded equal voice. Most essentially, multilateral institutions embedded the idea that collective challenges require collective solutions – a proposition that has become more relevant in the face of global problems such as climate change.

In recent years, however, multilateralism has faced unprecedented challenges. Geopolitical relations are increasingly polarised, with great powers demonstrating a disregard for sovereignty, human rights and the norms underpinning economic cooperation. International relations are being more obviously driven by national interest rather than shared values, and they have become more explicitly transactional instead of cooperative (Chikvaidze, 2020; Carney, 2026). UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently warned the Security Council that the rule of law is being replaced by 'the law of the jungle' with violations of international law and disregard for the UN Charter becoming more visible (UN, 2026). Previous multilateral commitments have been undermined or hollowed out, explicitly and implicitly breaking trust in the ability to implement multilateral solutions.

Here, we examine the threatened state of international cooperation through the lens of bloc and country positions on gender equality and climate action. Both agendas are deeply embedded in the UN system, relying on established international norms and legal obligations, and supported by dedicated institutional processes. For example, the UN Human Rights Office states that gender equality should be included in all climate mitigation and adaptation planning (OHCHR, 2015). But both have become focal points for political contestation, making them useful examples to understand how progressive agendas are defended, diluted or reshaped within multilateral spaces.

Gender equality has long been articulated within the UN as both a human rights obligation and a development imperative. It is reflected in international human rights frameworks as well as in global development agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, n.d.-b). Yet countries have selectively ratified the UN conventions on gender equality depending on their positions.[1] Commitments to gender equality have consistently been bitterly argued in the UN system, although a cautious global consensus on some women's rights did evolve between the Beijing Platform for Action (adopted after the last UN World Conference for Women) in 1995 until around 2010 (Goetz, 2020).

In recent years, commitments related to gender equality and women's rights have been challenged or narrowed through appeals to cultural or contextual specificity, alongside the use of procedural tactics that stall progress or confine outcomes to existing mandates (WGDAWG, 2019; UNRISD and UN Women, 2025). Scholars have analysed the rise of anti-gender or gender-restrictive actors who influence global policy-making, noting how they weaponise gender to undermine democracy and multilateralism more broadly (Datta, 2025). Not all governments are part of this trend, although many increasingly sympathise with the religiously framed and gender-restrictive rhetoric and 'moral panic' around gender issues that have been generated to win public support (Martínez et al., 2021).

Climate action broadly refers to collective efforts by national and local governments, businesses and civil society to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to support the goals of the Paris Agreement. Such action is subject to parallel, though distinct, pressures at the multilateral level.

Climate action is institutionalised within the UN system as a shared responsibility under the UNFCCC, which affirms the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) (UN, 1992; UNFCCC, n.d.-a). However, disagreements have repeatedly centred on how this principle should be interpreted and operationalised, particularly in debates over nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and the allocation of climate finance obligations between developed and developing countries (Pauw et al., 2014; Binetti and Menzel, 2025).

While the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 marked a high point of multilateral consensus with near-universal participation and agreement on limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C (UNFCCC, 2015), contestation over mitigation ambition and financial commitments persists. Tensions resurfaced with the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under President Trump in 2020, signaling renewed scepticism towards multilateral climate cooperation (Lazarou and Leclerc, 2025).

---

1 For example, the US is among the handful of countries yet to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The gender–climate nexus sits at the intersection of these pressures. Although the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls are widely acknowledged, translating this recognition into gender-responsive and inclusive climate policies is constrained both by institutional inertia and ongoing political contestation (Magnusdottir and Kronsell, 2024; Cano Prentice and Craft, 2025). Efforts to integrate gender equality into climate decision-making, policy design and finance are often fragmented, contested or confined to narrow areas of participation, rather than embedded across substantive climate outcomes (Maguire and Lewis, 2018).

Gender-focused multilateral fora increasingly accept the climate crisis as a structural factor shaping gender equality outcomes. Climate change is treated as a human rights issue as well as an environmental one by institutions such as the Human Rights Council (UN HRC, 2025) and the Commission on the Status of Women, for example. Indeed, in 2022, the annual Commission on the Status of Women meeting adopted the theme 'Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes', with associated conclusions agreed.

At the treaty level, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has actively incorporated climate action into the human rights obligations of states (UN HRC, 2024; Bonner, 2018), culminating in General Recommendation No. 37 in 2018, which provides an urgent call to mitigate the effects of climate change and disasters on gender equality (CEDAW, 2018). Similarly, the Human Rights Council has advanced an annual Resolution on Human Rights and Climate Change since 2008, promoting a rights-based approach (OHCHR, n.d.-a; Limon, 2018). These fora, focused on human rights and gender equality, have incorporated climate change agreements and knowledge into their work. However, like the UNFCCC, these spaces experience both championing and backsliding, with states pushing back on specific aspects of gender equality and climate action.

In this working paper we have sought to understand which blocs and countries champion gender equality in the UNFCCC negotiations and which are backsliding on agreed language. By examining the period 2022–2025, our research has also looked at how countries and blocs are shifting their positions and creating new alliances as pressures against progress increase. Our findings and recommendations may aid progressive actors as they navigate this changing multilateral landscape.

Our analysis builds on previous ODI Global work that established a baseline of commitments at the gender–climate nexus across the UNFCCC, the Group of Seven countries (G7) and the Group of 20 countries (G20) between 2022 and 2024 (Craft et al., 2025). While that baseline assessed the content of commitments and negotiated outcomes, our purpose here is to map states' positions and the changing alliances on gender in the UNFCCC negotiations. This forum

sets the highest normative standards on commitments to gender equality and climate action, and it provides insights into how nexus commitments are supported and contested within the multilateral system.

Our primary audience is diplomats, CSOs and feminist actors operating within and around multilateral spaces. The working paper is intended to support these actors in understanding how the multilateral landscape is shifting, where resistance and opportunities for coalition-building are emerging, and how progressive agendas are being advanced or constrained within existing institutions.

1.1 The UN climate change negotiations

The UNFCCC is the principal UN forum for negotiating and implementing global climate commitments. The UN climate negotiations bring together the 198 countries that are party to the UNFCCC. Every year, these countries convene to discuss and agree how they will work together to address climate change under three treaties: the UNFCCC (UN, 1992), the Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC, 1997) and the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015). Decisions are legally binding and are made by consensus, with no agreed system of voting (Tenzing et al., 2023). Parties form alliances and often negotiate in groups to strengthen their positions in the consensus-based decision-making process (UNFCCC, n.d.-b). UNFCCC decisions regularly call for parties and constituency members to submit information and proposals ahead of negotiating sessions.

Table 1 shows the membership of the negotiating blocs discussed in this working paper.

Under the UNFCCC, developed countries that are historically responsible for greenhouse gas emissions are also responsible for reducing emissions and for providing climate finance. The principle of CBDR-RC is enshrined in the Paris Agreement. While gender is not referenced in the original UNFCCC or the Kyoto Protocol, it is in the Paris Agreement. Gender language is now present in decisions relating to all three treaties and appears across decision types, including those on mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building, for example.

There is a dedicated track on gender within the climate negotiations. Parties launched the Lima work programme on gender in 2014, and in 2024 they agreed to extend an enhanced Lima work programme on gender for a further 10 years (UNFCCC, 2024a). The Lima work programme aims to improve gender balance and the integration of gender considerations throughout the UNFCCC's work, and to achieve gender-responsive climate policy and action. In 2025, countries adopted the nine-year Belém Gender Action Plan (GAP) (UNFCCC, 2025a), which builds on the previous GAP adopted in 2019 and reviewed in 2022. Overall, the Belém GAP's activities will encourage the adoption of national gender-responsive climate policies and strengthen gender mainstreaming under the UN climate regime.

