

April 2025

# WPHF WOMEN AND CLIMATE SECURITY

## BACKGROUND

Climate change is a global crisis with profoundly unequal impacts. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), more than 3.3 billion people are currently classified as highly vulnerable to its effects. As environmental systems are disrupted, climate change increasingly acts as a driver of insecurity, contributing to conflict, political instability, displacement, poverty, and hunger. These impacts fall disproportionately on women and girls.

An intersectional analysis of climate security and climate justice highlights how gender and structural inequalities are deepened by climate-related crises. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, women and girls are often more exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, while having fewer resources and opportunities to prevent harm, adapt to changing conditions, or recover from climate shocks. This results in increased risks of gender-based violence, the loss of livelihoods, and reduced access to essential resources such as food, water, and energy. Women environmental and human rights defenders face additional threats. Gender-based violence is often used as a means to silence their advocacy and hinder their access to justice. In 2021, more than one in ten recorded killings of environmental defenders involved women, nearly two-thirds of whom were Indigenous.

The growing frequency and severity of climate disasters, including flooding, drought, and rising sea levels, is also contributing to forced migration. As people move in search of safety, women and girls are exposed to further risks, particularly in contexts of insecurity and displacement. Despite experiencing the most significant impacts of climate change, women are often excluded from shaping prevention, response, and recovery efforts. This gap leads to policy and programming that overlook their specific needs and reinforce pre-existing inequalities.

At the same time, women continue to lead the response to climate-related challenges. Across communities, women and women-led civil society organizations are actively implementing solutions that are locally grounded, sustainable, and culturally responsive. Their contributions are essential to building resilience and achieving inclusive and lasting outcomes.

To address the interconnected challenges of climate change and insecurity, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda must fully integrate climate as a central concern. Women's equal and meaningful participation in climate-related decision-making is essential to promoting peace, stability, and resilience. This requires increased and sustained investment in the leadership and initiatives of women on the frontlines. However, only a small fraction of global funding supports this work. Just 0.2 percent of philanthropic giving currently goes to women-led environmental initiatives. As emphasized in the United Nations Secretary-General's 2020 annual report, more resources must be directed to local women's groups leading climate action in their communities.

## WPHF CLIMATE SECURITY BY THE NUMBERS

- 37** projects implemented from 2016
- 61** women's rights and young women led organizations have focused on climate security and WPS, including nine under WPHF's climate security and forced displacement initiatives
- 36,492** people have directly benefited (70% of which are women and girls)
- 2.1 million** people indirectly reached 2.1 million through mass awareness campaigns and other initiatives.



We're at a crucial time to catalyze the collective action of those who are defending human rights and protecting the environment, meet their urgent demands, and recognize their potential as peacebuilders.

**Nohora Alejandra Quiguntar,**  
Indigenous Youth Leader, Environmental Human Rights Defender and WPHF partner from Nariño, Colombia

# WPHF WOMEN AND CLIMATE SECURITY INITIATIVE

As part of its 2023–2025 Strategic Plan, the United Nations Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) launched its Women and Climate Security Initiative, focusing on the link between climate change and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This strategic priority aims to empower local women leaders to address the gender-climate-security nexus and to support their participation and leadership in decision-making that is still excluding women and girls. WPHF aims to accelerate women’s work in climate security across its portfolio and promoting selected strategic climate security opportunities in partnership with member states, civil society organizations and the private sector. When women climate activists and peacebuilders are adequately financed, their impact is exponential. WPHF therefore aims to provide flexible programmatic and institutional financing for local women’s organizations to leverage their strategic positions and expertise on the intersections of climate, peace and security in their communities. WPHF focuses on supporting local women civil society organizations leadership in climate security across the following thematic areas:



**Prevention of climate-related conflicts and injustice:** Women participate in and inform decision-making processes and responses related to the prevention of climate-related conflicts and injustice (aligned with WPHF impact area 2)



