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Kalyani Raj

Talanoa Dialogue Opening

My name is Kalyani Raj and I am speaking today on behalf of the Women and Gender Constituency.

We welcome the decision of the UN and the Parties for initiating the process of Talanoa dialogue, and the work the COP Presidency has put into designing this trust-building approach. We believe that this process could achieve its collective goals if trust and global solidarity became its characteristics, if developed countries came to the table with agreed finance, if implementation took into account the rights and resources of all people and communities, and if commitments reflected current loss and damage, the emissions challenge and the real capabilities of all countries to transform their economies to renewable and just ones.

We understand the desire, to avoid 'finger-pointing', however we urge Parties that in the quest to establish ambition, we do not lose the opportunity for frank and critical dialogue. We are combatting an unrelenting and unprecedented global challenge, and we must discuss openly the systems and issues that have led to this unsustainable economic and social model, while we also uplift, extoll and enhance transformative solutions - solutions that exist at many levels, in households and communities, across industries and sectors, and in creating collective will for fighting the ecological and climate crisis here.

In this dialogue you have asked us 'what do we want?' Our movements envision and aspire to build a feminist fossil fuel free future. We come to this space with real solutions, both technical and transformative - from agro-ecological initiatives, safe and clean renewable energy, community-level seed saving techniques and traditions, to larger-scale efforts to reduce and change consumption and production patterns, including regulating extractive corporate interests. We are ready to share, and work together to center and replicate this work across countries and regions, to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

We also come in our reality. While the Paris Agreement may represent a starting point for collective governmental action – everything in the science and our daily experience tells us we are so late as current commitments lead us to a 3 degree+ rise scenario. The ambition is too low especially from those who have brought us to this point and are still not committing their agreed finance.

People, namely indigenous peoples and local communities, and women in particular are both "at the frontlines of crisis and the frontlines of change." Since Paris, too many environmental defenders have lost their lives fighting for a just and sustainable world.

We have just a small window now to create a better, more sustainable future. This dialogue must be about raising ambition. The climate reality will be challenged only with real, strong and urgent commitment from you, Parties.