A PONTE

CLIMATE & CARE PROGRAM

Legislating for Climate & Care

Climate commitments become real in the hands of women legislators



Guideline for parliamentarians, negotiators and funders

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COP31 TÜRKİYE ANTALYA

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At a glance

Climate policy needs to land in local legislation. Most care services and most adaptation measures are delivered by cities and states. The women who sit in those legislatures write the budgets, oversee implementation and hold governments to account. They are the place where global climate commitments either become daycare centers that stay open during a heatwave, or remain words in a negotiated text.

This guideline aims to support three audiences. Women parliamentarians from all over the world, whom we invite to build an international network with us. Climate negotiators, who need routes to implementation. And funders, who are looking for places where climate action actually moves.

What we bring that is new

- **Legislatures as the implementing arena.** Feminist climate movements have shown that care work is climate work. We take the next step and show where that idea becomes law, budget and oversight. Subnational legislators remain absent from the international climate architecture, including the Belém Gender Action Plan.
- **Legislating in coordination.** Through the Wave of Bills (Maré de PLs), women legislators in different cities and states file the same climate and care bill at the same time. Isolated mandates become a coordinated policy force.
- **First adapted, first restored.** Daycare centers, schools and health units should be the first facilities adapted to heat and floods and the first to reopen after a disaster.
- **Care without racial hierarchy.** A care agenda that outsources care to Black women with little social protection reproduces the inequality it claims to fight. Ours redistributes care within households, within the economy and across racial lines at the same time.
- **Missing data is evidence.** Where disaggregated data does not exist, the gap becomes the basis for a formal request for information or a bill.
- **A joint climate and care budget marker.** One tag that shows whether the facilities, services and workers that sustain life under climate stress are actually funded.
- **Protecting the women who carry the agenda.** Political violence based on gender and race drives women out of office. A network that protects its legislators protects the climate and care agenda they carry.

Our invitation

Rede A Ponte, a Brazilian organization that supports elected women, works like a mycorrhizal network in the soil of each forest, a web of fungi that links roots underground and extends each plant's reach for water and nutrients. We connect women legislators so that knowledge, model bills, data and solidarity circulate between them. At COP31 we invite women parliamentarians from every region to join this network, and we invite funders to invest in the connections that make it grow.



A network beneath the surface

COPs are often described as slow. Negotiated texts move by commas, consensus takes years and the distance between what is promised and what reaches people seems to grow at every conference. Much of what makes climate action advance happens elsewhere, in the corridors, side events and bilateral conversations where a city councilor from the Amazon learns how a legislator from Mexico City funded community kitchens, or where a parliamentarian from Maputo and one from Salvador discover they face the same floods with the same missing shelters.

These exchanges are rarely official. They produce no decisions with a UN symbol. They do produce concrete responses to the climate crisis, because they travel directly from one legislature to another and turn into bills, budget amendments and oversight actions within months.

Forests offer an image for this. Beneath the soil, most land plants live in association with mycorrhizal fungi. The fungal threads, finer than a hair, reach far beyond the roots and bring back water and nutrients, and in return the plants share the carbon they capture from the air.

The forest that we see above ground depends on a living web that we do not see.

Rede A Ponte was built as that kind of network. Each mandate is rooted in its own territory, facing its own floods, droughts and budget fights. The network connects them so that what one legislator learns becomes available to all. Model bills, data, training, legal arguments, early warnings of political attacks and simple solidarity move through the threads. The visible results, such as a law approved, a shelter protocol adopted or a budget line created, grow from that invisible exchange.

This guideline is our contribution to making that web international. It explains what we have learned in Brazil, what we believe is new in our approach and how women parliamentarians from other countries can join us.

Our call to action

Of women parliamentarians

- Join the International Network of Women Parliamentarians for Climate and bring a colleague from another level of government.
- Apply the rule "first adapted, first restored" to daycare centers, schools and health units in your adaptation and contingency plans.
- File one climate and care bill in your legislature in the coming year, and share it with the network.
- Propose a joint climate and care budget marker and use it to monitor execution.
- Legislate safe shelter protocols before the next disaster.
- Turn data gaps into formal requests for information and into laws that require disaggregated data.

Of negotiators

- Recognize subnational parliaments and local governments as implementers of the Belém Gender Action Plan and invite their participation in its reviews.
- Support indicators on care service continuity and care time in adaptation reporting.
- Treat lost care time and damaged care infrastructure as part of loss and damage assessments.
- Strengthen the recognition of women of African descent, Indigenous women and women from local communities by explicitly naming racism as a driver of climate vulnerability.

