

CENTERING CLIMATE IN ALL G7 DISCUSSIONS

A Call for a Gender-Just
Climate Agenda

This briefing note has been produced by the 2025 W7 Working Group on Climate, co-chaired by Sonia Phalatse, Bridget Burns, and Diana Sarosi. It draws on the [Climate Crisis](#) paper by Deborah Livingstone commissioned by the 2025 W7. The briefing note is meant to inform 2025 G7 discussions and outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The G7 nations are critical actors in the fight against the climate crisis. Together, they represent over half of global GDP and over 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions—despite accounting for only 10% of the world's population¹. More significantly, the G7 bears a disproportionate share of historical emissions, making it a primary contributor to global climate destabilization. Intensifying weather disasters are causing excessive deaths, suffering, displacement, and economic loss, deepening historic and ongoing global inequalities, and with the most severe impacts falling on women, girls, children and youth, Indigenous Peoples, the elderly, subsistence farmers, and other marginalized groups, particularly in the Global South.

Despite long-standing pledges—from coal phase-outs to climate finance commitments—G7 countries remain far behind what is needed to deliver a just and equitable green transition. The climate emergency continues to escalate: 2024 marked the first year in which global temperatures exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, making it the hottest year on record². While the climate crisis affects people worldwide on a daily basis, its impact is most severe in fragile and conflict-affected areas, exacerbating human suffering, humanitarian challenges, and pressure on ecosystems. It can also contribute to further tensions and insecurity.

Alarmingly, climate change is not a central item on the 2025 G7 agenda. This deprioritization reflects a broader erosion of climate leadership at a moment when it is urgently needed. Yet the issues on the agenda—wildfires, critical minerals, armed conflict, economic resilience, digital transition—are *all* climate-related issues. It is not possible to address these without reckoning with how the climate crisis intersects with and accelerates them.

To be effective, G7 climate leadership must be cross-cutting and grounded in gender justice. This policy brief provides a call to action to G7 leaders to tackle the climate emergency comprehensively, while centering a gender-just transition.

1 Fyson, C., Geiges, A., Gidden, M., & Attard, M.-C. (2021). *Are the G7 pulling their weight on climate?* Climate Analytics. <https://climateanalytics.org/publications/2021/are-the-g7-pulling-their-weight-on-climate/>

2 Hausfather, Z. (2024, November 7). *State of the climate: 2024 will be first year above 1.5C of global warming*. Carbon Brief. <https://www.carbonbrief.org/state-of-the-climate-2024-will-be-first-year-above-1-5c-of-global-warming/>

CLIMATE INTERSECTS WITH ALL G7 PRIORITIES

Despite the absence of climate change as a standalone item on the G7's 2025 agenda, it remains deeply embedded across each of the Canadian Presidency's priority areas. Climate change—and its gendered impacts—are not isolated challenges. They are systemic forces that shape and compound every issue on the G7's list.

- **Ongoing armed conflicts and rising tensions, including the wars and crises in Ukraine, the Middle East, Haiti, and the Indo-Pacific**, come along with distinct environmental and climate dimensions. Large-scale environmental destruction from armed conflict leaves long-term impacts on people, livelihoods, and ecosystems, undermining communities' resilience to climate change. Additionally, military activities contribute to the climate crisis through substantial military greenhouse gas emissions. In reverse, climate-induced stresses - such as droughts, food insecurity, and disaster-related displacement - can fuel further tensions and instability. For example, in Haiti, climate-related disasters have compounded political fragility, insecurity and resulting gender-based violence³. Across conflict zones, women and girls are at heightened risk of exploitation, with reduced access to sexual and reproductive health services, education, and livelihoods.
- **Foreign interference and disinformation** campaigns often target environmental defenders and women's rights activists—particularly those opposing extractive industries or advocating for Indigenous land rights. These actors are increasingly at risk; Global Witness (2023) reported that over 1,700 land and environmental defenders were killed in the last decade, with women defenders facing specific threats linked to both gender and activism.
- **Economic resilience and critical minerals supply chains** are central to the green transition, but without safeguards, maintaining these supplies risks replicating patterns of colonial extraction and gendered exploitation, as well as could fuel or exacerbate tensions. Cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, often involves unsafe conditions, child labor, and minimal benefits for local communities⁴. Women in mining areas frequently face displacement, health hazards, and exclusion from economic gains. More broadly, economic resilience is inextricably linked to climate and gender justice, as inclusive economic systems are essential for communities to prepare for, withstand, and recover from climate-related shocks and stressors. Women, young people, and marginalized groups, who are disproportionately affected by climate impacts, must be empowered through equitable access to resources and decision-making in order to build sustainable livelihoods. Advancing climate and gender justice is not only a matter of rights, but a strategic investment in resilient, stable, and prosperous economies.

