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POLICY BRIEF

GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT IN ALBANIA

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Gender Alliance for Development Center
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Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS	4
MAIN MESSAGES.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
OBJECTIVE.....	9
GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN ALBANIA.....	10
LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK	12
INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.....	12
NATIONAL LEVEL:	13
GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED ASPECTS OF CLIMATIC CHANGES.....	15
RECOMMENDATIONS:	17
TO GOVERNMENT BODIES AND LEGAL AUTHORITIES	17
NGOS	17
DONOR COMMUNITY.....	17
INSPIRING EXAMPLES:.....	18
REFERENCES.....	18

Abbreviations

ARDA	Agriculture and Rural Development Agency
BIDS	Business and Investment Development Strategy
CEDAW	The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
COP	Conference of the Parties
EU	European Union
GCF	Global Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics in Albania
ISID	Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
NDC	National Determined Contribution
NSCC	National Strategy for Climate Change and Plans
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
NSGE	National Strategy for Gender Equality
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNEP	United Nation Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Main messages

- Women are active actors in climate change and the environmental sector. Their gender-defined roles, concerns, and contributions in households, communities, and the workplace should be recognized and reflected in related policies and actions.
- There is a need for awareness raising and capacity building on gender equality and women's empowerment aspects in the country about the environmental sector.
- This awareness should be translated into political commitment and financing for suitable actions that ensure gender sensitivity in climate change developments.
- Policy and program planning and financing should allow for the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment principles across sectors related to climate change and the environment at all levels.

Introduction

Access to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, is finally a universal human right, which was adopted on 28 July 2022 by UN General Assembly¹. The importance of this historic resolution is that nobody can take nature, clean air, and water, or a stable climate away from us – at least, not without a fight,"². In this context, this resolution plays a role in helping to make the environment healthier and more sustainable, and Albania as a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights³ has a chance to use the resolution to guarantee environmental protection for its citizens.

Besides the ratification of the Convention on Human Rights on October 2, 1996⁴, Albania has robust legislation in the environment sector spanning a number of strategies, laws, decisions of the Council of Ministers, and conventions⁵.

For citizens to fulfill their duties and achieve their human rights, they must first be aware of what happens with the environment that surrounds them and be aware of the law for access to information⁶ and the Aarhus convention⁷. The latest had played an important role in Albania, especially for the right to get environmental information and access to justice. Despite a well-developed legal and policy framework, people, regardless of their gender, often see themselves as powerless in making a change to minimize the negative impacts on the environment. They are not making full use of their right to information. Consequently, citizens tend to become indifferent to the complexity of the environmental sector, until the moment nature reacts strongly by flooding, earthquakes, heat waves, etc., which are becoming more frequent in recent years and are considered as a side effect of climate change that is present in Albania as well.

Albania is a very dynamic country, involved in rapid urban development but this rapid development is not sustainable and has a significant environmental bill. The increase in citizens' consumption, the need for the development of transport and infrastructure, an increase of urban or inert waste production, discharge of sewage into seas and rivers, illegal cutting of forests, erosion of

¹ UN General Assembly declares access to clean and healthy environment a universal human right

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1123482>

² Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/historic-move-un-declares-healthy-environment-human-right>

³ Signatories for Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<https://sdg.humanrights.dk/en/instrument/signees/24>

⁴ Human Rights <http://www.euro-centre.eu/referencat/human-rights-2/>

⁵ Environment Legislation and strategies <https://turizmi.gov.al/strategjia-e-mjedisit/>

⁶ Law no 119/2014 "On access to information" <https://www.idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/160-2014-DI.pdf>

⁷ Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters *Law No. 8672 date 26.10.2000 for the ratification of the "Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters"* <https://www.parlament.al/Files/ProjektLigje/20200610114104Ligji%20p%C3%ABr%20ratifikimin%20e%20KONVENT%C3%8BS%20S%C3%8B%20AARHUSIT.....pdf>

riverbeds, burning of tires, erosion of mountains, uncontrolled construction, etc., are just some of the environmental disasters Albania is facing.