Of funders

- Invest in the connections. Fund the infrastructure of the international network, including peer exchange, translation, travel and legislative technical support.
- Fund the participation of Black, Indigenous and traditional women legislators, who are most underrepresented in international spaces.
- Support international waves of bills and the technical work behind them.
- Fund care infrastructure as climate adaptation, and time-use and disaggregated data collection before and after extreme events.
- Provide flexible, direct funding to community care networks and organizations led by Black, Indigenous and traditional women.

Climate and care are the agenda of the present. Every extreme event already tests whether societies can keep people fed, clean, healthy and safe, and every time, the answer depends on who cares and under what conditions. That answer is written in local laws and local budgets, by legislators who know their territories.

The negotiated texts of a COP may move slowly. Beneath them, a network of women legislators is already exchanging, legislating and protecting one another, the way the hidden threads of a forest keep it alive. Rede A Ponte invites women parliamentarians, negotiators and funders gathered at COP31 to join that network and to place care at the center of climate action, starting where life is sustained every day.

1. Climate policy lands in local legislation

1.1 The implementation gap

International climate agreements are negotiated by national governments. Their implementation depends overwhelmingly on subnational ones. In Brazil, municipalities run daycare and early education, primary schools, primary health care units, social assistance services and local civil defense. They draft master plans and contingency plans and carry out most of the purchases of the National School Feeding Program (PNAE). States organize regional health networks, housing and sanitation policies and state civil defense systems.

The same pattern holds in most federal and decentralized countries. When a heatwave hits, the decisions that determine who lives and who suffers are local. Whether a cooling center is open, whether a health team visits older people living alone, whether a school has water storage, whether a shelter has a separate, well-lit bathroom for women. Each of these depends on a budget line, a law or a protocol that a local legislature approved, amended or failed to demand.

1.2 What legislators control

Legislators act at every stage of public policy. They can:

- propose and amend laws, including master plans, zoning laws and climate adaptation plans;
- amend multi-year plans, budget guidelines and annual budget laws, moving resources toward care and adaptation;
- request information from the executive and require the production of data;
- convene public hearings that bring affected communities into the decision;
- monitor budget execution and refer irregularities to audit bodies;
- work with policy councils and social movements;
- bring public attention to problems that are not yet on the government agenda.

Most of these tools need no new international agreement and no national reform. They are available today, in thousands of legislatures, to anyone with a mandate and the knowledge to use it.

1.3 Why women legislators

Rede A Ponte works with women elected early in their political careers. Women remain a minority in Brazilian legislatures, and Black, Indigenous and Quilombola women even more so. Many of the women we work with already lead on health, education, social assistance or women's rights. They know the daycare centers, health units and community kitchens of their territories, and they hear first from the women who keep life going when services fail.

What is often missing is the connection between these issues and the climate crisis, and the technical support to turn that connection into law and budget. That is the gap our Climate & Care Program fills.

1.4 The missing actor in the climate architecture

The Belém Gender Action Plan (UNFCCC, 2025), adopted at COP30 in 2025, is a significant step. It includes care work among its areas of activity, recognizes the contribution of women and girls of African descent to climate action, calls for coherence on gender and climate between national and local levels and promotes gender-responsive budgeting. Parliamentarians are not mentioned in the text. Subnational legislatures, where gender-responsive budgets are voted and adaptation plans are overseen, have no defined role in its implementation.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Tlatelolco Commitment (CEPAL, 2025), adopted in August 2025, launched a decade of action towards a care society. It links care to climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, calls for stronger subnational and local governments and encourages interparliamentary alliances to advance the legislative agenda. This is the opening our network seeks to occupy.

2. Our theory of change

2.1 From mandate to network to change

Our theory of change starts from a simple observation. Women legislators who are connected, supported and protected stay in politics longer, legislate better and bring the realities of their territories into public decisions. When many of them act together on the same agenda, the effect goes beyond the sum of their mandates.

The path has five steps.

1. **Connect.** We bring women legislators from different parties, regions and levels of government into a shared space of trust and exchange.
2. **Strengthen.** We offer training and technical support on public budgeting, government oversight, data production and collaboration with social movements, and we produce technical notes and model bills.
3. **Legislate together.** Through the Wave of Bills, we turn shared priorities into coordinated legislative action across many legislatures at once.
4. **Measure and learn.** We track what is approved, funded and implemented, record where data is missing and feed what we learn back into the network.
5. **Protect.** We respond to political violence based on gender and race, because the agenda advances only if the women who carry it can stay in office.

2.2 The Wave of Bills ("Maré de PLs")

The Wave of Bills is the clearest expression of how the network works. Rede A Ponte chooses a theme of shared interest with legislators, prepares a model bill with technical and legal grounding and supports its filing at the same time in several city councils and state legislatures. Each legislator adapts the proposal to her local legal framework and political context.

