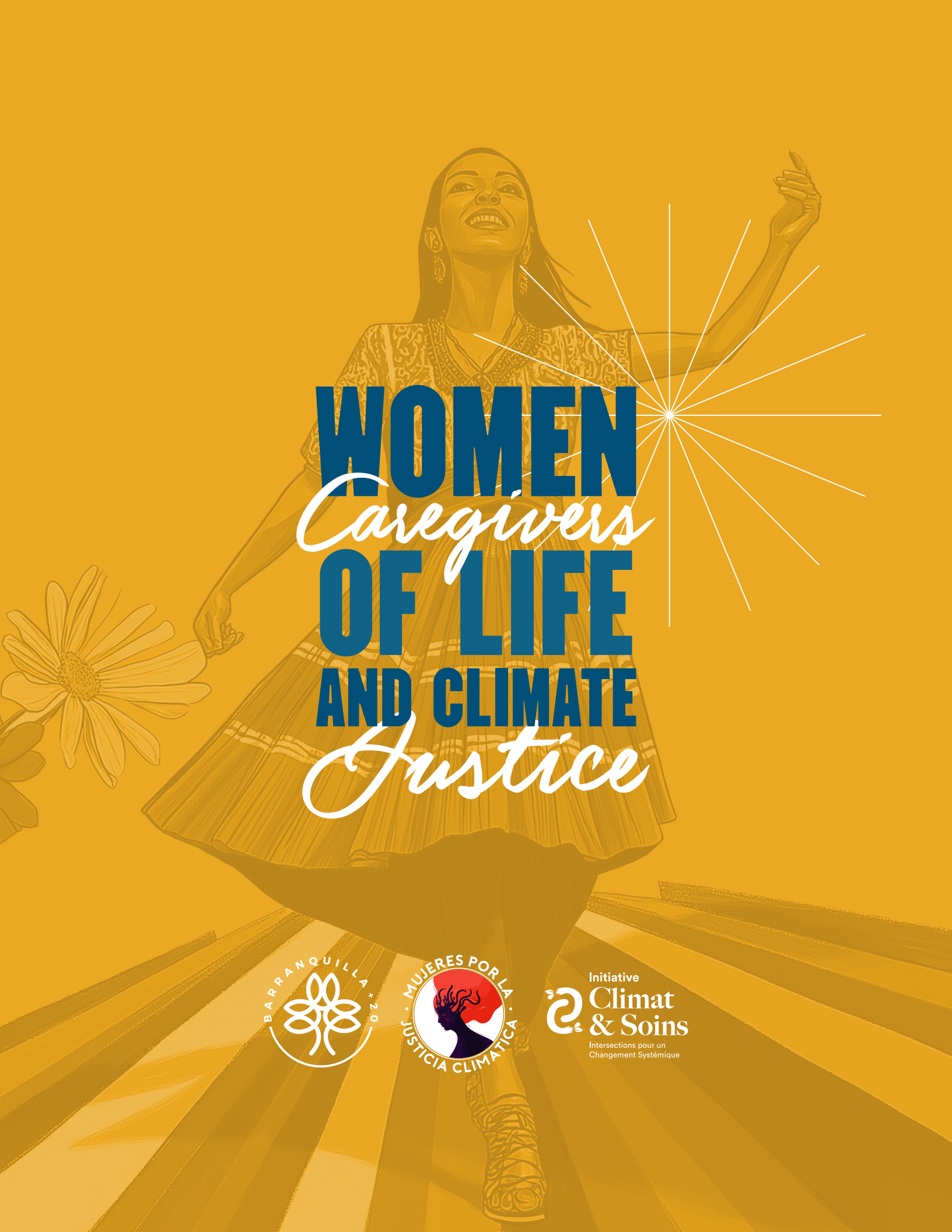


Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice





WOMEN *Caregivers* OF LIFE AND CLIMATE *Justice*



Initiative
**Climat
& Soins**
Intersections pour un
Changement Systémique

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Voices, lived realities, and recommendations

from the territories of Abya
Yala on the climate–care nexus

Barranquilla+20
Team

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Abbreviations

BAQ+20: Barranquilla+20

CBDR-RC: Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution

CONPES: National Council for Economic and Social Policy

COP: Conference of the Parties

ENUT: National Time Use Survey

NDCs: Nationally Determined Contributions

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

PAGG-CO: Colombia Gender and Climate Change Action Plan

GAP: Gender Action Plan

PIGCCT: Territorial Comprehensive Climate Change Management Plans

SISCLIMA: National Climate Change System

WGC: Women and Gender Constituency





Presentation

Who we are



Who We Are: Fundación Barranquilla+20

Fundación Barranquilla+20 is a nonprofit organization that has worked since 2012 to advance youth climate action and sustainable development in Colombia. It is led by women and seeks to promote projects addressing climate change, biodiversity, water resource management, and environmental education, linking local knowledge with innovation to help build resilient, low-emission territories. BAQ+20 has focused on projects that recover and strengthen local knowledge and intergenerational equity as essential foundations for resilient, low-greenhouse-gas-emission cities and territories. Its work has expanded across Colombia and the wider region, with initiatives in the Orinoquía, the Caribbean, the Amazon, and the South Pacific, as well as partnerships with women and organizations in Bolivia, Mexico, Venezuela, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, and other countries.

Barranquilla+20 was founded on the conviction that climate action is, above all, a practice of collective care. Seeking to influence climate leadership, environmental education, and intergenerational empowerment across Latin America, we have consolidated a model that educates, mobilizes, and strengthens women and the public at large in the defense of the climate, biodiversity, and life itself. Our impact is reflected in communities that are better informed, more organized, and better equipped to act for a just and resilient future centered on care for people and territories.



Women for Climate Justice Network

The Women for Climate Justice Network was established in 2020 to bring women-led initiatives from across the country into Colombia's national political debate. Over the last four years, more than 1,000 women have participated in discussion and training on political advocacy, international climate negotiations, and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as on the importance of ensuring that young women, regardless of social background, gender identity, sexual diversity, or ethnic identity, have access to learning opportunities and can contribute meaningfully in decision-making spaces.



“Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice” Initiative

In 2025, the Climate and Care initiative took shape through the convergence of several global organizations that recognized the urgent need to place at the center of climate negotiations the inseparable relationship between care work, women and girls, and the impacts of the climate crisis.

The “Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice” initiative was selected from a call involving more than 1,000 applicant organizations. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 130 women were selected from a pool of 500 applicants to participate in theoretical, practical, and intersectional training on the relationship between care and climate justice. Care was approached not only as reproductive labor, but as a set of political, territorial, and community practices that are fundamental to sustaining life in times of crisis.

The central purpose of the certificate program is to strengthen knowledge through a feminist approach that also incorporates ancestral knowledges, bringing together the defense of cuerpo-territorio (body-territory), the care economy, ancestral knowledge systems, and climate justice as a shared agenda for reshaping the present and contesting the future.

One of its main outcomes is the collective development of this publication and other advocacy and public-engagement materials produced in connection with our participation in COP30 of the UNFCCC, held in Belém do Pará, Brazil, in November 2025. Other milestones include:

- Building capacity in climate justice through ecofeminist, decolonial, and community-based approaches.
- Creating and strengthening the Women for Climate Justice Network. as a living space for exchange, mutual support, and collective action.
- Developing technical and advocacy inputs that position the climate–care nexus on local, national, and international agendas, including contributions to the update of Colombia’s NDC.
- Selecting and preparing a women’s delegation for advocacy at COP30 of the UNFCCC, making caregivers’ voices visible in global decision-making spaces.

The women participating in the “Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice” certificate program represent broad generational diversity, ranging in age from 18 to 57. This range brought together younger, adult, and older women, enriching the dialogue and enabling the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and experiences of care.



Participants came from a wide range of territories across Latin America. From the Colombian Caribbean, women joined from Barranquilla, Soledad, Galapa, Puerto Colombia, Palmar de Varela, Candelaria, Repelón, and Usiacurí, contributing perspectives rooted in coastal and Afro-descendant communities. From the country’s interior came voices from Medellín, Bogotá, Cúcuta, Neira, Silvania, Yopal, and Villavicencio. Women also participated from regions with strong Indigenous and peasant identities, including the Zenú Indigenous Reserve in Córdoba, the Gran Tescual Indigenous Reserve, and the Association of Peasant Women in Action of Putumayo (ADMUCAP). From the southern part of the continent came participants from Patagonia and Futaleufú in Chile, Salinas in Canelones, Uruguay, as well as Costa Rica, Venezuela, Mexico, and Peru.