Table 1 UNFCCC negotiating blocs and membership

Negotiating bloc	Membership
African Group of Negotiators (AGN)	The 54 countries in the Africa Group or AGN are the only ones in a UN regional group to negotiate as a bloc. There are 34 LDCs in the Africa Group and all are part of the Group of 77 (G77).
Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)	Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Peru. All members are also part of the G77 (see www.ailac.org).
Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)	The 39 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are recognised as a group by the UN. All SIDS, except for Bahrain, negotiate as AOSIS. Seven LDCs belong to AOSIS and most members belong to the G77 (see www.aosis.org).
Arab Group	This regional negotiating bloc comprises 22 Arab countries. All members are also part of the G77.
Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)	Georgia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Monaco, Republic of Korea and Switzerland. Certain members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) came together in 2000 because they did not share the positions of the Umbrella Group (see below); they were later joined by Liechtenstein, Monaco and Georgia.
European Union (EU)	A negotiating bloc comprising the 27 European Union member states. The EU is also a party to the Convention and thus has its own seat and party flag at the UNFCCC negotiations.
Group of 77 and China (G77)	The largest negotiating bloc with 134 members, mainly from developing countries (see www.g77.org).
Grupo SUR	Membership of this South American group varies, but typically includes Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay. All members are also part of the G77.
Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group	The 44 members are categorised as 'least developed' according to UN criteria. Thirty-four LDCs are in Africa, with others in Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The vast majority of LDCs are members of the G77 (see www.ldc-climate.org).
Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)	Approximately 24 developing countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America, which includes China and India. The LMDCs are all members of the G77.
Umbrella Group	A coalition of non-EU developed countries. While there is no formal list, the Umbrella Group usually comprises Australia, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, Ukraine, the US and the United Kingdom.

Note: In the UNFCCC process, countries frequently organise themselves into blocs or groups to coordinate positions and advance shared interests. These blocs are informal coalitions based on geographic, political, economic or vulnerability-related common interests. They allow member countries to present joint statements, submit coordinated proposals and increase their collective influence within the consensus-based decision-making process. Because these groupings are not mutually exclusive, countries often belong to multiple blocs simultaneously, and positions may be coordinated across several overlapping groups (for example, many members of AOSIS and the LDC Group are also part of the G77).

Source: Tenzing et al. (2023); UNFCCC (n.d.-b).

We have analysed the UNFCCC, in part, because of its transparency and the availability of public documentation. This includes submissions and statements, as well as participant observation during the negotiations. In contrast to more exclusive fora such as the G7 and G20, the UNFCCC allows for systematic analysis of country and bloc behaviour over time and offers insight into how a diverse set of states uphold or backslide on agreed language.

2 Methods and approaches

We examined two sets of documents to understand how countries are shifting their positions and creating new alliances as pressure increases to advance multilateral decisions on gender equality and climate action: 1) UNFCCC decisions taken since 2022, and 2) the stated positions of blocs and countries during that timeframe. Taken together, these documents show how decision language has progressed, and where groups and countries fall along the spectrum of agreement with those decisions.

Our review followed the same search term methodology as our baseline analysis (Craft et al., 2025). To find language related to gender equality we utilised primary and secondary search terms – the words most used in international decisions when referring to gender equality and climate action. Our primary search terms were "women" and "gender"; our secondary search terms were used less frequently and often in conjunction with the primary search terms.[2] As the UNFCCC documents inherently relate to climate action, we analysed paragraphs that contain gender terms.

Our first document review sought to narrow down the complex landscape of UNFCCC decisions. We wished to focus our analysis on the negotiating tracks where gender is discussed most. Classifying negotiating tracks is subjective though. We relied on the themes used most commonly to group agenda items into negotiating tracks: mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity-building, gender and climate change, and other. We searched decisions taken from 2022 and found that decisions relating to gender and climate, to finance and to mitigation contain the most gender references. This resonates with our previous analysis of UNFCCC decisions over 2022–2024, which finds that decisions devoted to gender and climate and to mitigation are the most likely to contain gender references. Table 2 lists the decisions under these three negotiating tracks that contain references to gender.

---

2 Secondary search terms include: "men", "female", "male", "boys", "girls", "marginalised groups (marginalisation)", "sexual minorities", "LGB*", "adolescent", "youth", "care", "care work", "unpaid care", "family", "sexuality", "parents", "parental" and "diversity".

Table 2 Key UNFCCC decisions 2022–2025

Mitigation	Finance	Gender
Sharm el-Sheikh implementation plan (Decision 1/CP.27 & Decision 1/CMA.4)	New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance (Decision 1/CMA.6)	Gender and climate change (Decision 15/CP.28; Decision 7/CP.29)
Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme (Decision 2/CMA.6)	Matters relating to the Standing Committee on Finance (Decision 14/CP.27; Decision 5/CP.28; 2/CP.29)	Intermediate review of the implementation of the GAP (Decision 24/CP.27)
Outcome of the first global stocktake (Decision 1/CMA.5)	Report of the Green Climate Fund (Decision 16/CP.27; Decision 6/CP.28; Decision 3/CP.29; Decision -/CP.30)	Belém GAP (Decision -/CP.30)
Matters related to the global stocktake (Decision -/CMA.7)	Report of the Global Environment Facility (Decision 17/CP.27; Decision 7/CP.28; Decision 4/CP.29; Decision -/CP.30)	Action for climate empowerment (Decision 23/CP.27 & Decision 22/CMA.4)
Just transition work programme (Decision 3/CMA.5; Decision -/CMA.7)	Operationalisation of the new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage (Decision 1/CP.28 & Decision 5/CMA.5)	
Matters relating to cooperative approaches referred to in Article 6.2 (Decision 6/CMA.4)	Report of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (Decision -/CP.30 & Decision -/CMA.7)	
Guidance on the mechanism established by Article 6.4 (Decision 7/CMA.4; Decision 6/CMA.6; Decision -/CMA.7)	Report of the Adaptation Fund Board (Decision 4/CMP.17)	
Response measures (Decision 13/CP.28 & Decision 19/CMA.5; Decision -/CP.30 & Decision -/CMP.20 & Decision -/CMA.7)	Fourth review of the Adaptation Fund (Decision 5/CMP.17)	
	Matters relating to the Adaptation Fund (Decision 18/CMA.4; Decision 3/CMP.18 & Decision 12/CMA.5; Decision 2/CMP.19 & Decision 13/CMA.6; Decision -/CMP.20 & Decision -/CMA.7)	
	Administrative, financial and institutional matters (Decision 19/CP.28; Decision -/CP.30)	

Note: Decisions with similar titles made year on year are listed together, though individual UNFCCC decision numbers are given. Decisions taken at COP30 remain provisionally numbered as of the publication date, April 2026. Some decisions contain multiple thematic elements and could be classified differently. Most notably, decisions relating to the Global Stocktake reference several themes. We have classified decisions relating to the Global Stocktake as belonging to the mitigation track, though we recognise they relate to more than mitigation. Classifying decisions under negotiating tracks is subjective, but doing so helped narrow our field of analysis to a practical scope that still encompassed a balance of treaty aims.

Source: UNFCCC decisions are accessible via https://unfccc.int/decisions

Next, we sought to understand the positions of countries and blocs. For this, we identified the public calls for submissions from 2022 to 2025 that relate to the UNFCCC decisions listed in Table 2. Though parties can make submissions at any time, we reviewed only those made in response to public calls and posted online on the UNFCCC's submission portal.[3]

Our second document review refined the submissions landscape to those that discuss gender most frequently and thus give us the best sense of positionality. We knew that submissions made under the gender and climate theme would inherently discuss gender. For decisions relating to finance and mitigation, we searched to identify the percentage of bloc submissions that mention gender terms. For mitigation, we find that submissions relating to the just transition work programme hold the highest percentage of bloc submissions that mention gender; for finance, submissions relating to the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance hold the highest percentage. Taken together with submissions relating to gender and climate, including those linked to the GAP, we believe these submissions provide the richest sources of information available to understand bloc and country positions.

Countries were also expected to adopt decisions related to these tracks at the COP30 negotiations in 2025, which we were able to observe in Belém. Our observations from the gender and just transition negotiations at COP30 supplement our document review.

2.1 Identifying champions and backsliders

We designed our approach to identify patterns in bloc membership and country positions over time. By understanding both how the decisions progressed and the positions of blocs and countries taken over the same period, we have been able to identify which groups have championed gender language in UNFCCC decisions and which have worked to block those decisions. We are also able to see changes in alliances and groupings over time.

In this research, we define a 'champion' as a country or bloc that consistently advances, defends or seeks to strengthen commitments linking gender equality and climate action. In practice, champions call for strong and explicit language that recognises the differentiated impacts of climate change and embeds gender equality into climate governance. This includes advocating for commitments that are timebound, supported by adequate resources, and subject to monitoring and review (Craft et al., 2025).