A synchronized filing changes the political dynamics of a bill. A proposal that would be easy to ignore in one city council becomes news when it appears in many at once. Legislators share arguments, data and strategies for building majorities. Approvals in one place become precedents for others. The model bill also travels further, since it can be adapted by legislators outside the network and by executive governments.

Rede A Ponte has decided to deepen this method. Listening processes with affected communities, such as fisherwomen, Quilombola communities, family farmers and residents of urban peripheries, will feed into the drafting of model bills, so that each wave carries demands formulated by the communities themselves.

2.3 Why the network form matters

Our network is designed as infrastructure for exchange, in which value lies in what circulates. Like a mycorrhizal web in the soil of the forests, the network gives each member a reach she would not have alone, and each member's growth strengthens the whole.

- **Knowledge.** What worked, what failed and why, in plain language.
- **Legislative technology.** Model bills, budget amendments, requests for information and oversight protocols that can be copied and adapted.
- **Evidence.** Data collected in one territory that supports arguments in another.
- **Protection.** Rapid public solidarity when a member is attacked, and shared strategies against online violence.
- **Courage.** The experience of not being alone in a legislature where you may be the only Black woman, the only young woman or the only one raising climate and care.

3. What makes this approach different

Feminist climate organizations have built a strong foundation over the past decade. The Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) and the Feminist Green New Deal Coalition, among others, have established that care work is climate work, that care infrastructure is climate infrastructure, that care jobs are low-carbon jobs and that a just transition must center care and Buen Vivir (Feminist Green New Deal Coalition, 2021; Lake and Quaid, 2023). We share these ideas and build on them.

Our contribution lies in what happens next. The points below are where we believe the Climate & Care Program brings something new to the international agenda. Each comes with the legislative tool that puts it into practice.

3.1 Legislatures as the implementing arena

Most of the feminist climate agenda addresses national governments, international institutions and policymakers in general. We address the specific level of government where care services and adaptation measures are delivered, and the specific institution that decides their budget and oversees their execution. This shifts the question from what should be done to who can make it happen next year, with which instrument and with what money.

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

Local adherence to national care plans, municipal adaptation plans that incorporate care, oversight of public food procurement and budget amendments for care facilities in high-risk territories.

3.2 Legislating in coordination

The Wave of Bills described in Section 2.2 is a method that can be replicated in any country with several layers of legislature, and it can cross borders. An international wave, in which women parliamentarians in different countries file comparable climate and care bills in the same season, would give the international network a shared, visible achievement and turn COP commitments into domestic law in several places at once.

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

A shared model text, adapted to each legal system, filed in a coordinated period and reported back to the network.

3.3 First adapted, first restored

When a disaster closes a daycare center or turns a school into a shelter, the care those facilities provided moves back into households, mostly onto women. Each day a care facility stays closed becomes hours of unpaid work. We propose a simple rule that any government can adopt. Daycare centers, schools and

health units should be among the first facilities adapted to heat and flooding and among the first to resume operation after a disaster.

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hospitals in 87 municipalities had their facilities affected after the 2024 floods in Rio Grande do Sul

CNN Brasil, 2025

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

Risk assessment of every care facility, a priority list for adaptation investment and continuity plans with target reopening times, written into adaptation and contingency plans.

3.4 Care without racial hierarchy

International debate frames the outsourcing of care as a "global care chain" linking migrant women from the Global South to households in the North. In Brazil the same chain runs inside national borders and along racial lines. A care agenda built from the experience of middle-class households tends to focus on reconciling paid work and family life and on purchasing care in the market. That purchase has historically relied on the work of Black women.

5.9 million

domestic workers in Brazil, 91.9% of them women

DIEESE, 2025

66%

of domestic workers are Black women

DIEESE, 2025

34.6%

contributed to social security in 2022

Ipea

R$ 1,018

average monthly income in 2022, below the minimum wage of R$ 1,212

Ipea

Our agenda therefore addresses three things together. The redistribution of unpaid care within families. The working conditions of paid care workers, most of whom are Black women with little social protection. And the recognition and funding of community care in Black, Indigenous, Quilombola and peripheral territories, such as neighborhood networks, solidarity kitchens, terreiros (Afro-Brazilian religious communities) and women's organizations, which fill the absence of public services and are mobilized intensively during climate emergencies.

We extend the same logic to men's co-responsibility for care. Extended parental leave, working hours compatible with family life and public co-responsibility campaigns are necessary. To be structural, they must be combined with policies that reduce the violence, unemployment and precarity that disproportionately affect Black men and their families.

