

Gender and Environmental Law. Challenges and opportunities for promoting the role of gender in environmental justice

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Panel 4. Poster pitch session

No more silenced voices: women's protection and environmental justice under international human rights law.

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The international community has shown a generalized understanding of the close interconnection that exists between gender equality and climate change. The incorporation of this link, often through the valorisation of women's role, can be found in different texts and policies adopted in various global and regional frameworks, such as the United Nations and the European Union. Significantly, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement have not overlooked the critical importance of promoting gender equality. Nevertheless, women all around the world still struggle to get their voices heard in the environmental field and are exposed to bias and threats that are often gender-based, which, clearly, also hampers environmental justice.

The purpose of this study is to explore how targeted protection can be theorized under international human rights law. Despite no specific human rights treaty on gender and climate change has so far been adopted, interesting reference sources are offered, universally, by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and, regionally, by the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The potential of these instruments is also explored by assessing the guidance provided by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – especially through General Recommendation n. 37 (2018) – as well as by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Finally, several proposals are advanced for the purpose of defining specific States' duties aimed at the promotion and the realization of gender equality and environmental justice, especially through the implementation of a human rights-based paradigm capable of ensuring appropriate inclusion of women in the process of decision-making and adequate protection of their role in the life of the community and their environmental engagement.