UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN | CLIMATE-WPS NETWORK

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION

A REGIONAL POLICY REPORT ON CLIMATE, WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Sweden
Sverige

SUMMARY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2026

The UfM Secretariat is co-funded by the EUROPEAN UNION

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The report establishes a 2026 baseline of the Climate–WPS nexus in the Euro-Mediterranean region and identifies entry points for action in 2027–2028. It draws on a desk review of 73 resources published between 2012 and 2026; the MedWE Policy Study The Climate WPS Nexus: Building a Shared Euro-Mediterranean Approach (IEMed and UfM); a Network survey and two focus groups, one with government and National Women's Machinery representatives and one with civil society, women's and youth organization representatives.

The Euro-Mediterranean region does not lack women and youth leaders. Rather, it lacks the institutional mechanisms, financing pathways and evidence-to-policy structures that can translate local knowledge and community leadership into policy influence, negotiation spaces and decision-making processes. The challenge is therefore less one of participation and more one of power, influence and access to resources.

KEY MESSAGES

The international frameworks linking climate action with women, peace, and security (Climate-WPS) are well established. What lags behind is delivery: across the Euro-Mediterranean region, climate, gender, and peace and security policies are still largely built apart. This summary presents the main findings and recommendations of the UfM Climate–WPS Network's newly released regional policy report, From Fragmentation to Integration.

1. **Plans are written in parallel.** Gender is entering national climate plans, but the link to WPS is missing: only 13% of Network survey respondents described their country's WPS action plan and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) as fully aligned.
2. **Data gaps weaken protection, monitoring and finance.** 70% of respondents rated the availability of sex-disaggregated data on climate-related displacement as poor or very poor.
3. **Women carry the weight of drought and displacement, but rarely the decisions.** 78% of respondents said climate-related displacement contributes to women's economic insecurity, while 48% said women take part in water and natural resource governance only rarely or symbolically.
4. **Women and youth lead but are consulted late.** Only 22% of respondents said women and youth are consulted from the initial planning stage. The region does not lack women and youth leaders; it lacks the infrastructure that carries their knowledge into policy.
5. **Funding rarely reaches those closest to communities.** Civil society participants reported no direct funding for local actors and asked for flexible, multi-year support.

