WOMEN FOR GREEN ECONOMY MOVEMENT UGANDA

AHEAD OF COP31 · TÜRK■YE

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS' COMMUNIQUÉ ON GENDER JUSTICE, CLIMATE FINANCE, AND A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

A call for accountability, inclusive climate action, and the protection of women's rights and livelihoods

To: The Hon. Min. Tumukunde Henry
Ministry of Gender and Social Development, Kampala, Uganda

INTRODUCTION

Context and Call for Gender-Responsive Climate Action

Women for Green Economy Movement Uganda (WoGEM) is a community-based organization dedicated to promoting women and girls' participation in a greener economy to advance inclusive social and economic development. WoGEM uses a community-based approach to empower women and girls, particularly those who are marginalized and disadvantaged, with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to strengthen their livelihoods, resilience, and leadership.

WoGEM, together with other Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), stands in solidarity with women and girls across Uganda, Africa, and the world to amplify their voices, experiences, and demands. We recognize that the climate crisis is deeply connected to gender-based violence (GBV), energy poverty, livelihood insecurity, health challenges, and economic inequality. These intersecting challenges disproportionately affect women and girls, particularly those living in rural, marginalized, and oil-affected communities.

Africa contributes the least to global greenhouse gas emissions yet remains among the regions most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis. In Uganda, women and girls are experiencing these impacts through prolonged droughts, water scarcity, food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, increasing unpaid care work, and displacement. As climate-related pressures increase, women and girls are often forced to travel longer distances to collect water and firewood, exposing them to sexual harassment, violence, and other protection risks. For many girls, these challenges contribute to school dropout, early pregnancy, and early marriage.

The climate crisis is therefore not gender-neutral. Yet women and girls who experience these impacts most directly continue to face barriers to meaningful participation in climate decision-making, environmental governance, land-related processes, and access to climate finance. Their knowledge, leadership, and locally developed solutions remain insufficiently recognized and supported.

> *Through our work with communities affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), WoGEM has witnessed how extractive activities and the loss of land and livelihoods can deepen existing inequalities faced by women. Women in affected communities have shared experiences of disrupted livelihoods, loss of access to agricultural land, challenges around compensation and land ownership, and increased economic pressure on households.*

For women who depend on land for food production and household income, losing access to land can mean losing an important source of economic independence and food security. At the same time, women continue to carry the greater burden of unpaid care work when household resources become scarce.

Our engagement with oil-affected communities has also highlighted concerns around women's limited participation in decisions concerning land, compensation, and community development. Women and young people can be left

at the margins of processes that directly affect their lives, while the social and emotional pressures associated with displacement, livelihood loss, and uncertainty can affect their well-being. These experiences demonstrate that the impacts of extraction are not only environmental and economic; they are also **gender, human rights, and well-being issues** that require a gender-responsive response.

> *In August 2026, WoGEM Uganda convened a well-being session bringing together feminists, marginalized women, activists, and women leaders to create a safe space for sharing experiences of climate change, environmental and land rights violations, and the pressures faced by women environmental defenders. Drawing from our community engagement, the session highlighted the need to recognize the emotional, social, economic, and physical burdens carried by women affected by environmental and climate injustices, including those living in oil-affected communities. Participants emphasized the importance of protection, self-care, meaningful participation, and collective action in defending women's rights and building resilient communities.*

At COP30, Parties adopted the **Belém Gender Action Plan**, strengthening the global commitment to advance gender-responsive climate action and women's meaningful participation in climate processes. However, commitments made at the global level must translate into concrete action, adequate financing, accountability, and implementation at national and community levels. As COP31 convenes in Türkiye, there is an urgent need to follow up on the commitments made at COP30 and ensure that gender equality is not treated as an add-on to climate action, but as a core element of a just and sustainable transition.

We call on global leaders, particularly governments and partners in the Global North, to fulfill their climate finance commitments and other pledges, strengthen support for adaptation and loss and damage, and ensure that climate finance reaches women and communities on the frontlines of the crisis. We further call for meaningful implementation of COP30 commitments and greater accountability for ensuring that global climate finance and policies respond to the realities experienced by women and communities on the ground.