Besides the above issues, one of the most sensitive topics in Albania and worldwide is the climate and energy crisis with their negative impacts on economic, social, and environmental aspects. Climate change and energy in Albania are strongly related to each other as Albania is producing its electrical energy 99.5% from Hydropower plants,⁸ making the country fragile to atmospheric changes. In the last 20 years, seasons are losing climatic features, winters have become milder and shorter while summers are getting hotter and longer at the expense of spring-autumn. This is causing a shortage of water and impacting the net domestic production of energy. These changes in climatic features are one of the consequences of climate change, that has impacted Albania, which is highly vulnerable to climate variability and change, particularly for water resources, the agriculture sector, public health, energy, and coastal zones. Heavy rains, flooding, and soil erosion puts both urban and rural infrastructure at risk⁹. It is estimated that an average of 50,000 Albanians are affected by floods every year and the annual negative impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is about 200 million dollars¹⁰

Climate-related disasters are not gender-neutral, and women and children are among the highest-risk groups. The main factors that influence the differences between women's and men's vulnerability to climate change risks include gender-based differences in time use; access to assets and credit, treatment by formal institutions, which can constrain women's opportunities, limited access to policy discussions and decision making, and a lack of sex-disaggregated data for policy change¹¹. In this context, the mitigation of climate change requires the active participation of women. Albania does not collect and publish regular data on gender and the environment, there are few reports and studies on this topic.

According to the World Bank¹² in terms of changing climate trends, Albania is one of the most vulnerable countries in the region. Over the past 15 years, changes in weather patterns have already been observed with increasing temperatures, decreasing precipitation, and more frequent extreme events, such as floods and droughts, being observed¹³. Projections indicate a decline in summer rainfalls of about 10 percent by 2020 and 20 percent by 2050. Energy and agriculture are two sectors that are adversely affected by climate change.¹⁴

⁸ Electricity balance 2021 <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/9633/bilanci-i-energjis%C3%AB-elektrike-2021.pdf>

⁹ Climate Risk Profile: Albania (2021): The World Bank Group
<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/15812-Albania%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf>

¹⁰ DW 10.05.2022. Albania: GIZ roles in mitigating climate change <https://www.dw.com/sq/shqip%C3%ABri-giz-protagonist-n%C3%AB-zbutjen-e-ndryshimeve-klimatike/a-61741809>

¹¹ Climate Risk Profile: Albania (2021): The World Bank Group
<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/15812-Albania%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf>

¹² Climate Change in Albania World Bank. Online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania/brief/climate-change-in-albania>

¹³ IBID

¹⁴ Climate Change in Albania World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania/brief/climate-change-in-albania>

Over the years, the European Commission Reports have marked Albania with unsatisfactory progress related to Climate Change, which stands as a specific subchapter within Chapter 27. Nevertheless, there is a progressive shift in the EC's 2020 and 2021 Reports, stating that *“Albania has achieved some level of preparation in tackling the climate change, but alignment with the acquis is still limited”*¹⁵

As per EU progress Report 2022¹⁶, environmental statistics are only very partly aligned to the EU *acquis*, while energy statistics are moderately aligned. Institute of Statistics in Albania (INSTAT) and the National Agency of Natural Resources produce monthly and annual energy statistics for commodity balances for all energy products (fuels) used in Albania as well as prices of electricity for households and industry.¹⁷ As per the findings of the same report, material flow accounts are well aligned to the EU *acquis*. Air emission accounts, physical energy flow accounts, and environmental taxes by economic activity remain partially in compliance with the EU requirements. Waste statistics have improved but they are not fully aligned yet. Data on packaging waste are increasingly substantial as they are the basis for a new EU Budget's own resource on non-recycled plastic packaging waste. Albania already collects data on municipal waste.¹⁸

Albania finalized and adopted its 2021-2027 business and investment development strategy (BIDS)¹⁹ in July 2021. The BIDS sets the strategic framework for Albania's enterprise and industrial policy, covering SME skills development, innovation, sustainable growth, and conditions for attracting foreign investment. It also adopted a 2020-2024 program for inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID)²⁰, with three main pillars: industrial competitiveness and market access; productive employment and entrepreneurship development; and sustainable energy for productive uses and environmental management.