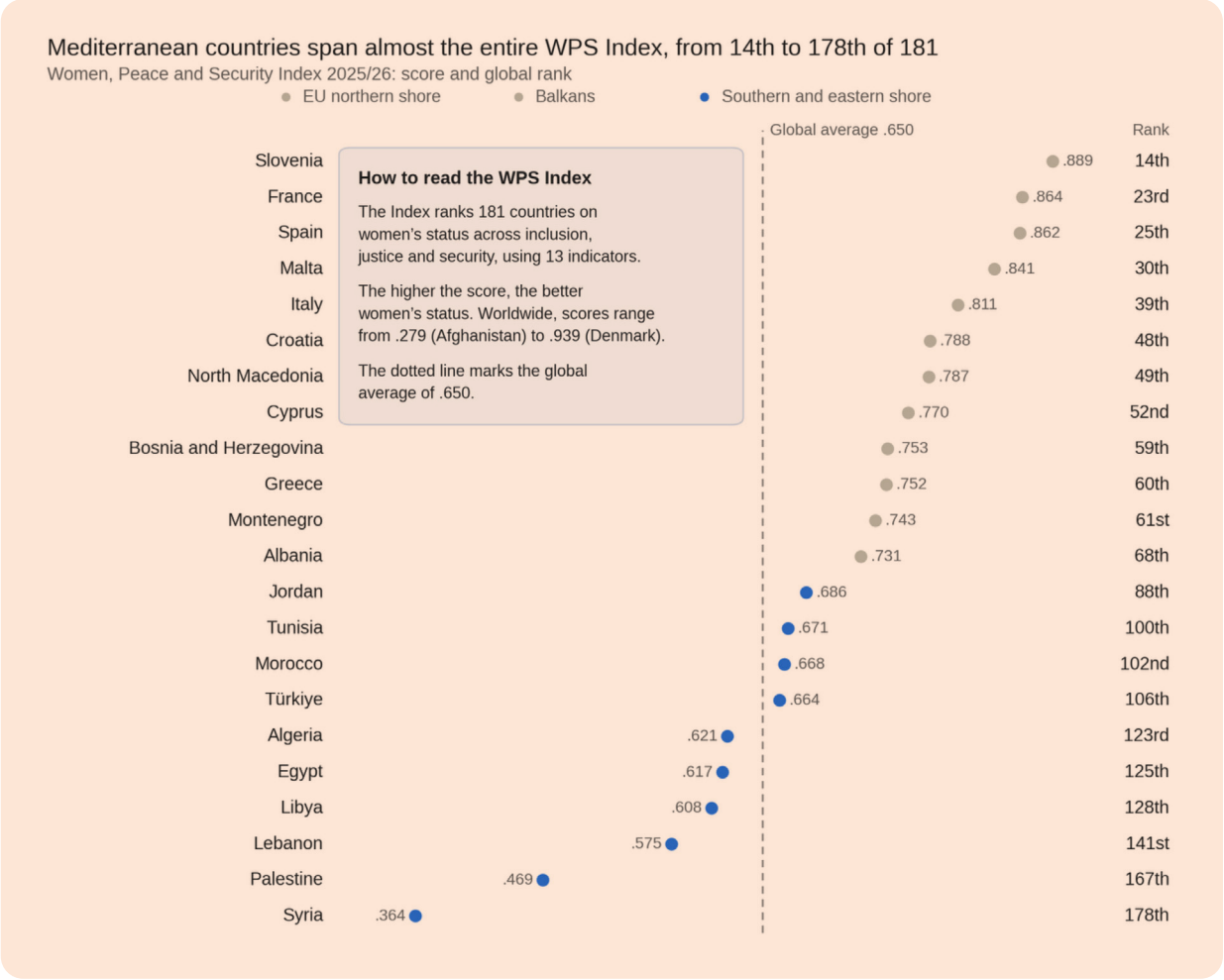
The report answers these gaps with seven recommendations that set out who should act, and at what level, to move from recognition to implementation, beginning with the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

THE CHALLENGE

Climate change rarely acts alone: it intensifies competition over resources and strains weak institutions. In the Mediterranean, every southern and eastern country already faces water scarcity or water stress, and the region is projected to become a global drought hotspot, according to the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC, 2026). Conflict adds to the pressure. According to the WPS Index 2025/26, produced by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), 42% of women in the Middle East and North Africa live near armed conflict, against 21.7% worldwide (GIWPS & PRIO, 2025).

Women carry a disproportionate share of these pressures. They travel farther for water and fuelwood, often hold land only through male relatives, face higher risks of gender-based violence, and are often excluded from decisions. Moreover, Climate acts as a risk multiplier rather than a direct cause of conflict and displacement, and gender, social norms, and other inequalities shape who moves, who is left behind and who can adapt (MedECC, 2026).

A region of extremes. On the WPS Index 2025/26, Mediterranean countries span almost the entire global range, from Slovenia (14th of 181) to Syria (178th). The Middle East and North Africa average is the third lowest of any region and has fallen 5% since the previous edition. Only 24% of women aged 25 to 64 in the region are employed, against 56% globally (GIWPS & PRIO, 2025).



Source: WPS Index 2025/26 (GIWPS & PRIO, 2025), as reported in Table 1 of the full report · 22 Mediterranean countries

The Index also links women's status to the capacities the region needs. Across 181 countries, higher scores for women on inclusion, justice and security are very strongly associated with greater climate readiness, lower fragility and more positive peace. These are correlations, not proof of cause, and the Index does not measure climate vulnerability itself.

