

UNFCCC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

at the Bangkok Climate Change Talks 2009

STATEMENT

8 October 2009

Bits of "women" for a chunk of the Earth's population?

We, women representing women's organisations from around the world, appreciate UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's recognition of women as stakeholders in this process. We are grateful for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat led by Mr. Yvo de Boer in recognizing us as a possible constituency. However women's leadership and participation in the discussions and ultimately, in the implementation of climate change solutions have yet to be clearly articulated. While the documents mention "women" at least twenty times, "women" mostly appear in the lists of vulnerable groups. Yet women have made significant contribution in solving the climate crisis through their leadership, experience, perspectives and ideas. We deserve to be included as stakeholders with interests that outstrip individual governments and corporate entities particularly those that refuse to consider the gendered impacts of climate change. The strong integration of gender dimensions in the discussions would have enabled a more comprehensive analysis of the causes of climate change. Until today, patriarchal politics and corporate greed are the helm of the UNFCCC process as it is held hostage by most developed countries that have been unconsciously messing up the planet and are not showing any signs of restraint.

Women represent half of the world's population. Often through our unpaid labour, we provide up to 90 per cent of the household's food and other needs. Many of us walk a long distance just to fetch water. Sometimes some of us are raped as we set out to gather firewood. Yet we continue to venture outside, if only to feed and shelter our families and communities. We significantly make up small-scale fisheries which is far less intrusive to the marine ecosystem. Despite the deep relationship we have established with nature as resource managers, especially in ancestral domains, a majority have yet to be accorded land rights, credit, information and a string of even the most basic human rights. This situation even worsens as access to natural resources becomes scarcer due to climate change.

In times of displacement because of extractive industries such as oil exploration, mining, rising sea levels, droughts, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes and others, women and girls constitute more than half of the death toll because of cultural restrictions, lack the necessary knowhow and resources to protect themselves. While tired and lost, we continue to perform our reproductive roles as providers and nurturers wherever and however we settle.

As women's empowerment primarily comes from women themselves, we need the opportunities to meaningfully engage the process, whose framework so leaves much to be desired especially in terms of transparency, accountability and equity. Women's participation will be fundamental for realization of a gender integrated approach to climate change. It is for this reason that we urge governments to include the following paragraph in the Shared Vision, which serves as the outcome document's preamble:

"The full integration of gender perspectives is essential to effective action on all aspects of climate change, adaptation, mitigation, technology sharing, financing, and capacity building. UNFCCC processes must ensure compliance with existing women's rights standards and best practice as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 [Women and Peace-Building]. The advancement of women, their leadership and meaningful participation and engagement as stakeholders in all climate related processes and implementation must be guaranteed."

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