

## CLIMATE SOLUTIONS: WOMEN AT THE FORE

Empowered women are critical for the global economy and the environment. So often the primary providers of energy, water, food and other resources for their families, women are already disproportionately feeling the impacts of climate change. This role also puts women at the centre of climate action. Women's equal participation in the economy could boost global annual GDP by as much as US\$28 trillion by 2025.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the 2018 Report of the New Climate Economy finds that bold climate action could increase female employment and labour participation. The New Climate Economy highlights success stories, challenges and solutions behind women's role in accelerating inclusive economic growth and climate action.

### SUCCESS STORIES

- Solar Sister is a women-led clean energy enterprise operating in **Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda** which recruits, trains and mentors women, and builds women-to-women networks to achieve “last mile” distribution for solar devices and clean cookstoves. Solar Sister has a network of over 2,500 entrepreneurs providing services to over 350,000 people.<sup>2</sup>
- Grameen Shakti in **Bangladesh** has trained 3,000 women as solar technicians to install and maintain Solar Home Systems (SHSs) in rural areas. Since 2003, 4.12 million SHSs have been installed in Bangladesh, increasing per capita income 9-12% as of 2014, creating 115,000 jobs as of 2017, and reducing carbon emissions by 160,000 tonnes per year.<sup>3</sup>
- BURN Manufacturing, a clean cookstove company in **Kenya**, prioritises employment for women. BURN now serves more than 100,000 Kenyan homes, reducing fuel costs and emissions compared to traditional alternatives by more than 60%.<sup>4</sup>



Photo credit: SolarSister.



**“** To support economic growth and development, we need to tap the potential of all workers, giving women opportunities not just to earn, but also to lead. Women need to be empowered, and their role in the economy transformed. What better moment to achieve this than now, when the world is pursuing another economic transformation, toward a green economy?”

**NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA**, Co-chair of the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, former Finance Minister of Nigeria

## REMAINING CHALLENGES

- Women continue to be under-represented and under-paid today. On average, a woman in the US earns 80.5 cents for every dollar a man earns, and globally women account for just 23% of parliamentarians.<sup>5</sup>
- Women and children are 14x more likely to die during natural disasters. After climate disasters, it is generally harder for poor women to recover than poor men.<sup>6</sup>
- Where piped water is absent, women and girls spend hours collecting water at the cost of their education and earnings. In Niger, an average of 13 days a year are spent travelling to and from a water source.<sup>7</sup>

## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

- **Scale-up clean energy access** – Access to clean energy and clean cooking advances women's living standards by freeing up their time and improving their health, while reducing GHG emissions.<sup>8</sup>
- **Create conditions for women to lead** – Development finance institutions, national governments and the private sector can partner to build and promote women's skills and leadership. Incorporating women's training and employment into business models can accelerate social impact.<sup>9</sup>
- **Empower women in agriculture** – Almost half the economically active women in the world work in agriculture, a sector already feeling significant climate impacts. Giving women farmers equal access to resources could help alleviate hunger for 150 million additional people.<sup>10</sup>
- **Improve water management** – Countries can follow the example of Uganda, which has a dedicated five-year gender strategy for water and sanitation.<sup>11</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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*The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, and its flagship project The New Climate Economy, were set up to help governments, businesses and society make better-informed decisions on how to achieve economic prosperity and development whilst also addressing climate change.*