The policy gap. The frameworks are in place. United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) anchors the WPS agenda, and Resolution 2242 (2015) first brought climate change into it. Yet a review by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) found that most WPS national action plans treat climate as peripheral (Smith/SIPRI, 2020), and many mention it without concrete actions, indicators or resources. Nearly a third of the WPS national action plans adopted over two decades expired in 2022 and have not been renewed (GIWPS & PRIO, 2025).

The gap, in other words, is less one of awareness than of coherent delivery. An integrated Climate–WPS approach is not an additional agenda: it is a condition for adaptation, conflict prevention and gender equality to succeed together.

WHAT THE REPORT FOUND

The report's four sources of evidence point the same way: strong frameworks, fragmented delivery, thin data where it matters most, and women's and youth agency that remains under-used. Each finding below ends with the recommendation that responds to it.

1. Plans are written in parallel

Gender is finding its way into climate plans. The bridge to WPS planning is still missing

WPS action plans, national climate plans and NDCs are typically developed in isolation, and coordination bodies often exist on paper without the mandate, resources or capacity to enforce coherence. Only 13% of Network survey respondents described their country's WPS action plan and NDC as fully aligned; 48% described them as partially aligned and 22% as not aligned. Asked about coordination between ministries, 39% said a formal mechanism exists but is under-resourced or rarely convened, and 30% said none exists.

Government participants in the first focus group pointed to progress on the climate side. Gender features in Palestine's third-generation NDC, Egypt's National Climate Change Strategy 2050, and Lebanon's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2025, which the Ministry of Environment shared with the National Commission for Lebanese Women so that impacts on women could be added. The link to WPS planning is weaker: participants from Egypt and Tunisia reported no standing mechanism connecting environment ministries with ministries responsible for women.

WHAT'S ALREADY WORKING

Lebanon. The National Commission for Lebanese Women developed climate and environment indicators for its WPS action plan with several ministries and works through focal points within them.

Jordan and Morocco. In Jordan, a coordination mechanism led by the Ministry of Social Development brings together about 60 civil society organizations across five governorates. Morocco has a similar, earlier-stage mechanism led by the Ministry of Environment.

The report's response: Recommendation 1. Give inter-ministerial mechanisms a legal mandate, a budget and the technical capacity to align WPS action plans, national climate plans and NDCs.

2. Data gaps weaken protection, monitoring and finance

Without reliable data, progress cannot be shown, and financing is harder to secure

70% of survey respondents rated the availability of sex-disaggregated data on climate-related displacement as poor or very poor. The barriers they cited most were the lack of an institutional mandate or coordination (70%), the lack of funding or technical capacity (61%) and the lack of common indicators (61%).

What gets measured matters as much. Indicators are often limited to counts of participation, leaving aside the protection, prevention and relief-and-recovery pillars (Baldwin, 2026), and monitoring also needs to account for disability, not only gender, according to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA, 2023d).

Focus group participants described a further problem: figures that exist but are not shared or agreed on. A participant from Lebanon described ministries, a national scientific group and civil society organizations each producing figures without an agreed methodology, making it difficult for the data to be accepted by all. A participant from Libya said many civil society organizations hold a lot of data but are cautious about how it will be used and shared. Participants asked that communities not be asked to collect data without a pathway to influence decisions, and that data collection be safe and ethical in conflict and displacement settings. Government participants called for common regional tools and indicators.

The report's response: Recommendations 2 and 4. A shared gender-, disability- and conflict-sensitive monitoring tool, and an evidence-to-policy pipeline that turns evidence, including community-generated evidence, into policy briefs.

3. Women carry the weight of drought and displacement

They bear much of the burden of scarce resources, but have little say in how those resources are managed

The regional science calls for nuance. Most environmental migration in the Mediterranean is internal, over short distances and from rural areas to towns. In the Middle East and North Africa, conflict and violence are the immediate causes of displacement, with environmental change acting as an additional stressor. Women and older people in rural areas are often left behind, although some women also migrate in the face of climate change, and international human rights law does not recognize climate-related reasons for migration as grounds for protection (MedECC, 2026).

