



THE IMPACT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

While navigating the climate crisis, it is essential that women and girls have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. However, new analysis from MSI Reproductive Choices shows that due to climate-related disruptions, an estimated 14 million women are at risk of losing access to contraception over the next decade.

A GENDERED CRISIS

It is an injustice that the communities that have contributed the least to the climate crisis are suffering the most from its impacts. Water scarcity, rising sea levels, and increasing crop failures and flooding are disproportionately affecting low- and middle-income countries.

Africa, for example, contributes only 2% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, but is also the continent most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

Evidence shows that women and girls are hardest hit. Facing gendered discrimination, lower incomes and poorer access to food and other resources, the UN has warned that women and girls will suffer for longer and more severely from climate shocks and disasters.

The World Bank estimates that climate change could displace more than 216 million people by 2050. In humanitarian settings, where one in five women and girls report experiencing sexual violence, the need for sexual and reproductive health and rights become more acute, yet access to quality care is inadequate.



“OUR CHILDREN MIGRATED IN THE HOPE OF A BETTER FUTURE. THE SEA, THEIR ONLY HOPE WITH AGRICULTURE, DOESN'T GENERATE REVENUES ANYMORE. BEFORE WE COULD GET UP TO 100 BASKETS OF FISH. NOW WE BARELY GET 10.”

ROKHI, MSI CONTRACEPTIVE CLIENT, JOAL, SENEGAL

14 MILLION WOMEN AT RISK OF LOSING REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

When facing climate disruptions, like any humanitarian emergency, it is essential that women have access to reproductive choice, enabling them to prevent unintended pregnancies while navigating the crisis. However, analysis from MSI Reproductive Choices across 26 climate impacted countries found that since 2011¹, an estimated 11.5 million women have had their access to contraception disrupted due to climate-related displacement.

MSI's modelling indicates that this will worsen over the next decade, as we estimate that 14 million women are at risk of losing access to contraception due to climate-related displacement.

14M

If access is not protected for these women and their demand is not met, MSI estimates that this would lead to an additional

6.2M

unintended pregnancies

2.1M

unsafe abortions

5,800

maternal deaths

Pictured left: A woman in Joal, Senegal collects shellfish, which have become harder to harvest due to climate change, with warmer temperatures, rising sea levels and higher water salinity.

¹ Modelling uses data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2010-2020), DHS data for 26 of the countries that MSI works in (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, PNG, Timor-Leste, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) and MSI's IMPACT2 tool. Full technical note and methodology available at msichoices.org.

“RESOURCES ARE SCARCE NOW BECAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE. IF WOMEN CAN’T CHOOSE IF OR WHEN TO BECOME PREGNANT, THEIR LIVES AND THOSE OF THEIR CHILDREN BECOME DIFFICULT. THANKS TO FAMILY PLANNING, WE CAN SUPPORT OURSELVES, LOOK AFTER OUR CHILDREN AND GET ON WITH EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES. THIS IS WHY WE USE CONTRACEPTION, TO RECLAIM OUR LIVES.”

BINETOU SONKO, PRESIDENT OF THE BABA YAYE ASSOCIATION, WHICH HELPS TO REBUILD LOCAL MANGROVES AND FORESTS IN JOAL, SENEGAL, SUPPORTING GREATER SHELLFISH HARVESTS.



SUPPORTING WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE OF THE CRISIS TO ADAPT WITH CHOICE

While the global community works to mitigate climate change, we must better support women and communities on the frontline of the crisis to adapt. Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare information and services is foundational to this.

The World Bank has identified sub-Saharan Africa as the region most vulnerable to climate change due to desertification, fragile coastlines, and dependence on agriculture, and this aligns with the experience of MSI's programmes.

For many women accessing healthcare with MSI, the climate crisis is a daily reality. When drought hits, they need to walk further to find water and when harvests fail, they can struggle to feed their families. To support them to adapt to these challenging circumstances, whether that's re-locating or re-entering the workforce, women and girls have made clear that they want reproductive choice.

For example, in Senegal, MSI supported a client who had lost her home due to coastal erosion caused by rising sea levels. Facing homelessness, Fatou* accessed contraception with MSI, providing her with the ability to avoid unintended pregnancy while finding a new home.

WITH AUTONOMY, WOMEN CAN BE PART OF FINDING THE SOLUTIONS

If we are to solve the climate crisis, climate action must acknowledge existing gender inequalities and ensure that women and girls can take part in finding the solutions.

With reproductive choice, girls are better able to finish their education and pursue their careers, providing them with greater economic stability and agency when facing a disaster. With reproductive autonomy, women are also better placed to take on decision-making roles at a community and national level, enabling women to have a seat at the table in finding climate solutions.

* a pseudonym

RECOMMENDATION:

SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO ADAPT WITH REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

Around the COP26 climate conference, there is a focus on mobilising \$100 billion per year to support low-income countries to respond to climate change. MSI Reproductive Choices is joining 65 partners in calling on governments and donors to integrate sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights into these funding commitments, to support women and girls on the frontline of the crisis to adapt and determine their lives and futures.

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