WoGEM Uganda therefore calls for a climate response that places women and girls at the center of decision-making, climate finance, adaptation, mitigation, energy transition, and community resilience. We reaffirm our commitment to advancing a **just, feminist, inclusive, and sustainable green economy** where women and youth are recognized not only as those most affected by the climate crisis and environmental injustice, but also as leaders and agents of climate solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COP31

WoGEM Uganda Recommendations to COP31

1. Localize and Implement the Belém Gender Action Plan

WoGEM recommends translating the Belém Gender Action Plan into practical action at national, district and community levels. Implementation should be informed by the lived experiences and priorities of women, youth, grassroots organizations and local communities. Governments and relevant institutions should strengthen coordination, financing, capacity-building and accountability mechanisms to ensure that gender-responsive commitments are reflected in policies, programmes and budgets. Localization should also create meaningful opportunities for women's rights organizations and community-based organizations to participate in implementation and monitoring.

2. Prioritize the Wellbeing, Safety and Protection of Activists and Environmental Defenders

WoGEM recommends recognizing the wellbeing and protection of activists and environmental defenders as an essential part of sustainable environmental and social action. Activists and defenders often work under significant physical, emotional, social and legal pressures. Dedicated spaces and support mechanisms should address psychosocial wellbeing, burnout, physical safety, digital security and access to legal assistance. Particular attention should be given to women environmental defenders, who may face gender-specific risks. Supporting the people who protect communities, ecosystems and human rights is fundamental to sustaining long-term action.

3. Put Women at the Center of Resilient Food Systems

WoGEM recommends greater recognition and investment in the role of women in food systems, from production and processing to marketing, household food security and natural-resource management. Policies and programmes should support women farmers with access to land, finance, technology, markets, knowledge and climate-resilient agricultural

practices. Building resilient food systems requires empowering the people who sustain them, while addressing the structural barriers that limit women's economic and decision-making power.

> *"There is no resilient food system without resilient people, and no food security without empowering those who feed our communities."*

4. Invest in Renewable Energy and a Just Energy Transition

WoGEM recommends significantly increasing investment in renewable and clean energy systems while reducing dependence on new fossil-fuel infrastructure. Across the East African region, major fossil-fuel developments, including the **East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)**, demonstrate the importance of ensuring that energy and development decisions adequately consider environmental sustainability, community livelihoods, human rights and long-term energy security. WoGEM calls for greater investment in accessible and affordable solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower and other appropriate renewable-energy solutions that can expand energy access while creating sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities.

5. Increase Direct and Accessible Financing for Women and Youth

WoGEM recommends creating more accessible financing opportunities for women- and youth-led organizations, particularly those working at grassroots and community levels. Existing funding mechanisms often present administrative, technical and financial barriers that prevent local organizations from accessing resources. Financing should therefore be flexible, transparent and responsive to local realities, with simplified application and reporting requirements where appropriate. Women and youth should be recognized not only as beneficiaries of development and environmental financing but also as leaders, decision-makers and implementers.

6. Strengthen Locally Led Solutions and Community Resilience

WoGEM recommends placing communities at the center of programmes and policies addressing environmental, social and economic challenges. Local communities possess knowledge, practices and networks that can contribute significantly to sustainable development and resilience. Governments, development partners and other institutions should support locally led initiatives and create meaningful opportunities for women, youth and marginalized groups to participate in planning, implementation and monitoring. Local ownership should be strengthened so that solutions respond to community priorities and can be sustained beyond individual projects.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

As COP31 takes place, WoGEM Uganda calls on global and national leaders to turn climate commitments into meaningful action for women and girls. The experiences of communities affected by climate change and extraction, including those affected by EACOP, show that women cannot continue to carry the greatest burden while remaining excluded from decisions and resources.

We urge leaders to fulfill their climate finance commitments, follow up on the COP30 outcomes and Belém Gender Action Plan, and ensure that women are meaningfully included in climate decision-making.

Climate justice must be gender justice, and no woman or girl should be left behind in the transition to a just and sustainable future.

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SIGNED BY

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Executive Director

Women for Green Economy Movement Uganda (WoGEM Uganda)

Cc:

Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
Ministry of Water and Environment