78% of survey respondents said climate-related displacement contributes to women's economic insecurity to an extent or a very strong extent. The barriers to women's secure access to land and water most often cited were social and cultural norms (70%), discriminatory inheritance or land tenure laws (61%) and weak enforcement of existing protections (61%).

Women's voice in resource decisions remains limited: 48% of respondents said women are included in water and natural resource governance only rarely or symbolically, and 13% said not at all. 65% disagreed that gender-sensitive early warning systems for natural resource conflicts exist and function. Civil society participants added that emergency and psychological assistance exists, but access to livelihoods, documentation, long-term psychosocial support, reintegration and safe participation is much weaker.

FROM THE FIELD

A participant from Morocco's Souss-Massa region described how drought increases the time rural women spend collecting water, threatens farming and livestock livelihoods, and limits their access to training, paid work and community participation. In seven villages assessed in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq through research supported by an international non-governmental organization, women carried much of the water-scarcity burden but were mostly excluded from decisions on wells and irrigation.

WHAT'S ALREADY WORKING

Regional. The Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), with the League of Arab States and UN Women, runs the training "Women Mediating Access to Resources in Climate-Affected Contexts" for the Arab Women Mediators Network.

The report's response: Recommendations 3 and 7. Involve women from the design stage of climate, WPS and disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies, and add climate and natural resource conflict to the work of women mediators' networks.

4. Women and youth are leaders treated as beneficiaries

Women and young people already lead adaptation in their communities. Policy still treats them as recipients

Only 22% of survey respondents said women and youth are involved from the initial planning phase of climate or peacebuilding policy; 35% said only at the final validation stage and 17% said not at all. Civil society participants described women and youth as treated as beneficiaries or volunteers who complete government action rather than lead it.

> **Being invited to a consultation is not necessarily the same as having meaningful influence over a decision.**
> *— Regional feminist network representative*

Even where participation works, it often stops short of influence. A Jordanian organization has been involved in the Jordan National Action Plan on WPS (JONAP) from its first stage, and its recommendations on women-led organizations' role in crisis management, climate change and early warning were integrated into JONAP 2, yet no system tracks how they were taken into account. A regional youth network supported its members in Libya on the NDC by bridging the technical gap and sharing reports; many of their recommendations ended up in the NDC, but without an official follow-up mechanism or funding to create one.

To conclude, the region does not lack women and youth leaders; it lacks the infrastructure that carries local knowledge into evidence, policy influence and negotiation.

WHAT'S ALREADY WORKING

Iraq. Leadership programmes for women in the Dohuk Water Directorate worked best when they combined training, mentoring and peer learning over a long period, included male colleagues, and worked with ministry mandates, human resources structures and codes of conduct.

The report's response: Recommendations 3 and 6. Involve women and youth from the initial planning stage, and build capacity through a dual-track approach, starting with the Network itself.

5. Funding does not reach those closest to communities

The organizations closest to communities often receive the smallest share

Civil society members of the network reported no direct funding targeting local actors. International organizations registered locally or working in consortia often take the larger share, while complex applications, technical language, and registration and co-financing requirements exclude smaller organizations.

Participants asked for small, flexible grants with simplified procedures for grassroots groups, and multi-year core funding for established organizations.

> **The key word is trust: they want long-term support, not small one-off initiatives, and they worry about how data are used and shared.**
> *— Youth network representative, North Africa*

The report's response: Recommendation 5. Track how much climate finance reaches women and youth, and review NDC financing provisions for gender-responsiveness.

Eight recommendations

Each recommendation specifies what needs to change, who needs to act and at what level, with priority actions set for 2027. The table at the end of this section shows where each actor has a role.

1. **Mandate coherence between gender, climate and security planning.** Give inter-ministerial mechanisms linking National Women's Machineries and Environment Ministries a legal mandate, a budget and technical capacity to align WPS action plans, national climate plans and NDCs, with a joint review at each planning cycle. Level: national, with regional peer learning.
2. **Adopt gender-, disability- and conflict-sensitive data and monitoring protocols.** The Network should develop a shared monitoring tool that builds on existing instruments, such as the gender and climate policy scorecard and NDC checklist, and pairs quantitative indicators with narrative and community-level evidence. Level: Network, regional and national.
3. **Shift from vulnerability-only framing to agency and leadership, from the design stage.** Involve women and youth from the initial planning of climate, WPS and DRR policies and projects, address gender norms and not only access or quotas, and support leadership

pathways, including through women's networks. Level: regional and national.