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

Formalization of domestic workers, heat protection standards for care workers, public funding lines for community kitchens and care networks and parental leave laws for public servants at state and municipal level.

3.5 Missing data is evidence

Most of the inequalities described in this guideline are poorly measured. Few countries track how unpaid care time changes before and after a disaster, and climate impact data are rarely disaggregated by sex, race, age and territory at the same time. When data is missing, problems are easily dismissed.

We treat the absence as information. Wherever the data needed to cross gender, race, income, age and territory does not exist, the gap is recorded as a finding in its own right. Legislators then use it as the basis for a formal request for information, an oversight action or a bill requiring public bodies to produce, publish and territorialize the missing data.

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

A standard request for information on disaggregated climate and care data that any legislator in the network can file, and a public register of the answers received and the gaps that remain.

3.6 Lost care time is a climate loss

When a disaster destroys a daycare center, a water network or a health unit, the cost of rebuilding is recorded. The months during which families, mostly women, take over the work those services performed are recorded nowhere. Research by Oxfam in Bangladesh found that unpaid care hours rise among the poorest women after climate shocks and that care is not meaningfully considered in current loss and damage assessments (Oxfam GB)

We propose that lost care time be treated as a climate loss. Measuring it requires time-use data collected before and after extreme events, disaggregated by sex, race and territory. Counting it would change how damage is assessed, how reconstruction is prioritized and how loss and damage resources are allocated.

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

Post-disaster assessments that include care facilities and care time, and local reconstruction plans that prioritize the services whose closure shifts work onto women.

3.7 A joint climate and care budget marker

A policy written into law without matching funding remains on paper. Climate budget tagging and gender budget tagging already exist separately in many countries. At federal level, Brazil's 2024–2027 multi-year plan defined five cross-cutting agendas, covering women, children and adolescents, racial equality, Indigenous peoples and the environment, and the Ministry of Planning publishes monitoring reports on them (MPO, 2024a, 2024b, 2025). We propose combining climate and care in a single marker that states

and municipalities can adopt, so that spending on the facilities, services and workers that sustain life under climate stress becomes visible and can be tracked over time.

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

A bill or budget guideline amendment creating the marker, followed by an annual report to the legislature on what was planned, approved and executed.

3.8 Protecting the women who carry the agenda

Women legislators, and especially Black, Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ women, face political violence based on gender and race, from online attacks to threats against their families. This violence pushes women out of politics and silences the agendas they bring, including climate and care. Rede A Ponte addresses it through its campaign A Woman's Place Is Where She Was Elected (Lugar de Mulher é Onde Ela Foi Eleita), launched in May 2026.

We treat the protection of legislators as part of the climate agenda. A network that responds quickly when a member is attacked keeps her in office and keeps her proposals moving.

LEGISLATIVE TOOL

Rapid response and public solidarity protocols within the network, and laws and internal rules that recognize and sanction political violence based on gender and race in legislatures.

4. Foundations

The concepts below are widely used in climate and gender debates. This section explains how we apply them, since that use shapes every proposal in this guideline.

4.1 Buen Vivir *as the measure of policy*

Buen Vivir (Bem-Viver) is a political formulation rooted in the cosmologies of Andean Indigenous peoples, expressed in the notions of sumak kawsay in Quechua and suma qamaña in Aymara, and incorporated into the constitutions of Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009). In Brazil it resonates with Indigenous, Black women's and traditional community movements that see body, territory and nature as the basis of collective life. The IV March of Indigenous Women, held in Brasília in August 2025, linked the bodies of Indigenous women to territory and to the protection of the planet.

We adopt Buen Vivir as our horizon for the sustainability of life, understood as the material, emotional, environmental and community conditions that allow people to live with dignity throughout their lives and those of future generations. A policy is judged by its capacity to guarantee water, food, housing, health, education, free time and caring relationships without destroying the ecosystems on which those conditions depend. Economic efficiency and GDP growth become means, subordinate to that test.

4.2 Climate justice and environmental racism

Climate justice recognizes that the groups that contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions generally suffer most from climate change and have the fewest resources to protect themselves and recover. Environmental racism describes the disproportionate exposure of Black, Indigenous and other racialized populations to environmental risks as a result of public and private decisions about land use. Brazil has incorporated the concept into official policy through a Thematic Plan on Racial Equality and Combating Racism within the adaptation strategy of its Climate Plan (Plano Clima), which aims to overcome environmental racism (MMA, 2025).

Brazil's 2022 Census shows how this plays out.

