

WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

11 November, 2022

No Gender Justice in the GAP

The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) joined UNFCCC meetings this year to engage in a substantive review of progress and challenges in implementation of the five-year gender action plan (GAP). We coordinated among our network of hundreds of gender experts and frontline women leaders and came with clear asks to enhance implementation. We met with Parties and found support for what are both clearly defined and well-reasoned demands for the GAP - demands that don't even scratch the surface of what is truly needed for gender just climate action, such as solutions that tackling structural crises of debt, illicit financial flows and social protection - but that can advance critical dialogue and implementation in this contested space.

Lack of progress at COP27

But - as is now practice under this agenda - there has been no real time for substance. Instead, reflecting a lack of progress on gender-responsive implementation and a failure of Parties to truly prioritize this agenda and resource National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points (NGCCFPs), Parties are instead negotiating for hours over the weakest of texts that at best, in relation to finance, reiterate mandates already existing under this process- and at worst, in relation to understanding the ways in which climate change exacerbates inequalities, represents a roll back on normative language under the UN on gender equality and human rights.

The review fails to meaningfully address the most recent IPCC report, which includes a chapter on gender and climate justice in identifying pathways for a just transition - a starting point for any gender transformative implementation of climate action.

It is frankly absurd that the hundreds of advocates and technical experts on gender issues at this COP, including from the Women and Gender Constituency, do not have representation in the negotiating rooms, and have not once been given the floor to share our views on what is needed to advance action under the GAP.

We see and understand there are negotiators under this item working hard to come to a decision here at COP, and there are valid demands around capacity and resourcing.

But Parties, we have to say: who does this agenda aim to serve at this point?

WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

Is it the **Indigenous women** whose voices and leadership we fought hard to have recognized under the GAP? Who are facing ever-increasing rates of violence and discrimination in the face of environmental degradation, human rights violations, extraction and land grabbing?

A key event here at COP was supposed to be the joint dialogue of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) and the GAP. Those who spoke were powerful, deserving of center stage in this COP - but instead were forced to move rooms, start an hour late when the event was already scheduled well into evening, and deliver their solutions and insights to a room with little to no Party representation. This was certainly not the spirit or intention this dialogue was supposed to achieve. This holds too many echoes of the first two-year GAP, where deliverables, such as a promised dialogue on finance with the Standing Committee on Finance, did not happen.

Quite simply, these negotiations are not serving the purpose of advancing gender equality in climate action. They are not serving the **advocates and negotiators** who worked for years to develop a framework of activities for gender-responsive climate action, the GAP. This review is not serving the **Indigenous women** whose voices were supposed to be raised and amplified by the GAP. This agenda item is not serving **Parties** who seek to have a better understanding of how to advance gender equality across all areas of climate change, nor grassroots practitioners waiting endlessly for more support, funding, and recognition for their work. These negotiations are not serving the **women human rights defenders and Indigenous women** whose lives remain in danger from threats and gender-based violence in spaces of increasing environmental degradation. They are not serving the **communities that are denied sexual and reproductive health and rights**, preventing them from adapting to a changing climate and extreme weather disasters. And this review is not serving **everyone facing the impacts of an ongoing pandemic** that exposed deep structural inequalities, especially around the role women play in underpinning an economy of care.

The Women and Gender Constituency's unrealized demands

We came here saying that the GAP deliverables were not working to advance the leadership of grassroots and Indigenous women in this process; that the gendered health impacts of climate change needed to be better recognized and understood; that the intersection of a care economy and a just transition was critical to create dialogue to inform Parties' national plans and low emissions development strategies; and that agriculture and gender, including land rights, are persistent intersections of effective climate action but are not informing national planning. We came demanding that at minimum, we recognize the increasing impacts that loss and damage are having on the lives of women and girls in all

WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

their diversity. We came with demands on financing for gender-responsive implementation - and what that means in terms of delivery and direct access for grassroots women and women's groups.

But instead, Parties are rolling back language on rights, allowing any country who is anti-gender or intent on erasing progressive language on human rights and equality to steamroll the process for the sake of an outcome. Instead, Parties are spending hours on process fights.

The review process has not prompted real reflection on the failures of this GAP. The proposals for revised language are weak, vague, and without any substance to change the course of its implementation.

There may be an outcome under this review here at COP, but it will not be one that reflects the inputs of women and gender advocates. We have remained on the sidelines looking in - or sometimes fully on the outside - only to find text that doesn't reflect the realities of people nor their needs and demands. We continue to ask who this agenda is for.

Our call to action

Gender equality is not a sideshow, not a thematic day, not an opportunity to host an event at your Pavilion.

We need Parties to step up and make this process about outcomes that serve women and girls in their full diversity at the frontline of climate impacts and forefront of climate solutions. Parties need to step up, at the negotiating table, in prioritizing a robust outcome or a rethink of the entire approach. Parties need to step up in prioritizing gender in the negotiations, in coordinating with the resources and dedication of agenda items such as finance and creating a real, detailed vision of what a GAP could accomplish. Parties need to step up in resourcing the GAP activities, in ensuring their implementation in all the days and weeks and months between COPs.

As is, adoption of this text contributes so little to the work of gender equality that we cannot claim having a decision is a substantive outcome of this COP. We have learned from this review that we must look elsewhere, outside the UNFCCC, for real commitment to gender-just climate action. We will continue to seek the spaces where action is valued more than talk.