Champions also tend to promote inclusive language that considers the rights of women and girls and also those of men and boys, and of structurally marginalised groups, which includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer plus (LGBTQ+) people, Indigenous peoples and those living with disabilities. In doing so, champions approach gender equality beyond ensuring

3 See https://submissions.unfccc.int

women's participation in decision-making and view it as a principle that should influence all UNFCCC decisions including, but not limited to, mitigation pathways, just transition design and climate finance.

In contrast, a 'backslider' repeatedly contests or dilutes previously agreed language and thus delays further commitments. Identifying backsliders is more complex, as resistance rarely appears as explicit opposition in written records. Instead, it is often observable through patterns of interventions or the omission of gender language in written submissions. In negotiations, backsliders frequently seek to water down agreed terminology, replacing 'gender' with 'sex', removing references to 'gender mainstreaming' or 'intersectionality' or 'diversity' (Khan and Michalko, 2026) and confining language to preambular paragraphs rather than operative commitments.

Replacing 'gender' with 'sex' shifts the conceptual focus from socially constructed power relations and structural inequality to narrow biological categories. 'Gender equality' addresses how power operates within societies and institutions, while 'sex' refers only to biological difference. The substitution limits the scope of analysis and weakens accountability for addressing structural discrimination. Similarly, removing references to 'intersectionality' or 'diversity' narrows the range of groups recognised as affected by climate change, permitting the continued exclusion or marginalisation of LGBTQ+ people, Indigenous peoples and those living with disabilities (Khan and Michalko, 2026).

Pushback, therefore, is not typically expressed as a rejection of women's participation in climate action. Rather, it operates through efforts to redefine the scope of inclusion, to constrain normative expansion or to decouple gender equality from meaningful climate commitments (UNRISD, 2025).

2.2 Limitations

We use the terms 'champions' and 'backsliders' to describe observable patterns of behaviour within multilateral fora, rather than to assign fixed or moral categories to parties. A key limitation of this study is that backsliders can mainly be observed in negotiations and plenary discussions rather than through documentary analysis. While the omission of gender mentions in UNFCCC submissions is illuminating, it is not sufficient to classify blocs and countries as backsliders without further evidence. For the UNFCCC, we were able to observe select negotiations at COP30, which provided additional insight into how positions have been articulated and contested in practice.

We have limited the scope of our study to an observable amount for our team. Our methodology allowed us to narrow our field of analysis to a practical scope that still encompasses a balance of treaty aims, but we recognise that focusing on gender and climate, on the just transition work programme and on finance discussions – particularly submissions related to the NCQG – is a limited view.

This view is limited both within the chosen negotiating tracks and outside them. To take an example, as indicated in Table 2, five COP30 decisions that we classified as finance contain gender language. We did not observe the negotiations held under these agenda items, however, as we found the NCQG to provide the richest stream of information on bloc and country positions relating to gender-responsive climate finance during the period of our study. At the same time, because the NCQG negotiations concluded with a decision in 2024 at COP29, we did not observe these either.

We also recognise that gender equality is championed and faces backsliding beyond the negotiating tracks of our analysis. At COP30, parties adopted several decisions referencing gender that fall outside our review – including, but not limited to, the Belém Technology Implementation Programme and the Global Goal on Adaptation. Understanding who champions and backslides in these spaces would involve exploring the negotiating tracks for technology development and transfer and for adaptation.

Less obvious still, in negotiating tracks whose decisions conclude without references to gender, championing may not exist or backlash may be so strong as to prevent the inclusion of gender. By limiting our study to negotiating tracks where gender championing and backsliding are visible, we do not intend to suggest that this is not happening throughout the UNFCCC. Further research would need to be undertaken to reflect a comprehensive understanding of how gender championing and backlash occurs.

Further research would also need to be undertaken to unpack why blocs and countries adopt the positions they hold. This work could consider factors like capacity and UNFCCC delegation size; the public nature of submissions and statements, and how that impacts intentionality; and changes in domestic politics and their impact on international alliances; etc. Understanding the political context through which submissions and statements are mediated is not the focus of this research – though in section 4.1 we do briefly discuss political changes that have had noticeable impacts on countries' positions on gender equality and climate action, and thus on their alliances within the UNFCCC negotiations during the timeframe of our study.

3 Gender in UNFCCC decisions

Decisions taken at the UNFCCC recognise 'with concern that climate change impacts on women and men can often differ owing to historical and current gender inequalities and multidimensional factors and can be more pronounced for developing countries and for local communities and Indigenous peoples' (UNFCCC, 2024a: 23).

Parties have agreed they *should* respect, promote and consider gender equality and the empowerment of women when acting on climate change. This principle was agreed in the Paris Agreement[4] and it is referenced several times in decisions taken from 2022 to 2025 (UNFCCC, 2015: 2). Broadly interpreted, all climate actions to implement the central aims of the Paris Agreement – to limit temperature rise to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C, increase countries' ability to adapt and deal with climate impacts, and make finance flows consistent with a low greenhouse gas pathway (Tenzing et al., 2023) – *should* consider gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The UNFCCC employs a hierarchy of verbs to signal varying levels of obligation or expectation. These terms are not incidental: they shape the legal and political force of climate decisions and commitments. Therefore, the difference between words can significantly affect implementation and accountability. In legal terms, *should* indicates a recommendation or guidance, suggesting that something is expected but not required; *shall* or *must* indicates that action is required (Duvic-Paoli et al., 2024).

The Paris Agreement's preambular paragraph 11 goes on to say that parties should act according to their respective obligations. This is understood to mean their national obligations on human rights and their CBDR-RC to undertake climate action (UNFCCC, 2015: 2). Countries, as well as the UNFCCC Secretariat and relevant organisations, are encouraged to act locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.

Parties to the UNFCCC recognise that gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation – primarily understood to mean finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building in the UNFCCC – can enable countries to raise ambition and enhance gender equality. They note that gender-responsive implementation of climate policies can enhance 'the just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities' (UNFCCC, 2024a: 23).

---

4 See preambular paragraph 11: 'Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity' (UNFCCC, 2015: 2).

At COP30, negotiations on just transition pathways culminated with a decision to develop a mechanism to enhance international cooperation and enable equitable, inclusive just transitions (UNFCCC, 2025b: 4). In this decision, parties recognise the importance of just transition pathways that respect, promote and fulfil all human rights and labour rights, as well as gender equality, the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.[5] They also recognise the importance of ensuring broad and meaningful participation from all relevant stakeholders, including women, to enable effective, inclusive and participatory just transition pathways.

Parties are encouraged to ensure gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation to raise climate ambition and achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Under the NCQG on climate finance adopted in 2024, parties and other relevant actors are urged 'to promote the inclusion and extension of benefits to vulnerable communities and groups in climate finance efforts, including women and girls' (UNFCCC, 2024b: 5). UNFCCC parties and public and private entities are also encouraged to build women's capacity and facilitate simplified access to climate finance for women, including grassroots women's organisations (UNFCCC, 2024a). Outcomes from 2022 cite parties' decisions to improve tracking and reporting of gender-related aspects of climate finance, but state that 'work remains to be done on strengthening gender mainstreaming efforts and the availability of gender-disaggregated and other gender-related data to evaluate outcomes' (UNFCCC, 2022: 16).

UNFCCC parties, as well as relevant public and private entities, are encouraged to strengthen the gender-responsiveness of climate finance. Parties continue to emphasise 'the urgency of scaled-up support for developing countries to implement the Lima work programme on gender and any subsequent gender action plan, consistent with relevant provisions of the Convention' (UNFCCC, 2024a: 25). And parties are invited 'to provide support to developing country Parties for addressing gender related action under the Convention, including in relation to the enhanced Lima work programme on gender and any subsequent gender action plan' (ibid.).

The Belém GAP, adopted at COP30, is the newest such plan (UNFCCC, 2025a). Both this and the extended Lima work programme on gender will run until 2034. The Belém GAP's annex details five priority work areas: 1) capacity-building, knowledge management and communication; 2) gender balance, participation and women's leadership; 3) coherence (within the UNFCCC and among other multilateral spaces); 4) gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation; and 5) monitoring and reporting. Under each priority area, parties outline activities, the lead and contributing actors responsible for deliverables and outputs, and a timeline.