4. **Participation should be measured not only through representation or consultation but through demonstrated influence on decisions, resource allocations, implementation priorities and monitoring mechanisms.** Monitoring frameworks should therefore assess both presence and influence
5. **Build an evidence-to-policy pipeline that includes civil society and the private sector.** The Network's Knowledge Hub should turn evidence, including community-generated evidence, into policy briefs, prioritizing under-covered areas such as the Maghreb and the wider East Mediterranean. Level: Network, regional and national.
6. **Track and mobilize gender-responsive climate finance.** Use gender markers and accountability tools to track how much climate finance reaches women and youth, and review NDC financing provisions for gender-responsiveness. Level: national and regional.
7. **Build capacity through a dual-track approach, starting with the Network itself.** First bring Network members, who come from diverse sectors to a shared framework so they can act as mentors; then run parallel strands for governments and institutions, and for civil society. Level: Network, regional and national.
8. **Partner with existing women mediators' networks.** Agree a working arrangement with the networking platform for women leaders and mediators of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and with the Mediterranean and Arab women mediators' networks, adding climate and natural resource conflict to their peer exchange and capacity building. Level: Network and regional.







WHO ACTS ON WHAT

Recommendation	Governments and National Women's Machineries	UfM Secretariat and Network	Donors and financial institutions	Civil society and youth organisations	Other partners
1. Mandate coherence	●	●			Environment Ministries
2. Data and monitoring protocols	●	●			National statistical offices, international organizations
3. Agency and leadership from the design stage	●	●	●	●	International organizations
4. Evidence-to-policy pipeline	●	●		●	Private sector
5. Gender-responsive climate finance	●		●		Ministries of finance and environment
6. Dual-track capacity building	●	●	●	●	
7. Partnership with women mediators' networks	●	●	●		OSCE and regional mediators' networks

FROM RECOGNITION TO IMPLEMENTATION

The report's baseline and recommendations are intended to inform decisions in 2027–2028, beginning with COP31. Three conditions will decide whether they deliver: political ownership, with coordination mechanisms and shared tools given an institutional mandate, a budget and champions within ministries; flexible, multi-year resources that reach the organizations closest to communities; and evidence that is trusted and used, based on agreed methodologies and common indicators, with community-generated evidence recognized alongside official data.

Several of the report's findings connect directly to processes under the UNFCCC:

- **Women's representation in climate negotiations.** Women made up only about one-third of party delegations at COP28 (GIWPS & PRIO, 2025).
- **The Gender Action Plan.** The UNFCCC Gender Action Plan was agreed at COP30. Members of the Network's monitoring working group suggested structuring the Network's monitoring around the plan's five thematic areas.
- **NDCs.** The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s NDC Insights Series tracks how gender surfaces in the 2025 NDC cycle, and a UNDP review of a decade of NDCs shows country ownership and social inclusion provisions strengthening over successive cycles. The monitoring working group proposed combining the NDC gender scorecard, the gender markers of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and WPS action plan indicators into one set.

The civil society message. Civil society participants asked COP31 to move from recognition to implementation: resources that reach communities, real decision-making power for women and young people, and community knowledge recognized as evidence.

The evidence from the desk review, MedWE3 policy studies, survey and focus group discussions converges around three interconnected findings. First, policy coherence remains weak across climate, gender and security agendas. Second, data and monitoring systems remain fragmented. Third, the region already possesses a rich ecosystem of women and youth leaders, but lacks the institutional, financial and political infrastructure required to transform local leadership into lasting influence. Moving from recognition to implementation will require closing these three gaps simultaneously


23-24 September 2026
Cairo, Egypt


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