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Recommendations for German Feminist Foreign Policy in the Field of Climate Change

Principles

Feminist foreign policy is a high claim if feminism means overcoming patriarchy. The extent to which this claim can be fulfilled by state policy is questionable. Politics must therefore constantly question itself in order to at least be aware of the tension between what is necessary and what can be achieved in real political terms.

A feminist approach must

- ▶ Build on the recognition of the rights of all genders;
- ▶ Consider the linkage between gender, climate crisis and conflict;
- ▶ Prioritise human security;
- ▶ Minimise social and technological risks;
- ▶ Address structural causes of discrimination and work towards transformational change;
- ▶ Significantly involve civil society, and especially women's rights organisations and marginalised groups in the sense of intersectional feminism.

In the following, we focus on climate policy as a central theme of GenderCC's work.

Good reasons for a feminist climate policy

It is well known and frequently addressed that vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is gender-specific. Mostly - not always - it is women who are more affected, not because women are more vulnerable per se, but because of structural disadvantages, especially their responsibility for care work, their lower income and assets, and their risk of being affected by gender-based violence. Therefore, it is always necessary to examine and address the causes of gender differences.



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Vulnerability is not the only aspect of climate change where gender plays a role. There is extensive evidence of different contributions to the problem in terms of individual carbon footprints, different attitudes, preferences and opportunities for action, as well as different impacts of climate policies on different genders. Climate change mitigation and adaptation policies can have a negative impact on gender equality if non-intended impacts of these policies are not taken into account and addressed.

Limitations of the gender debate in climate policy must be overcome

Feminism, in the sense of combating patriarchal power relations and structures in order to bring about gender justice, must not be exclusively about women, but must include all genders, including LGBTIQ*, and also address those who profit from the patriarchal system and whose privileges must be curtailed.

Gender justice issues are not only relevant for the Global South. There is ample evidence that the gendered impacts and causes of climate change, as well as the gendered impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, are also highly relevant for industrialised countries. In order to justify the demand for gender-responsive approaches in the Global South, Germany should therefore be able to demonstrate that its own climate policies are gender-responsive.

Gender equality is often reduced to the individual level, i.e. gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. However, the symbolic level (hierarchies rooted in norms and values, masculine characteristics and perspectives considered the norm, feminine ones considered a deviation from the norm, characteristics and activities attributed to women that are less valued) and the structural level (gender norms embedded in organisations, social relations, institutional and physical structures) are even more important for lasting change and transformational effects.

International climate policy

In principle, trade-offs between human rights and climate protection ambitions, as has often happened in the past, have to be avoided.



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UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (GAP)

Germany should actively participate in the review and future development of the GAP. The requirement for gender assessments of all climate policy measures must be clearly strengthened in the GAP, and methods and good practices must be provided for this purpose.

Climate finance

Gender equality considerations must be strengthened in implementation. Gender analyses of the Green Climate Fund's activities show that despite the already advanced anchoring of gender (in the GCF Governing Instrument and the Gender Policy), many projects in reality do not meet the requirements of gender mainstreaming.

Germany should work towards a stronger prioritisation of gender justice in international climate finance instruments and strengthen the corresponding rules, e.g. that gender-related activities are incorporated into the budget in a transparent and comprehensible manner, that monitoring is strengthened, involving gender expertise and women's rights organisations, and that sanctions are created in the case of non-compliance.

In its own climate policy funding programmes for third countries (IKI and also EUKI), Germany must set a good example and effectively embed gender equality both in the funding criteria and in the evaluation of applications and monitoring. In addition, more support should be given to measures included in the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, such as capacity building and exchange of experience for the development of gender-responsive strategies and programmes, as well as the promotion of informed participation of women in national delegations and from grassroots organisations, local and indigenous communities.

Loss and Damage

German feminist foreign policy must push for adequate funding for damages and losses in the UNFCCC negotiations and set a good example itself.

Damage and losses require provisions that take gender into account. For example, insurance will not help if premiums are not affordable, especially with increasing losses and damages and thus increasing premiums. It must also be taken into account that women are often dependent on informal work and informal access to resources, which makes it difficult to settle claims.



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National climate policy

In order to credibly represent feminist climate foreign policy, national climate policy must also be feminist. This means that everything that is demanded from the Global South in the direction of gender justice must also be consistently implemented at the national level in terms of gender-responsive policies and measures. Otherwise, there would be a lack of coherence and climate foreign policy would not be feminist but paternalistic. The need for gender-responsive climate policies in industrialised countries should also be addressed in fora such as G7 and G20.

However, after initial steps in recent years, no feminist approaches are currently discernible in national climate policy.

The next necessary steps for both domestic and foreign climate policy are to take into account the findings of gender research in the development of climate policy programmes and measures, to improve the data basis, to strengthen gender competence and expertise in climate policy in the ministries and to involve external expertise, to review and regularly evaluate climate policy projects for gender equality, and to focus climate protection and adaptation programmes much more strongly on societal and social transformation.

Gotelind Alber, August 2022