



# Colloquium on climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Africa

The Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria is organising a colloquium on climate change and SRHR in Africa. It will be held on 12-13 November 2026 in Pretoria, South Africa. The colloquium will be in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual participation). It will bring together scholars, researchers, practitioners and experts from the African region for a rich scholarly discussion on linking climate change and SRHR. Accepted papers will be presented at the colloquium and subsequently published in an accredited journal.

## 1. Introduction and Background

Climate change is causing catastrophic effects globally, including land loss and more frequent and longer periods of extreme heat.<sup>1</sup> It also poses a threat to human rights, health and sustainable development globally, with Africa experiencing significant impact. Since most African countries' economies are largely dependent on agriculture, a limited adaptation capacity and effects of mitigation strategies adopted by the rest of the world imply that inhabitants of Africa are and will be affected more by climate change compared to populations in other regions. Africa is extremely

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1. JK Medaris, 'The Impact of Climate Change on the Cultural Identity of Indigenous Peoples and the Nation's First "Climate Refugees"' (2023) 47:1 *American Indian Law Review* 1.

vulnerable to climate-related shocks such as droughts, floods, excessive heat, and food scarcity. These environmental factors have far-reaching consequences for health systems, access to critical services and enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Evidence suggests that climate change heightens existing gender disparities and weakens SRHR outcomes. During climate-related crises, women, girls, and marginalised populations, such as persons with disabilities (PWDs), displaced communities and sexual

minorities, are more likely to experience gender-based violence, child marriage, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and poor maternal and newborn health outcomes. Furthermore, climate-related resource scarcity frequently affects access to critical SRHR services, commodities and information hence, jeopardising the implementation of human rights standards such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women



(CEDAW), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Climate governance frameworks internationally and regionally are increasingly tying climate change to health, gender equality and sustainable development, creating critical opportunities to incorporate SRHR into climate action. Globally, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Paris Agreement, and Sendai Framework call for resilience-building, adaptation, human rights, gender responsiveness, and protection for vulnerable groups, whereas SDGs 3 (health), 5 (gender equality) and 13 (climate action) call for comprehensive strategies that address both climate risks and SRHR. In Africa, the AU Agenda 2063, African Climate Change Strategy, AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy (2022-2032), and Maputo Protocol all provide significant normative support for gender equality, health rights, and resilience.

Despite this progress, most African climate policies prioritise environmental and economic solutions above climate's catastrophic, diverse effects on body autonomy, reproductive and maternal health, and gender-based violence. To achieve genuine, transformative resilience, Africa urgently requires bold policy alignment and intersectional approaches that place SRHR at the heart of climate governance.

Despite these pressing realities, there is a lack of cross-sectoral discourse, evidence development, and policy coherence in Africa regarding climate action and SRHR. Amadi *et al.* research considered the impact of climate change on SRHR.<sup>2</sup> They argue that climate change impacts can exacerbate the SRHR in sub-Saharan Africa and that there is limited actions on the intersection of climate change and SRHR, which this colloquium agrees with. The works of scholars like Dijkerman *et al.* emphasise the importance of linking climate change and SRHR in order to address the impact of climate change on SRHR decision-making, behaviours and outcomes.<sup>3</sup> The implication of the above

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2 Amadi JA, Odwe G, Obare F, Sambai B & Kangwana B (2025) Interventions addressing impacts of climate change on sexual and reproductive health and rights in sub-Saharan Africa: A scoping review. *PloS One* 20(8), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0329201>

3 Dijkerman S, Hossain J, Persson M, Konika RA & Paul D (2025) Applying an intersectional climate justice lens to understand climate crisis impacts on sexual and reproductive health and rights and identify local solutions: Qualitative findings from Khulna, Bangladesh. *Women's Health* 21, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17455057251339283>



literature is that majority of the scholars focused on the impact of climate change, the need to realise the SRHR with no in-depth discussion or emphasis on integrating SRHR in climate policies and frameworks in Africa for sustainable development.

Against this background, this colloquium aims to bridge this gap by bringing together diverse scholars to examine the relationship between climate change and SRHR, strengthen regional advocacy,

and propose actionable strategies for incorporating SRHR into climate change policies, adaptation frameworks, and resilience-building initiatives.

## 2. Objectives

The primary goal of the colloquium is to promote collaboration, knowledge exchange, and policy alignment on climate change and SRHR in Africa. The colloquium specifically aims to achieve the following:

- i. Analyse the impact of climate change on SRHR outcomes in Africa, with special attention to vulnerable and marginalised populations.
- ii. Identify policy gaps and potential to include SRHR into national and regional climate change adaptation and mitigation programs.
- iii. Identify evidence-based, gender-transformative, and rights-based methods to addressing SRHR concerns in climate-impacted communities.
- iv. Develop recommendations for improving SRHR through advocacy, programming and financing in climate resilience efforts.
- v. Cross-sector collaboration between diverse stakeholders fostered.