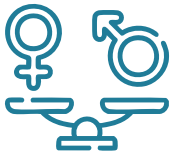
This plurality of origins fostered an intercultural, intergenerational, and transnational dialogue in which each participant brought her own experiences of life, struggle, and care. The certificate program thus became a genuine continental weave of women caregivers, connecting forests, mountains, deserts, and coastlines through a shared commitment to the defense of life and climate justice.

The project also generated broad territorial and regional mobilization, connecting local experiences with global debates and consolidating alliances with universities, feminist organizations, regional networks, and key public-policy actors.

One of the central lessons of the process was the recognition of care as a structural pillar of climate justice. Participants redefined care not as a private or domestic task, but as a political, collective, and transformative practice that is essential to sustaining life, territories, and ecosystems in the face of the climate crisis.

The certificate program highlighted:

- The historical overburdening of women with care responsibilities and the way this burden intensifies in contexts of climate crisis.
- The need to redistribute, recognize, and value care as part of local economies and climate policies.
- The power of dialogue among different knowledge systems, art, healing, and spirituality as tools for learning, advocacy, and collective action.
- The importance of building accessible, flexible, and territorially grounded learning processes, particularly in the face of connectivity gaps and structural inequality.



Despite these challenges, the process reaffirmed that a climate–care approach strengthens community resilience, women’s leadership, and collective capacity to respond to the climate crisis. It consolidated a clear political message: there can be no climate justice without gender justice or care systems that sustain life. Care must therefore be recognized as a central pillar of climate, adaptation, and just-transition policies; women caregivers must be understood as political subjects and producers of knowledge, not merely as beneficiaries of climate action; and solutions to the climate crisis must emerge from the territories themselves, integrating feminist, intersectional, and decolonial approaches.

Objectives of This Publication

01

Make visible the voices, knowledge, and resistance of women caregivers who defend life against the climate crisis from the territories of Abya Yala, demonstrating that feminist climate action is not abstract, but embodied in the lived experiences of women who resist, care for, and transform their communities every day.

02

Demonstrate the inseparable relationship between care and just transitions in the pursuit of climate, racial, and gender justice, arguing that climate policies that ignore care economies, invisibilized labor, and multiple forms of structural oppression perpetuate existing injustices and create new forms of exclusion.

03

Influence global climate decision-making spaces, particularly COP30, by proposing concrete recommendations so that NDCs and climate policies integrate care as a human right and as a fundamental pillar of just transitions.

Key Messages

Patriarchy, white supremacy, and human supremacy operate as interconnected systems of separation and exploitation of bodies-territories. Capitalism is sustained through care work domestic, grassroots, and subsistence work, that is rendered invisible and systematically devalued, particularly across the geographies of the Global South and in territories inhabited by racialized, peasant, Indigenous, migrant, and displaced communities.

The climate crisis is not neutral with respect to gender, race, class, or territory; its impacts are distributed unevenly across communities. NDCs that ignore care economies, invisibilized labor, and multiple forms of structural oppression will perpetuate existing injustices and create new forms of exclusion in the name of “climate action.”

The “**Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice**” certificate program shows that these are not abstract reflections, but realities embodied in women’s lives. As one participant put it: “**I came to understand that caring for life is a political, spiritual, and collective act. Protecting the land also means protecting ourselves.**” Another participant shared: “**I locate the crack in my feet, because I feel that for those of us who migrate, exhaustion becomes visible there, in the feet that carry us everywhere.**” This visceral embodiment shows that the climate crisis is not abstract: it is inscribed on the bodies of women who bear the fractures produced by extractivism, displacement, and climate violence.

Care is a radical way of thinking the commons. It is practiced collectively through communities and peoples whose territorial practices are intrinsically connected to agroecology, the democratization of energy, water governance, and the defense of territories. This broader understanding emerges from the perspectives of ethnic and Indigenous peoples, who have never separated care for human beings from care for nature. In Latin America, collective care is also a form of resistance in territories marked by violence and rebuilt through grief: weaving memory, guarding rivers and waters, and defending life with one’s feet rooted in the soil.

If these binary and exclusionary ways of understanding the world remain unchallenged, we risk reproducing and entrenching narratives that sustain gendered and racialized hierarchies. From a feminist perspective, making social reproduction visible and recognizing it as work is not an end in itself; it is part of a broader struggle to transform who performs this work, how it is distributed, and the conditions under which it takes place. Care must be understood beyond the idea that it is a private and domestic responsibility assigned to women. Rather, it must be recognized as a vital infrastructure woven into the social, cultural, economic, and ecological systems that sustain diverse forms of life. This requires challenging the colonial structures and logics that separate us from one another and undermine our capacity to care collectively. Care can no longer be confined to the private and domestic spheres. This notion must transcend the colonial legacy embedded in the concrete walls that distance us from one another and prevent care within the community. Forms of care no longer belong exclusively to the private-domestic sphere and move into the public sphere, where the responsibility of communities and States for sustaining care is recognized, as is the need for solidarity networks that guarantee its provision.

Climate policies must dismantle these systems of oppression rather than reinforce them. Transitions toward more just and equitable systems must challenge the structures of the international imperialist economic and political order and advance a sovereign development agenda grounded in genuine self-determination. This means reclaiming time, labor, land, productive capacity, energy, and resources for the benefit of the people and communities whose lives and livelihoods depend on them, rather than allowing them to remain organized around the interests of those who profit from their exploitation. Such a transformation requires decommodifying, democratizing, defossilizing, deconcentrating, decentralizing, and depatriarchalizing our economic, political, and social systems, the kinds of systemic changes that the corporate green consensus remains unwilling to articulate.

It is imperative to move beyond carbon tunnel vision, which focuses almost exclusively on reducing emissions through technology and false market-based solutions. These mechanisms often operate as a smokescreen for deep inequalities and injustices, preserving a license to “burn now and pay later.” Planetary boundaries offer a more comprehensive and interconnected framework for understanding the escalating risks created by human pressure on the critical global processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth. A genuinely just transition must address not only greenhouse-gas emissions, but also socio-environmental inequalities and impacts within territories, conflicts associated with ecosystem exploitation, and the concentration of energy power in the hands of a small number of actors and large corporations.

In the lead-up to COP30 under the UNFCCC, women participating in the certificate program identified three key priorities for the conference: environmental stewardship and the defense of territories (72.9%), feminist approaches to climate justice (69.5%), and political advocacy and women's networks (64.4%). These figures are more than statistics; they give expression to the collective voices of women in all their diversity women, who confront extractivism in their daily lives, sustain their communities' food sovereignty, and defend increasingly threatened water sources. Spaces for learning, exchange, and connection are therefore essential to strengthening political advocacy rooted in the lived realities of those on the front lines of an extractivist economic system that has been a major driver of the climate crisis.

The answer to whether we will achieve just transitions will depend on whether we are able to integrate what Latin American community feminisms have taught us: that there can be no climate justice without territorial justice; that women's bodies are not instruments of policy, but territories of dignity; and that sustaining life requires dismantling not only emissions, but also the structures of power that made this catastrophe possible.





The Green Trap: when transition reproduces dispossession

The history of colonialism and extractivism is repeating itself with a brutality that can no longer be concealed behind the language of progress. What was once the plunder of gold, silver, and rubber is now cloaked in green, while reproducing the same patterns of dispossession. This continuity is not accidental but structural, rooted in more than five centuries of colonialism and extending from the exploitation of enslaved labor and biomass, through coal and oil, to the minerals now required for the energy transition, often designated as “critical minerals.”

Latin America was incorporated into the global capitalist system as an exporter of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods, locked into a labor regime shaped by an international division of labor that enabled the industrialization of the Global North while relegating our countries to the periphery. This structural condition, in which our economies remain subordinated to the development and expansion of dominant economies, has established relations of dependency that persist and continue to deepen to this day.

The so-called economic powers set the prices of our coffee, flowers, and minerals, actively driving down the value of what we produce while increasing the cost of what they sell back to us. Our commons are not cheap by nature; they have been made cheap by a system built upon unequal exchange and sustained by it. We export the finest goods, the gourmet products, the commodities celebrated around the world for their exceptional quality, yet those same goods and flavors rarely reach all of our own tables. Large-scale mining lays bare this perverse logic: land, energy, labor, and raw materials are systematically undervalued by the Global North, which continues to set the rules of international trade. These powers, themselves built on the foundations of unequal exchange, keep countries in the Global South locked into the lower tiers of global value chains, channeling our resources toward consumption in the North rather than toward meeting the needs of our own communities or advancing locally rooted visions of development and Buen Vivir (Living Well). At the same time, colonial geographies shape a world in which developing countries carry USD 11.7 trillion in external debt. In 2024 alone, countries across the Global South allocated approximately USD 400 billion to debt repayment (Adarve & Shortall, 2025).

