GLOBAL 50/50

POLICY BRIEF – 2026

COUNTED OUT

How 211 climate and health indicators across four global frameworks fail to see sex and gender



Chilli Farm, Pinkesh Bhati.

The climate crisis is impacting who gets sick, who has to move, who has enough to eat and who is exposed to heat, smoke and floods. The four frameworks that monitor climate and health – the Belém Adaptation Indicators, the WHO Global Survey, the GCHA Healthy NDCs Scorecard and the Lancet Countdown – report on populations as a whole, masking how climate change affects women and men differently. Of their 45 indicators that measure people's lives, just one reports results separately by sex/gender.

WHAT DECISION-MAKERS SHOULD DO

Parties and the UNFCCC adaptation process

At COP31, give the Belém technical task force expertise in sex and gender statistics and a mandate that makes sex/gender a default reporting field for every indicator that counts people, starting with the eight health indicators. This meets commitments under Target 10(b) and the Belém Gender Action Plan.

Health ministries

Require results by sex/gender from your own programmes and surveillance systems, and report them to WHO.

The Lancet Countdown

Publish by sex/gender the indicators whose inputs already carry it, starting with the three the 2025 report identifies: heatwave exposure (1.1.1), dietary change and health co-benefits (3.3.2) and economic losses from heat-impaired labour (4.1.3).

WHO

Add one question to the Global Survey: do national climate-health surveillance systems collect and report sex/gender-disaggregated data? Also consider asking whether vulnerability and adaptation assessments are gender-sensitive.

GCHA

Report the result of GCHA-7.1, which already records whether NDCs name women, and ask whether NDCs differentiate climate-health risk by sex/gender.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Disaggregation changes the picture. Decisions about targeting climate change responses depend on knowing who is at risk. Where sex/gender-disaggregated data exist, they can challenge established narratives about who is most at risk. The purpose is not to rank the sexes against each other but to see which pathway puts which people at risk, informing what a sound response looks like.

Monitoring is almost entirely blind to sex and gender. One of 45 people-level indicators reports a result by sex/gender: the Lancet Countdown's count of outdoor workers. A single population total cannot inform a government or funder whether its intervention improved the health outcomes for the people most affected.

Much of the gap can start to close with data that already exist. The 15 Belém indicators that count people are likely to draw on household surveys, vital registration and workforce registers, which already publish results by sex/gender. For these, the gap is a publishing decision that could be closed in the next reporting cycle.

The year to November 2027 is the window. Successive drafts of the Belém health indicators went from three sex-specific proposals in May 2025, to one in September, to none in the text adopted at COP30. The task force that will define each indicator has not yet been agreed; definitions are due in November 2027, and national data systems will be built around them.

Read the Global 50/50 report *Counted out*

Funders

- Require results by sex/gender in grant agreements and results frameworks.
- Fund gender statistics expertise for the Belém task force and negotiators from low- and middle-income countries.
- Ask the frameworks you already fund to publish by sex/gender the indicators whose inputs carry it.
- Support the repeat of this audit, so movement is visible by COP32.

WHAT FOUR GLOBAL CLIMATE AND HEALTH FRAMEWORKS MEASURE

1 OF 45
indicators that measure people's lives report a result by sex/gender

5 OF 166
indicators on plans, systems and environments refer to sex, gender, women or men

We assessed 211 indicators of four global climate and health frameworks on whether they are reported by sex/gender, or incorporate a sex/gender lens. Of the five indicators on plans, systems or environments that mention gender, two assess gender rather than list it: Belém 10(b) (b) records whether a country has gender-responsive adaptation plans, and Lancet Countdown 5.4.1a counts gender keywords in UN General Debate speeches.

Framework	Indicators	People, by sex/gender	Context, refer to sex/gender
Belém Adaptation Indicators (2025)	59	0 of 15	1 of 44
WHO Global Survey (2021)	32	0 of 3	2 of 29
GCHA Healthy NDCs Scorecard (2025)	58	–	1 of 58
Lancet Countdown (2025)	62	1 of 27	1 of 35
Total	**211**	**1 of 45**	**5 of 166**

The Belém decision says indicators "may be disaggregated, as appropriate". In the WHO survey's 2021 round, none of the 43 vulnerability and adaptation assessments countries submitted included sex/gender-disaggregated data.

WHAT A SEX/GENDER COMPARISON REVEALS

Heat-related mortality. Men's rate is about 2.1 times women's in Latin America and the Caribbean and 1.3 times in South Asia; in six countries women's rate is higher, and European heatwave studies show women at higher risk. The burden does not fall in one predictable direction.

Household air pollution. Men's modelled exposure is around 64% of women's, and more women die: 1.17 million in 2023, against 1.06 million men. Yet from the mid-30s to the late 70s men die at higher rates – 26.2 against 20.3 per 100,000 at ages 50–54. Men's higher underlying risk of cardiovascular and chronic respiratory disease means a smaller dose produces more deaths; women's higher count partly reflects longer lives. *Source: Global Burden of Disease study.*

Neither comparison says which men or which women are dying, or why. The outdoor worker exposed to heat, the man whose smoke exposure compounds tobacco and occupational dust, and the woman cooking indoors for decades in a fuel-poor household need different policy responses. Disaggregation by sex/gender is the first step; explaining the differences through work, housing, income, care, age and migration status is the second.



Any animal other than man, Jialu Pombo.

About Global 50/50. Global 50/50 is an independent think tank that informs, inspires and incites action for gender justice through rigorous evidence, accountability and strengthening movements for change. Since 2017 it has assessed hundreds of global organisations each year against the same evidence-informed standards on gender justice.

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