---

5 See paragraph 11h: 'The importance of just transition pathways that respect, promote and fulfil all human rights and labour rights, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the right to health, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations, and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity'.

In section 4 we compare bloc and country positions in order to determine who is championing and backsliding on agreed language. However, as previously stated, gender language is now present in UNFCCC decisions relating to all three treaties (UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement) and it appears across decision types. At COP30, parties adopted several decisions referencing gender that fall outside our review – including, but not limited to, the Belém Technology Implementation Programme and the Global Goal on Adaptation. As discussed, further research would need to be undertaken to complete a comprehensive review of how gender is reflected in all UNFCCC decisions.[6]

6 WEDO's Gender Climate Tracker provides a searchable database of gender references in all UNFCCC decisions. See https://genderclimatetracker.org/gender-mandates

4 Findings

In this section we establish which blocs and countries act as champions and backsliders in the UNFCCC. Before presenting that analysis, however, we first discuss large changes in positions and alliances that have occurred over the timeframe of our research. We end with a discussion of observed trends.

4.1 Changing positions and shifting alliances

Categorising countries as champions or backsliders requires caution. These roles are shaped not only by normative positions, but also by domestic politics, geopolitical considerations, structural responsibilities and negotiating context. Whether a state appears as a champion or a backslider may also depend on whether it negotiates individually or as part of a bloc.

For example, the EU occasionally struggles to reach an ambitious consensus as a bloc and may default to a more conservative position to satisfy more resistant member states. Individual European countries may be able to take a bolder stance. These dynamics underscore that championing and backsliding are context-dependent roles and not always fixed attributes of particular countries. Furthermore, we observed several changes in alliances and positionality.

Over the timeframe of our research, the group known as Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay (ABU) ceased to convene. Under the just transition work programme, Brazil went from making submissions on behalf of the ABU in 2023 that did not mention gender (ABU, 2023) to championing nexus positions as a member of the Grupo SUR: Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay (Grupo SUR, 2025). Though we did not observe the Grupo SUR intervene in the just transition or gender negotiations throughout COP30, we did observe Brazil, as the host of COP30, regularly speak in support of nexus commitments. Paraguay regularly aligned itself with Argentina – including in just transition and other spaces where the Grupo SUR had made submissions that furthered agreed language.

Though not the focus of this research, it is evident that political changes in Argentina and Brazil since 2022 have had a noticeable impact on the countries' positions on gender equality and climate action. This has meant their alliances within the UNFCCC negotiations have changed. To give a tangible example, Argentina made several submissions on gender and climate change in 2022, prior to the election of President Milei. From 2023 onwards, Argentina has not submitted views that have furthered work on gender equality and climate action. In fact, at COP30, Argentina spoke in its national capacity in support of backsliding on nexus commitments.

Changes in US policy are even more pronounced over the timeframe of our research. Following his second election in 2024, President Trump again withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement and from the underlying UNFCCC in 2026. The US went from making UNFCCC submissions

championing nexus language both individually and together with other members of the Umbrella Group, to no longer holding a seat at the UN climate change negotiations. Changes in national political leadership have a strong impact on how politics plays out, as the election of President Trump shows (Sweeney, 2023).

4.2 Champions

As with many informal negotiating coalitions in the UNFCCC process, membership and participation in groups can vary across negotiation periods. However, during the timeframe observed, AILAC, AOSIS, EIG and the EU championed nexus concepts throughout the gender and just transition negotiations. These groups also collectively endorsed public statements on gender equality and climate action at COP30. Other blocs that supported nexus concepts in some areas include AGN, the G77 and China, and the LDC Group. To understand these nuances, we examined positions across the chosen negotiation tracks.

4.2.1 Gender and climate change

The submissions in the gender track demonstrate that most parties belong to blocs that support and advance nexus positions beyond the UNFCCC's agreed language. Between 2022 and 2025, there were four calls for submissions on gender and climate change. A total of 74 submissions were received, from seven blocs and 37 individual countries.[7] The bloc submissions that inherently mention gender are from AGN, AILAC, AOSIS, EIG, the EU, the G77 and the LDC Group.

The submissions establish where blocs have advanced beyond the UNFCCC's agreed language defining the differentiated impacts of climate change, as well as beyond the agreed framing for actions to address the gender–climate nexus. For example, the EU explicitly advances intersectionality as a foundational principle of the GAP, linking gender inequality with not only age, disability, poverty, Indigenous status and other multidimensional factors previously recognised in UNFCCC decisions, but also with sexual orientation and gender identity. The EU identifies thematic areas previously unaddressed in UNFCCC decisions such as the critical intersection between climate change and unpaid care work (which disproportionately impacts women and girls), and the links between climate change, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The EU also recognises the intersections between climate change and gender-based violence, exacerbated by climate change (EC, 2025).

7 Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, UK, Uruguay, US, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

Our observations of the gender negotiations at COP30 reflect the finding that most parties belong to a group that champions the UNFCCC's agreed nexus language. We observed statements from AGN, AILAC, AOSIS, EIG, the EU, the G77 and the LDC Group reflecting this. On the first day, 92 countries issued a global statement on gender equality and climate action (European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action, 2025). AILAC, AOSIS, EIG and the EU are signatories, as are the individual countries of: Australia, Canada, Chad, Guinea, Iceland, Japan, Moldova, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of San Marino, the UK and Uruguay.

So, if over 160 of the 198 countries in the UNFCCC negotiations are championing nexus language, how could backsliding by a minority of countries delay progress in consensus-based decision-making? Examining the just transition and finance tracks shows the nuanced positions within these groups and how they impact consensus.

4.2.2 Just transition

Different forms and degrees of championing are evident in group submissions on just transition. Though the primary focus of our analysis was not to rank the bloc's ambition, nuance in positions has been easier to observe outside the gender track.

Between 2022 and 2025, there were four calls for submissions relating to the just transition work programme. These received 50 submissions, made by 11 blocs and 15 individual countries. Of the blocs, six group submissions mention gender terms: those of AOSIS, EIG, the EU, the G77, Grupo SUR and the LDC Group. Of the submissions made by individual countries, gender is mentioned by: Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Mauritius, Norway, Philippines, the UK and the US.

The G77 and China's submissions on just transition pathways also reference gender. However, they do so by restating verbatim the Paris Agreement's eleventh preambular paragraph (G77 and China, 2024). The only other mention of gender is to suggest that studying gender inequality could be linked to an analysis of the different impacts, costs and support needed to implement climate policies (ibid.). So, while the G77 does reaffirm agreed language, the only advancement from that baseline is a proposal to further understand how gender inequality could be mitigated via just transition policies and what support that would require.

In contrast, the EU's submissions have gone well beyond agreed language. The EU cites the clear gender dimension and serious policy implications of the anticipated changes in labour markets due to climate change. It stresses that if measures are not adopted to increase women's participation in emerging green occupations, current gender stereotypes are likely to persist and women will only have access to a fraction of the jobs created. It cites female workers as only accounting for a third of the workforce in the renewables energy sector, while almost two-thirds

of green-task jobs across OECD regions are held by men. The EU calls for gender-transformative reskilling measures for low-, mid- and high-skilled occupations to ensure women's access to new jobs, as recommended by the International Labour Organization (EC, 2024a).

Our observations at COP30 reinforce the range of championing noted in submissions. On the first day of just transition negotiations, AOSIS stated that just transitions must be gender responsive and grounded in human rights, and that any mechanism established at COP30 must advance gender equality and the empowerment of care work. We observed the EIG and EU support this intervention and all three groups champion nexus positions over the next two weeks. We did not observe interventions made on behalf of the Grupo SUR. And while we did observe statements from the G77 and the LDC Group, they did not speak in support of nexus positions.

As nexus concepts met with pushback, we observed that, among the blocs, AILAC – whose submissions do not mention gender – voiced deep opposition to the exclusion of gender and human rights in the just transition decision, because the work was inherently about justice. In stating this, AILAC added to the sentiments expressed by AOSIS, EIG and the EU. So here we begin to understand that with groups as large as the G77, restating agreed language may be as far as group consensus allows. Smaller blocs seem able to advance nexus positions beyond previously agreed language; however, these groups represent far fewer countries (about 80 states) than the majority at the UNFCCC.