Returning once again to the EU Progress Report for 2022, as regards Green Agenda²¹ and sustainable connectivity, Albania is moderately prepared on energy, environment, and climate change. It has some level of preparation in the areas of transport policy and of trans-European networks and some progress was achieved in developing transport and energy networks. It made progress on civil protection and is ready to join the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.²² The country has made limited progress in the other areas covered by this cluster and ongoing efforts to address issues with vessels Flag State Control and to align legislation need to continue. Limited progress was made in further aligning the EU *acquis* on water management, chemicals, and

¹⁵ European Commission Albania 2021 Report. Online: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/albania-report-2021_en

¹⁶ European Commission Albania 2022 Report Online: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/albania-report-2022_en

¹⁷ IBID

¹⁸ IBID

¹⁹ Business and Investment Development Strategy: <https://financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Strategjia-e-Zhvillimit-t%C3%AB-Biznesit-dhe-Investimeve.pdf>

²⁰ United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) online:

https://open.unido.org/api/documents/18998180/download/Factsheet%20on%20CP%20Albania_2020.pdf

²¹ Cluster 4: The Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity - European Commission Albania 2022 Report Online: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/albania-report-2022_en

²² Cluster 4: The Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity - European Commission Albania 2022 Report Online: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/albania-report-2022_en

environmental crime.²³ The impact of strategic investments on biodiversity and nature protection requires attention. This cluster and the reforms concerned have significant links to Albania's Economic Reform Programme, the Commission's Economic and Investment Plan and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans endorsed by Albania in December 2020.²⁴

According to UN Women, it is very likely that energy supply, use, and consumption affect men and women differently, and intersects with factors such as location, age, and financial status. Energy is considered to be a male topic, but household management is a women's responsibility.²⁵ Energy poverty may thus be worsened by climate change, as it affects energy consumption, means of heating, health, and overall quality of life, including during winter, all topics typically falling under women's purview.

Objective

This policy brief will show that climate change and its impacts are not gender-neutral. Due to their gender-defined roles in society and traditional patterns of marginalization, women are among those who are likely to carry the heaviest burden from these changes and benefit less from the policies and programs that address them. The policy brief also shows that women should not be seen as 'victims'. They are crucial actors in climate change actions and their needs and knowledge should be used to inform the design, implementation, and monitoring of climate change and policies. This policy will deal with three Sustainable Development Goals SDGs²⁶:

1. **GOAL 5: Gender Equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
2. **GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**
3. **GOAL 13: Climate Action - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

The purpose of the policy brief is to raise awareness and demonstrate how to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment principles into the environment, climate change actions, and policies in Albania. Its target audience is policymakers at national and local levels, legislative authorities, and other non-governmental organizations working in this area.

²³ IBID

²⁴ IBID

²⁵ UN Women & UNDP (2016). Gender Brief Albania 2016. Prepared by Monika Kocaqi, Ani Plaku and Dolly Wittberger. UN Women, Albania. Online <https://albania.un.org/en/46623-albania-gender-brief-2016>

²⁶ The agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched by UN Summit in New York on 25-27 September 2015 and is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/un-2030-agenda>

Gender equality and women's empowerment in Albania

Women constitute more than half of Albania's population (50.2 %) ²⁷, and they play an important role at the household level, in the rural and urban economies, and in society as a whole. There are differences between women and men, and these are reflected in women's and men's contributions to productive and reproductive work, formal and informal employment and salaries, poverty levels, literacy rates, their access to and control over natural resources, migration patterns, and women's participation and representation in decision-making at different levels. 18.8% of women fulfill household duties, compared to only 0.6% of men ²⁸, this difference in percentage demonstrates that women and men have different attitudes toward energy and different attitudes in their household for the protection of the environment. The gender inequalities between women and men contribute to different vulnerabilities and thereby also to differentiated impacts of disasters and climatic change. On the other hand, women and men have diverse capacities – knowledge, experience, skills, and visions – in dealing with these challenges and impacts. It should be noted however that not all women are the same; they do not form one large homogenous group. There are important differences according to social and economic differentiators such as age (women and girls), social status (rich vs. poor) livelihood, and ethnicity (majority vs. minority women).