**Humanitarian response to climate-related crises/disasters:** Climate-related humanitarian/crisis response planning, frameworks and programming are gender inclusive and responsive (aligned with WPHF impact area 3)



**Economic and political participation on climate security:** Women lead and participate in socio-economic recovery and political decision-making to reduce climate-related conflicts and injustice (aligned with WPHF impact area 6)

To date, WPHF launched **three climate security Calls for Proposals in the [Pacific](#), [Nigeria](#), and [Colombia](#)**, generating interest from 338 CSOs who submitted proposals. **A fourth CfP will be launched in Bangladesh** in the coming month on climate security. Resources such as the [climate security and justice impact and indicator tip sheet](#) have helped CSOs to apply to this initiative.

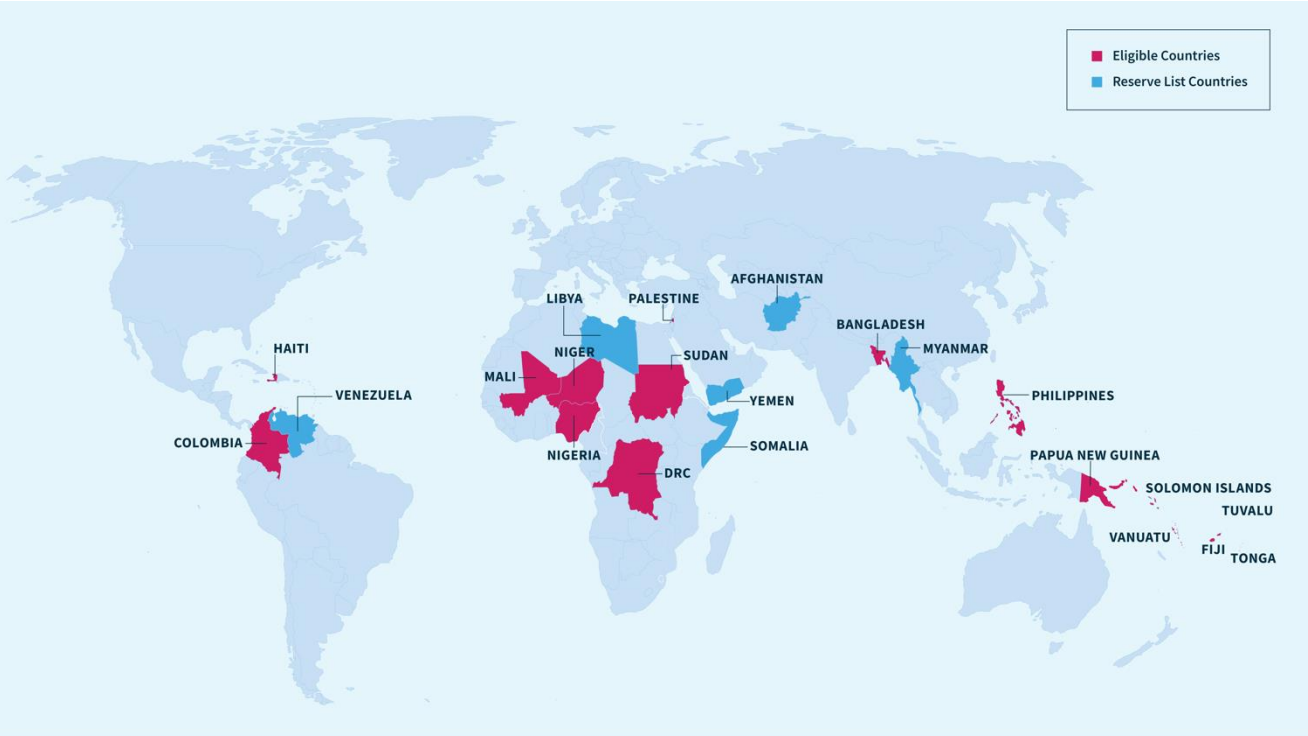
## ELIGIBLE WPHF COUNTRIES:

