

Thank You Chair

My name is Bridget Burns from the Women's Environment and Development Organization.

At this COP, we were very encouraged that a decision on gender equality would be discussed. **Now as the decision was adopted by the SBI earlier tonight, we thank Parties for their commitment to this issue and their work to raise its importance within this climate change process. We see it as a step towards achieving a truly gender responsive climate policy.**

Equitable participation of women in climate change decision making *can provide the cross-cutting experiences necessary* for climate change policies that *embody social equity and reflect* and serve the needs of society.

Parties' recognition of the importance of gender balance **has** already helped to increase women's participation at all levels in this process. However, women continue to be underrepresented in many delegations, particularly with respect to higher levels of leadership positions in the negotiations, and in countries most vulnerable to climate impacts. We are encouraged that this decision seeks to go further than the original decision at COP7 in Marrakesh, recognizing that to be fully effective, enhanced capacity building and innovative actions are needed for transformation in representation.

Delegates, this is a beginning to what we hope moves us towards more knowledge, information and action that encompass not just gender balance but the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment within the work of the UNFCCC.

Thank You