While there is an effort from the Albanian government to achieve gender equality through a number of policies and strategies for the political, economic, and social empowerment of women. ²⁹ The law on gender equality requires a minimum of 30% representation of women in all bodies of legislative, executive, judicial, and other institutions ³⁰. Meanwhile, in the Commission for Production Activities, Trade and Environment ³¹, which is the only commission for the environment at the Albanian assembly, 2 out of 20 members are women. ³²

As this policy brief is focused on the SDGs, in addition, the Government of Albania is fully committed to implementing the agenda 2030 ³³. Mainstreaming the SDGs in the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020 (NSDI-II) ³⁴, including the related sector strategies and national policies and plans, is essential for the successful implementation of the SDGs in Albania

²⁷ Census 2011 online <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/censuses/census-of-population-and-housing/publikimet/2011/publications-of-population-and-housing-census-2011/>

²⁸ Women and Men in Albania online (<http://instat.gov.al/kapitulli/t%C3%AB-dreitat-e-njeriut/pengesa-sociale-si-forma-diskriminimi-n%C3%AB-praktik%C3%AB/>)

²⁹ Law no. 9970, dated 24.7.2008 For gender equality in society
https://www.mod.gov.al/images/PDF/barazia_gjinore_shoqeri.pdf

³⁰ Article 15 Law no. 9970, dated 24.7.2008 For gender equality in society
https://www.mod.gov.al/images/PDF/barazia_gjinore_shoqeri.pdf

³¹ Commission for Production Activities, Trade and Environment is responsible to examines draft laws, and draft decisions that are presented to the Assembly, conducting studies on the effectiveness of laws in force, following the implementation of laws and controlling the activity of ministries and other central bodies, proposing to the Assembly or the Council of Ministers taking relevant measures, as well as proposing draft laws, draft statements or draft resolutions for approval in the Assembly

³² Structure of the Commission for Production Activities, Trade and Environment
<https://www.parlament.al/Strukture?kategori=5&strukture=1015>

³³ The agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/un-2030-agenda>

³⁴ SDG mainstreaming through the National Strategy for Integration and Development 2015-2020 (NSDII)
<https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/no.30-%20SDG%20mainstreaming%20through%20the%20National%20Strategy%20for%20Integration%20and%20Development%202015-2020%20%28NSDI%20II%29.pdf>

and the context of the European integration process as well. Albania is a member of the Global Climate Fund (GCF) board³⁵, represented by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Environment, and with her initiative, an informal group of women was recently created on the GCF Board which demonstrates that the contribution of women and girls to the climate change mitigation agenda is indispensable. Gender equality and women's leadership in climate change are of key importance in global efforts under UN International Commitments and the 2030 Agenda³⁶.

Based on INSTAT data³⁷ on "SDG 5 Gender Equality Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", to contribute to achieving "5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" the woman % should increase to achieve the target of the SDG5 (**available data 2014 - 20.7% was the % of woman in parliament and in 2020 29.5% was the % woman in parliament**). SDG 7 7.1 By 2030 ensure universal access to affordable and reliable energy services, the percentage of the population with access to electricity in 2020 is 99.98%, this indicator should be increased as well to achieve the target for 2030.

