

Press Release

WOMEN DISCOURAGED BY COP OUTCOME – BUT COMMITTED TO HOPE AND ACTION FOR 2010

The lives of millions of people are at stake, entire nations are expected to disappear under the ocean, and yet world leaders in Copenhagen failed to commit to necessary measures for an equitable, just and legally binding post-Kyoto agreement to tackle climate change.

The women's organizations comprising the Women and Gender Constituency under the UNFCCC– including WECF, GenderCC, WEDO, LIFE and others– are dismayed by the lack of progress. Women are among the most urgently affected by climate change and, at the same time, key agents of change - and we see that there is no time to lose.

As UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer puts it, the Copenhagen summit was “a rollercoaster ride”. Far from a comprehensive agreement to tackle the world's most comprehensive problem, the outcome of the Copenhagen Conference of Parties was a mere “Copenhagen Accord”, negotiated by a small group of the key countries, and “noting” the necessity to contain global warming to the 2 degree C limit. The Accord calls for commitments by industrialized countries and engagement of developing countries, but does little to specify how this will occur. Even more concerning, not all countries even agreed to acknowledge this step due to the dominance of world superpowers in drafting the Accord.

With current promises on the table, global warming will reach well beyond the 2 degree limit; scientists on site urged that this type of inaction will actually result in a 3.5 degree increase this century. With even the most optimistic outlook, the outcome of Copenhagen suggests the inevitable: small islands will disappear, global economies and states' security will be in jeopardy, and those populations in already fragile positions will be further entrenched in poverty, the world over.

While gender-sensitive text remained in the negotiating documents until the end, these texts mean nothing without an overall outcome which will protect the lives and livelihoods of everyone on Earth. As the AWG-LCA process is now mandated to continue until COP-16 in Mexico, the strategies for ensuring gender responsive texts be maintained and strengthened must go hand-in-hand with the message that every country must step up and commit to action.

The Women and Gender Constituency further expresses grave concern over the issue of transparency and access at the Copenhagen COP. The failure to ensure conference accessibility to the thousands of accredited civil society representatives was a dire indication of the inability to tackle climate change in a comprehensive, equitable, transparent and just way. Many partners came well prepared with presentations, research materials, documentation and personal testimony – all ready to contribute to a real outcome of the COP. Many of these partners were never granted access to the Bella Center, limiting the options for finding a solution to climate change, silencing their voices, tossing millions of dollars into a place ill-equipped to receive its visitors. An evaluation of this process must be conducted immediately in order to ensure that these mistakes will not be repeated in the future.

Is there still hope? There must be. To give up on the process would be to give up on millions of people whose lives depend on a strong, legally binding agreement. There must be individual action, committing to change and making a difference at the household, community, regional and national levels; there must be renewed commitment by our world leaders to look beyond mitigation as a burden on GDP. Women are ready; we are committed to this process and remain optimistic that tackling climate change offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform towards sustainable, low-carbon, transparent, equitable and just economies.

At the global and national levels, we therefore call for

- increasing the number of women chairs in the UNFCCC
- meaningful participation of women and men from all sectors in national and global climate policies
- strengthening a commitment to prioritize the most vulnerable, and strengthening gender-sensitive approaches in the draft Mexico agreement
- increasing access for women to existing mitigation and adaptation funds

Kommentar [g1]: I would put it at the end of the bullet point list

At the individual level - in every aspect of our daily lives – we call upon women and men to secure the future of our children and our grandchildren as consumers, educators, advocates and leaders

- to make use of our power as consumers, and to support services and products which are healthy for the climate and the planet

Kommentar [ur2]: Although this demand is important I suggest to delete it because it doesn't fit to the analysis – or at least put it in the end of the first set of demands

Without a binding agreement, the only real success of Copenhagen can become a broader movement of citizens and consumers, fueled by the behavior of each to switch to a sustainable way of life, and can become the base for a global, ambitious, equitable, legally binding agreement for climate protection in Mexico next year. It is not too late yet; we must not lose hope.

Contact:

GenderCC: Gotelind Alber, g.alber@gendercc.net, mobile +49.151.15240802

LIFE e.V.: Ulrike Roehr, roehr@life-online.de, mobile +49.179.2031511

WECF: Sabine Bock, sabine.bock@wecf.eu, mobile + 49 176 22 82 74 65 and
Sascha Gabizon, sascha.gabizon@wecf.eu, mobile + +49 172 8637586

WEDO: Cate Owren, cate@wedo.org and
Monique Essed-Fernandes, mjessed@aol.com