4.2.3 Gender-responsive climate finance

Examining positions on gender-responsive climate finance has deepened our understanding of divergence among the champions. We examined four calls for submissions relating to the NCQG agreed in 2024. The calls received 73 submissions, from 11 blocs and 12 individual countries. Of the blocs, the submissions from four groups mention gender: AILAC, AOSIS, the EU and Grupo SUR. Of the submissions made by individual countries, gender is mentioned by Canada, Norway and the Philippines.

In its submissions, AOSIS refers to gender but only by restating an abridged version of the Paris Agreement's preamble language (AOSIS, 2024). Groups like the EU, Grupo SUR and AILAC take positions on gender-responsive climate finance beyond agreed language. Group SUR states the implementation of the NCQG must take into consideration human rights and gender equality, and consider the people and communities on the frontlines of climate change, including women (Grupo SUR, 2024). AILAC uses very similar language in its submission and states that the goal must require the operating entities of the NCQG and other climate finance providers to collectively adopt simplified and harmonised procedures to facilitate access modalities, including financing to subnational actors, local communities, Indigenous peoples and women (AILAC, 2024a). The EU's submission does not go that far, but it does encourage all climate finance providers to promote gender-responsiveness in both processes and outcomes (EC, 2024b).

Our other window into bloc positions on gender-responsive climate finance comprises submissions on gender and climate that discuss funding, particularly for implementing the GAP. Here, submissions by AGN, EIG, the G77 and the LDC Group add to those of AILAC, AOSIS, Grupo SUR and the EU as champions of gender-responsive climate finance.

AGN emphasises the need for scaled-up and dedicated funding for gender and climate change. It stresses that financial resources for developing countries are imperative and calls for concrete targets and clearer implementation strategies within the GAP. AGN also calls for improved transparency and accountability in tracking gender-responsive climate finance under UNFCCC and Paris Agreement reporting processes. Specifically, it stresses the need for guidance on how to access existing funds under the UNFCCC and for finance negotiators to be included in discussions to avoid 'gender being discussed in finance rooms' without concrete financial commitments (AGN, 2025).

The AGN also stresses the insufficient funding and technical support for National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points (NGCCFPs) and calls for financial assistance to enable their participation in UNFCCC sessions (ibid.). Limited resources and uneven support for focal points are recurring concerns, echoed by AILAC as well (AILAC, 2024b). The LDC Group similarly highlights the absence of localised standalone funds to support gender-responsive action, plus inadequate mainstreaming of gender within funding mechanisms (LDC, 2025). EIG also notes limited financial support and difficulties accessing technology and calls for innovative and accessible financing mechanisms (EIG, 2025).

One important pattern is divergence in levels of ambition from a bloc or group of countries with structural similarities, depending on the issue under negotiation. The EU illustrates this dynamic.

While often regarded as a relatively progressive actor on gender equality, the EU's position may become more cautious where gender commitments imply stronger expectations around climate finance or public resource mobilisation. For example, in its submission on the review of the UNFCCC GAP, the EU and its member states express support for strengthening gender-responsive approaches in climate finance and implementation (EC, 2024c). At the same time, in discussions on the NCQG on climate finance, the EU has emphasised the need to expand the sources of climate finance including by 'broadening the contributor base, innovative finance, strengthening the mobilisation of the private sector, and encouraging South-South financial flows' to meet developing country needs (EC, 2023).The EU may normatively support greater gender equality but be reticent to provide greater financial resources to achieve this.

In contrast, SIDS and LDCs are often able to adopt more ambitious positions on mitigation and gender integration. This is because their negotiating positions are not constrained by expectations of providing large-scale climate finance or bearing primary responsibility for historical emissions. Both groups consistently frame their claims through the principle of CBDR-RC (Pauw et al., 2014; Mathema et al., 2014), which recognises that, while all states share responsibility for addressing

climate change, those with greater historical emissions and economic capacity should take the lead in mitigation and support (UNFCCC, 1992). Within negotiations, this asymmetry strengthens the legitimacy of SIDS and LDC demands for more ambitious global mitigation and stronger international support.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) similarly notes that countries with the lowest historical emissions are frequently among those most exposed to climate impacts (IPCC, 2023). These countries' relative ambition on issues such as mitigation and the integration of gender equality into climate governance therefore reflects a normative commitment and also their structural position within the political economy of climate negotiations.

4.3 Backsliders

To understand which blocs and countries backslide on agreed language, we again first turned to our submission analysis – though here we were looking for the absence of gender terms.

When considered together with the COP30 negotiations, we find that the Arab Group and LMDCs have spoken against extending agreed language to incorporate gender-based approaches into just transitions. Across other themes, Argentina, the Holy See, Iran, Paraguay, Russia and Saudi Arabia have regularly taken positions to backslide on agreed nexus language.

4.3.1 Gender and climate change

As the negotiation track with the highest volume of submissions related to gender and climate, it is useful to interrogate which blocs and countries *have not* made submissions. Between 2022 and 2025, this list includes ABU (2023), the Arab Group and LMDCs. These groups are all constituencies within the G77, but they also regularly make submissions on the other tracks in our analysis.

We also do not see bloc submissions from developed countries that are not part of the EU. In other negotiating tracks (such as action for climate empowerment or ACE), these states have issued submissions as constellations of the Umbrella Group (e.g. the joint submission by the US, Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway and the UK (2024) on the 2024 ACE Dialogue). Though several members have made gender and climate submissions as individual countries,[8] in the consensus-based process of the UNFCCC these submissions carry less weight than bloc positions, which inherently demonstrate consensus.

With this framing in mind, we turned to our observations at COP30. In the gender and climate negotiations, we *did not* observe interventions made on behalf of the Arab Group or LMDCs.

---

8 During the timeframe of our study this includes Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and the US.

In this track, we observed that countries backsliding on agreed language tended to speak in their national capacity, rather than on behalf of a group. As with all interventions, we checked our observations against daily reporting and noted one discrepancy regarding whom a speaker represented – though we observed Saudi Arabia speaking in its national capacity, interventions made by Saudi Arabia were reported as being made on behalf of the Arab Group (e.g. when it called for the deletion of references to 'reproductive health and rights') (IISD, 2025).

In the negotiations we observed, the Russian Federation emphasised that the implementation of the GAP must be strictly in line with national laws and priorities, taking into account religious, cultural and ethical values of the nation. It noted that gender relates to men and women in line with the Russian Constitution, and it emphasised the importance of strengthening family, motherhood, fatherhood, childhood and marriage. It also stressed that children, given their physical and psychological immaturity, cannot participate on an equal footing with adults in any process (ibid.).

The Holy See underlined that any reference to gender and related terms in any document adopted is to be understood as grounded in the biological sexual identity of male and female. Argentina restated that it understands gender as referring to male and female sexes, and Paraguay similarly expressed that it understands gender as framed within its national Constitution as referring to female and male sexes. Argentina, the Holy See, Paraguay and other countries requested the inclusion of footnotes to give nation-specific definitions and interpretations of the term (Climate Network, 2025). These framings backslide on the UNFCCC's framing that parties have agreed to respect, promote and consider gender equality.

4.3.2 Just transition

Just transition submissions give a slightly different insight. In those made between 2022 and 2025, five blocs' submissions do not mention gender: ABU, AILAC, AGN, the Arab Group and LMDCs. In the submissions made by individual countries, gender is not mentioned by Japan, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey.

However, we need to interrogate whether the absence of gender concepts does indeed signal a wish to backslide on agreed language. As discussed in section 4.2 on champions, AILAC was observed to support the inclusion of gender equality in the just transition negotiations at COP30. But we did not observe AGN speak to gender in its interventions – either to support or contradict the inclusion of gender equality in the framing of the just transition mechanism. Thus, though AGN is not championing nexus concepts, within the just transition space we cannot classify it as a group backsliding on agreed language.

LMDCs and the Arab Group did make statements that opposed the inclusion of gender equality in just transition spaces, however. LMDCs called for the removal of language citing the importance of gender- and human rights-based approaches to just transition pathways, which the Arab Group

supported. This proposal was also supported by individual countries, including Argentina and Paraguay. Both called for 'gender equality' to be replaced with the term 'equality between women and men'. Argentina went on to state that 'gender- and human rights-based approaches' is not agreed language, and that the UNFCCC is not the appropriate place to negotiate human rights. As in the gender negotiations, Argentina, the Holy See, Iran and Paraguay also requested the inclusion of footnotes with nation-specific definitions and interpretations of gender.