The discourse of the corporate energy transition has emerged as a new global consensus: a compelling narrative that promises to rescue us from climate collapse without confronting the very structures that brought us here. Under the pressure of the climate emergency, the world has entered a frantic race marked by what might be described as carbon tunnel

tunnel vision, an obsessive focus on emissions that deliberately obscures the systemic connections between the climate crisis and the multiple global crises unfolding alongside it. Accelerating biodiversity loss, pollution that poisons entire territories, resource depletion, systematic human rights violations, rapidly widening inequality, and stagnating levels of well-being are treated as secondary externalities in the race toward carbon neutrality, despite the fact that multiple planetary boundaries are being breached simultaneously.

This narrow perspective is reinforced through the discourse of carbon neutrality and net-zero emissions concepts that, despite what they may suggest, do not mean that actual emissions have been reduced to zero. Instead, these narratives have become a convenient means for governments, industries, and major polluters to evade their historical responsibility by obscuring both their inaction and the harmful measures they continue to pursue in response to climate change.

The so-called carbon metric reduces climate action to the accounting of CO₂ molecules, turning carbon into a kind of currency for emissions trading, offsetting, and international transactions. In doing so, it creates the illusion of meaningful action against environmental degradation while, in practice, opening up new markets for transnational capital.

Technochauvinism the almost religious belief that technology can solve every problem society faces, reinforces an excessive reliance on market-based solutions to climate change, reproducing and deepening racial injustice in the process. Technology undoubtedly has an essential role to play in responding to the ecological crisis, yet the way it is currently deployed remains embedded in systemic racism and often comes at the expense of communities marginalized on racial or ethnic grounds. Across the Global South, communities are seeing their lands dispossessed, their water sources depleted, and their rights violated in the name of this notion of a “green transition.” This is happening not only through the extraction of transition minerals, but also through the large-scale deployment of renewable energy and through false climate solutions such as biofuels, carbon markets, and gas, which often bring harm rather than benefits to the communities expected to host them. These territories are increasingly transformed into racial sacrifice zones: regions rendered dangerous or even uninhabitable by environmental degradation and disproportionately inhabited by communities marginalized on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin, including Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, Small Island Developing States, territories under colonial occupation, and even racially segregated neighborhoods in

Global North. Between 2012 and 2022, nearly 2,000 land and environmental defenders were killed while protecting the planet, with Latin America accounting for 85% of all documented cases (Global Witness, 2023). Colombia remains the deadliest country in the world for environmental defenders: 79 people were killed in 2023, representing 40% of all reported cases worldwide that year, and nearly half of those killed were Afro-descendant or Indigenous (Global Witness, 2024).

This paradigm has been embraced as a policy objective by broad sectors of business and political leadership across multiple regions, giving rise to what is commonly described as the corporate energy transition, a model shaped by a hegemonic neoliberal and techno-economic worldview. Governmental and supranational initiatives such as the European Green Deal and the U.S. Green New Deal have positioned themselves as political and discursive frameworks for decarbonizing the economies of the Global North by reducing territorial emissions, while simultaneously promoting the prospect of infinite economic growth on a finite planet, a project made possible through the continued expansion of extractive industries across the Global South. It is from these centers of power that certain minerals are designated as “critical,” framed as a matter of strategic security for the implementation of these agendas and regarded as particularly important for renewable energy, digital technologies, space industries, and military defense. From a feminist perspective, however, we must ask: critical to whom, critical for what, and at whose expense?

The corporate energy transition depends on a range of so-called critical minerals, including graphite, lithium, and cobalt, particularly for electricity storage and conduction. The World Bank estimates that demand for these essential minerals could increase by approximately 500% by 2050, a projection that does not even account for the infrastructure required to deploy these technologies or for physical components such as the chassis of newly manufactured electric vehicles. Much of this demand will be supplied through imports from mineral-rich countries in Africa and Latin America. Meeting the energy requirements of this transition will therefore impose increasingly intensive forms of exploitation on the land, the subsoil, and river systems throughout our territories. In the Lithium Triangle, spanning northern Argentina and Chile and southern Bolivia, we are already witnessing the reorganization of green extractivism around the supply of lithium for batteries used in vehicles and other electrical technologies consumed in the North. In the Ecuadorian Amazon, meanwhile, deforestation and the massive export of balsa wood for the manufacture of wind-turbine blades are devastating entire ecosystems.

The imperative to move beyond fossil fuels, without any corresponding reduction in the use, consumption, and extraction of materials and energy in the Global North, has only intensified pressure on the ecosystems of the South. This ecological and historical debt continues to grow, yet it is obscured by the deliberate traps of a financial system built by the same Global North, a system that promotes neocolonial practices and instruments that deepen dependency. Debt itself has become one of the principal mechanisms through which countries are expected to finance development agendas and recover from extreme climate events. Governments in the Global South are consequently pushed toward further extractivism in order to service that debt, creating a vicious cycle of inequality, dependency, and environmental destruction.



“The ‘Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice’ certificate program brought me into conversation with women leaders from across Latin America, creating bonds of sisterhood that transcend borders and giving us a powerful sense of connection and mutual support. Through this experience, I came to understand more deeply how gender justice and climate justice are intertwined, and to reflect on the essential role women play in caring for and sustaining life and the natural world. It also introduced me to the contributions of ecofeminism, feminismos comunitarios (community feminisms), and feminismos populares (popular feminisms) as ways of understanding and responding to these interconnected struggles. Each session opened up new questions, perspectives, and forms of learning that broadened the way I see the world and brought into focus realities I had not fully recognized before. I now understand that capitalism, one of the driving forces behind the civilizational crisis humanity is facing, is also profoundly patriarchal. I also had the extraordinary opportunity to travel to COP30 in Belém do Pará as a delegate of the certificate program and to take part in some of the hundreds of activities that brought together thousands of people from around the world to engage with the climate crisis and the collective responsibility of caring for our planet. While there, I spoke about what I call the ‘revolution of small things’: radical change that takes shape gradually through our everyday practices and choices, and that can lay the foundations for a different way of inhabiting the Earth, one rooted in harmony with nature.”

Natalia Agudelo

Women Caregiving Delegation at COP30





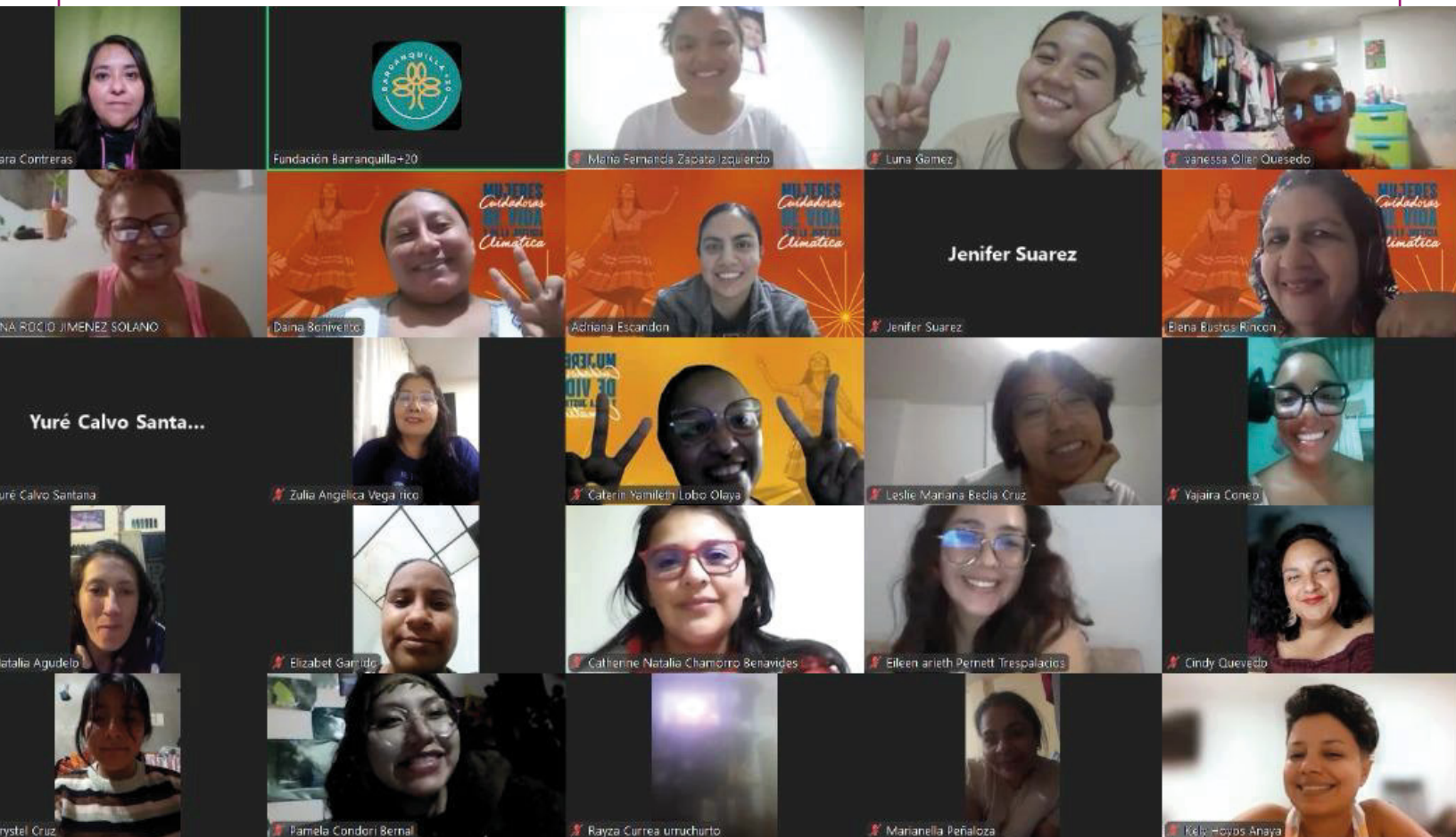
Cuerpo-Territorio (Body-Territory): the missing nexus in addressing interlocking crises

