

# New ADB initiative launched to strengthen women's resilience to heat stress in Asia

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**Online Desk:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday launched a new initiative to better understand and invest in adaptation to the impacts of heat stress on women and girls across Asia and the Pacific.

Under the new technical assistance program, ADB will research how the growing threat of heat stress affects women and identify specific policies, actions, and investments that can help governments reduce the impacts of heat on women and girls.

The program will be implemented in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan, said a media release issued from Dubai.

“We are on course for the warmest year on record and in Asia and the Pacific, this is placing unprecedented strain on women, on their economic productivity, their role in food security, and the infrastructure that women use,” said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa at the launch of the initiative at COP28.

“Development is no longer possible without addressing the consequences of climate change such as extreme heat—and we must focus on women.”

Extreme heat has been linked to more than 650 billion hours of annual labor losses worldwide, equivalent to about 148 million full-time jobs—a scale of disruption comparable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Women are disproportionately affected by these rising temperatures, facing life-threatening conditions and substantial socioeconomic losses.

“Women in vulnerable regions are often hardest hit by the effects of our warming planet,” said Former US Secretary of State and Arsht-Rock Global Ambassador for Heat, Health, and Gender Hillary Rodham Clinton on a panel discussion at the event which was coorganized by ADB and the Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center. “ADB’s initiative marks an important step towards rectifying these imbalances.”

“Every person on the planet is at risk of being impacted by extreme heat—but the impacts are unequal,” said Former President of Mexico Felipe Calderón.

“Policymakers must take measures to protect the most vulnerable communities, particularly in cities where the problem is more severe due to the urban heat island effect. From naming and categorizing heatwaves to urban greening initiatives, cities are at the frontline of implementing solutions that safeguard their citizens’ lives and livelihoods.”

“In the Pacific, where climate change is a lived reality, we see first-hand how extreme heat exacerbates existing gender inequalities,” said Fiji’s Minister for Women, Children, and Poverty Alleviation Lynda Tabuya. “Empowering women through targeted measures is crucial for our collective climate response.”

“The disproportionate impact of heat stress on women calls for a tailored approach,” said UN-Habitat and Arsht-Rock Global Chief Heat Officer Eleni Myrivili. “Integrating gender perspectives in our climate strategies is not just essential; it’s a matter of urgency and equity.”

“Cities are on the frontline of climate change,” said City of Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp. “As leaders, we must ensure our climate resilience efforts, particularly regarding heat stress, are inclusive, recognizing the

unique vulnerabilities and strengths of women.”

The initiative marks ADB’s commitment to integrating heat action-planning into all new operations in vulnerable regions, focusing on enhancing women’s climate resilience and advocating for gender-responsive measures.

The program aligns with the bank’s ambition to provide \$100 billion in climate financing from its own resources from 2019 to 2030, including \$34 billion for adaptation, according to ADB.

In 2022, ADB committed \$7.1 billion of climate finance, including \$4.3 billion for mitigation and \$2.8 billion for adaptation.

The bank mobilized an additional \$548 million in climate finance from the private sector last year.