Access to adequate sewage, waste collection and water supply at once, by race or color (2022)

83.5%	75%	68.9%	29.9%
of White people	of Black (*preta*) people	of Brown (*parda*) people	of Indigenous people

IBGE, 2024a

In all 20 most populous municipalities, White residents had better access to these services than Black, Brown and Indigenous residents.

4.3 Care as social infrastructure

The care economy covers the activities needed to sustain life, such as preparing food, cleaning, looking after children, older people, sick people and people with disabilities, offering emotional support and maintaining community networks. Paid or unpaid, this work sustains the whole economy and remains outside GDP accounts.

Brazil's National Care Policy (Law 15,069/2024) establishes that everyone has a right to care, understood as the right to be cared for, to care and to self-care, and defines care as a duty of the State at all levels of government, shared with families, the private sector and civil society. Treating care as social infrastructure means treating daycare centers, full-time schools, day centers for older people, home support services, public laundries and restaurants and community spaces as structures on which a city depends to function in normal times and to respond to crises.

4.4 Race, gender and territory

Intersectionality, the term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and anticipated in Brazil by Black intellectuals such as Lélia Gonzalez, describes how systems of inequality act simultaneously. We place **race, gender and territory** at the center of our strategy. Territory is included because exposure to climate risks and access to care vary enormously between neighborhoods of the same city, between urban and rural areas and between regions.

Brazil's 2022 Census identified 12,348 favelas and urban communities in 656 municipalities, home to 16.4 million people, or 8.1% of the population.

Residents of favelas and urban communities, by race and sex (2022)

56.8%	16.1%	51.7%
identify as Brown	identify as Black	are women

IBGE, 2024b

The shares of Brown and Black residents are higher than in the population as a whole. Precarious public services and occupation of areas at environmental risk are among the criteria used to define them.

Using these three axes as priorities means that the question of who is affected and who decides guides every stage of policy, from diagnosis to budget. Other dimensions of inequality, such as disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, are addressed wherever they shape exposure to risk and access to care, as in the shelter protocols described in Section 7.

5. Political principles

5.1 Centrality of life

Climate, economic and budget decisions should be assessed by their capacity to protect and sustain the lives of people and ecosystems. For political leaders this means prioritizing spending and policies that guarantee water, food, shelter, health and care, especially for the groups most exposed to climate risks. The rule "first adapted, first restored" (Section 3.3) is the most concrete expression of this principle.

5.2 Territorial action with participation and social oversight

Climate risks, care needs and response capacities are unevenly distributed, and policies work only when they take those differences into account. Brazil's Law 14,904/2024 on adaptation plans requires adaptation measures to be designed jointly by the three levels of government, with guaranteed participation of those most vulnerable to climate change (Brasil, 2024a). Participation should include existing policy councils and also listening processes with traditional communities, Indigenous peoples, Quilombolas, fisherwomen and shellfish gatherers, family farmers and residents of urban peripheries, using methods suited to how they organize themselves.

5.3 Redistribution and climate federalism

Climate and care policies should transfer resources, time and decision-making power to the groups that have historically borne the costs of crises. Climate federalism refers to how competences, resources and responsibilities are shared between national, state and municipal governments. Brazil's adaptation strategy sets a national target for all states and at least 35% of municipalities to have adaptation plans by 2035 (MMA, 2026). Law 14,904/2024 requires priority support for the most vulnerable municipalities, encourages inter-municipal consortia and allows the National Climate Change Fund to finance municipal adaptation plans. The National Care Policy follows a similar logic, with funding from federal, state and municipal budgets.

For subnational legislators this opens two fronts. They can press local governments to prepare adaptation plans that incorporate care, and they can monitor whether available federal and state resources are being accessed and spent in the most exposed territories. The same two fronts exist in any country where national climate and social commitments depend on local delivery.

5.4 Just transition. For whom?

The shift to a low-carbon economy produces gains and losses that are unevenly distributed. The guiding question is who defines the direction of the transition, who bears its costs and who benefits. In 2015, Quilombola communities and artisanal fishers from four Brazilian states launched the campaign Not One More Well! (Nem um Poço a Mais!) to halt oil expansion over their territories (CPP). For us, a just transition recognizes care as a strategic sector for low-carbon employment, guarantees decent conditions for those who care, respects the territorial rights of traditional peoples and communities and secures their participation in decisions about projects that affect their ways of life.

6. How the climate crisis deepens the care crisis

6.1 Who sustains life in times of crisis

According to Brazil's national household survey (PNAD Contínua) for 2022, women aged 14 and over spent on average 21.3 hours a week on domestic work and caring for people, while men spent 11.7 hours. The gap persists among people in paid employment, where it reaches 6.8 hours (IBGE, 2023a). Black women show the highest rate of participation in domestic work of all groups, at 92.7%. Globally, the International Labour Organization estimates that in 2023, 708 million women were outside the labor force because of care responsibilities, compared with 40 million men (ILO, via Agência Gov, 2025a). In Brazil, women in large companies earn on average 21.3% less than men (MTE, 2026), and in 2024 Black women earned 47.5% of what non-Black men earned (Agência Gov, 2025b).