3 United Nations Development Programme. (2023). *Gender, climate change and food security: Policy brief 3*. UNDP <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Gender,%20CC%20and%20Food%20Security%20Policy%20Brief%203-WEB.pdf>

4 Amnesty International. (2021). *Stop burning our rights! What governments and corporations must do to protect humanity from the climate crisis*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol30/3476/2021/en/>

- **The digital transition**, especially in AI and quantum technologies, has significant environmental consequences that must be addressed. Training large AI models can produce substantial carbon emissions. The growing demand for data centers contributes to energy and water use at unsustainable levels. If left unchecked, digital climate solutions risk creating new forms of environmental harm while reinforcing data biases and excluding women and marginalized communities from decision-making and access. Countries in the global south still have inadequate formal systems to recover and safely dispose of hazardous materials, valuable minerals, and e-waste AI is expected to generate⁵.
- **Mobilizing private capital** for green infrastructure must be accompanied by gender-responsive safeguards and strong public accountability frameworks. Without direct access to funding, local women and girls—who are important yet undervalued stewards of natural resources—are excluded from shaping climate responses and building resilience. Private capital is increasingly flowing into green energy and critical mineral supply chains, yet without adequate oversight, these investments risk driving land grabs, environmental degradation, and the exploitation of women and Indigenous communities under the guise of sustainability. Moreover, much of this financing is cloaked in greenwashing—branding profit-driven, extractive projects as “green” while failing to reduce emissions or redistribute power. Unchecked growth, even when labeled as green, remains fundamentally incompatible with the deep structural transformation required to meet climate goals and advance gender justice.
- **Fighting wildfires**, one of the few climate-linked items explicitly on the agenda, reveals the failure to integrate systemic solutions. Rising wildfire frequency is a direct result of climate change and land mismanagement. Women—particularly Indigenous women—hold traditional ecological knowledge vital for fire management and community recovery but are rarely included in decision-making spaces or in developing national strategies. Additionally, women and children face heightened physiological vulnerability to the effects of wildfires, along with increased safety risks from climate-induced disasters, including gender-based violence and trafficking⁶.
- **Countering migrant and drug smuggling** requires addressing the climate drivers of displacement. In 2022 alone, over 32 million people were displaced by weather-related disasters⁷. Women and girls in climate migration contexts face multiple human rights violations and are exposed to specific gender related threats. In particular, the impacts of climate change worsen the cycle of poverty and exacerbates situations of vulnerability for women and girls, such as gender-based violence and human trafficking as well as barriers to asylum due to gender-insensitive migration policies⁸.

5 Crownhart, C. (2024, October 28). *AI will add to the e-waste problem. Here's what we can do*. MIT Technology Review. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2024/10/28/1106316/ai-e-waste/#:~:text=Equipment%20used%20to%20train%20and,fraction%20of%20the%20global%20total.&text=Generative%20AI%20could%20account%20for,according%20to%20a%20new%20study>.

6 Save the Children. (2023). *Global girlhood report 2023: Girls at the centre of the storm—Her planet, her future, her solutions*. Save the Children International.

7 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2023). *Global report on internal displacement 2023*. IDMC. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2024/>

8 United Nations. (2022). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe González Morales (A/77/189)*. United Nations General Assembly. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2022/report-impact-climate-change-and-protection-human-rights-migrants>

THE NEED FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN A JUST TRANSITION

While gender equality is referenced in G7 communiqués, it remains marginal in actual climate policies. A just transition, at its core, emerged from labor movements advocating for equity as economies shift away from high-carbon industries—calling for decent work, social dialogue, and the protection of workers whose jobs are at risk. As we expand this vision to ensure no one is left behind, it is essential to recognize that gender equality must be central to a truly just transition, ensuring new green economies correct—not replicate—existing inequalities.

The dominant approach to decarbonization continues to ignore the gendered structures of economic and social life. A just transition that centers gender equality is more than representation. It demands that G7 climate policy recognize and address how climate action—if designed without equity—can reinforce the very inequalities it claims to redress. Women remain overrepresented in low paid, precarious and informal work, conditions that are particular to care and domestic (also environmental) work, albeit the care economy’s potential to provide decent green jobs, and they are excluded from formal decision-making and employment in traditional green sectors. Climate impacts intensify care burdens, job segregation, threaten land-based livelihoods, entrenches clean energy marginalization and heighten exposure to harm.