According to Albania Country Gender Equality Brief 2020³⁸ the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) has increased the use of gender indicators and added gender equality sections to some of its reports. Only a few ministries collect gender-disaggregated data on issues related to climate change. This includes the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)³⁹ and its Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (ARDA)⁴⁰ but not the Civil Protection Units. Uptake is greater at the local level, where municipalities are establishing gender indicators in their budget monitoring systems.⁴¹

In 2021, Albania drafted the new National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030⁴², where among the objectives for the first time is addressed the climate change and gender equality issues. NSGE 2021-2030" contains objectives and measures related to the thematic areas of the Action Plan for Gender Equality III 2021-2025, of the European Union (GEP III) of EU, as well as "Addressing the challenges and exploiting the opportunities offered by the transition to the green economy, digital transformation, climate change, and the environment." In its entirety "NSGE 2021 - 2030" consists of four main strategic goals, where there are also specific objectives that reflect the need for change or the addition of new dimensions towards which attention should be focused for properly addressing gender equality issues, based on the most recent developments, as well as considering issues related to civil emergencies, natural disasters or new areas so far unaddressed or very little

³⁵ The Green Climate Fund (GCF) – is the world's largest climate fund, mandated to support developing countries raise and realize their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions towards low-emissions, climate-resilient pathways [About GCF | Green Climate Fund](#)

³⁶ Albania: GIZ protagonist in mitigating climate change <https://www.dw.com/sq/shqip%C3%ABri-giz-protagonist-n%C3%AB-zbutjen-e-ndryshimeve-klimatike/a-61741809>

³⁷ Institute of Statistics INSTAT <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/sdgs/>

³⁸ Un Women Albania Country Gender Equality Brief 2020

https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/FIELD%20Office%20Albania/Attachments/Publications/2020/12/CGEB%20Albania_REPORT_1.pdf

³⁹ Ministria e Bujqësisë dhe Zhvillimit Rural <https://bujqesia.gov.al/en/>

⁴⁰ Agjencia për Zhvillim Bujqësor dhe Rural <https://aasf.com.al/azhbr/>

⁴¹ Un Women Albania Country Gender Equality Brief 2020

⁴² National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030 <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2021/06/30/400>

addressed in relation to gender equality (environment and climate change, digitization, economy, and green, etc.).⁴³

Legislative framework

In the area of environment and climate change, there is a solid legal framework and also strategies to specifically address gender equality, with national and international binding obligations.

International level

NON-binding obligations:

- **UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.**⁴⁴

The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994. Today, it has near-universal membership. The 198 countries that have ratified the Convention are called Parties to the Convention. Preventing “dangerous” human interference with the climate system is the ultimate aim of the UNFCCC. Albania ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on October, 1994, and it entered into force on 1 January 1995.

- **Kyoto Protocol**⁴⁵

From January 2005 Albania is also a Party to the Kyoto Protocol of the UNFCCC. This protocol commits developed countries, listed in Annex I, to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. As a developing country, Albania holds the status of Non-Annex I Party to both these legal documents, which means that it does not have legally binding emissions reduction targets

- **Paris Agreement**⁴⁶

The Paris Agreement is the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate change agreement, adopted at the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) in December 2015. Albania signed on 22 April 2016 and ratified the agreement on 21 September 2016⁴⁷

- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)**⁴⁸

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. It recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 associated targets which are integrated and indivisible. The Albanian Government has affirmed full commitment to the Agenda 2030. The coordination and the leadership of the

⁴³ IBID

⁴⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change <https://unfccc.int/>

⁴⁵ The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement that aimed to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and the presence of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/k/kyoto.asp>

⁴⁶ The [Paris Agreement](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/international-action-climate-change/climate-negotiations/paris-agreement_en) is the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate change agreement, adopted at the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015. https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/international-action-climate-change/climate-negotiations/paris-agreement_en

⁴⁷ <https://unfccc.int/node/28572>

⁴⁸ The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/un-2030-agenda) was launched by a UN Summit in New York on 25-27 September 2015 and is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/un-2030-agenda>

process is provided by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania and comprising key government institutions as well as other stakeholders from the business community, civil society, academia and international organizations, including the technical support provided by the Department of Development and Good Governance in the Prime Minister's Office and the contribution of the United Nations agencies in Albania. The Albanian Parliament has unanimously approved a resolution confirming Albania's commitment to Agenda 2030 as it plays an important role in monitoring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Binding obligations:

- Council of Europe's 2011 Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence ("The Istanbul Convention").⁴⁹

The Convention also establishes a specific monitoring mechanism ("GREVIO") in order to ensure effective implementation of its provisions by the Parties. Albania has signed the convention on December 19, 2011.

