

# WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

## PRESS RELEASE

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## The Power is With Us: COP26 Fails People & Planet

*Glasgow, Scotland* - After two weeks at one of the most exclusive, inaccessible and unjust COPs that the [Women and Gender Constituency](#) has experienced, Parties failed to meet the moment that our urgent climate crisis requires. Through a spectacle of press releases, Parties attempted to give the impression of action and ambition, but in the text of these agreements, the same false and harmful rhetoric prevailed. Once again, we see an utter failure to commit to critical finance for loss and damage - as was a key demand and benchmark for climate vulnerable countries and communities - and a rigid lock in to a dangerous carbon offsetting mechanism that fails to protect human rights and will only continue to deepen green colonialism.

The recognition of phasing down unabated coal and fossil fuel subsidies is long overdue in this process- though it is a very weak commitment - and we have yet to see real action from developed countries to ensure the complete phase out of oil and gas. With all of these texts and fanfare of these global governmental convenings, we know we can rely on only one thing for sure: the power of our movements to hold the fossil fuel industry to account. Feminist advocates and members of the Women & Gender Constituency will continue to unapologetically and boldly call for the change we demand, call out false solutions, and pave the way toward the world we need.

The injustice and exclusiveness of this COP set the stage for negotiations that were deeply laden with wealth inequality, patriarchy and white supremacy. The challenges for frontline feminists and activists to participate were insurmountable for many. **Member of APWLD and Climate Watch Thailand Executive Director Wanun Permpibul, said,** *"The exclusion of grassroots women from Asia and the Pacific has robbed them of the opportunity to demand real actions and accountability for false climate solutions reinforced at COP26. These false climate solutions have not only misdirected the issue of climate crisis but have also perpetuated oppression of women through militarisation, fundamentalisms and patriarchy, and have strengthened authoritarian governments."*

These many missing voices contributed to gross power imbalances within the negotiations. **Mwanahamisi Singano (FEMNET)** illustrates, *"As feminists, as African feminists, Indigenous Peoples, grassroots women leaders, we have been the centers of resistance throughout the history of time. We come to this COP year after year with solutions - solutions that are sustainable, solutions that center food sovereignty, and solutions which embody an understanding of our mutual relationship to the land and ecosystems. And year after year, you prioritize large corporations and business as usual approaches that amount to nothing but hot air."*

The progress made on prioritizing human rights and environmental safeguards was shameful, and leaves significant questions around the power of corporate influence and human rights violations. Regarding discussions surrounding Article 6 and carbon markets, **Gina Cortés Valderrama (Women Engage for a Common Future)** expressed deep concerns, saying, *"I fear for the exacerbated risks that this COP is placing on environmental and human-rights defenders. We needed the COP26 to advance real climate solutions that bring immediate GHG reductions and not 'false' solutions that lead to land-grabbing from women farmers, Afrodescendants, and Indigenous Peoples. Instead, the COP outcome will still have billions of public tax payers money going to the fossil fuel industry, tree-plantation monocultures, nuclear and geoengineering, instead of to a just transition."*

**Bridget Burns (Director at WEDO and Co-Focal Point of the Women and Gender Constituency)** highlighted the failures and injustices of this COP: *"What we have seen in Glasgow was a parade of publicity and a failure on policy. Developed countries Parties have talked the talk of urgency and climate justice, while bringing the same weak rhetoric and bullying posture to the negotiations that fails on delivering for the most vulnerable countries and peoples. To hear countries asking developing countries to be happy with "making a start" on the issue of loss and damage - when so many are facing real and disastrous impacts right now, is a betrayal of global solidarity. As always, the bright spot is the power in people, and feminist organizing. A bolder, braver and even more committed movement for climate justice that is going to create the transformation we seek. People power, climate justice."*

Even where a decision under the agenda item on gender was achieved, as **Gotelind Alber, GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice**, points out, it's a procedural decision far from enhancing action on gender-responsive climate action, *"The language on gender and climate change, unfortunately, did not define a clear pathway towards gender-responsive policies, including adaptation and mitigation. We must unlock the vast potential for more effective and gender-just policies through gender analysis and gender impact assessments of planned actions, in order to maximise social and gender equality, rather than aggravating inequalities."*