Amongst the WPHF list of eligible countries, 12 countries/groups of countries were identified as priority countries based on existing funding gaps and vulnerability to climate issues:

- ▶ Bangladesh
- ▶ Colombia
- ▶ Democratic Republic of Congo
- ▶ Haiti
- ▶ Mali
- ▶ Niger
- ▶ Nigeria
- ▶ Pacific (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu)
- ▶ Palestine
- ▶ Papua New Guinea
- ▶ Philippines
- ▶ Sudan

In addition, WPHF has selected a list of reserve list countries eligible for climate security funding based on evolving needs. They include:

- ▶ Myanmar
- ▶ Yemen
- ▶ Libya
- ▶ Venezuela
- ▶ Afghanistan



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### COLOMBIA

This project, led by the Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica (CIASE), aims to strengthen the leadership and participation of Indigenous women in environmental governance and position them as key actors in advancing climate justice and preventing conflicts related to environmental insecurity. Focused Nariño, the project seeks to improve water security and reduce conflict over natural resources by empowering women and youth leaders involved in reforestation and environmental stewardship. Key activities include the formation of climate governance committees with at least 50% women in leadership, alongside dialogue spaces and exchange forums that promote peaceful natural resource management and climate adaptation through traditional and innovative practices. The project also runs awareness campaigns on climate impacts, the role of women as environmental defenders, and the links between environmental degradation and violence. Women leaders are supported to co-develop political advocacy strategies and land use plans centered on water governance and biodiversity. Reforestation efforts led by women and youth contribute to climate mitigation and reduce environmental pressures that can fuel local conflict, reinforcing women's roles in both environmental protection and conflict prevention.



### NIGERIA

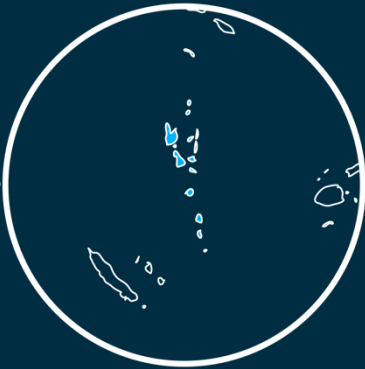
This project, led by the Center for Women's Studies and Intervention (CWSI) aims to empower women-led civil society organizations, policymakers, and community leaders to lead climate security initiatives and address conflict and injustice rooted in natural resource management. Key activities include training Community Peace Advocates to lead climate security efforts and reduce resource-based conflicts, alongside providing women with climate-smart agricultural techniques like rainwater harvesting and rotational planting. The project aims to distribute organic seeds for climate-resilient crops to women in conflict-affected areas, while coaching women's groups on planting, harvesting, and marketing these crops to address economic injustice and environmental challenges.

The project also aims to establish Community Climate Security Architecture Dialogues to foster continuous communication on climate security and early warning systems. Community leaders, both men and women, are engaged to monitor the implementation of climate-smart practices, ensuring accountability and collaboration in promoting peace and resilience.



### VANUATU

This project, led by Action Aid Vanuatu, aims to address climate-induced gender-based violence and insecurity while enhancing women's leadership in preventing climate-related conflict and violence. Key activities include strengthening early warning systems to monitor and prevent climate-related conflicts, alongside providing safe spaces for women to organize, share learning, and respond to conflicts. The project aims to establish emergency shelters, community kitchens, and psychosocial referral pathways, in collaboration with local programs like the Committee Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW). The project further aims to empower women by training them in the use of the Vanuatu Survivor-Victims Charter through a training-of-trainers model and developing community-based Climate Resilience and Security Action Plans. Women's participation in decision-making processes will be strengthened to prevent climate-related conflicts and injustice. Additionally, the project supports women in improving early warning systems, providing timely climate and emergency information through bulk SMS and a phone tree network to enhance women's resilience and safety.