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CeDaW)⁵⁰

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The CEDAW Committee consists of 23 experts on women's rights from around the world. The CEDAW treaty is a tool that helps women around the world to bring about change in their daily life. In countries that have ratified the treaty, such as Albania, CEDAW has proved invaluable in opposing the effects of discrimination, which include violence, poverty, and lack of legal protections, along with the denial of inheritance, property rights, and access to credit.

National level:

Climate legal framework

- Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan⁵¹ designed to support the implementation of EU environment and climate legislation
- Law for climate changes⁵²
- First, Second, and Third National Communication of the Republic of Albania addressed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁵³,
- Draft National Plan of the Republic of Albania for Energy and Climate⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Online <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

⁵⁰ Online <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

⁵¹ Climate Change Strategy and Action Plans <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2.-Strategjia-e-Ndryshimeve-Klimatike-dhe-Planet-e-Veprimit-Qershor-2019-1.pdf>

⁵² Ligji për Ndryshimet Klimaterike. Ligji nr. 155, dt. 17.12.2020 PER NDRYSHIMET KLIMATIKE

⁵³ The First, second, third, National Communication of the Republic of Albania addressed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change <https://turizmi.gov.al/ndryshimet-klimatike/>

- National plan of the republic of Albania for energy and climate strategic environmental assessment draft version⁵⁵

National Strategy for Climate Change and Plans (NSCC)⁵⁶ is the main strategic document on addressing climate change in Albania, which is approved by the Albanian Government in July 2019. It is designed to support the implementation of EU legislation on environment and climate, aimed at strengthening coordination across sectors to climate adaptation measures, environmental protection, and sustainable development. The NSCC focus is put on the mitigation and adaptation of climate change in Albania.

According to Nationally Determined Contribution⁵⁷ by United Nations Climate Change, at the fourth National Communication of the Republic of Albania, which is not yet published, there will be guidelines on mainstreaming gender in climate change mitigation and adaptation programs and plans.⁵⁸

Albania ratified on 21 September 2016, the Paris Agreement⁵⁹ which is the most ambitious multilateral climate change agreement. To achieve its objective, all Parties to this agreement are expected to update and enhance their NDC⁶⁰ every 5 years.

The Paris Agreement, Article 11⁶¹ states that capacity-building must be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive. To some degree, the adoption of a domestic commitment – has assisted capacity development within the institutions but the reliance and dependence on foreign experts for climate issues is inevitable. This institutional dimension can be illustrated with the case of National Communications on Climate Change. Albania through own resources or foreign assistance, has hired and/or trained experts to prepare a national communication. However, a successful completion of the does not guarantee that the country has the institutional capacities to prepare national communications - or inventories- on a regular basis.

The revised National Determined Contribution (NDC) for Albania,⁶² has specified the importance to include the gender approach for tackling climate change, “*Promote gender equality in terms of climate change adaptation*” as women are considered more affected and face many obstacles in enjoying their equal rights. If we analyze the document its states our findings that the available analysis on how climate change affects men and women differently in Albania is limited and focuses on the agriculture sector. This is relevant given that agriculture is a labor-intensive sector highly dependent on environmental conditions. The different vulnerabilities in this sector depend to a

⁵⁴ Draft National Plan of the Republic of Albania for Energy and Climate https://www.infrastruktura.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NECP-Albania_drafti-shqip.pdf

⁵⁵ National plan of the Republic of Albania for energy and climate strategic environmental assessment draft version <https://www.infrastruktura.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Vlersimi-Strategjike.pdf>