## 3. Expected Outcomes

- i. Increased evidence and understanding of the impact of climate change on SRHR outcomes in Africa, particularly among vulnerable and marginalised populations.
- ii. Policy gaps and opportunities for integrating SRHR into national and regional climate adaptation and mitigation frameworks identified, with recommendations for responsive policy development.
- iii. Evidence-based, gender-transformative, and rights-based approaches to addressing SRHR concerns in climate-impacted communities identified and documented.
- iv. Concrete recommendations for improving SRHR through advocacy, programming, and financing within climate resilience efforts developed.
- v. Cross-sector collaboration between governments, civil society, research institutions, and development partners strengthened to promote a unified agenda on climate change and SRHR.

#### 4. Areas to be covered

Contributors are encouraged to submit abstracts related to the following key areas, although abstracts related to key areas not mentioned here are welcomed:

- Maternal health under extreme heat
- Contraceptive supply chains in climate disasters
- Climate migration and SRHR service continuity
- Gender-based violence during climate shocks and links to SRHR service demand and safe spaces
- Adolescent SRHR and education disruption
- Air pollution, wildfire smoke, and reproductive outcomes
- Water insecurity and menstrual health
- Vector-borne diseases and pregnancy
- Food insecurity, malnutrition, and fertility: Undernutrition, anemia, and impacts on menstrual cycles, conception, and healthy pregnancy outcomes.
- Climate anxiety and reproductive choice
- Health facility resilience for SRHR services
- Indigenous and community-led adaptation
- Policy integration and climate finance
- Data systems and early warning for SRHR
- Bodily autonomy and environmental justice:
- National Adaptation Plans and SRHR inclusion
- Disaster risk reduction policies and SRHR service continuity
- Climate finance architecture for SRHR
- Health system climate resilience standards for SRHR delivery
- Gender-responsive budgeting for climate and SRHR
- Ensuring national WASH and climate adaptation plans address water access for menstrual hygiene and maternity units.
- Urban planning and heat policies

that protect pregnant people, infants, and outdoor workers; zoning for clinic access.

- African Union and continental policy instruments

## 5. Important Dates

- **30 June 2026** - Submission of abstracts (350 words, setting out the methodology, anticipated findings,

conclusions and recommendations).

- **31 July 2026** - Selected participants are informed about their selection.
- **30 September 2026** - First draft of the paper should be sent to the organisers.
- **12- 13 November 2026** - Colloquium in Pretoria, South Africa.
- **5 December 2026** - Submission of final papers.



## 6. Submission guidelines

All submissions should be made to **Dr Sindiso Nkomo** at [sindiso.nkomo@up.ac.za](mailto:sindiso.nkomo@up.ac.za) and **Maryanne Nkechi Obiagbaoso** at [maryanne.obiagbaoso@up.ac.za](mailto:maryanne.obiagbaoso@up.ac.za)

All submissions should include the names of authors and the document saved with the authors' names.

Submissions must be original, unpublished work and not under consideration by any journal or other publication house.

- Papers should be between 5 000 and 7 000 words (including footnotes) in length.
- Authors should supply a summary of their contributions of not more than 350 words, setting out the main findings and contribution to scholarship.
- Each paper should have an introduction and a conclusion.
- Authors are required to adhere to the house style of Pretoria University Law Press (PULP). The guideline is available at [https://](https://www.ahrlj.up.ac.za/images/ahrlj/PULP_Styleguidelines_2022.pdf)

[www.ahrlj.up.ac.za/images/ahrlj/PULP\\_Styleguidelines\\_2022.pdf](https://www.ahrlj.up.ac.za/images/ahrlj/PULP_Styleguidelines_2022.pdf).

Papers that do not adhere to PULP style will not be considered.

- Authors must provide their ORCID identifier together with their manuscript. If you do not have such an ID, please register at the website <https://orcid.org/> register, and provide your ID.

## 7. Funding

There are no registration fees for the colloquium. Funding for travel and accommodation is available for all authors. Kindly note that where two or more authors collaborate, funding will be provided to one author.

## 8. Further information

For any questions or queries, please contact **Dr Sindiso Nkomo** at [sindiso.nkomo@up.ac.za](mailto:sindiso.nkomo@up.ac.za) and **Maryanne Nkechi Obiagbaoso** at [maryanne.obiagbaoso@up.ac.za](mailto:maryanne.obiagbaoso@up.ac.za)