To be just, a transition must:

- Center care as essential work for planetary health.
- Support economic transformation that regenerates rather than extracts.
- Advance just climate and environmental finance for historical social and ecological injustices.
- Require a central role for the State and the avoidance and elimination of regressive austerity measures such as budget cuts on social welfare.

Critical Minerals and Just Transition: Avoiding a New Era of Extraction

As G7 countries race to secure access to critical minerals—such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earth elements—for renewable energy technologies and digital infrastructure, a new frontier of global extraction is rapidly unfolding. These minerals are essential for batteries, electric vehicles, solar panels, and wind turbines, making them central to the green transition. However, if the G7 fails to address the environmental, social, and gendered impacts of this supply chain, the result will be a transition that is green in name only—replicating the same systems of colonialism, extraction, and exploitation that created the crisis in the first place.

Most critical minerals are located in the Global South. Over 70% of the world’s cobalt, for example, is mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where artisanal miners—including children and women—work under dangerous conditions for low pay, without protective equipment or labor rights⁹. Lithium extraction in South America’s “Lithium Triangle” (spanning Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile) threatens Indigenous water sources and ecosystems, yet consultation and consent processes with affected communities remain weak or nonexistent¹⁰. The gendered effects are stark: women in these regions face increased exposure to pollutants, loss of land-based livelihoods, heightened care burdens due to environmental degradation, and exclusion from both formal mining employment and community decision-making.

The G7’s current approach to critical minerals is narrowly focused on *securing supply chains* to support domestic industries and geopolitical positioning—particularly to counter China’s influence. Canada’s *2023 Critical Minerals Strategy*, and similar strategies in the U.S. and EU, emphasize rapid expansion of exploration, investment, and trade agreements. Yet few of these plans include meaningful safeguards to protect the environment, Indigenous Peoples’ rights, or women’s rights in producer countries. As a result, this green industrial push risks becoming another chapter in the long history of resource colonialism.

In short, critical minerals policy must not be a race to the bottom. The G7 has both the power and the responsibility to set new norms that prioritize people and the planet over profits and power. A gender-just transition demands more than replacing fossil fuels—it requires transforming the systems of inequality that the fossil fuel era was built on.

9 Amnesty International, 2021

10 International Renewable Energy Agency. (2023). *World energy transitions outlook 2023: 1.5°C pathway*. IRENA. https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2023/Mar/IRENA_WETO_Preview_2023.pdf?rev=2ca35086907b42cca651b0179a7c639c#:~:text=This%20decade%2C%20our%20success%20in,renewable%20energy%20and%20efficiency%20solutions.

ANALYSIS OF PAST G7 COMMITMENTS

Previous G7 communiqués have recognized that people and communities on the frontlines of the climate, environmental and biodiversity crises - including women, youth and Indigenous Peoples - are disproportionately affected but also play a critical role as leaders and agents of change. Further, leaders have acknowledged that climate change, biodiversity loss, and ocean and land degradation are interconnected global challenges that threaten peace, security, development, health and economic stability, especially in the most vulnerable countries. As a result, leaders have committed to developing gender-responsive approaches to climate and nature financing, investment and policies.

G7 leaders have committed to advance women's leadership, agency and participation. However, these commitments are rarely attached to specific climate policies, decisions and actions. The G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps, a mechanism to continuously monitor G7 commitments and progress toward achieving gender equality across a range of areas, does not currently include any indicators relevant to the climate crisis.

Past G7 communiqués emphasize the importance of accelerating the transition to low-carbon economies. While various statements have included language such as “just,” “equitable,” “inclusive,” “leave no one behind,” which provides an entry point for more concrete language on measures to ensure a gender-just energy transition. Commitments to standards, plans and investments relating to a just transition, such as the Menu of Policy Options for a Just Transition towards Net Zero, in the G7 Finance track, should include stronger gender analysis.

G7 commitments to climate finance, and particularly to the Loss and Damage Fund, have been weak and few commitments explicitly refer to gender equality. Rather than committing funds, they have encouraged action from other institutions and signaled intent, not concrete actions or commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE G7

To advance a gender-just transition away from fossil fuels that is truly transformative, the G7 must adopt a feminist, decolonial approach to climate governance—one that centers care, equity and human rights, and rejects the false dichotomy between economic resilience and environmental justice. The following recommendations reflect the urgent demands of feminist and Indigenous climate advocates across the globe, grounded in lived experience, frontline action, and decades of policy engagement.

