

Opinion

If you want to solve climate change — involve women

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Image source: REUTERS/Andres Martinez Casares

Women are disproportionately affected by climate change.

It is not that men are incapable; women are more supportive and likely to contribute more to mitigate climate change.

When it comes to climate concern, a vast gender gap emerges among the wealthier nations. According to the [Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey](#) of seven developed

countries, women are more likely to consider climate change a severe concern and willing to change their lifestyle to cope with the problem.

Women care more about the climate for several reasons, but chief among them is that they are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change than men. Women's vulnerability to climate change arises from several factors — social, economic, and cultural. In the recent [BBC News Science & Environment article](#), UN statistics indicate that among all the people displaced by climate-related disasters, 80% are only women. Women's role as food providers and primary caregivers — and having less socioeconomic power than men — make them more exposed to climate issues, including hurricanes, droughts, and floods. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research report, after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, [83% of low-income single mothers](#) did not come back to their homes in New Orleans. In addition, [air pollution is a major threat](#) for pregnant women. Pollution affections their babies to be born badly. Thus, including women's voices in policies and planning is very important to tackle the challenge of climate change and to safeguard the environment.

Being concerned is not enough; we need people who can act, and women possess this power. Let's take an example — who should you talk to about getting an energy-efficient appliance? The person who manages the household budget and is worried about climate or the person who earns. And we know women are [much likelier](#) than men to control household spending. Investing in girls and women can yield excellent results for them and their communities, families, and countries.

Currently, women's representation in national and global negotiating bodies is less than 30%. On the world Service week, Diana Liverman, an environmental scientist, told the BBC's [Science in Action](#) Programme that the lack of women's involvement in the decision-making process on climate issues ends up giving money to men rather than women. For effective and practical climate change mitigation, we must unleash the power of women. Women possess half of the world's population; they must be given a chance to participate in all kinds of decision-making.

For these reasons, it is important to include women in climate change mitigation and it will also ensure enough clean air, sufficient food, safe drinking water, and secure shelter for future generations. Gender equality is a must to protect the Earth, and women empowerment can only lead us to a bright future!