Several groups (including AILAC and the EU), countries and observers opposed the insertion of footnotes referencing individual country definitions of gender, warning against backsliding on agreed language and setting a 'dangerous' precedent (IISD, 2025). AILAC stated it was deeply concerned by efforts to remove gender throughout the text, as integrating gender is essential to just transitions. It went on to reiterate that gender equality is a core pillar of human rights; and that gender references should be preserved and strengthened throughout the text. The EU supported AILAC's intervention, calling to keep the bracketed text on gender- and human rights-based approaches and noting that similar language is used in other UNFCCC decisions.

4.3.3 Gender-responsive climate finance

We have similar insights regarding the NCQG submissions and the positions on gender-responsive climate finance contained in gender submissions. To contextualise the absence of positions, we again turned to our observations of the COP30 negotiations on gender and climate – specifically those that discussed funding the Belém GAP.

In NCQG submissions, six blocs do not mention gender: ABU, AGN, the Arab Group, EIG, the LDC Group and LMDCs. In submissions made by individual countries, gender is not mentioned by Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Russia, the UK or Vanuatu. However, as previously discussed, AGN, EIG, the G77 and the LDC Group affirm or advance the UNFCCC's agreed language on gender-responsive climate finance in their gender submissions.

At COP30 we observed AGN, the G77 and the LDC Group speak to means of implementation as a foundation for putting the GAP into practice. In fact, the LDC Group called for parties to finalise an actionable and implementable GAP to send a strong message of unity on gender and climate action. In COP30's gender negotiations, the Arab Group[9] and LMDCs were not observed to intervene.

While no group was observed to backslide on the need for gender-responsive climate finance, we did observe this around efforts to improve tracking and reporting of gender-related aspects of climate finance. These negotiations centred on the GAP's priority area devoted to gender-

9 See IISD (2025) on reporting. Saudi Arabia has supported language that backslides on agreed commitments, but we observed them speaking in their national capacity rather than on behalf of the Arab Group.

responsive implementation and means of implementation, particularly on the need to strengthen gender mainstreaming efforts and improve the availability of gender-disaggregated and other gender-related data to evaluate outcomes.

When discussing mainstreaming gender in national climate change policies, Iran requested a caveat that considers national circumstances, in addition to bracketing 'formulating gender-responsive budgets' (IISD, 2025). In negotiations on the enhanced collection and use of gender-disaggregated data, the Russian Federation highlighted its preference for 'data disaggregated by sex' and requested to change 'gender-responsive' to 'policies that take into account the needs of women and girls'. This was supported by Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. AILAC, EIG, the EU and several individual countries disagreed, emphasising the need to stick to agreed language.

4.4 Discussion

When considering who champions and who backslides across tracks, it becomes clearer why it is difficult to advance agreed language and how pushback manifests in the UNFCCC.

At COP30 we observed a relatively stable set of blocs and countries act as consistent champions or backsliders. AOSIS, AILAC, EIG and the EU acted as champions. The Arab Group and LMDCs spoke against extending agreed language to incorporate gender-based approaches into just transition pathways. In terms of individual countries, we observed Argentina, the Holy See, Iran, Paraguay, Russia and Saudi Arabia backslide on agreed language. The statements of individual countries do matter and certainly Australia, Canada, Norway, the Philippines and the UK consistently championed across the agenda items we observed.

It will be difficult to make further progress without broader alliances though. If – as we observed – about 50 countries backslide and 80 countries champion progress, gains will be marginal. Our observations at COP30 indicate that blocs and countries are seeking out broad coalitions of the willing to advance gender language in the face of pushback. The absence of other championing blocs like the Umbrella Group may be felt in the nexus space, however.

The global statement on gender equality and climate action at COP30 issued by 92 countries builds on previous coalition-building in this area (European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action, 2025). In 2024, the EU issued a 'Statement at COP29 on the importance of an ambitious outcome on gender and climate change', which 17 countries agreed to support by the end of the COP's first week.[10] In 2023, 82 countries signed the COP28 Gender Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership (UNFCCC, 2023), including several members of the Arab Group, principally the United Arab Emirates which held the COP Presidency in 2023.

---

10 Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Switzerland, the UK and the US. See EC (2024d).

In response to backlash in the just transition negotiations at COP30, 85 countries called for a roadmap to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels. Like the global statement on gender equality, all members of AILAC and EIG were signatories, as were most members of the EU[11] and AOSIS.[12] They were joined by five individual countries: Australia, Brazil, Iceland, Norway and the UK. Coming together as a coalition of the willing seemed to help champions retain agreed language and see through the adoption of the Belém GAP in the face of pushback. That was not the case with the just transition outcome though, as the final decision does not retain agreed language on phasing out fossil fuels.

For the first time, discussions on several issues – including the transition away from fossil fuels – will move forwards in spaces parallel to the UNFCCC negotiations. The COP30 Presidency launched roadmaps for 'Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner' and for 'Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030', as well as consultations on the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade (IFCCT). Colombia announced it will host the first conference on transitioning away from fossil fuels in April 2026, which represents a complementary space to the UNFCCC, formally contributing to the COP30 Presidency's roadmap.[13] The first consultations on the IFCCT were set to take place in December 2025 in Geneva. A series of dialogues on climate change and trade will also convene at the next three intersessional Bonn sessions, with a high-level discussion event in 2028. But there are outstanding questions about how these parallel discussions will relate to the new dialogues and to ongoing UNFCCC negotiations.

11 All 27 members of the EU signed the statement on gender equality. Italy and Poland were not among those who called for a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuels.

12 All 39 AOSIS members signed the statement on gender equality. Singapore and Seychelles were not among those who called for a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuels.

13 See https://transitionawayconference.com/about

5 Conclusions and recommendations

The tense negotiations at COP30, exacerbated by political leaders who deny both climate change and gender equality, show that the multilateral system is under severe strain. One result is that parallel spaces are emerging, in which like-minded states can more easily agree on specific issues that interest them.

As stakeholders consider the changing multilateral landscape, it is useful to evaluate which middle-ground states are well-placed to expand coalitions of the willing. At COP30, AGN and the LDC Group intervened to further the need for gender-responsive climate finance, though they did not intervene as groups in the just transition space.

We can guess that there is weak consensus on all nexus commitments except finance, and thus AGN and the LDC Group cannot speak with one voice on other action. This explains why individual members make submissions and take the floor in their national capacity to champion gender language. Should coalitions wish to broaden their membership, there are an additional 98 potential signatories to language that speaks to delivering gender-responsive climate finance. The leadership of other allies, including members of the Umbrella Group and former and current COP presidencies, could also be leveraged to build coalitions.

Diplomats, CSOs and feminist actors operating within and around multilateral spaces may benefit from the following recommendations. We end with suggestions for further research, to address questions critical to strengthening gender-responsive climate action within the UNFCCC and multilateralism at large.

Key recommendations:

1. In the UNFCCC negotiations, a powerful set of actors are rejecting multilateralism (e.g. the US), opposing gender-based approaches to just transition pathways (e.g. groups whose membership includes China and India), and explicitly backsliding on agreed gender language (e.g. Russia and Saudia Arabia). The multilateral system, wherein every country has a seat at the decision-making table, faces unprecedented challenges. As such, unprecedented solutions will be required to advance international commitments and implement previous decisions to address gender equality and climate action.
2. In response to these challenges, broad coalitions are seeking to gather strength in numbers. Stakeholders should seek out: 1) middle-ground countries, including African constituencies (e.g. members of AGN and the LDC Group), 2) countries that consistently champion gender in their UNFCCC submissions (e.g. the Philippines), and 3) recent COP presidencies (e.g. United Arab Emirates, Brazil and Australia) to strengthen coalition-building.

3. The formation of spaces parallel to the UNFCCC negotiations creates opportunities and challenges. Stakeholders should build on coalitions of the willing, for example at the first conference on transitioning away from fossil fuels. They must also proactively articulate how parallel discussions will further the inclusive decision-making of the UNFCCC rather than detract from the legitimacy of the multilateral system.
4. The UN climate change negotiations recognise that the climate crisis disproportionately impacts women and that climate action requires a gendered response. For stakeholders engaging with the negotiations, a baseline understanding of previously agreed language is important to challenge backsliding, especially in spaces where gender is explicitly discussed less often.
5. Our study focuses on gender and climate, just transition and gender-responsive climate finance, but agreed gender language appears across UNFCCC negotiation tracks. Dedicated and coordinated advocacy is needed throughout the UN climate negotiations to advance international commitments and implement previous decisions.