Extreme weather multiplies this overload. When water supply is interrupted, more time is needed to fetch water and keep people clean. When schools and daycare centers close or are used as shelters, children stay at home. When heat worsens the health of older or chronically ill people, a family member has to accompany them. When a flood hits a house, cleaning, recovering documents and rebuilding add to paid work and existing care. Paid care workers, such as domestic workers, caregivers, community health agents and early childhood educators, must keep working through heatwaves and floods, often without formal contracts, paid leave or income support.

6.2 Health and wellbeing

A study by researchers from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) and the University of Lisbon estimated that heatwaves caused more than 48,000 deaths in Brazil's 14 most populous metropolitan regions between 2000 and 2018, over twenty times the number of deaths from landslides in the same period. Women, Black and Brown people, older people and people with less schooling were the most affected (Santos et al., 2024).

Work-related impacts are also unequal. In a 2017 survey of 139 shellfish gatherers in a community in Bahia, 89.2% were Brown or Black and all reported musculoskeletal pain (Silva et al., 2021). After the 2019 oil spill along the Brazilian coast, shellfish gatherers working in prolonged contact with water were exposed to substances associated with skin, eye, endocrine and reproductive problems. Losing a home or livelihood, living for long periods in shelters and facing territorial conflicts also cause psychological suffering that reaches both those affected and those who care for them.

6.3 Unequal territories, unequal responses

The floods in Rio Grande do Sul in April and May 2024 affected 478 municipalities and almost 2.4 million people. In mid-May, 77,199 people were in shelters, and by August 2025 the disaster had caused 185 deaths, with 23 people still missing (Defesa Civil RS, 2024a, 2024b, 2025). In the first weeks, cases of sexual abuse against women, children and adolescents in shelters were reported. Public authorities and organized residents responded by creating women- and children-only shelters, as in the city of Canoas (Sul21, 2024), and affected women asked the federal Ministry of Women for a dedicated reporting point,

separate bathrooms, psychological support and supplies such as menstrual pads, diapers and underwear (Secom, 2024).

Sanitation and food follow the same pattern. In 2022, 24.3% of Brazil's population still relied on precarious sewage solutions, with greater restrictions among young, Black, Brown and Indigenous people (IBGE, 2024a). In 2024, 24.2% of households experienced some degree of food insecurity. Households headed by women accounted for 59.9% of food-insecure households while representing 51.8% of all households, and 73.8% of households in severe food insecurity were headed by Black or Brown people (IBGE, 2025).

7. A legislative toolkit for Climate & Care

Each area below lists measures that subnational legislators can propose, fund or oversee. They are drawn from Brazilian practice and can be adapted to other federal and decentralized systems. The table offers a summary, and the text that follows explains each area.

AREA	LEGISLATE	FUND	OVERSEE
Care infrastructure	Risk assessment and continuity plans for daycare centers, schools and health units; adherence to the national care plan	Thermal adaptation, water storage and backup energy for care facilities in high-risk areas	Whether new facilities are sited and designed with climate risks in mind
Water, energy and sanitation	Bans on cutting water and power to vulnerable households during climate emergencies; social tariffs	Expansion of services in favelas, Quilombola territories and rural areas	Concession contracts with targets disaggregated by territory
Health	Municipal heat alert systems linked to primary care and civil defense	Home visits to older people, cooling points, psychosocial support	Continuity plans for health units during extreme events
Food systems	Priority for women's family farming groups in public procurement	Community kitchens, popular restaurants, full-time school meals	Compliance with the minimum share of school meal purchases from family farming
Care work	Heat protection standards and pay equity criteria in public contracts	Formalization and training of care workers	Working conditions of outsourced care workers in public services
Disaster risk	Safe shelter protocols; registers of people who depend on care	Civil defense teams trained in care and protection	Whether contingency plans are updated and include care
Budget and data	Joint climate and care budget marker; mandatory disaggregated data	Time-use and disaggregated data collection	Annual report on planned, approved and executed spending

7.1 Care infrastructure

Daycare centers, schools, primary health units, social assistance centers, day centers and long-term care homes for older people should be included in climate risk assessments and adaptation plans. They serve the people most sensitive to heat and floods and are often used as shelters during emergencies. Legislators can require risk assessments of these facilities, thermal adaptation of classrooms and health units, water storage and backup energy and continuity plans for rapid reopening after disasters.