Reduce Emissions

During a time of increasing fossil fuel industry opportunism to address economic woes, the G7 must stand firm on its commitments to meeting their targets on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ramping up the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance.

- **Divest from fossil fuels and extractive industries, and reduce the climate impacts of global trade.** Despite international pledges, G7 countries continue to subsidize fossil fuels at levels exceeding USD 1 trillion annually (IEA, 2023). At the same time, the rapid push to secure critical minerals for green technology threatens to replicate and entrench extractive models that harm frontline communities—particularly women, children and youth, and Indigenous peoples who bear the brunt of land dispossession, toxic exposure, and violence^{11,12}.
- **Close the military emissions gap and address environmental impacts of conflicts.** Militaries are some of the world's largest institutional polluters, yet military emissions are routinely excluded from national GHG inventories. The G7 must account for the emissions of military operations and weapons manufacturing, and support environmental recovery in conflict-affected countries—while investing in peacebuilding and community resilience.
- **Reject false climate solutions that delay meaningful action and entrench inequities.** These include technologies and schemes such as biofuels, “clean coal,” net-zero pledges without real emissions cuts, carbon trading, offsets, geoengineering and carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies, and speculative carbon sequestration approaches like soil carbon farming. Many of these are used by corporations and governments to greenwash continued pollution while displacing Indigenous and local communities. Instead, G7 governments should prioritize and invest in evidence-based, community-led, gender-responsive solutions that support mitigation (e.g., renewable energy, public transit systems, etc.) and adaptation (e.g., agroecological farming, Indigenous-led conservation, green infrastructure, etc.).

Gender-Just Transition

Previous G7 communiqués have acknowledged the gendered nature of climate impacts, but have fallen short of meaningful, operational commitments. A gender-just transition is not a side issue—it is foundational to any climate solution that aims to be fair, lasting, and effective.

- **Commit to a just and equitable green transition by dismantling systems of extraction, exploitation, and oppression.** This includes ensuring the phaseout of carbon dependency while protecting human rights and delivering redistributive justice. Governments must recognize, redistribute, and remunerate unpaid care work, ensure access to decent, green jobs for women, youth, and marginalized groups, and address occupational segregation in green sectors. Economic transformation must also shift power toward local, worker-led cooperatives and support micro, small, and medium enterprises, which are key to community resilience and inclusive economic development.

11 Amnesty International, 2021

12 International Renewable Energy Agency, 2023

- **Move away from labour law's narrow definition of 'work' to adopt a wide definition** that includes unpaid work, as well as all sources of livelihood, such as access to land, capital and resources, agricultural and fishing and other subsistence work, precarious work and the wide range of activities within the informal economy, including care and domestic (environmental) work. Care is an essential contribution to the social fabric. It is also green. Caring activities are lower in carbon intensity than other productive work, meaning that public investment for generating more and better employment in caring work is consistent with low carbon emissions. Just Transition must ensure that care-workers have decent work conditions, decent pay, proper training and job security.
- **Prioritize women's leadership and gender equality among workers in a just transition towards a greener economy** (e.g., renewable energy, sustainable construction) through targeted apprenticeships, STEM scholarships for underrepresented groups, and the provision of safe and harassment-free workplaces with parental leave and childcare, while investing in green and sustainable infrastructure which further provides decent jobs.
- **Promote robust investment in public services available to all by creating decent green jobs in compliance with ILO's standard**¹³. Rather than the sporadic and largely unskilled work provided under current public employment projects, social protection should be complemented with guaranteed work on decent terms for the unemployed together with relevant training to provide high quality public services.
- **Promote and ensure safe, orderly and regular paths of migration** in and across countries in just transition programs by granting legal status and access to socio-economic rights, including the right to decent and dignified work for migrants, refugees and people displaced by the adverse effects of climate change. **Move away from anti-immigration and pushback policies** to recognizing the added value of migrants, refugees and displaced people due to climate change adverse effects, their skills and climate-related knowledge, including indigenous knowledge to the green economy.
- **Urgently prioritize and implement climate justice strategies that respond to the lived realities of climate-impacted communities.** These strategies must meaningfully engage with the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and traditional knowledge and existing locally-led climate action to address climate-induced loss and damage, protect ocean health, support disaster risk reduction, and halt biodiversity destruction and ecocide—all of which disproportionately affect women, children and youth, and Indigenous peoples. For instance, women in small island developing states (SIDS) face escalating threats to food security, water access, and livelihoods due to sea-level rise and coral reef collapse (UN Women, 2023).
- **Establish and enforce accountability mechanisms to hold corporations headquartered in G7 states accountable for human rights and environmental abuses—particularly violations of women's rights, Indigenous sovereignty, and the rights of environmental defenders, and children's environmental rights.** These mechanisms must align with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Comment 26 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and uphold Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in all climate-related investments and projects.