5.1 Recommendations for future research

Several questions remain that are critical to strengthening gender-responsive climate action within the UNFCCC.

Further analysis is needed to better understand the political economy shaping country positions across negotiation tracks and over time. This includes examining the domestic incentives, political aims, power dynamics and strategic interests that drive shifts and influence how countries engage within and across blocs.

There is also a need to consider how capacity can be strengthened within groups and national delegations to support coherent positions, particularly given the challenges of reaching consensus and navigating a complex landscape of negotiating tracks. In parallel, insights from other multilateral fora on norm-spoiling and gender rollbacks could be compared to the UNFCCC context, to assess whether similar tactics are being used and how they transfer across institutional settings. Advancing this research would support more strategic engagement and help identify where and how interventions can most effectively sustain and strengthen gender–climate commitments.

In this working paper we use gender equality and climate action as exemplar issues through which broader dynamics can be explored that are affecting progressive multilateralism. Analysis of the interactions between these agendas can show how progressive norms are negotiated and upheld in practice, how alliances form and shift, and how pushback is enacted across different institutional contexts. Although our analysis centres around the UNFCCC, the patterns we identify may well have relevance for wider multilateral issues, including other aspects of human rights, environmental stewardship, development cooperation and rules-based trade.

The post-war, post-colonial international settlement was deeply imperfect and much needs to be done to deliver peace and prosperity for all. But multilateralism remains our best tool to meet shared challenges and to prevent rolling back tremendous gains from recent decades.

References

ABU (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay) (2023) 'Views on different elements of the work programme on just transition pathways: submission by Brazil on behalf of ABU'. Submission to the UNFCCC (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202309211039---2023.09%20-%20ABU%20submission%20on%20the%20Work%20Programme%20on%20Just%20Transition%20Pathways.pdf).

AGN (African Group of Negotiators) (2025) 'Submission by the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN): Submit views on the format and scope to be considered during the in-session technical workshop to be held at SB62 in Bonn June 2025". Submission to the UNFCCC, (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202504291016---Submission%20by%20the%20United%20Rep%20of%20Tanzania%20on%20behalf%20of%20the%20AGN%20on%20Gender%20workshop%20at%20SB62%20session_.pdf).

AILAC (Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean) (2024a) 'New collective quantified goal on climate finance: Written inputs'. Submission to the UNFCCC (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202408231650---20240823%20V5%20AILAC%20-%20NCQG%20Submission.pdf).

AILAC (2024b) 'Submission AILAC: Information on the progress, challenges, gaps and priorities in implementing the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and future work to be undertaken on gender and climate change, mandate decision 15/CP.28, para. 2'. Submission to the UNFCCC (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202403251758---AILAC%20Gender%20Submission.pdf).

AOSIS (Alliance of Small Island States) (2024) 'Finance: new collective quantified goal on climate finance – draft elements'. Submission to the UNFCCC (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202406041944---AOSIS%20-%20CC%20Finance%20-%20NCQG%20-%20Submission%20-%20Draft%20Elements%20-%202024-06-04.pdf).

Binetti, B. and Menzel, S. (2025) 'NDCs – from missed moment to failing forward', *E3G*, 12 October (https://www.e3g.org/news/what-to-learn-from-delay-ndcs/).

Bonner, O. (2018) 'Tackling gender disparity at the intersection of human rights and climate change'. CIEL Blog, 13 March (https://www.ciel.org/gender-disparity-intersection-human-rights-climate-change/).

Cano Prentice, A. and Craft, B. (2025) 'Backlash on gender and climate commitments: losing ground at Bonn and the G7', *ODI Insights*, 23 July (https://odi.org/en/insights/backlash-on-gender-and-climate-commitments-losing-ground-at-bonn-and-the-g7).

Carney. M. (2026) 'Davos 2026: special address by Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada', World Economic Forum, Davos, 20 January (https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/davos-2026-special-address-by-mark-carney-prime-minister-of-canada/).

CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) (2018) 'General recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change'. CEDAW/C/GC/37. Geneva: CEDAW (https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/GC/37).

Chikvaidze, D.A. (2020) 'Multilateralism: its past, present and future', *Cadmus* 4(2): 127–133 (https://www.fspi.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Chikvaidze-Multilateralism-Its-Past-Present-and-Future-DChikvaidze-Cadmus-V4-I2-P2-Reprint.pdf).

Climate Network (2025) 'Eco newsletter', 19 November (https://womengenderclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ECO-19-November-2025.pdf).

Craft, B., Cano Prentice, A., Zeka, F. and Khosravi, D. (2025) *Gender equality and the climate crisis: where do international commitments stand?* ODI Global Briefing Note. London: ODI Global (https://media.odi.org/documents/Gender_equality_and_the_climate_crisis_-_where_do_international_commitments_st_W78v3yV.pdf).

Datta, N. (2025) *Beyond the chaos, a new world is emerging: making sense of the trump administration's impact on reproductive rights and gender equality*. Brussels: European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (https://www.epfweb.org/node/1124).

Duvic-Paoli, L.-A., Madariaga, M., Cox, H., et al. (2024) *Guide to climate negotiations terminology*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development (www.iied.org/22589iied).

EC (European Commission) (2023) 'Submission by Sweden and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States: EU's views on the 2023 work plan for the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance'. Submission to the UNFCCC, Stockholm, 6 February (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202302061016---SE-2023-02-06%20EU%20submission_NCQG_WP_230131.pdf).

EC (2024a) 'Submission by Belgium and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States: Input to the first dialogue of the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) in 2024 – views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to just transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement through nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national adaptation plans (NAPs) and long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS), pursuant to decision 3/CMA.5'. Submission to the UNFCCC, 6 May (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202405070723---BE-2024-05-06%20EU%20Submission_JTWP%201st%20Dialogue%202024.pdf).

EC (2024b) 'Submission by Hungary and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States: Eleventh Technical Expert Dialogue (TED11) and third Meeting under the Ad Hoc Work Programme (MAHWP3) on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)'. Submission to the UNFCCC (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202408131609---HU-2024-08-13%20EU%20submission%20on%20NCQG.pdf).

EC (2024c) 'Submission by Belgium and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States: Submission for the final review of the progress of implementation of the activities contained in the GAP'. Submission to UNFCCC, 2 April (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202404021331---BE-2024-04-02%20EU%20submission%20on%20Gender%20Action%20Plan%20review.pdf).

EC (2024d) 'COP29: The European Union commits to ambitious climate action on gender and climate change'. EC press release, 11 November (https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-other-reads/news/cop29-european-union-commits-ambitious-climate-action-gender-and-climate-change-2024-11-11_en).

EC (2025) 'Submission by Poland and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States: Views on the format and scope of the in-session technical workshop to be held at the sixty-second session of the SBI to facilitate the design of gender action plan activities'. Submission to UNFCCC, Warsaw, 13 March (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202503131821---PL-2025-03-13%20EU%20Submission%20on%20Gender.pdf).

EIG (Environmental Integrity Group) (2025) 'Submission for the workshop on the Gender Action Plan of 2025: Views on structuring the technical workshop at the sixty-second session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB62) to facilitate the design of gender action plan activities, pursuant to decision 7/CP.29, paragraphs 11, 13 and 14'. Submission to the UNFCCC (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/20250404080953---EIG-%20UNFCCC%20Gender%20submission.pdf).

European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action (2025) 'Global statement on gender equality and climate action at COP30'. Belém, 10 November (https://climate.ec.europa.eu/document/download/7249d07f-4358-416f-a8a9-730f2364ce02_en?filename=Global%20Statement%20on%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Climate%20Action_final.pdf).

G77 (Group of 77) and China (2024) 'G77 and China submission on the work programme on just transition pathways, 15 February 2024'. Submission to the UNFCCC, 15 February (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202402231918---G77%20and%20China%20Just%20Transition%20Pathways%20Submission%20Feb%2024.pdf).

Goetz, A.M. (2020) 'The new competition in multilateral norm-setting: transnational feminists & the illiberal backlash', *Daedalus* 149(1): 160–179 (https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01780).