⁵⁶ Strategjia e Ndryshimeve Klimatike dhe Planet e Veprimit https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2.-Strategjia-e-Ndryshimeve-Klimatike-dhe-Planet-e-Veprimit_Qershor-2019_-1.pdf

⁵⁷ UNCC Nationally Determined Contribution https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-05/Test_ndc.pdf

⁵⁹ Paris Agreement <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

⁶⁰ National Determined Contribution to the global efforts for GHG emission reduction

⁶¹ Check Article 11 https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/paris_agreement_english_.pdf

⁶² Albania revised NDC https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-05/Test_ndc.pdf

large extent on the differentiated roles of women and men in the agricultural value chain. No studies are available on the effects of climate change on gender in the energy sector in Albania.

Environmental framework

- The environmental protection law⁶³
- Law on Strategic Impact Assessment, and Environmental Impact Assessment⁶⁴
- Strategic policy document for integrated waste management and action plan 2020-2035⁶⁵, Document of Strategic Policies for the Protection of Biodiversity⁶⁶
- The Cross-Sector Strategy on Environment 2015-2030⁶⁷, do not have a gender perspective.

As women play a key role in the provision, management, and conservation of water, there are efforts to include the content of gender in the action plan for the water supply and wastewater section⁶⁸ as the deficiencies in water supply and wastewater systems impact the female population in a differentiated and unequal manner⁶⁹.

Gender-differentiated aspects of climatic changes

It is clear that not everybody is affected in the same way by climate change, there are gender-specific effects on women and men.

Studies show that natural disasters mostly affect economies dependent on agricultural production. In Albania, agriculture accounts for 18% of GDP, employing 40% of the workforce⁷⁰.

It is particularly difficult for Albanian women to cope with the effects of climate change since they mostly work the land informally or unpaid. To achieve environmental and climate goals, Albania needs to empower women and make gender equality a reality. In order to do so, it must improve the national and local capacities, enhance coordination across institutions and partners, and measure the differential impacts of climate change and disasters based on gender.

⁶³ Law 10431, dated 9.6.2011 on Environmental Protection https://akm.gov.al/en/ova_doc/ligji-10431-date-9-6-2011-per-mbrojtjen-e-mjedisit/

⁶⁴ <https://turizmi.gov.al/2013-2/>

⁶⁵ Strategic policy document for integrated waste management and action plan 2020-2035 <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Dokumenti-i-Politikave-Strategjike-AL.pdf>

⁶⁶ Document of Strategic Policies for the Protection of Biodiversity <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Dokumenti-i-Politikave-Strategjike-per-Mbrojtjen-e-Biodiversitetit.pdf>

⁶⁷ <http://eurokonventa.al/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/strategjia-ndersektoriale-e-Mjedisit-draft-SNM-2015-2020.pdf>

⁶⁸ Gender Agenda and Action Plan for Water Utilities in Albania 2019-2030 <https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/gwp-med-files/news-and-activities/albania-gender-work2021/giz-gender-agenda.pdf>

⁶⁹ Albania EU for a cleaner Environment - Support for Wastewater Treatment https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2018-12/ipa_2018_040215_al_04_eu_for_a_cleaner_environment.pdf

⁷⁰ World Bank Report Future of Water in Agriculture in Albania 2022 <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099745002162237184/p1724700fec9280650aad201dde94af7777>

As per UN Women Report on Gender Equality Brief 2020⁷¹ data and information on the gender-related aspects of natural resource management, environmental pollution, and the impacts of climate change remains highly limited in Albania, which reveals a clear omission/gap in awareness, discourse and policy.