Brazil's National Care Plan, launched in December 2025 with 79 actions in five areas and R$ 25 billion in planned investment through 2027, includes care spaces for children, training for care professionals, public laundries and daycare centers (MDS, 2025). Adherence by states and municipalities is being phased in through 2026. Legislators can check whether their municipality or state has joined and insist that new facilities be sited and designed with climate risks in mind.

Regular access to safe water, electricity and sanitation determines how much time and effort care requires. Legislators can prioritize the expansion of services in favelas, Quilombola territories and rural areas, require concession contracts to include targets disaggregated by territory and propose social tariffs and bans on cutting water and power to vulnerable households during climate emergencies. Through master plans and zoning laws they can also protect mangroves, rivers, springs, hillsides and urban green areas that reduce the risk of floods, landslides and heat, and recognize the territorial rights of the Indigenous, Quilombola and traditional communities that manage these ecosystems.

7.2 Health

Heat plans should identify in advance older people who live alone or have chronic illnesses, organize home visits by primary care teams, open cooling points in public buildings and support the people who care for them. Health surveillance should incorporate heat and heavy rain alerts and record data by sex, race, age and territory. Health units should be adapted to keep working during extreme events. Psychosocial support belongs in response and reconstruction plans, for those affected, for care professionals and for family members who take on care. In traditional territories it should be built with the communities and respect their own practices of care. Legislators can also propose expanded occupational health care for non-salaried workers such as fisherwomen and shellfish gatherers (Pena, Martins and Rego, 2013).

7.3 Food systems

Brazil's National School Feeding Program (PNAE) combines in a single policy guaranteed meals for public school students, less food preparation work for families and income for family farmers. Law 14,660/2023 made women's family farming groups priority suppliers and required that at least 50% of purchases from individual rural families be made in the woman's name. Law 15,226/2025 raised the minimum share of federal school feeding funds spent directly on family farming from 30% to 45% starting in January 2026. In 2022, 1,586 municipalities failed to reach even the 30% threshold (FGM, 2025), which makes legislative oversight and technical support for women farmers decisive.

Cooking shows one of the largest gender gaps of all domestic tasks, 29.7 percentage points in 2022 (IBGE, 2023b). Popular restaurants, community kitchens and full-time school meals reduce the time families, and especially women, spend preparing food. They are care redistribution policies and crisis protection policies at the same time. Territorial food systems based on family farming, artisanal fishing and local markets also reduce dependence on long supply chains that break during climate shocks.

7.4 Care work

Recognizing care means making it visible in statistics, budgets and policies. Redistributing it means shifting part of the work from families to public and community services and, within families, from women to

men. Closing the gender pay gap is part of this agenda, since women's lower pay reinforces household decisions to concentrate unpaid work on them. Subnational legislators can add pay equity criteria to public contracts and concessions, set heat protection standards for public and outsourced care workers, including breaks, access to water and rules for leave in risk situations, support the formalization of domestic workers and strengthen their unions and associations. They can also reduce the time care requires through public transportation, services close to home and community support networks.

7.5 Disaster risk management with a care perspective

Adaptation plans should map the care facilities exposed to risk, the populations that depend on them and the people responsible for care in each territory, and guarantee continuity of services. Brazil's adaptation strategy names gender equality and environmental racism as cross-cutting themes, which gives legislators a basis to demand the same in local plans. Civil defense contingency plans should identify in advance bedridden people, people with disabilities and older people living alone, organize their evacuation and keep essential health and social services running during the emergency.

The Rio Grande do Sul floods showed that temporary shelters must include, from the planning stage, exclusive spaces for women and children, separate and well-lit bathrooms, channels to report violence, social assistance and health teams, psychological support and supplies of menstrual products, diapers and underwear. Legislators can propose state and municipal laws establishing protection protocols for women, children, older people, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ people in shelters and require their inclusion in contingency plans. This is legislation that should be in place before the next disaster.

7.6 Education and public narrative

Law 14,926/2024 updated Brazil's National Environmental Education Policy to address climate change and disaster risk. Legislators can monitor its implementation and propose that climate education include care work, the sharing of domestic tasks between girls and boys, traditional knowledge of territorial management and emergency preparedness. Education is absent from the 16 sectoral and thematic plans of Brazil's adaptation strategy (Exame, 2026), which makes local action on school buildings, routines and curricula all the more important.

Communication can help people see the link between climate and care through concrete situations, such as water shortages, school closures, overheated classrooms or the situation of women in shelters, and understand them as the result of public decisions that can be changed. Good practice uses data with identified sources and presents caregivers as political actors. Legislators can also support public alert systems in accessible language and partnerships with community radio to counter disinformation, which can cost lives during emergencies.