The exploitation of territories and the exploitation of bodies are not separate phenomena. Rather, they are expressions of the same colonial, capitalist, racist, and patriarchal logic, one that operates simultaneously on the land and on those who inhabit, sustain, and care for it. As Guatemalan community feminist Lorena Cabnal argues, women's bodies and territory are inseparable spaces that have historically been commodified and subjected to appropriation (Cabnal, 2010).

The relationship between body and territory is not merely metaphorical; it is profoundly material. The same system that systematically devalues lithium, water, and forests also devalues care work, domestic labor, and the lives of women, Indigenous peoples, peasant communities, Afro-descendant peoples, migrants, and *disidencias sexuales* (sexual and gender dissidences). The extractivist violence that tears open mountains in pursuit of minerals cannot be separated from the patriarchal violence that uproots women from their territories, renders their labor precarious and invisible, militarizes their bodies, and uses sexual violence as an instrument of territorial dispossession. Extractivism does not simply remove natural resources; it also erodes the conditions for a dignified life, self-determination, and the full exercise of rights for those whose daily labor sustains the reproduction of life.

The neoliberal dynamics and the violence that enables transnational corporations to gain access to our territories, are the same forces that deregulate labor markets, erode working conditions, and dismantle social protections. Together, they generate what Federici describes as a "new round of primitive accumulation," one that depends both on the appropriation of communal lands and on the appropriation of women's unpaid reproductive labor (Federici, 2010). Across Latin America and the Caribbean, this *acumulación por despojo* (accumulation by dispossession) bears down with particular force on racialized and feminized bodies. Indigenous women whose water sources are contaminated by large-scale mining must devote additional hours each day to securing safe drinking water; Afro-descendant women displaced by conflict migrate to cities, where many enter domestic work in wealthy white households; and peasant women resisting the expansion of the agricultural frontier face criminalization and violence even as they continue to sustain their communities' food sovereignty.

Capitalist accumulation structurally depends on the uncompensated appropriation of vast amounts of labor and resources, while rendering both effectively invisible as externalities of the market. This logic becomes a rationality that permeates every sphere of life, producing new forms of exploitation that build upon pre-existing colonial, racial, and patriarchal hierarchies and intensify the extraction of value from both territories and the bodies that inhabit them. Recognizing the connection between territorial extractivism and the extraction of care labor makes one thing clear: there can be no climate justice without gender justice, racial justice, and decolonization.





"Before joining the certificate program, I had never really stopped to consider that women, too, are the ones who care for and sustain this world. Even though I am an older sister and now a mother, I grew up believing, and carrying a quiet anger about the fact, that care was simply my responsibility because I was a woman. In a deeply patriarchal region like Puno, Peru, care is not questioned; it is imposed. It is not recognized as work, it is not acknowledged, and it is not paid. It is simply expected."

Joining the certificate program marked a turning point for me. Realizing how deeply unjust society has always been toward women, and understanding that this system was never designed to sustain women's lives, but rather to extract from them, was heartbreaking. It hurt not only because of what it meant for me, but because I am the mother of a daughter. One day she will become an adult, and despite everything I may wish for her, she will most likely be expected to care for me. Realizing that this fate can begin to be written even before birth, from the very moment someone announces that you will grow up to be a woman, was profoundly painful."

The certificate program gave me language for something I had felt throughout my life but had never been able to explain. I came to understand that care is not a "natural" responsibility of women, but a historical imposition sustained by a patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist system that depends on our unpaid labor in order to function. It is a system that expects us to hold everything together while simultaneously telling us that we "do nothing."

Recognizing the parallels between the exploitation of the land and the exploitation of our own lives was devastating. Just as territories are plundered, depleted, and discarded, our bodies and our time have been used without recognition, without pay, and without rest. We have sustained this world in silence, carrying the responsibility for the reproduction of life while others accumulate wealth, power, and recognition."

The certificate program helped me understand that this injustice is neither individual nor accidental; it is structural. The violence inflicted upon territories and the violence experienced by women arise from the same extractive logic. And care, far from being a private burden, is a collective political force that sustains life, one that must be recognized, redistributed, and protected."

Today, after completing the certificate program, I can no longer think about care in the same way. Finding the words to name it was painful, but it also gave me tools to resist. Understanding that care is not a natural obligation, but work that has been historically exploited, allowed me to reclaim something that had been taken from us: the dignity of our struggle."

Stephanie Geraldine Gavilan — Chino, Peru.

Leader, participant, and graduate of the Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice certificate program.



Care as the foundation
of transitions that
sustain life



In January 2025, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued an advisory opinion recognizing care as an autonomous human right. In Advisory Opinion 31/25, the Court affirmed that every person has the right to receive care, to provide care under dignified conditions, and to care for themselves, including access to the time, resources, and support necessary to live with dignity and autonomy, particularly for people in situations of vulnerability (ESCR-Net, 2025). This marked the first time an international tribunal recognized care as an independent human right interconnected with other economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights. The Court further recognized that the unequal distribution of care work—performed predominantly by women and girls, constitutes a structural barrier to substantive equality, and that intersectional forms of discrimination based on gender, race, age, migration status, disability, and socioeconomic position deepen inequities and restrict access to rights such as education, employment, and political participation.

Through its academic production and feminist mobilization, Latin America has made a decisive contribution to conceptualizing and politicizing care as a central category for rethinking the world. Care is a primary concern because it is indispensable to social reproduction and to the reproduction of the labor force, thereby underpinning chains of economic value. Yet its centuries-long invisibilization has served as a patriarchal and capitalist strategy that forecloses discussion of the unjust international division of labor along lines of sex, race, and nationality, while entrenching profound structures of inequality and exploitation.

From the feminisms of Abya Yala emerges a radical understanding of care. As Gabriela Franco articulated during the “Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice” certificate program, care moves beyond the domestic and private spheres to become “a radical way of thinking the commons.” Care appears as a network of reciprocity that sustains all forms of life, not only human life, functioning both as an everyday practice and as an epistemological framework for confronting the climate emergency. The opposite of extraction is not simply conservation, but interdependence. False climate solutions can be recognized precisely because they reproduce systems of separation and extraction, whereas genuine solutions commit to systems of care and interdependence.

The concept of *cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory), developed by community feminist movements, holds that what happens to the body also happens to the territory, and what happens to the territory manifests in the body. Testimonies emerging from the certificate program make this connection tangible. Kelly, a woman displaced by Colombia's armed conflict, maps pain onto her body in these words: "I locate the crack in my feet, because I feel that for those of us who migrate, exhaustion becomes visible there, in the feet that carry us everywhere." This visceral embodiment reveals that the climate crisis is not abstract but lived in the flesh: when drought destroys water sources, floods sweep away homes, or green extractivism devastates ancestral territories, it is the bodies of racialized, peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant women that bear the fractures. Yet these testimonies also show how, from this reality, *duelo fértil* (fertile grief) can emerge, places of pain transformed through collective care into sites of change.

Just transitions, then, require above all a transformation of the ideological system that legitimizes political, economic, and military hegemony through patriarchal, racist, and colonial forms of organization (Cortés, 2025). They require us to ask for whom, and for what kind of life, we consume and produce, and at what cost to the planet and to all the beings that inhabit it. This means broadening our conception of work beyond wage labor devoted to commodity production, so that it includes the forms of work essential to sustaining human and non-human life and regenerating social and ecological conditions (Akbulut, 2024, cited in Cortés, 2025). Framing care as a human right breaks with the naturalization of women as caregivers and instead establishes care as a right that must be guaranteed.