Civil society and feminist movements know that there is no choice but to continue pushing for the action and justice that our communities and our world needs. And we will continue to do so, together and with fierce care for people and the planet. **Marie Christina Kolo (Indian Ocean Climate Network-Madagascar)**, said, *"For the first time, I have seen the suffering and plight of my people elevated to an international level. I naively thought that our distress, shared by other developing countries, would finally be considered, listened to, and solutions would be put into place that incorporate gender equality and human rights. I thought the pandemic - that we have all lived through - would have made us all listen to each other, understand each other and bring us together. Despite all these false hopes, we, the people, will continue fighting because we don't have the choice."*

**See further reaction quotes from the Women and Gender Constituency attached below.**

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## ABOUT

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 29 women's and environmental civil society organizations, who are 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>

## RESOURCES

[Women and Gender Constituency Key Demands](#)

[Women and Gender Constituency website](#)

[Women and Gender Constituency video](#)

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## FURTHER QUOTES

### On the COP26 Outcomes:

**Mari-Claire Price, RESURJ,** *"It was clear to see from the past 2 weeks, that the real solutions are already happening, and are being led by the people and communities outside of these halls of power. Feminists, indigenous people, and young people, came together in Glasgow to share solutions that center ecological justice, human rights, the needs and voices of marginalized communities most affected by climate change, and that are rooted in decolonization, anti-imperialism, resistance, equity, and care for the wellbeing of people and the ecosystems we are part of. We reject and resist the false solutions and weak commitments coming from COP26, steeped in power and profit, and will continue to support and build true transformation in our communities, in solidarity with one another across movements and regions."*

**Nathalie Rengifo Alvarez, Latin America Climate Director, Corporate Accountability:** *"Our future is disappearing in front of our eyes. We know who's responsible, but who will make them pay? Corporations and polluting governments got us into this crisis, but they won't get us out. Only the people will save us. Polluters should be afraid—the UNFCCC may have failed us, but we still have the courts and the streets, and we are millions."*

**Faith Lumonya, Programme Officer, Akina Mama wa Afrika:** *"I followed COP 26 in doubt that this urgent and yet extremely delicate global decision making process would deliver real commitments aimed at addressing the systemic and structural causes on the climate crisis when at the center of it were privileged*

*individuals who are either too old to fathom the anxiety we have for our future as young women in the global South, or too avaricious to prioritize human rights, gender, and environmental justice.”*

**Marianna Leite, Brazilian human rights lawyer and advocacy manager at ACT Alliance** - *“COP26 parties have spent 2 weeks wasting time negotiating commas and full stops. As a result of this political maneuvering, we have extremely weak outcomes that do not deliver on the needs of people and planet. The solutions and resources to effectively tackle the climate crisis are standing before us. We are only lacking political will and a real commitment to justice.”*

**Osprey-Orielle Lake, Executive Director, Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN):** *“We do not accept decisions at COP26 that enable sacrifice of people and sacrifice zones, or corporate colonialism, or an incremental transition to renewable energy, or false market-based solutions. Where are the government leaders from wealthy countries willing to stand up to the fossil fuel industry? And, where is the \$100 billion a year promised from wealthy countries so we can move toward a just transition? We need real commitments on loss and damage, and robust language and policies upholding and safeguarding human rights, gender justice, Indigenous rights, and ecological integrity. Despite the incredibly unjust COP 26 outcome, we, the people, will continue to ceaselessly fight for climate justice and what is sacred— for the last chance for our climate and a livable future.”*

**Yvette Ramos- president, Lidia Zakowska -secretary general and Lylia Coelho- contact point for UNFCCC, co-founders of WOMENVAI:** *“COP26 is of course disappointing for the people we came to represent here in Glasgow. But there is hope as demonstrated through the recent IPCC report which provides high-level summaries and helps all of us understand the current state of Climate on Earth, including how it is changing and the role of human influence. We have no choice than to act and we, engineers and scientists, women and men together are more than ever ready to co-design with all stakeholders and offer the Planet and our Humanity a change taking-off now, with the Paris-agreement basis and co-complement a wise and concrete Climate Adaptation plan.”*

**Pamela EA, Emiliana Rickenman & Karin Watson, co-founders of Latinas for Climate:** *“The urgency for climate action seems to have been forgotten by the decision-makers at COP26. The youth have been tirelessly working to influence the decision-making process in favor of our livable future. The decisions being made now are about the world we will inherit. Once again, we have found ourselves outraged about the presented text. Our future is at stake and we do not want to see more empty promises. The failure of ensuring sufficient changes to keep the projected temperature increase below 1.5\* directly puts our lives in danger. World leaders have responded to a planetary emergency with water-downed solutions rather than immediate and direct solutions. We are disappointed, but not surprised, to see our so-called leaders prioritize outdated economic models and profit margins over human rights.”*

