



Press Release
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Peoples' voices and urgent solutions dismissed at COP24 in Katowice

After two weeks of intense negotiations, women and gender groups represented in Katowice assert that COP24's failure to deliver on the 1.5°C goal and refusal to put people at the center of climate action exacerbates rather than addresses the challenges facing our planet.

The key objective of this COP24 was to operationalize the Paris Agreement, which is premised on a vision for rights-based and gender-responsive climate action. The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC), representing people at the frontlines of climate change, has constantly put pressure on countries to craft an appropriately ambitious and people-centered interpretation of the Paris Agreement and is disheartened at the continued and dangerous dismissal and silencing of the real, system-changing solutions to a just and sustainable world.

Prior to these negotiations, the IPCC Report gave the world a reality check - if we want to reach the goals laid out in the PA, we have to act fast and ambitiously with the right solutions. The opportunity to put people at the center of this vital climate action by including the principles that states already agreed upon, such as protecting human rights and gender equality, was overlooked. However, communities of concerned persons throughout the world, including those represented by the WGC, will continue to put into place real solutions, from the grassroots up, to save our planet and people.

The lack of ambition revealed an unwillingness to recognize the ongoing devastation across our landscapes: *"Our world is facing brutal changes in the way we used to know it. The weather, the rivers and the forests are not the same. Right now, local, traditional and indigenous communities, intersected by gender, economic status and age, are at the frontline of climate impacts, but in a short time, everybody will feel it."* Taily Terena, ECMIA - Continental Network of Indigenous Women, Americas, as spoken at the Talanoa Dialogue closing.

Climate science must not be questioned or treated as just another negotiation item: *"The Paris Agreement set an important and ambitious goal of keeping warming under 1.5°C. The recent IPCC report on achieving this goal could not be clearer - we have 12 years to avert climate catastrophe. Instead of heeding the alarm by climate scientists to raise ambition and action at COP24, some countries shamefully attempted to weaken recognition of the report and its findings. We are long past attempts to deny the science of climate change. For the WGC, we know we need to stay below 1.5 to stay alive- and we will not stop our collective action to achieve this."* Bridget Burns, Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO).

The guidelines are not robust enough to solve the climate crisis, nor do they ensure that the voices and rights of peoples affected are properly taken into account: *“The PA has firmly recognized that to be effective and truly transformative, climate action has to respect and promote gender equality and women’s human rights. Instead we see that large investments, increasingly under the guise of climate action, are forcing women and indigenous peoples from their lands, forests and traditional fishing territories. A number of states wanted to delete almost all references to human rights and gender. Only in a few areas could this egregious trend be reversed.”* Hwei Mian Lim, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW).

National implementation must integrate gender-responsive approaches: *“It is a success that Parties recognise the need to design NDCs in a gender-responsive manner. Still other principles that are pivotal for ambitious and effective action are missing. While planning the NDCs countries should report on how the guiding principles of the PA, such as food security, public participation, just transition, ecosystem integrity, gender equality, indigenous peoples’ knowledge and human rights have been taken into account. This was agreed upon in Paris!”* Nanna Birk, LIFE - Education, Environment, Equality.

Without strong mechanisms, we cannot correct our course toward the PA goals: *“Because the Global Stocktake has not been designed as a robust and true accounting of the state of the world’s progress toward the Paris goals, we fear that the currently disastrously insufficient commitments by countries will not be improved. This system is failing us now, and it has now been designed to fail us in the future.”* Ndivile Mokoena, GenderCCSA-Women for Climate Justice Southern Africa.

