



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-sixth session

14–25 March 2022

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and  
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly  
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and  
peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc., a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc., supports the priority theme of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) focusing on ‘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.’

All life on earth is interconnected, interdependent and has integrity. Humans are the heart of sustainable development and have the right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature as stated in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All women have a right to life and have full agency to participate in the development of sustainable and ecological patterns of consumption and production and regenerative approaches in managing Earth’s resources.

Humanity has broken this vital relationship between humans and nature. The United Nations named three planetary crises of our time: climate change, loss of biodiversity and marine litter and plastic pollution. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, in his State of the Planet address stated that making peace with nature is the overarching mission of our time. The International Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report declared that the present trajectory of global warming of the planet is a code red for humanity. If we do not act together now to change our unsustainable ways of development and lifestyle, we will be reaching a point where irreversible climate change or what scientists call hothouse trajectory for the planet will be our future. People around the world are already suffering catastrophic impacts of climate change.

### Women’s Leadership in Climate Action

The most vulnerable are those who are least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, and women and girls are disproportionately affected. They are 80 per cent of those displaced by climate change. Women face social constraints, receive less education and are excluded in various levels of political and household decision-making affecting their lives. Gender inequality and multidimensional poverty increase women’s vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change. According to the United Nations Development Program in 2012, there is a direct correlation between gender equality, women’s empowerment and climate change. Vulnerability based on gender is compounded for women living in rural areas, particularly indigenous women and girls.

We must recognize the vital role of women in addressing climate change. They are the backbone of agriculture and stewards of nature’s biodiversity. Many of the environmental human rights defenders are women. Women must be front and center in the decision making processes on climate action and transition to low-carbon development, and in the governance of natural resources and conservation. There will be no climate action without women.

In 2020, the General Assembly adopted Resolution [75/217](#) on the Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind. The document recalled the Paris Agreement calling all nations to address adaptation to adverse impacts of climate change. The resolution took note of the Green Climate Fund and reiterated a gender-sensitive approach in its allocation and use of resources. Further, it urged member states to take into account that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by climate change owing to the gender inequalities and the dependence of many women on natural resources for their livelihoods. Finally, the resolution called to promote the integration of a gender perspective into environment and climate change policies and to strengthen mechanisms and provide adequate resources towards achieving the full and equal participation of women in decision making at all levels on environmental issues, and stresses the need to address

the challenges posed by climate change that affect women and girls in particular, including through the implementation of the first gender action plan adopted at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-third session, with a view to advancing toward the goal of mainstreaming a gender perspective into climate action. It is time to put this resolution into action.

What does it look like when women lead climate action? Women are leaders in climate adaptation. In 2016, in Antipolo, Philippines women participation in reforestation and afforestation programs is part of a community-based watershed conservation program, the Marikina Watershed Protected Landscape, a reef-to-ridge initiative in adaptation-mitigation program. This is a sub-national level initiative conserving fresh water sources directly beneficial to surrounding communities. This program is a multi-stakeholder participation that involves national agencies, local governments, faith based organizations, people's organizations composed of local women and environmental advocacy networks. The seedling production was aligned with the National Greening Program (NGP) of the Philippines and the Marikina River Rehabilitation Commission. The project aims to address water security, disaster risk reduction, local and rural and indigenous livelihood and a nature based solution to climate change. Local women initiated leadership in the implementation process: from seeds/wildlings collection, setting up nurseries, participation in government meetings and capacity building workshops, sale of seedlings to the government, planting and monitoring. As part of their livelihood program, the women formed a small cooperative store to supply basic needs such as rice, oil, sugar and vegetables from the community garden at reasonable prices. They have focused group meetings where members share how this program changed them personally and their lives. They shared how reforestation became transformative for them: they used to cut trees to make charcoal for livelihood, but now they understand the importance of trees, so they changed from consumers to protectors of forests. Relationships in the community have also improved, looking after each other's families while parents are planting trees in the forests. In addition they shared that animals have come back as biodiversity improved. Women leading climate action have shown interconnectivity of solutions.

We recommend the following actions to support women's full participation and leadership in climate action;

- Review of existing policies and gender equality and mainstream its application in the context of climate actions.
- Disaggregate gender data related to climate impacts and adaptation needs.
- Improve gender mainstreaming capacity of stakeholders in aspects such as levels of education.
- Ensure women equal access to climate finance in both adaptation and mitigation.
- Close the gender knowledge gap on climate change and prioritize training of women and girls in climate action at all governance levels.

Maryknoll Sisters of Saint Dominic, Inc. has been working in mission areas to educate and train women and girls. In East Africa, the Emusoi Center provides secondary education to the Masai young women. In Asia and Latin America, Maryknoll Sisters established prestigious educational institutions for women, and have produced numerous women leaders in the areas of politics, environment, peace and justice, and human rights in all governance levels. Likewise, the Sisters also established centers to accompany women suffering homelessness, migrants and their families, especially victims of human trafficking. They also engaged women in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Africa, Asia and Latin America.