**Jennie C Stephens, Professor and Director, Northeastern University School and Public Policy and Urban Affairs,** *“This disappointing outcome perpetuates and reinforces the problematic power dynamics of the polluter elite who continue to prioritize investments in ineffective technological innovation for profit instead of investing in the social, political and economic innovation that is so desperately needed for climate justice. We now need to focus our efforts on building a global collective commitment to phasing out coal, oil, and gas, leaving fossil fuels in the ground, and ending all fossil fuel subsidies as we invest in a more just, healthy, renewable-based future.”*

### **On the lack of access at COP26:**

**Aderonke Ige, Associate Director, CAPP**- *"COP26 is a well-disguised charade, dominated by 'big boys' in shiny suits and small rooms, concerned only with protecting their image, profits, and power. Meanwhile, systemic oppression, vaccine apartheid, and private negotiations have excluded the victims of these climate crimes! Without the people's voices and real solutions, COP is just an elite marketplace for environmental criminals."*

**Not Without Us! (Babitha PS, Dinda Yura, Farina Hoffmann, Greta Pallaver, Melissa Moreano, Ndivile Mokoena, Pat Bohland, Taily Terena)**, *"The missing voices at COP26 as well as the lack of access to the negotiation rooms is clearly reflected in the terrifying outcomes. Inclusive participation is key to achieve ambitious decisions that lead the way to equity and a gender responsive transformation to zero emissions."*

**Marisa Hutchinson, Environmental Justice programme officer, International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP AP)** - *"The consistent lack of engagement and participation by world leaders with civil society at previous COPs and COP26 will continue to significantly impact those most vulnerable to climate change, specifically patriarchal systems. We demand inclusive, intergenerational, intersectional participation in these processes to ensure the protection and survival of all. To echo the sentiments of Caribbean World leader, the honourable Mia Amor Mottley, we have to fight this together."*

**Judit Szoleczky, CSO INFORSE network**, *"CSOs from the South (Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Nepal) phased huge challenges of participation. Many prepared to come, but had to give up and did not manage to travel or were delayed arriving in Glasgow. These challenges were: Uncertainties of the event because of COVID 19, uncertainties that a vaccination would be actually possible before the event, carantene warnings before and after the event, slow visa processes delaying to buy tickets, and the actual travel dates has to be postponed, high prices of travel and no available accomodation for the budgeted costs."*

### **On the power of feminist organizing and gender-just climate solutions:**

**Caitlyn Hughes, Executive Director, Solar Cookers International**, *"A highlight of COP26 for me was to be able to give a workshop on solar cooking to the winners of the Gender Just Climate Solutions, organized by the Women and Gender Constituency and the United Nations Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN). Being a part of women coming together with solutions that stop deforestation, reduce pollution, improve health, free up time, reduce gender violence, generate income, reduce expenses, and improve food security was inspiring, empowering, and uplifting. These women give me hope for the future."*

**Anne Barre, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)**, *"We gained a small glimpse of hope as our Women and Gender Constituency, alongside Indigenous Peoples and Youth, obtained a seat in the Advisory Board of the Climate Technology Center and Network (CTCN), to participate in decision making. We will advance gender-just climate technologies and solutions based on our [award programme](#) and [scale-up fund!](#)"*

**Farina Hoffmann, GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice**, *"We are worried, how nuclear power was advocated as a solution to the energy transition at COP26. Unlike what lobbyists would like to make us believe, Uranium mining and milling is very energy intensive and leads to large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions."*

*Nuclear power is dangerous, expensive, leaves large amounts of radioactive waste, pollutes lands and people and violates human and Indigenous rights!"*

**On the focus on transport:**

**Flordea Di Ciommo, cambiaMO changing Mobility,** *"COP26 business and political sides think that electric cars will save the planet, while sustainable mobility experts and women know very well that the real sustainable mobility, free of transport and energy poverty trap, is the active mobility (i.e. walking, biking) and public transport associated with an adequate use of land. Only 2 bikes have been found among all the pavilions and quite hidden, while a running "electric" car was in the main entrance of the pavillonnaire zone. How much energy and mineral extraction do we need for running this car and all promoted electric cars during the CoP26 transport events? We leave the COP26 with the impression that in transport the Conference of Parties are still far away from addressing the climate change crises. A strong gender approach is needed."*