8. Measuring what matters

8.1 Climate and care indicators

Monitoring the links between climate, care and inequality requires indicators that show how extreme events, water insecurity, precarious services and environmental degradation change living conditions and increase unpaid work, particularly among Black women and residents of peripheral and environmentally vulnerable territories. We organize them in four dimensions.

DIMENSION AND INDICATORS	REQUIRED DISAGGREGATION	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
1. Care workload Weekly hours of domestic and care work; share of people outside the labor force due to care; school dropout linked to care duties.	Race, gender, age, territory	Show how climate crises and failing services increase unpaid care and limit women's economic and educational autonomy.
2. Access to essential services Water and sewage coverage; electricity access; time needed to reach water and energy; daycare places, primary care and public care facilities; food and nutrition security.	Income, race, territory (neighborhood and community level)	Assess whether infrastructure reduces inequality and the time needed to access essential services, and locate territories with deficits or interruptions.
3. Exposure, climate impacts and health Care facilities in risk areas; days of service interruption after extreme events; health impacts of environmental degradation and territorial conflict; heat-related mortality and morbidity.	Race, gender, territory, age	Map where risks and impacts fall, track the vulnerability of public infrastructure and measure the health effects of extreme events.
4. Institutional response and budget justice Execution of funds for care infrastructure and climate policy; inclusion of gender, race and care in municipal adaptation plans; shelter protection protocols; adherence to the national care plan.	Municipality, budget unit, territory	Verify whether plans and budgets translate into services and investment in the most affected territories.

These indicators draw on national household surveys and censuses, health information systems, social registries, municipal administrative records and participatory territorial diagnoses. Wherever the necessary disaggregation is missing, the gap is recorded and acted upon, following the principle in Section 3.5.

8.2 From plan to territory

Policy monitoring follows the full cycle of planning, budgeting, execution, territorial coverage and results. It checks whether laws and plans contain objectives, targets, resources and clear responsibilities, tracks physical and financial execution and asks whether resources reach the groups and territories most affected. Policy councils, community organizations, public hearings and legislative oversight tools are part of the method, so that the formal existence of a policy is never mistaken for its implementation.

Findings feed directly into bills, budget amendments, requests for information, technical notes and oversight actions, as well as Climate & Care Notebooks (Cadernos de Clima e Cuidado) and training materials. Across the network, each legislator's findings become evidence available to all.

9. From Brazil to the world

Building an international network

9.1 A network that is already growing

The model described in this guideline was developed with women legislators in Brazil, and it is already crossing borders. Through El Puente, Rede A Ponte is taking its work with elected women to Mexico. With our partner Mukadzi, we are building a South-South initiative that connects elected women in Mozambique and Brazil, which held its first workshop in Maputo in January 2026 with civil society, feminist academics and former parliamentarians. Each of these connections has shown us that women legislators in very different countries face the same floods, the same closed schools and the same budget fights, and that they learn fast from each other.

9.2 The International Network of Women Parliamentarians for Climate

At COP31 we are convening the International Network of Women Parliamentarians for Climate (Rede Internacional de Mulheres Parlamentares pelo Clima). We aim to **connect women legislators at every level, from city councils to national parliaments, who want to turn climate and care commitments into law, budget and oversight in their own territories, and to support each other while doing it.**

We imagine the network working the way our Brazilian network does.

- **Exchange.** Regular peer conversations between legislators facing similar challenges, across languages and regions.
- **Shared legislative technology.** Model bills, budget amendments and oversight protocols on climate and care, adapted to different legal systems.
- **International waves.** Coordinated periods in which members file comparable bills in their legislatures and report back.
- **Evidence from the ground.** Data and stories collected by members, brought together to inform international negotiations.
- **Mutual protection.** Public solidarity when a member faces political violence.
- **A voice at the COP.** A collective presence of subnational and national women legislators in the processes that implement the Belém Gender Action Plan and the Tlatelolco Commitment.

9.3 Why the COP is the right place

The COP is where national governments negotiate. It is also one of the few places in the world where a councilor from Belém, a legislator from Oaxaca, a parliamentarian from Maputo and a funder from Europe can sit at the same table. Many of the most useful exchanges at a COP are informal and bilateral. A model bill shared over coffee, a contact passed on after a side event, a funding conversation that starts in a corridor. These exchanges do not appear in the final decision. They do advance concrete responses to the climate crisis, because they connect people who hold the instruments of implementation.

The international network gives these exchanges continuity. What starts at a COP can keep moving between conferences, through the threads of the network, and return to the next COP as approved laws, funded services and evidence.

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