Ignoring loss and damage is an injustice: *“It became quite obvious during COP24 that few countries tried to avoid discussing loss and damage entirely, though this should be non-negotiable as the Paris Agreement recognised the urgency of this topic. 2018 has been a disastrous year especially in South and South east Asia bearing the brunt of unpredictable monsoons, cyclonic storms and natural disasters, destroying properties, livelihoods and lives of the people who continue struggling to recover from these losses. The needs of those most affected, including women, migrants, people with disabilities and other discriminated, communities-at-risk, must be taken into account financially. Instead, climate frontline states are being asked to pay high premiums for disaster risk insurance to companies from the Global North, whose governments continue to shirk their historic responsibility for loss and damage. That implies an irony that we will never accept.”* Shradha Shreejaya, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

The development and transfer of technology has to be just: *“It is very distressing that the already scarce resources for the technology framework will go to the private sector. This is based on a perverse idea that public funds should be blended with private sector investment that will bring profit. In this way, climate adaptation technologies and our solutions will always end up being left behind.”* Neth Dano, ETC Groups.

Nuclear energy is neither clean nor renewable: *“It is unacceptable that the dirty energy industries, which act clearly against the Paris Agreement and are responsible for numerous cases of human rights violations, are given so much visibility at COP24, particularly the nuclear industry. We want to ask all states in this process: Which side are you on? We think they must stand with their people, not polluters!”* Sascha Gabizon, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF).

Silencing voices of climate activists must be condemned by the community of states:

“We have warned since early this year that the Special Bill for COP24 that was passed by the Polish parliament risked creating a dangerous precedent of silencing activists’ voices and excluding frontline communities shared experience that is crucial to this process. We had demanded guarantees that no untoward actions against civil society were taken; however, people have been arrested, interrogated and even denied entry to Poland or deported. This unacceptable practice that violates UN principles must not be repeated at any future climate conference.” Patricia Bohland, GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice.

Providing the recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ rights is only the beginning:

“Even though we are celebrating that the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform will be brought to life with equal representation from Parties and indigenous peoples, the WGC will keep following the Platform’s development to ensure its goals are fully achieved, while also paying attention to gender equality considerations.” Isadora Cardoso, GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice.

True, system-changing solutions are available but require real support:

“The WGC’s Gender Just Climate Solutions showcase how grassroots women invent and manage community-based and appropriate climate technologies. Their efforts, however, are not supported by the current mechanisms, which focus on centralized and very large scale activities, often to the detriment of human rights, the rights of women and indigenous peoples, and ecosystem integrity”. Anne Barre, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF). [Link](#) to the award publication.

ABOUT THE WOMEN AND GENDER CONSTITUENCY (WGC)

The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC), is one of the nine stakeholder groups of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Established in 2009, the WGC now consists of 28 women’s and environmental civil society organizations working to ensure that women’s voices and their rights are embedded in all processes and results of the UNFCCC framework, for a sustainable and just future, so that gender equality and women’s human rights are central to the ongoing discussions. As the WGC represents the voices of hundreds and thousands of people across the globe, members of the Constituency are present at each UNFCCC meeting and intersessional alongside the UNFCCC Secretariat, governments, civil society observers and other stakeholders to ensure that women’s rights and gender justice are core elements of the UNFCCC. In this action the constituency is joined by other stakeholders committed to advancing women’s human rights, peace and climate justice. <http://womengenderclimate.org>

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

All India Women’s Conference (AIWC), All India Women’s Education Fund Association (AIWEFA), Asian-Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD), Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), Association jeunesse verte du Cameroun (AJVC), Centre for 21st Century Issues (C21st), Danish Family Planning Association, ENERGIA, part of the ETC Foundation, FAWCO, Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), LIFE- Education Environment Equality, GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice, Global Forest Coalition, Huairou Commission, International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Italian Climate Network, Landesa, Margaret Pyke Trust, with the Population & Sustainability Network, NGO CSW/NY Rural Women Energy Security (RUWES) Initiative, Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN), Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR), Women Environmental

Programme (WEP), Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO), Youth Action for Development (AJED-CONGO)

FURTHER RESOURCES

Women and Gender Constituency Key Demands for COP24

http://womengenderclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/COP24-WGC-Demands_Final_litedesign.pdf

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