

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Having regard to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of 2016; the Lima Work Programme on Gender Issues and its Action Plan of December 2019; CEDAW Recommendation no. 37 of 2018 on "*Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change*"; the European Parliament's resolution of 16 January 2018 on women, equal opportunities and climate justice; the European Parliament's resolution of 21 January 2021 on the EU strategy for gender equality (2019/2169(INI)); the Conclusions of the Council of the European Union adopted on 6 October 2021 recognising the need to promote gender equality and women's empowerment for effective climate action, and in anticipation of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), scheduled to take place from 31 October to 12 November 2021 in Glasgow;

Believing that gender equality, which is a *sine qua non* condition for combating poverty, hunger and disease, is an inescapable goal on the path to achieving sustainable development;

Noting that **extreme weather conditions have a gender impact**; indeed, many studies show that women are **more vulnerable than men to the consequences of climate change** and **are not given the same access to resources**, such as education, information, land and credit, that would help them mitigate and adapt to such impacts;

Considering that climate change also has **a multiplier effect on inequalities**, as it increases gender-based violence and the exploitation of women and girls, particularly the most marginalised; and considering, furthermore, that some 12 million more girls would be forced into marriage as a result of the increased frequency of natural disasters;

Noting, moreover, that there is a clear link between the occurrence of environmental disasters and the reduction in the **schooling rate**, which particularly affects girls, since after natural disasters, they are often the first to drop out of school to help their families, resulting, in the longer term, in a **further significant widening of the gender gap in education** (women accounting for 75% of the illiterate population worldwide);

Acknowledging that **climate change endangers food security** by making **farming extremely difficult** due to floods, droughts or significant changes in seasonal temperatures, and also by **reducing agricultural biodiversity**, which directly affects women who depend on crop diversity to meet family food requirements (which in many countries of the Global South is still the preserve of women);

Believing that **women and girls are crucial in the fight against the climate crisis** and that gender equality and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes are prerequisites for

sustainable development and the efficient management of climate challenges in order to achieve a **fair and just transition** that leaves no one behind;

The PA UfM Committee on Women's Rights urges the UfM member countries to implement the Paris Agreement principles which state that all climate actions must respect human rights, including the promotion of gender equality, and calls for the rapid implementation of the Action Plan on Gender Equality linked to the UNFCCC Lima Work Programme;

Urges the UfM member countries to **include a gender perspective in all their environmental policies** and in their projects relating to climate change, biodiversity, and the circular economy, including the setting of environmental standards that take into account the different impacts of adverse natural events on men and women;

Calls on governments to recognise women as agents of change in the 'green transition' and to **promote gender equality and women's empowerment** through policies that strengthen women's rights and ensure equal access to education and health, as well as **gender equality in climate decision-making bodies**; and to support gender empowerment in climate finance and **ensure women's access to credit and other financial instruments** in order to foster green and resilient entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on promoting women-led small and medium-sized enterprises, also through appropriate microcredit instruments;

Calls on the parliamentarians of the member countries to promote a wide-ranging debate, in the most appropriate parliamentary fora, on the reasons that determine the greater vulnerability of women to the negative impacts of climate change, and to raise the awareness that in many Mediterranean countries women are still the weak parties in the economic change driven by climate change;

Calls on parliaments to consider **innovative ways of involving women** in issues that affect them in the climate crisis, including the possibility of introducing a gender quota system in climate decision-making processes starting with the annual Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, where women delegates account for only 30% of participants;

Urges parliaments to support strengthening the *Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)* process, designed to empower vulnerable groups through education, training, awareness-building, information access, participation and international cooperation, with a special emphasis on women's capacity-building.