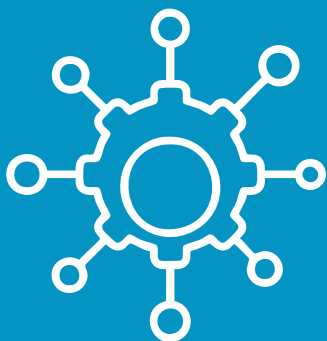
<i>To care for the land is to care for memory</i>	<i>To care for water is to care for the future</i>
<i>To care for air is to care for the word</i>	<i>To care for fire is to care for the energy that keeps us moving</i>

María Fernanda Zapata

A care-centered society promotes political transformation and the social reorganization of care through the active participation of the State, communities, and public and private institutions in the provision of services, seeking to overcome socioeconomic and gender inequalities while prioritizing environmental care and the sustainability of life (Pautassi, 2023). Just transitions cannot mean reshaping communities to fit the needs of financial and market systems; they must mean transforming those systems so that they respond to the needs of people and non-human life. The goal is not to integrate women into a fractured economic, extractive, and industrial system, but to open pathways toward collective rights and regenerative practices. As women in the certificate program affirmed, care can be understood as “resistance,” as “sustaining the fabric of life,” and as “doing the common good.” This knowledge does not belong only to academic experts; it lives in the everyday experience of those who care. It makes clear that there can be no climate justice without gender justice, and that both require dismantling three interconnected systems that produced the crisis: male supremacy/patriarchy, white supremacy/racism, and human supremacy/extractivist anthropocentrism.







Institutional framework
for global and national
climate action:
**from the UNFCCC to
territorial implementation**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and entered into force in 1994. With 197 Parties, the term used by the Convention for participating countries, it is among the international treaties with the broadest universal adherence. Its ultimate objective is to stabilize greenhouse-gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system (UNFCCC, 2025). The Convention provides the framework for international climate cooperation and recognizes climate change as a common concern of humankind. The principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) is a cornerstone of the Convention. It recognizes both the greater historical responsibility of developed countries for accumulated emissions and their greater capacity to respond to climate change, establishing that they should take the lead in addressing climate change and its adverse effects (UNFCCC, 2025).



The Paris Agreement: Progress and Limitations from Women's Perspectives

The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 in 2015 and in force since 2016, marked a milestone by establishing a binding framework for holding the increase in global average temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C (UNFCCC, 2015). The Agreement also seeks to strengthen adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster development characterized by low greenhouse-gas emissions. It further establishes commitments to make financial flows consistent with pathways toward those objectives.

The Paris Agreement includes significant references to human rights and gender in its preamble, although not in its operative articles. The preamble states that, when taking action to address climate change, Parties should respect, promote, and consider their respective obligations regarding human rights, the right to health, the rights of Indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations, the right to development, as well as gender equality, the empowerment of women, and intergenerational equity (UNFCCC, 2015). Although this preambular language represents an important symbolic advance achieved after decades of advocacy by feminist and human-rights movements, it does not create legally binding obligations for Parties in implementing their climate commitments.

It is also important to note what the Agreement leaves unnamed. It does not explicitly identify systemic structures such as capitalism, extractivism, colonialism, or patriarchy as drivers of the climate emergency. Nor does it address the historical ecological debt owed by the Global North to the Global South, relying instead on the language of “common but differentiated responsibilities” without establishing concrete mechanisms for reparation. Climate-justice movements have consistently criticized these omissions, arguing that solutions that fail to confront the systemic roots of the crisis risk reproducing the same dynamics of exploitation and dispossession that generated it.



Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

The Paris Agreement requires each country to prepare, communicate, and maintain the commitments it intends to undertake toward the collective climate goal. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) lie at the heart of the Agreement and of the pursuit of its long-term objectives. They embody each country’s efforts to transform its economy, industries, practices, and other systems in order to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Parties must communicate an NDC every five years, and each successive NDC is expected to represent a progression beyond the previous one. The third round of updates was scheduled for late 2025 in connection with COP30 in Brazil. Collectively, NDCs will determine how far the world advances toward limiting global temperature rise and avoiding the worst climate impacts.

The Paris Agreement establishes that NDCs should reflect the CBDR-RC principle “in the light of different national circumstances,” recognizing that developing countries face greater difficulty in reaching peak emissions and that emissions reductions are undertaken on the basis of equity, sustainable development, and poverty eradication (UNFCCC, 2015). Yet this recognition does not automatically translate into adequate finance, technology transfer, or capacity-building from developed countries, allowing structural asymmetries to persist.

Although the most recent NDCs contain deeper emissions reductions than those submitted in 2015, they still fall far short of the ambition required. If fully implemented, the NDCs submitted as of October 2025 would deliver less than 6% of the additional emissions reductions needed by 2035 to close the gap to a 1.5°C pathway.



Global Responses: The Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender

Gender was formally integrated into UNFCCC climate negotiations in 2001 through Decision 36/CP.7, which recognized the need to strengthen women's participation in the bodies of the Convention (UNFCCC, 2024). A more substantive advance came in 2014 at COP20 in Lima, Peru, with the adoption of the Lima Work Programme on Gender, which created the first formal mechanism dedicated to advancing gender balance, integrating gender considerations into the work of Parties and the Secretariat, and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (UNFCCC, 2014).

In 2017, at COP23 in Bonn, Germany, the first Gender Action Plan (GAP) was adopted under the Lima Work Programme, establishing concrete activities in five priority areas: capacity-building, knowledge management, and communication; gender balance, participation, and women's leadership; coherence; gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation; and monitoring and reporting (UNFCCC, 2017). The Lima Work Programme and its GAP represent important achievements resulting from decades of advocacy by the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC), which brings together diverse activists, defenders, and feminist, women's, and gender-diversity organizations and has held official constituency status in the negotiations since 2011.

The GAP was updated in 2019 at COP25 in Madrid, extending its mandate through 2024 and strengthening requirements to integrate gender across all thematic areas of the Convention (UNFCCC, 2019). At COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024, tense negotiations, marked by resistance from countries and actors including Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the Vatican to inclusive language, resulted in a ten-year extension of the Lima Work Programme and a mandate to develop a new GAP, which was subsequently adopted at COP30 in Belém do Pará, Brazil, in November 2025.

Across this decade, participation figures reveal the persistence of exclusion. No COP since 2008 has achieved gender parity in national delegations; only one in five heads of delegation are women; and at the opening of COP29 in Baku, only 9 of 77 speakers were women (SEforALL, 2025). At COP27 in 2022, UNFCCC registration allowed a non-binary title for the first time. Only two-Party delegates selected the Mx. identifier at COP27, both from Canada. The national contexts in which COPs take



place and the criminalization that participants may experience, must also be considered in order to understand the barriers and risks associated with openly identifying as part of the LGBTIQ+ community.

The central question surrounding COP30 was whether the new GAP would become a genuine instrument of transformation or simply reproduce the status quo. Feminist groups identified priority areas including stronger gender-responsive climate finance, closing gaps in climate data disaggregated by gender and age, and ensuring access to financing for implementation of the GAP itself. Crucially, the new plan must address the ways climate policies can exacerbate existing inequalities when they fail to incorporate intersectional analysis recognizing how race, class, ethnicity, migration status, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity shape differentiated experiences of the climate emergency.





Statement by Women for Climate Justice on the COP30 Gender Action Plan Belém do Pará, Brazil.

Current discussions on the Gender Action Plan in the context of COP30 have generated significant expectations among those of us who defend climate justice from our territories. After reviewing the most recent decision text, Barranquilla+20 recognizes that it incorporates important and necessary advances, while also noting persistent omissions that could limit the global response to the inequalities and impacts women face in contexts of climate crisis.

We welcome the fact that the text retains priorities classified as “relevant issues,” although we reiterate that we would have preferred the term “emerging issues,” which better reflects the urgency and specificity of the challenges women experience in their territories. We also recognize the inclusion of approaches such as ecosystem-based adaptation, which are fundamental to strengthening community resilience and acknowledging the role women play in protecting territories.

We likewise underscore the historical and present-day role of Afro-descendant women in Colombia, Brazil, and across Abya Yala. Their struggles, knowledge, care practices, and defense of territory are essential to climate action. Their leadership must be explicitly made visible and recognized in global decisions without diminishing the plurality and diversity of women who sustain the climate-justice agenda. Nevertheless, the document still fails to provide sufficient guarantees in strategic areas. It does not establish clear mechanisms to ensure direct and accessible financing for women, community processes, and territorial organizations. Nor does it adequately recognize the differentiated impacts on girls, adolescents, women defenders, and women leaders who face multiple forms of violence on the front lines of climate action. Protection of cuerpos-territorios (bodies-territories) and the prevention of violence continue to receive only superficial treatment, despite being longstanding demands of women from the Global South.

