



ICA Gender Equality Committee Statement on the International Women's Day 2022

This year International Women's Day theme is "**Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow**", reflecting the interconnectedness amongst **women's rights, gender equality and climate justice!**

Plenty of scientific data has proved that climate change has a greater and disproportionate impact towards the most vulnerable, especially for women and girls in situation of poverty, that rely mainly on natural resources for their livelihoods.

Women and girls constitute the majority of the world's poorest, and it is exactly like climate that poverty has a gender dimension. Gender-based stereotypes that are influenced by social norms restrict women's economic empowerment by prescribing the roles that women and men should play in society, at home and in the economic sphere. This results in women having significantly less access to information and networks, assets and resources that will enable them to respond to the adverse effects of climate change. According to Alok Sharma, the COP26 President, [80% of people](#) displaced by the climate emergency are women and children.

It is high time that a sustainable future should be built beyond **gender equality**, but rather focus on **gender equity!**

A sustainable tomorrow is much broader than climate change and requires an understanding of complex environmental, social and economic drivers. Cooperatives, as people-centered economic models – through their values of self-help, equality and equity, and principles of voluntary and open membership and democratic control – are well-placed to address many of the issues that negatively impact women, especially to address the multifaceted issue of poverty and shape women's wellbeing.

Cooperatives are a tool to achieve gender equity! By increasing women's access to resources and economic opportunities; by empowering them not only economically but also individually and socially to challenge the social and cultural norms; by creating an enabling environment for them to use those opportunities and assets to achieve equal outcomes to men. The cooperative model has proved to be a mean of building long-term resilience, allowing communities, especially women and girls, to overcome multiple crisis and shocks, including the pandemic and the warlike conflicts that we are experiencing nowadays.

The climate crisis requires resilient solutions that will allow for rapid, just and fair transitions!

ICA Gender Equality Committee works extensively on this direction; in mainstreaming the impact of the cooperative model in achieving gender equity and climate justice! Addressing gender inequality and empowering women is an essential pillar of our work in advancing human rights and sustainable and resilient economic development.

We echo the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel (IPCC) which states that "*Climate resilient development is enabled when governments, civil society and the private sector make*

inclusive development choices that prioritize risk reduction, equity and justice..” and we commit to cooperate on this front with the global community!

Concluding, we would like **to reiterate the commitment of the cooperative movement to positive peace**, as the goal and means to build a society founded on the values of democracy, equality, solidarity, participation and concern for the community¹. The ICA GEC joins the voices of those calling for peace and diplomatic solutions to prevent the further suffering of millions of innocent people, especially of women and girls in Eastern Europe affected by the conflict in Ukraine.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

The Gender Equality Committee (GEC) is a Thematic Committee of the International Cooperative alliance. It is a catalyst for change to make gender equality a reality in all cooperatives and serves as a forum for the discussion and exchange of experiences and ideas on issues related to gender equality.

The GEC's vision is of a cooperative movement led by women and men and based upon equity, solidarity, democracy, and development. In this vision, women's and men's values, skills, and contributions are valued equally and the organisation of work and decision-making structures are based on all people's needs and views.

María Eugenia Pérez Zea
Chair of the ICA Gender Equality Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "María Eugenia Pérez Zea". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

¹ [International Cooperative Alliance Declaration On Positive Peace Through Cooperatives](#)