13 International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *About the ILO*. International Labour Organization. Retrieved May 26, 2025, from <https://www.ilo.org/about-ilo>

Financing

Climate finance must be radically reimagined towards acknowledging and addressing the ecological debt owed by the Global North, ensuring that finance mechanisms repair both ecosystems and the livelihoods of people in the Global South who are disproportionately impacted by climate breakdown and enable the pursuit of ambitious climate action.

- **Disincentivize and rapidly phase out fossil fuel investments**, which still exceed USD 1 trillion globally (IEA, 2023), undermining efforts to scale renewable energy and climate adaptation. Reallocate these funds toward climate finance to help those least responsible for the climate but hardest hit to deal with the fallout.
- **Deliver climate finance as grants—not loans or debt-for-nature swaps**—to avoid deepening debt burdens in climate-vulnerable countries. G7 countries must commit to a minimum of USD 1 trillion per year in public finance for developing countries, aligned with the principles of polluter pays, historical responsibility, and common but differentiated responsibilities.
- **Fully endorse, finance, and implement the UNFCCC’s Lima Work Programme on Gender and its renewed Gender Action Plan**, as well as ensure coherence and ambition across the UNFCCC, Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Gender Plan of Action and the Sendai Framework’s gender action plans (GAPs).
- **Strengthen progress on gender equality outcomes via existing funds** (including the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and Fund for responding to Loss and Damage) and invest in alternative gender-responsive delivery mechanisms (i.e. women’s and environmental funds) to ensure direct access for grassroots women’s organizations, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities. This must include equitable and transparent monitoring of how funds are distributed and used, with accountability to those most affected.
- **Strengthen transparency and data tracking in climate finance flows**, including publishing disaggregated data on bilateral and multilateral funding to women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, youth, local communities, and by geographic region.
- **While providing and scaling up new and additional climate finance, allocate at least 15% of climate-related Official Development Assistance (ODA)** to initiatives with gender equality as a primary objective. To date, less than 1% of global climate finance reaches grassroots women’s organizations (OECD, 2023), and less than 7% of multilateral climate finance explicitly and substantively takes girls into account (CERI, 2023). There is a need to dramatically scale up support for gender-responsive climate initiatives, particularly through direct funding flowing to grassroots groups and women’s rights organizations.

Critical Minerals

To ensure a truly just transition, the G7 must reframe the critical minerals agenda through a climate justice and gender equality lens. This means:

- **Shifting from extractivism to circularity:** Prioritize investments in recycling, reuse, and demand reduction strategies to decrease dependence on raw mineral extraction. The International Energy Agency (2022) estimates that improving battery recycling alone could reduce mineral demand by up to 30% by 2040.

- **Upholding Indigenous and community rights:** All critical mineral projects must adhere to the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. G7 countries must not fund or support mining operations that violate Indigenous land rights, displace communities, or degrade ecosystems.
- **Ensuring gender-responsive impact assessments:** Require environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) for all mining projects to include gender analysis and community-driven input, with particular attention to care responsibilities, land access, health impacts, and employment.
- **Supporting community-led alternatives:** Allocate development finance to cooperatives, small-scale processing operations, and women- and youth-led enterprises that promote local ownership, dignified work, equitable benefit-sharing, and environmental restoration.
- **Creating corporate accountability mechanisms:** Implement robust due diligence regulations for G7-based companies involved in mineral extraction, processing, and trade. Legislation such as the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive must be strengthened and harmonized across G7 countries to enforce environmental, labor, and human rights standards.
- **Promoting care-centered economies:** Recognize that the transition should not be built on continued extraction, but on systemic shifts toward economies of care, repair, and regeneration. This includes investing in social infrastructure, supporting care workers, and valuing unpaid and underpaid labor—especially that done by women and girls.

Leadership and accountability

- **Ensure the equitable participation of women** in all their diversity and center their leadership in climate discussions and decision-making bodies and processes. In particular, we highlight the urgency of recognizing the leadership of Indigenous women from all parts of the world, African states, SIDS, LLDCs and LDCs, among others.
- **Integrate robust gender analysis and gender-responsive objectives into all G7 climate discussions, negotiations, and policy processes**—not as an add-on, but as a central pillar of effective climate governance. Gender mainstreaming must be backed by funding, capacity building, and data disaggregation across all G7 climate initiatives.

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