From Barranquilla+20, we consider it essential for the text to move toward a vision more consistent with the call of the Manifesto of the Women for Climate Justice Network. . Recognizing the diversity of women in the region is not enough; their priorities concerning economic autonomy, recognition of diverse knowledge systems, access to fair financing, and effective participation in climate governance must be incorporated into the substance of the plan.

We recognize the efforts of negotiating teams, including the leadership of women negotiators, and welcome the progress achieved. At the same time, we insist that the Gender Action Plan must respond with greater precision and political force to the realities women face in their territories. A strong plan requires verifiable commitments, clear implementation mechanisms, and a roadmap that does not leave behind those already leading adaptation, territorial defense, and community resilience.

Barranquilla+20 will continue to engage in this process from a strategic, rigorous, and constructive position. We believe COP30 can consolidate a genuinely transformative Gender Action Plan, provided that the priorities of women, youth, and diverse communities across Abya Yala are fully taken into account.

Statement issued on November 21, 2025, during COP30.





Colombia

progress and gaps in
integrating gender and
care into climate
action



Nationally Determined Contributions: Climate Commitments and Gender Justice in Colombia

Colombia submitted its first NDC in 2015, initially committing to reduce emissions by 20% by 2030, with the possibility of increasing the target to 30% with international cooperation. In December 2020, the country updated its commitment, raising the target to a 51% reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions by the end of the decade (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, 2020). This update incorporated participatory processes with differential and gender approaches and was structured around three interconnected components: greenhouse-gas mitigation, adaptation to climate change, and means of implementation.

The updated NDC formally recognizes several cross-cutting elements regarded as essential under the Paris Agreement: human rights, intergenerational equity, a just transition of the workforce, gender equality and women's empowerment, a differential approach for ethnic communities and vulnerable populations, poverty eradication, among others (Ministry of Environment, 2020). The NDCs are intended to align with Colombia's E2050 Long-Term Strategy to achieve carbon neutrality, and they identify both the National Climate Change Policy (2017) and the Climate Change Law (2018) as structuring the National Climate Change System (SISCLIMA) as the country's primary institutional framework.

With respect to gender, still framed through a largely binary lens, the NDC recognizes the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men and the central role of women in areas such as agricultural production, food security, and community resilience (Ministry of Environment, 2020). Colombia committed to mainstreaming a gender approach across public policy, including the National Public Policy on Gender Equity, and to explicitly incorporating climate-change considerations in the years following the update under the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan.

From the perspective of gender justice and the care economy, one of the most troubling features of Colombia's 2020 NDC is its near-total failure to recognize care work, unpaid domestic labor, and subsistence economies. At the time of this publication, the Colombian NDC contains no specific measure addressing the way the climate crisis intensifies care burdens that fall disproportionately on women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ people. It does not recognize that when ecosystem services deteriorate, rural, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant women must often travel greater distances to obtain water, collect firewood, or secure food



for their families. Nor does it acknowledge that domestic work increases during extreme climate events when essential services are disrupted, when austerity measures are imposed in response to debt repayment, when climate-related illnesses arise, or when climate migrants arrive in new territories. Consequently, there are no targets for redistributing these burdens through care infrastructure, climate-resilient public services, or the economic recognition of reproductive labor that is essential to sustaining life.

The NDC also fails to incorporate specific social protections for populations facing heightened vulnerability in the climate transition. Although it refers to a “differential approach with ethnic and vulnerable communities” and recognizes that a significant proportion of Colombia’s forests, particularly in the Amazon and Pacific regions, are located in Indigenous reserves and the collective territories of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities (Ministry of Environment, 2020, p. 7), it does not establish concrete safeguards for these communities when mitigation and adaptation policies transform their traditional economies. The document recognizes peasant communities as “essential to transforming agro-productive practices,” but does not specify how their economic, territorial, and food security will be protected during that transformation.

With regard to just transition, Colombia committed its Ministry of Labor to lead the development of a Just Transition Strategy for the workforce toward a resilient, low-carbon economy. The strategy is intended to improve quality of life and social and economic inclusion, ensure that no one is left behind, promote tripartite social dialogue among employers, workers, and government, and connect national measures with territorial labor-market realities. The 2050 Just Transition Recommendations prepared by the same ministry note only marginally that women “take on additional work as a result of climate-change impacts, tasks that are sometimes a consequence of male migration,” and that they “experience more severe psychological effects such as distress, emotional strain, mental-health problems, reduced food intake in many cases, or increased domestic violence” (Ministry of Environment and UNDP, 2020, p. 5). Yet this mention, buried in a complementary just-transition document, does not translate into concrete targets within the official NDC.

The “workforce” is conceptualized almost exclusively as formally registered employment in extractive sectors, rendering unpaid work, the care labor that sustains those economies, and the reproductive labor that intensifies when territories are environmentally devastated virtually invisible. There is no meaningful recognition of care work, of women as



differentiated subjects within that workforce, or of how the energy transition will reshape care burdens, particularly for rural, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant women whose territories are already being sacrificed for the extraction of transition minerals. The document proposes “workforce reconversion” and “training” without asking who will provide care while workers are being trained, who will assume reproductive tasks if local economies collapse, or how the increase in environmental care work already being carried out by women in response to contaminated water sources and ecosystem degradation will be compensated.

The vision of *cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory) is entirely absent. Although the document mentions “territorial impacts”, territories are treated as economic spaces to be reconverted rather than as living bodies with which communities maintain symbiotic relationships of care, continuity, and survival. The NDC likewise fails to acknowledge that the energy transition is already generating new forms of extractivism in Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant territories for lithium, cobalt, and other minerals, reproducing the same patterns of dispossession it purportedly seeks to overcome.

In sum, the 2050 just-transition strategy reproduces the carbon tunnel vision that characterizes the Decarbonization Consensus: it focuses intensely on emissions and formal employment while ignoring the fact that life is sustained by the invisibilized work of women, communities, and territories. A genuinely just transition would require acknowledging that there can be no climate justice without care justice; that territories are not simply spaces to be economically reconverted, but living bodies entitled to reparation after centuries of extractivism; and that any policy that fails to place care at its center will only deepen the inequalities generated by the climate crisis.

This third round of NDCs, discussed at COP30 in 2025, coincides with critical moments for gender justice in global climate governance. The renewal of the Gender Action Plan and negotiations on just transition offer an opportunity for organizations and networks converging in Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice to advocate for future updates of Colombia’s NDC to incorporate a genuinely intersectional perspective. This means moving beyond merely naming women, Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, or peasants as “vulnerable populations” and recognizing them instead as political agents whose economies, knowledge, and forms of labor, paid and invisibilized alike—are indispensable to any transition that can truly claim to be just.



Care as a Right in Colombia: Colombia's Gender and Climate Change Action Plan and CONPES 4143

Within this global context, Colombia presented its Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (PAGG-CO) in 2024, led by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. The plan is aligned with CONPES 4080 of 2022 on public policy for gender equity, the 2022–2026 National Development Plan “Colombia Potencia Mundial de la Vida” (“Colombia, a World Power of Life”), and the 2020 NDC, while seeking coherence with global climate objectives, human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda, and the agreements adopted under the UNFCCC.

PAGG-CO is structured around four specific objectives focused primarily on rural women:

Within this global context, Colombia presented its Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (PAGG-CO) in 2024, led by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. The plan is aligned with CONPES 4080 of 2022 on public policy for gender equity, the 2022–2026 National Development Plan “Colombia Potencia Mundial de la Vida” (“Colombia, a World Power of Life”), and the 2020 NDC, while seeking coherence with global climate objectives, human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda, and the agreements adopted under the UNFCCC.

- I Capacity-building, knowledge management, and communication concerning the differentiated impacts of climate change.
- II Women's participation and leadership in formulation, implementation, and monitoring, including actions to eliminate gender-based violence.
- III Coherence with national and international gender-equality frameworks, including guarantees for participation in UNFCCC negotiations.
- IV Monitoring and reporting through systems, methodologies, and quantitative and qualitative indicators capable of capturing differentiated climate impacts.



By 2030, Colombia commits to strengthening policies that guarantee the full participation of women in all their diversity in responsible energy use, emissions reduction, and the transition to renewable energy; advancing safe spaces for rural women while recognizing their rights to land, education, and health; and eliminating gender disparities in the climate sphere through equitable access to resources, knowledge, services, and opportunities. The Colombian plan establishes guiding principles that include gender equality, climate justice, inclusion, intersectionality, a territorial approach, environmental prevention, coherence, transparency, precaution, progressivity and non-regression, intergenerational responsibility, and the principle of do no harm.