Women's risk of losing income and productive sources

A high dependency on land and natural resources makes women more vulnerable

- Climate change causes an increase in temperatures and a decrease in total annual precipitation, this is directly affecting the agricultural sector which is a very vulnerable sector to climate change effects. In 2020, in the agricultural sector 41.4 % of its employees' women with a gender gap in pay (men vs women of 6.1 %) ⁷². Women are directly affected by drought and uncertain rainfall caused by climate change as in providing water, less income and there is less productivity from land, etc.
- Climate change causes water insecurity, which increases the workload of women as they spend more time and effort on land preparation, fetching water, watering, and protecting crops from disease

Women's and men's work

Concentration in the informal sector makes women more vulnerable

- More women than men “work” in the household. 18.8% of women contribute in the household and only 0.6% of men contribute⁷³, showing that they are more affected and they are the first that need to overcome difficulties caused by water shortage, energy insecurities, food insecurity, more time and effort may be needed, for example on collecting biomass⁷⁴ and providing water, etc. (the latest are consequences of environmental damages)
- Natural disasters cause both men and women to lose jobs. However, the conditions of women's work may deteriorate more than those of men, as many poor women – in both rural and urban areas work more in the insecure informal sector (*the structure of employees shows that 43.3 % of women in the labor force are employed in paid positions while 22.8 % of them engage in unpaid work in the family business*)⁷⁵

⁷¹ Un Women Report on Gender Equality Brief

https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Albania/Attachments/Publications/2020/12/CGEB%20Albania_REPORT_2.pdf

⁷² INSTAT “Women and Men in Albania, 2021” <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/8713/burra-dhe-gra.pdf>

⁷³ INSTAT Pengesa Sociale si Forma Diskriminimi në Praktikë (Eng. Social Barriers as a Form of Discrimination in Practice) <http://www.instat.gov.al/kapitulli/t%C3%AB-drejtat-e-njeriut/pengesa-sociale-si-forma-diskriminimi-n%C3%AB-praktik%C3%AB/>

⁷⁴ For cooking, heating

⁷⁵ “Women and Men in Albania, 2021” <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/8713/burra-dhe-gra.pdf>

Recommendations:

General recommendations

- Improve the research base on gender and climate change links and ensure gender-sensitive data is collected and analyzed to inform decision-making
- Ensure that gender-climate change links are mainstreamed in policy and programs, and ensure women's participation in policymaking and decision-making at all levels
- Protect women's rights in particular during and after disasters that are enhanced by climate change.
- Collection of gender-disaggregated data to address the women's issues and environmental sustainability.
- Enhancing the participation of women in green innovation.

To government bodies and legal authorities

- The Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, and their government agencies should ensure that laws and policies explicitly integrate gender equality aspects
- Government bodies should develop capacities of women and men and national institutions dealing with climate change and related disasters, allocate enough financial and human resources, and ensure gender-sensitive budgeting
- Climate change actions for adaptation at all levels should be developed in a participatory way, involving both men and women of all age groups and different backgrounds
- Ensure that the collection of sex-disaggregated data and related gender information from the local level, specifically damage and needs assessments to post climate or weather-related disasters, is disseminated widely and is publicly accessible, and is used to inform, monitor, and evaluate new policies and programs

NGOs

- Ensure that projects and programs on climate change involve advocacy around the need for gender equality/gender mainstreaming, addressing local, provincial, and national stakeholders
- Support vulnerable groups in 'making their voices heard in climate change actions
- Build national expertise on gender mainstreaming and gender equality

Donor community

- Provide technical assistance to the Government and other stakeholders to promote gender mainstreaming in disaster risk reduction and climate change-related adaptation policies and programs.
- Be engaged actively in ensuring gender equality in legislation, policies, strategies, and plans, by providing opportunities and coherent engagement for policy dialogue

- Engage with the media by bringing environmental and gender journalist networks together.

Inspiring examples:

This section demonstrates inspiring examples of the importance of educating girls and boys to deal with climate change

- A non for profit “Girl Rising” is an initiative that creates deep links between girls’ education and climate change. It uses the power of storytelling to change the way the world values girls and their education. <https://girlrising.org/our-programs/future-rising-girls-education-climate-change>
 - CAMFED is a pan-African movement revolutionizing how girls’ education is delivered. Through a gold-standard system of accountability to the young people and communities we serve, we have created a model that radically improves girls’ prospects of becoming independent, influential women <https://camfed.org/eur/why-girls-education/climate-action/>
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