RESULTS

In the **Pacific**, significant progress was made in enhancing community resilience to climate change and disasters across Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Over **3,300 women took on leadership roles and actively engaged in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts**. In Tonga, for instance, 16 Village Disaster Plans were developed and the initiative prepared communities for the Disaster Management Act 2021, emphasizing social inclusion in disaster risk reduction decision-making.


Since the Window on WHRDs was established in 2022, **20 WHRDs** (individuals and delegations) have participated in global climate change conferences (COP27, 28 and 29) through its advocacy stream. In 2024, 11 in 2024 from the D.R.C, Venezuela and PNG participated in the **2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan** where they highlighted the negative impacts of climate change on women and activists and advocated for gender-responsive provisions to be included in responses. Enabling local WHRDs to apply as delegation has strengthened coalition building and collective actions.

ADVOCACY

The WPHF Funding Initiative on Women and Climate Security has been featured at several events since its launch in December 2023. WPHF co-hosted in person events at COP29 in Azerbaijan, at COP 28 in the United Arab Emirates, the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Antigua and Barbuda and the Berlin Climate Security Conference, featuring WPHF partners from 4 countries (Colombia, DRC, Uganda and Fiji) as speakers. In addition, a WPHF partner from Colombia briefed members of the UN Security Council on her work as a woman human rights defender on climate security and climate justice issues at an in-person UNSC Arrria-Formula meeting in New York and a briefing of climate experts at the Slovenian Mission in New York. Two breakfast meetings with Germany’s Secretary of State and Climate Envoy Jennifer Morgan were held in Nigeria and Fiji with three WPHF-funded partners to discuss women’s participation and leadership in climate security. WPHF also acted as a speaker at 8 in-person and online events highlighting the WPHF Funding Initiative on Women and Climate Security and the importance of investing in women and girls to prevent and respond to climate-related conflicts and injustice. These include three side events in the blue zone at COP29 and COP29, an in-person donor roundtable discussion at the Third Environmental Peacebuilding Conference in The Hague, and a briefing of the Group of friends on Women, Peace and Security.

**LEARN MORE AT:**  
[WPHFUND.ORG/WOMEN-AND-CLIMATE-SECURITY](https://wphfund.org/women-and-climate-security)

**WATCH OUR VIDEO:**  
[WPHF FUNDING INITIATIVE ON WOMEN AND CLIMATE SECURITY](#)



WPHF IN ACTION

OUR VISION TO ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ON THE FRONT LINES

The United Nations Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a multi-partner trust fund mobilizing urgently needed financing for local women’s organizations and WHRDs working on the frontlines to respond to crisis and build lasting peace. Guided by a range of civil society, government, and UN actors, WPHF supports women and their local organizations in fragile settings around the world across six outcome areas through three key funding mechanisms:

1

**Regular Funding Cycle**

Provides institutional and programmatic funding to local civil society organizations to support their work on women, peace and security and humanitarian action.

2

**Rapid Response Window for Women and Peace Processes**

Addresses short-term strategic interventions aiming at ensuring or strengthening women’s meaningful participation in track 1 and track 2 peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements.

3

**Funding Window for Women Human Rights Defenders**

Supports the advocacy and the protection of women peacebuilders, humanitarian responders and human rights activists from crisis countries.

WPHF GLOBAL LEARNING HUB

Learn more about the WPHF Global Learning Hub (L-HUB), an innovative initiative providing training, knowledge exchange, mentoring opportunities and resources for women’s rights organizations and individual women human rights defenders receiving WPHF support worldwide.



[WPHFUND.ORG/L-HUB](https://wphfund.org/l-hub)

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**Women’s Peace & Humanitarian Fund**  
A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership

CONFLICT INVEST IN WOMEN  
DISASTER RESPOND TO CRISIS  
INEQUALITY BUILD PEACE



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