As COP30 negotiates a new Gender Action Plan, the fundamental question for organizations such as Barranquilla+20 is whether the plan will become a genuine instrument of transformation or continue the tradition of instrumentalizing women as managers of crises they did not cause?



At the national level, Colombia took a historic step in February 2025 by approving CONPES 4143, the National Care Policy, becoming the first country in the region to formally recognize, at the level of programmatic public policy, the right to care for both those who provide care and those who require it. This achievement resulting from decades of struggle by feminist movements, caregivers' organizations, and territorial communities, gave concrete form to the government's 2022 commitment to advance a policy that would "place care at the center of life," under the leadership of the Office of the Vice President and the Ministry of Equality and Equity (DNP, 2025). The policy defines care as a fundamental dimension for guaranteeing, protecting, and sustaining life in the interdependence of all that exists and in all its expressions, human and non-human, across all territories. It explicitly recognizes that the social organization of care in Colombia is inequitable, impedes the effective enjoyment of rights, and renders collective and community care invisible, including the distinctive practices of ethnic peoples and peasant communities (DNP, 2025).



The institutional architecture created to give effect to this recognition comprises 133 actions organized around four specific objectives, with a time horizon through 2034 and an indicative cost of COP 25.6 trillion. Significantly, the first objective is devoted to increasing the recognition and strengthening of community and collective care practices, as well as care practices specific to peasant communities and ethnic peoples. It includes the participatory design of an Indigenous component of the National Care System together with the National Commission of Indigenous Women. This prioritization recognizes that collective forms of care grounded in reciprocity, solidarity, and connection to territory do more than ensure the survival of vulnerable communities: they also build social fabric and foster shared responsibility. As documented by CONPES and by the testimonies of women participating in the “Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice” certificate program, practices and organizations such as community kitchens and communal dining spaces, mourning caregivers in the Caribbean, Afro-Colombian practices of *malungaje* and *comadrazgo*, and healing spaces for victims of the armed conflict, among many others, constitute “mechanisms of resistance to systematic violence and discrimination,” particularly for LGBTIQ+ populations, persons with disabilities, and communities affected by armed conflict (DNP, 2025).

The policy itself acknowledges “nation–territory fragmentation,” “dispersion in the public management of care,” “limited coordination between institutional responses and ethnic, peasant, and territorial organizing processes,” and the fact that coverage of early childhood education is even more limited in populated rural centers, dispersed rural areas, and municipalities with larger peasant and ethnic populations. These admissions make clear the profound challenges the institutional architecture still faces if the right to care is to be realized beyond paper commitments (DNP, 2025).

It remains to be seen whether this policy framework will effectively transform the social organization of care or, like so many public policies in Latin America, remain caught in the gap between formal recognition and structural transformation, between the declaration of rights and the dismantling of the racial, gender, and class hierarchies that sustain the exploitation of care labor. The decisive test will be whether it can redistribute not only tasks but power; not only resources but territories; not only services but sovereignty over bodies and ways of life.



Testimonies from Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice

In the Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice certificate program, women from diverse backgrounds described how, from within their own realities and territories, they experience the effects of climate change and inequality. Yennis Brito, from the Association of Persons with Disabilities – Manitas Cuidadoras, in Valledupar, Colombia, stated that, in her role as a caregiver for life and nature and through learning and training spaces, she has been able to deepen her understanding of the lived experiences of other women. She recognizes the importance of exploring and listening to the realities of women caregivers in other territories in order to examine the different ways in which culture, the environment, and care can be interconnected.

“From the “Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice” certificate program, our voices intertwine to name what official maps leave unspoken: in Bolivia, as across Abya Yala, care must be a political act practiced at the intersection of climate displacement and territorial defense. Here, where salt flats are wounded by the lithium rush and droughts trace new pathways of forced movement, we recognize ourselves as women who migrate carrying the living memory of our territories and who, amid fracture, continue weaving economies of reciprocity, barter, and soberanía alimentaria (food sovereignty). This learning space has become a symbolic territory where our grief is transformed into struggle, where feminicide and extractivist violence are not accepted as destiny, but denounced as mechanisms of a system that fears our capacity to decide and to organize life collectively. We must learn that caring is not enough: care must be politicized; the divide between domestic and public life must be dismantled; and, from ancestral and urban knowledges, we must build a radical alternative to an energy transition that sacrifices us. That is why we raise our voices to say that climate justice will be feminist and community-based, or it will not be, because we, caregivers of water, seed, and memory, are already sowing the horizon in which no cuerpo-territorio (body-territory) will be a bargaining chip, but the root of a dignified and sustaining world.”

Pamela Condori

Women Caregiving Delegation at COP30







Starting Points and Recommendations for Strengthening Climate and Care Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean

Drawing on this process of learning and *juntanza* (collective gathering), we, Women Caregivers of Life and climate justice, propose the following starting points for addressing the climate–care nexus across the region and in Colombia.

01

Recognize care as a collective human right and a structural pillar of regional climate action

Countries across Latin America and the Caribbean should explicitly incorporate care as a collective human right within their climate frameworks, in line with Advisory Opinion 31/25 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. This requires NDCs, adaptation plans, and just-transition strategies to recognize paid and unpaid care work as vital infrastructure for sustaining life. Care should be integrated both as a human right and as a foundation of the social fabric, ensuring that public services, social-protection policies, and adaptation strategies treat care work as part of the infrastructure that makes life possible. Climate policy formulation and implementation must also guarantee the meaningful participation of women, LGBTIQ+ groups, ethnic communities, and territorial organizations, not as stakeholders who are merely consulted, but as political agents involved in designing solutions. This is essential if local knowledge and care practices are to be translated into effective mitigation and adaptation measures.

Among the measures recommended are:

- **Establish measurable targets to reduce unpaid care burdens:** Establish specific targets for expanding climate-resilient public services (universal early childhood education, decentralized health services, community-based water and sanitation systems, and accessible public transportation).
- **Binding participation in policy design and implementation:** Establish mandatory mechanisms for the participation of women’s organizations, ethnic communities, peasant movements, and care collectives throughout all stages of the climate policy cycle, from assessment through evaluation, with dedicated funding to enable effective, rather than merely symbolic, participation.

- Integrate care as a cross-cutting principle in NDCs and national adaptation plans, with verifiable targets.
- Recognize community-based economies: peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant care economies as legitimate climate adaptation strategies.

02

Advance climate-resilient public and community care systems

The region faces intensifying climate impacts, hurricanes, droughts, floods, and wildfires, that disproportionately increase care burdens. Comprehensive care systems should therefore connect the State, communities, and territories, with priority given to areas facing high climate vulnerability.

- Strengthen public care infrastructure (water, health, education, energy, and transportation) using climate-resilience criteria.
- Guarantee stable and direct financing for community care networks that sustain life during climate emergencies and disasters.

03

Redistribute care burdens within just transitions

Energy and productive-transition strategies in the region cannot be limited to formal employment or the retraining of male workers. The care burdens that make these transitions possible, and that have historically fallen on women and racialized communities, must also be redistributed.

- Incorporate universal social protection for community caregivers, informal workers, and subsistence economies in transition contexts.
- Recognize that there can be no just transition without care justice, including time, income, and services capable of reducing structural care overload.

04

Stop false climate solutions that deepen extractivism and dispossession

Carbon markets, the extractivism of so-called “critical” minerals, and mega-scale energy infrastructure are reproducing sacrifice zones across Latin America and the Caribbean. These policies require critical reassessment through the lenses of care, cuerpo-territorio (body-territory), and planetary boundaries.

- Require comprehensive climate and gender impact assessments that include disaggregated data on care work and the reproduction of life.
- Prioritize decentralized, community-based, small-scale energy models that strengthen territorial sovereignty.

05

Advance a regional agenda for care, climate justice, and historical

Latin America and the Caribbean should position themselves collectively within the UNFCCC to demand unconditional climate finance, reparation for ecological debt, and recognition of the historical responsibilities of the Global North.

- Promote a regional agenda that connects care, climate justice, decolonization, and self-determination.
- Reject solutions based exclusively on markets and advance policies that sustain life in all its forms.
- Advance a regional call for the cancellation of illegitimate debt so that public budgets can be redirected toward care and climate action.

“Deciding to act in defense of nature is like bringing a new life into being: it is a decision that changes your life, but its effects extend far beyond you—to everything that surrounds that action and to the future of the life being nurtured. Every trace left by this process is a seed whose fruit we may never see, yet we can still choose to nourish that soil with love and with an awareness of our roots and of the ways our actions affect others.