Grupo SUR (2024) 'Written inputs ahead of the third meeting under the ad hoc work programme'. Submission to the UNFCCC, 6 August (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202408061551---Group%20SUR%20-%20NCQG%20-%20TED11%20and%20AHWP3.pdf).

Grupo SUR (Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay) (2025) 'Submission of the Grupo SUR countries Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay on the dialogues under the UAE Just Transition Work Programme in 2025'. Submission to the UNFCCC, 15 February

(https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202502271521---Submission%20of%20the%20Grupo%20SUR%20countries%20Brazil,%20Ecuador,%20Paraguay%20and%20Uruguay.pdf).

IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development) (2025) *Earth negotiations bulletin: Belém climate change conference – COP30*, vol. 12, no. 888. Winnipeg, MB: IISD (https://enb.iisd.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/enb12888e.pdf).

IPCC (2023) *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/

Khan, A. and Michalko, J. (2026) *Advancing gender rights at the Human Rights Council in times of backlash: success strategies from the 59th session*. ODI Report. London: ODI Global (https://media.odi.org/documents/ODI_Report_-_Human_Right_Council_2026.pdf).

Lazarou, E. and Leclerc, G. (2025) *US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and from the WHO*. European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Brussels: European Parliament (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2025/767230/EPRS_ATA(2025)767230_EN.pdf).

LDC (Least Developed Countries) Group (2025) 'Submission by the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group on Gender for SB62: Views on the format and scope of the in-session technical workshop SB62 (June 2025) to facilitate the design of Gender Action Plan (GAP) activities under the extension of the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender'. Submission to the UNFCCC, June (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202504041206---_LDC%20Submission%20on%20Gender_2025.docx.pdf).

Limon, M. (2018) 'The politics of human rights, the environment, and climate change at the Human Rights Council: toward a universal right to a healthy environment?'. In: Knox, J.H. and Pejan, R. (eds) *The human right to a healthy environment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/human-right-to-a-healthy-environment/politics-of-human-rights-the-environment-and-climate-change-at-the-human-rights-council/92469C9A81458C2CF849087FD6C58BA8).

Magnusdottir, G.L. and Kronsell, A. (2024) 'Climate institutions matter: the challenges of making gender-sensitive and inclusive climate policies', *Cooperation and Conflict* 59(3) (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00108367241230011).

Maguire, R. and Lewis, B. (2018) 'Women, human rights and the global climate regime', *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment* 9(1): 90–109 (https://doi.org/10.4337/jhre.2018.01.03).

Martínez, J., Duarte, Á. and Rojas, M.J. (2021) *Manufacturing moral panic: weaponizing children to undermine gender justice and human rights*. Wilmington, DE: Global Philanthropy Project and the Elevate Children Funders Group (https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ Manufacturing-Moral-Panic-Report.pdf).

Mathema, P., Abeysinghe, A. and Tenzing, J. (2014) *Understanding key positions of the Least Developed Countries in climate change negotiations*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (https://www.iied.org/17252iied).

Meyerrose, A.M. and Nooruddin, I. (2023) 'Trojan horses in liberal international organizations? How democratic backsliders undermine the UNHRC: contribution to the special issue "Autocratic regimes, democratic backsliding, and international organizations"', *Review of International Organizations* 20: 125–156 (https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-023-09511-6).

Nord, M., Altman, D., Angiolillo, F., Fernandes, T., Good God, A. and Lindberg, S.I. (2025) *Democracy report 2025: 25 years of autocratization – democracy trumped?* Gothenburg: V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg (https://www.v-dem.net/documents/61/v-dem-dr__2025_lowres_v2.pdf).

OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) (n.d.- a) 'OHCHR's role in promoting rights-based climate action'. Geneva: OHCHR (https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/ohchrs-role-promoting-rights-based-climate-action).

OHCHR (2015) *Understanding human rights and climate change: submission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Geneva: OHCHR (https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/COP21.pdf).

Pauw, P., Brandi, C., Richerzhagen, C., Bauer, S. and Schmole, H. (2014) *Different perspectives on differentiated responsibilities: a state-of-the-art review of the notion of common but differentiated responsibilities in international negotiations*. Discussion Paper No. 6/2014. Bonn: Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) (https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/199419).

Sweeney, C. (2023) 'The United Nations Human Rights Council at 16: a creature of compromise or a compromised creature?', *International Journal of Human Rights* 27(1): 74–116 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2022.2061952).

Tenzing, J., Diabate, F., Yassin, L. and Sied Ahmed, T. (2023) *Becoming a UNFCCC delegate: what you need to know*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development (https://www.iied.org/17385iied).

UN (United Nations) (n.d.-a) 'The United Nations and decolonization'. New York: UN (https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/).

UN (n.d.-b) 'The 17 Goals | Sustainable Development Goals'. New York: UN (https://sdgs.un.org/goals).

UN (1945) Charter of the United Nations. New York: UN (https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text).

UN (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. New York: UN (https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf).

UN (1992) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. New York: UN (https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf).

UN (2015) *The Millennium Development Goals report*. New York: UN (https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf).

UN (2026) '"Law of the jungle" replacing rules-based order, Secretary-General warns, as speakers push Security Council to reform, ensure accountability'. Security Council meetings coverage10096th meeting, 26 January (https://press.un.org/en/2026/sc16282.doc.htm).

UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) (n.d.- a) 'Global climate action'. Bonn: UNFCCC (https://unfccc.int/climate-action#tab_home).

UNFCCC (n.d.- b) 'Party groupings'. Bonn: UNFCCC (https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties/party-groupings).

UNFCCC (1997) Kyoto protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Kyoto, 11 December (https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-kyoto-protocol).

UNFCCC (2015) 'Adoption of the Paris Agreement'. Decision 1/CP.21. Paris, 30 November to 11 December (https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf).

UNFCCC (2022) 'Matters relating to the Standing Committee on Finance'. Decision 14/CP.27. Sharm el-Sheikh, 6–20 November (https://unfccc.int/documents/626563).

UNFCCC (2023) 'COP28 Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership'. Dubai: UNFCCC (https://www.cop28.com/en/cop28-gender-responsive-just-transitions-and-climate-action-partnership).

UNFCCC (2024a) 'Gender and climate change'. Decision 7/CP.29. COP29, Baku, 11–22 November (https://unfccc.int/documents/644941).

UNFCCC (2024b) 'New collective quantified goal on climate finance'. Decision 1/CMA.6 (https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2024_17a01_adv.pdf).

UNFCCC (2025a) Belém gender action plan. Decision -/CP.30. Belém: UNFCCC (https://unfccc.int/documents/655016).

UNFCCC (2025b) 'United Arab Emirates just transition work programme'. Decision -/CMA.7 (https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma7_5_UAE%20JTWP_auv.pdf).

UN HRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) (2024) Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls. A/HRC/RES/56/22. Geneva: UN HRC (https://docs.un.org/en/A/hrc/RES/56/22).

UN HRC (2025) Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 8 July 2025: human rights and climate change. A/HRC/RES/59/25. Geneva: UN HRC, 16 July (https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/59/25).

United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway and the United Kingdom (2024) 'Submission on the 2024 ACE Dialogue'. Submission to UNFCCC (https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202403210006--Submission-%20ACE%20Dialogue%202024_US_AUS_CAN_JPN_NOR_UK.pdf).

UNRISD (UN Research Institute for Social Development) and UN Women (2025) *Understanding backlash against gender equality: evidence, trends and policy responses*. Geneva: UNRISD (https://knowledge.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/understanding-backlash against-gender-equality-evidence-trends-and-policy-responses-en.pdf).

WGDAWG (Working Group on discrimination against women and girls) (2019) *Gender equality and gender backlash*. Geneva: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/Gender-equality-and-gender-backlash.pdf).

World Bank (2022) *Poverty and shared prosperity 2022: correcting course*. Washington, DC: World Bank (https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b96b361a-a806-5567-8e8a-b14392e11fa0/content).

ODI Global

ODI Global advises leaders on driving positive change. We turn bold ideas, evidence, and broad expertise into actionable strategies for a more resilient, just and equitable future.

ODI Global
4 Millbank
London SW1P 3JA, UK

+44 (0)20 7922 0300
info@odi.org

odi.org
www.linkedin.com/company/odi/
bsky.app/profile/odi.global