

Women's Caucus at COP12 / COP-MOP2

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Climate Change cannot be fully understood without recognizing the complex interplays between environmental, economic and social factors – in order to fully understand the causes of climate change, mitigating climate change, the effects of climate change, and adapting to climate change.

Climate Change is a sustainable development challenge.

The gender aspects of climate change demonstrate this: Women and men impact the climate differently. And they are differently affected by climate change. They can play specific roles in mitigation. And they have particular needs, and specific contributions to make to adaptation.

Climate Change Impacts and Vulnerabilities

Climate change has different impacts on different social groups, especially women and men, due to gender specific roles and status in societies.

Women and men have different vulnerabilities. They fulfil different roles in their families and societies. Their economic situation differs, with regard to economic sectors, income, and property ownership. Women constitute the majority of the world's poor, and are often more dependent on natural resources.

Actions:

- Each country should conduct an analysis of impacts of climate change on women and men, which should be included in the National Communications.
- There is an urgent need for a gender analysis of vulnerability, and gender analysis must become a regular practice for all policies being developed.

Adaptation ¹

Adaptation programs need to be aware of people's differential capacity to cope with climate change, both in terms of their specific needs and risks arising from the roles assigned to them by society, and in terms of their specific knowledge and experience that can contribute to more effective solutions.

Actions:

- Gender analysis should be integrated into National Adaptation Plans.
- It is particularly important to conduct gender analyses of adaptation needs, and ensure women's participation in developing adaptation policies and programs.
- Women should have an equal say in how resources for adaptation are spent at the national level.

Market-based Mechanisms ²

The main victims of the market-based approach to environmental protection are those who do not have the cash to buy their water, fuel wood and medicines. They include women, Indigenous Peoples, landless farmers, and the monetary poor in general.

These people also lack formal land titles, marketing skills, investment capital and information they would need if they wished to compete in environmental services markets. As IIED concludes, "... by spurring competition, markets may lead to the further marginalization of weaker groups (...). The constraints to pro-poor market development are formidable."

In addition, challenges of access to energy, which are particularly important to rural women and the urban poor, are not likely to be resolved through market-based mechanisms.

Action: All market-based approaches need a careful analysis of positive and negative effects on all potential market actors. This cannot necessarily be done at the national level but may require context-specific analysis at the local level.

¹ See: Friends of the Earth International: *Position on Adaptation*, 2006.

² See: Global Forest Coalition: *You Cannot Save It If You Cannot Sell It?* August 2006.

Clean Development Mechanism

Many CDM projects depend on substantial land use change, which compounds the problems of local people, affecting women and men differently. Where there are cash awards and technology transfers, it is usually not the women but the men who enjoy access to them. Where collective lands are used, women are more negatively affected because they are dependent on the natural resources provided by those lands and are often hindered to obtain land titles.

Action: Sustainability criteria for CDM projects should be made public and easily accessible. They should include mechanisms for stakeholder participation, gender analysis and equitable benefits for women and men.

Biofuels: ³

The local production and consumption of biomass plays an important role in sustainable livelihood strategies of, in particular, rural women in developing countries. However, international trade in biofuels is causing negative impacts on food sovereignty, rural livelihoods, forests and other ecosystems. Large-scale, export-oriented production of biofuel requires large-scale monocultures of trees, sugarcane, corn, oilpalm, soy and other crops. These monocultures already form the number one cause of rural depopulation and deforestation worldwide.

Effects of rapidly increasing biofuel production will have a particularly negative effect on women and Indigenous Peoples, who are marginalized and more dependent on natural resources like water and forests.

Action: The modalities of biomass consumption and production must be carefully analyzed from a gender perspective in conjunction with communities, to introduce adaptive measures that will maintain and enhance patterns of sustainability, while avoiding negative impacts on health and the adverse effects inherent to increases in demand or changes in socio-economic settings.

Capacity Building, Public Awareness and Information

Many public awareness campaigns are not target-group specific although they aim to inform women and men. However, women and men use different channels and different networks for sharing and disseminating information. Moreover, an increasing number of capacity building programmes are focusing mainly on the use of the CDM.

Actions:

- Capacity building programmes should also include components on climate change itself, and on adaptation. In their design and roll-out, capacity building and public awareness campaigns should draw on priorities put forward by women and local communities.
- Information needs to reach women, particularly rural women who are remote from the cities and information and technologies, especially on weather and other conditions relating to agriculture, such as suitable crops and rain water harvesting, in order to ensure food security.

Women and Gender in the Climate Policy Process

The above are just a few example points that demonstrate the importance of taking into account the gender specific aspects of climate change and climate policies. Participation of women and gender experts is a key strategy to develop just, effective and efficient measures of climate protection.

Actions:

- Climate policy makers should draw on the expertise of relevant international institutions, such as the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW; as well as gender specialists at FAO, UNEP, UNDP, UN-Habitat; and others;
- Governments should draw on gender expertise at national level, through inviting contributions from gender departments and experts within environment and other relevant ministries;
- Governments should support the contributions and participation of women and gender experts in the climate process, and include them in national delegations;
- Women should be included as a distinct constituency in the groups of observers to the UNFCCC.

³ See: Global Forest Coalition: *Biofuels: A Disaster In the Making*, 2006