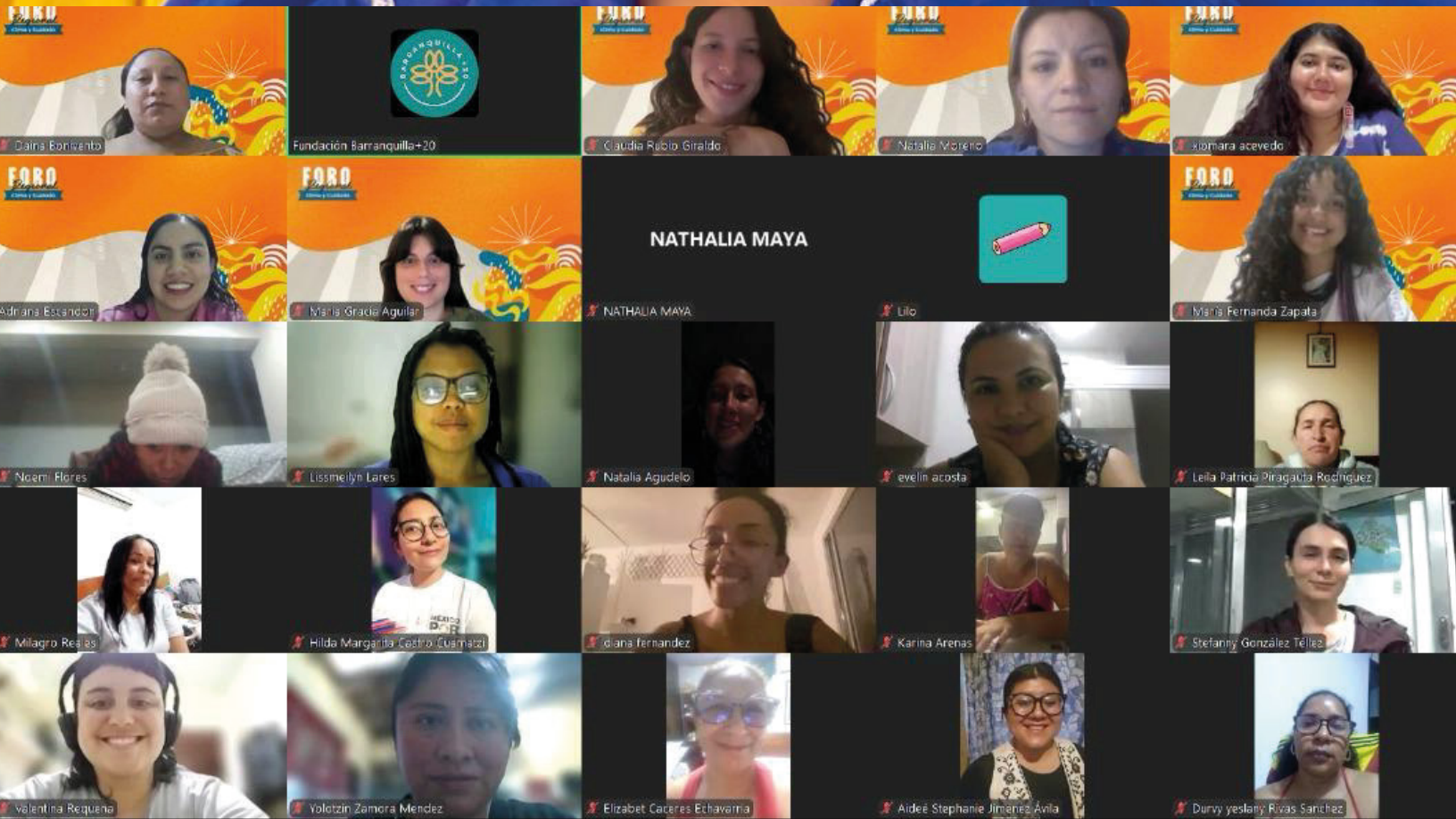
The “Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice” certificate program is water for the land we are caring for together. It fosters empathy and protection and helps nourish us. The easiest path is to move through the world without knowing, remaining sheltered within the comfort of one’s own space. Women Caregivers of Life will not choose that path. We have learned from other struggles, from other territories, and from our own territory, and I am grateful to have been part of this process with all of you.

Climate change is our reality, and we need women’s perspectives to help bring forth the future of the generations that will come after us.”

Natalia Elizabeth Ibáñez Baeza

Chilean Patagonia. Graduate of the certificate program.







For **Colombia**

01

Strengthen coordination between care policies and climate strategies

The National Care Policy (CONPES 4143) and Colombia's Long-Term Climate Strategy should be conceived as interdependent policies. Creating coordination spaces among the institutions responsible for climate, equality, labor, agriculture, and planning would help align efforts and avoid duplication. Monitoring and evaluation systems must recognize the contribution of care-related actions to reducing climate vulnerability and building social and ecosystem resilience. The implementation of the National Care System should also prioritize territories exposed to climate risks, where women often assume heavier care burdens as a result of environmental degradation or natural disasters.

- **Universal social protection for domestic, care, and subsistence workers during transition processes:** create a social-protection system covering informal workers, migrants, and community caregivers during energy-transition and climate-adaptation processes, guaranteeing basic income, access to health care, pensions, and training for alternative economies without erasing the value of their existing practices.
- **Prioritize climate-vulnerable territories:** implementation of the National Care System should prioritize municipalities identified in the NDC as highly climate-vulnerable, especially those affected by droughts, floods, and landslides and where women face heavier care burdens because of deteriorating ecosystem services.

02

Lead the climate–care nexus in international forums

Colombia can play a regional leadership role by advancing the nexus between care, climate justice, and just transition in debates under the UNFCCC. In particular, the new Gender Action Plan (GAP) adopted in 2025 provides a strategic framework for making intersectionality and the care economy visible as integral components of climate solutions.

- **Protection of women environmental defenders as a core priority:** given that Colombia is the deadliest country in the world for environmental defenders—with 79 killings in 2023, 40% of the global total, and nearly half of those killed being Afro-descendant or Indigenous (Global Witness, 2024)—the GAP should establish binding protection mechanisms for women who carry out territorial care and defense work.
- **Climate finance for community care organizations:** advocate for the GAP to establish direct, simplified financing channels for community care organizations carrying out ecosystem-based adaptation, without requiring intermediation by international NGOs or accredited entities that make access unnecessarily bureaucratic.
- **Include disaggregated indicators and care indicators:** propose that the GAP monitoring framework incorporate indicators on unpaid care work using an intersectional approach disaggregated by gender, race, rurality, and migration status, and link those indicators to the implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures.

03

Recognize territorial care knowledge in environmental processes

Prior-consultation processes and environmental assessments should incorporate differentiated participation mechanisms that recognize women's specific knowledge of the impacts of climate change and extractive projects.

- **Differentiated protocols for women's participation:** require every prior-consultation process concerning energy, extractive, or infrastructure projects to include dedicated sessions with women in affected communities, recognizing their knowledge of impacts on water sources, food security, community health, and care burdens as valid technical expertise for project assessment.
- **Recognize care practices as adaptation:** Territorial Comprehensive Climate Change Management Plans (PIGCCTs) should map community care practices such as community kitchens, traditional medicine, midwifery, child-care networks, community water management, and agroecology. These practices are simultaneously climate-adaptation strategies and should receive financial and technical support.

04

Integrate planetary boundaries into care systems

The design of services and infrastructure within the National Care System must take future climate scenarios into account. Climate education should also integrate an ethic of care, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between protecting the planet and shared social responsibility for sustaining life.

- **Incorporate climate variables into the design of care services:** all services and infrastructure of the National Care System should be designed using future climate scenarios and resilience criteria for floods, droughts, and heat waves, and care centers should not be located in areas of high climate risk.
- **Recognize environmental care as social care:** NDC targets for ecosystem protection, restoration, and water management should be coordinated with CONPES 4143 to strengthen community care practices, recognizing that communities caring for territories are simultaneously caring for the conditions that sustain human and non-human life.

“From my path as a woman caregiving for life in Montería, Córdoba, I have come to recognize care as a form of resistance and collective love. It is women who sustain life in the midst of the climate crisis, defending water, land, and dignity from our territories.

Caring for life means organizing ourselves, resisting dispossession, and affirming that neither our bodies nor our territories are expendable. That is why I raise my voice to say that there can be no climate justice without women and without care at the center.

We continue sowing the future with hope and dignity.”

Natalis Oviedo Hernández — Montería, Córdoba, Colombia.

Participant and graduate of the Women Caregivers of Life and Climate Justice certificate program



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