

The 66 organisations working to improve human and environmental health undersigned

The Rt Hon. Boris Johnson MP
10 Downing Street
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Dear Prime Minister

30 June 2021

Climate change leadership: an opportunity to champion women and girls

There is increasing evidence that gender-responsive climate action is foundational to climate change adaptation and resilience, and to conserving biodiversity. At COP25, Parties to UNFCCC agreed an Enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan. At COP26 we must build on this by recognising the importance of removing:

1. Barriers preventing women and girls from accessing rights-based, high-quality family planning services, and
2. Barriers preventing girls from accessing school, feeling safe whilst there, and completing all levels of their education.

Highlighting these barriers and solutions to their removal at COP26 would build on recent UK Government efforts. For example, in February 2021, HM Treasury published the landmark report *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*, which highlighted the importance of removing these barriers. In November 2020, the UK Government voted in favour of the International Union for Conservation of Nature motion, *Importance for the conservation of nature of removing barriers to rights-based voluntary family planning*.

Globally the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change noted, in its *Fifth Assessment Report*, the value of family planning, and the UN Environment Programme's fifth *Global Environment Outlook* calls for greater access to family planning programmes along with women's education, as does UNEP's 2021 report *Making Peace with Nature*.

So whilst climate scientists, policy makers and the world's largest environmental network recognise the importance of removing these barriers, this has not yet translated into adequate resourcing from climate funding mechanisms. As organisations working to improve human and environmental health, we call on the UK Government to:

1. Ensure all UK Government-funded climate mechanisms expressly encourage climate adaptation/resilience programmes with a direct focus on removing barriers to family planning and girls' education; and
2. Encourage financing mechanisms supported by the UK Government, and other climate donors, do the same.

Given the recent cuts to the aid budget and the urgency of the climate crisis we need innovative ways to integrate development and climate programming. The changes we call for would have no impact on total UK Government expenditure; we request merely a change in the eligibility and focus of existing funding mechanisms. This is a change which can be implemented in time for announcement in Glasgow. It would benefit girls and women in communities most vulnerable to climate change and would be appropriate for a Government that is a long-standing champion of sexual and reproductive health and rights. In a year when the connections between human and environmental health have never been more acute, we stand

ready to support you in making this a key outcome of COP26 as a cost effective and transformational response to gender inequality and the climate crisis.

Yours sincerely

- Margaret Pyke Trust (co-organiser)
- EngenderHealth
- Pathfinder International
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trillion Trees
- DKT International
- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Blue Ventures Conservation
- PATH Foundation Philippines Inc.
- Youth peer South Sudan
- International Youth Alliance For Family Planning
- International Campaign for Safe Abortion
- Center for Biological Diversity
- International Crane Foundation
- Project Drawdown
- Nature Uganda
- Ecological Christian Organisation
- Big Life Foundation
- Population Reference Bureau
- Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy
- Norsaac
- Feedback
- White Ribbon Alliance
- MSI Reproductive Choices (co-organiser)
- PSI
- Ipas
- Endangered Wildlife Trust
- Mount Kenya Trust
- PATH
- Ansul-India Health & Management Services
- PHE Ethiopia Consortium
- Conservation Through Public Health
- Dorobo Fund for Tanzania
- Society for the Improvement of Rural People
- OSIENALA (Friends of Lake Victoria)
- Institute of Natural Resources
- Women for Conservation
- Dynamic Doctors Uganda
- What Works Association
- Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau
- OIKOS East Africa
- Frankfurt Zoological Society
- Uganda Youth Alliance For Family Planning And Adolescent Health
- Population Connection
- OASIS
- FHI 360
- ARROW
- Jane Goodall Institute UK
- Global Ocean Trust
- PAI
- Rwenzori Center for Research and Advocacy
- CHASE Africa
- People's Trust for Endangered Species
- Advocates for Youth
- Universal Health and Development Foundation
- Likhaan Center for Women's Health
- Transition Earth
- Western Uganda FBOs Network
- SafeHands
- Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Women and Children First
- Light Ethiopia
- Association Djibouti Nature
- Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health
- Rainforest Trust UK
- Kyrgyz Family Planning Alliance

CC: APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health; APPG Climate Change
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