

# WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

## **COP29: “Rollback is our Red Line” - What’s at Stake on Gender?**

We feminists are utterly dismayed at the current state of the negotiations on gender here at COP29.

**At the SBs, we were worried about distractions, now we fear we are losing the hard-won gender work programme.**

We come to this space to defend our rights, our livelihoods and our lives. We wanted to bear witness and to remind Parties that their decision at this COP has a direct impact on the lives of millions of women and girls in all their diversity around the world.

**Our demands remain the same: A work program and Gender Action Plan that is inclusive, intersectional, measurable, cohesive, and resourced.**

Unfortunately, after hours of closed-door meetings, we expected a commitment to uphold gender equality—progressively, expand ambition or at least hold a line with existing human rights agreements. Instead, parties are repeating endlessly their “red lines”, some of them dragging us backward to the world where our sheer existence is being questioned. We are angry. We see what is happening, and we will not allow it. We feminists at this COP cannot allow parties bracketing just transition, questioning our right to land, and debating our protection against violence. We also cannot allow Parties to deny funds to have an actionable and implementable work program.

The backlash against long established agreed language in the Work Programme on Gender simply cannot continue. Statements like “We do not want any reference to human rights” or references to “diversity”, are unacceptable. Human rights are non-negotiable—a core pillar of the UN framework, binding under international law and more important than ever in a time of unprecedented human rights abuses against environmental defenders. As people we exist with multiple intersecting identities that shape our experiences. Diversity is our reality. We live it. An ambitious Work Programme on Gender must reflect this.

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COP29 should never weaken our rights, it should strengthen them. The rights of all of us in all our intersecting realities. We will not have our presence—or our rights—questioned at this COP or anywhere.

Feminists will not rest until we deliver the most ambitious and fit for purpose gender work programme needed to address the climate crisis injustices.

**We demand Parties to deliver an ambitious Lima work programme on gender and hold the line against the rollback of our rights. We are watching.**

Quotes from Constituencies

WGC

- “Backsliding on already agreed text is indicative of the deeply worrying regression regarding the rights of women and girls that we are seeing reflected in the global arena today. This is unacceptable. Parties must hold the line and, as a bare minimum, retain existing language on human rights and gender equality.” Áine Beattie, WILPF International
- “We came to COP hoping to address the particular challenges faced by the most marginalized, such as adolescent girls. Instead, we find ourselves having to argue for our most basic rights and to remind States of their commitment to gender equality under the SDGs amongst others, reflecting wider trends of shrinking civil society space and retrogressive attacks on gender.” Paola Salwan Daher, Women Deliver
- “We came to Baku with high expectations for a new and ambitious LWP. Parties have been working hard and we saw draft texts with clear improvements. We cannot accept that some parties want to remove not only the improvements but also agreed human rights language from the Paris Agreement. Improvements and language necessary to address the climate injustice faced by the most structurally excluded groups.” - Lisbet Dinsen, DFPA
- “The comments proposed by parties last night are deliberately leaving behind those who are impacted the most by climate change. If accepted, we are not only failing the Paris

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Agreement, but also the 2030 Agenda, the Declaration of Human Rights and the UN charter. Exclusion and discrimination will only undermine any real sense of progress towards sustainable development. Parties, please do not fail humanity. Please give us a LWP that is ambitious, comprehensive, cohesive, funded, and that celebrates diversity and intersectionality. You have the opportunity to make history, don't waste it!" - Diego de Leon Segovia, Out for Sustainability

- "Our priority and expectation for this COP was the delivery of an ambitious and transformative Lima Work Programme on gender. Now, we have lost the faith that this will happen, as we hold the line for our basic human rights. We need Parties to pay attention, to not give up on the language that has already been agreed. This is a crucial time for gender. You have a few days left. Do not let it slide." - Claudia Rubio Giraldo, Environment and Development Organization
- "Women and girls on the frontlines are suffering life-threatening food insecurity, disrupted education, and maternal health & gender-based violence risks fuelled by extreme heat, floods, droughts yet Parties at COP29 are failing to agree on a gender Work Programme that can address these gendered inequalities and injustices. With children and young people already feeling betrayed by current governmental responses, Parties must reassure them by putting humanity first. What this looks like is centring everyone affected, mostly those least able to cope: women, girls, boys, men, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, and of varying age, race, nationalities, class, religion, sexual orientation and much more. Indeed, every human being, **in all their diversity!** We want a Work Programme that can work, uphold human rights and justice, and truly leave no one behind." - Zainab Yunusa, WGC Africa (Nigeria)
- "Instead of advancing the Lima Work Programme and gender-responsive climate action at COP29, Parties are -once again - backsliding on crucial human rights language. Bringing anti-gender agendas to derail progress is unacceptable. Parties need to step up, protect human rights, and champion the leadership of women and girls, in all their diversity, in the fight against climate change!" -Rosa van Driel, CARE Netherlands
- "We need to deliver on an ambitious Work Programme on Gender for the sake of those people who are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis, but are too often left out of the discussion and the solution. Feminists are ready to move forward, but certain Parties seem

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keen on taking us back. Our basic Human Rights are not to be questioned, and we will stand our ground.” - Rebecca Heuvelmans, Women Engage for a Common Future

- “While we see continued and increasing crackdown on civic space and devastating environmental harms worldwide, it is even more appalling seeing States at COP29 walking backward and opposing to center human rights at the core of the very workstream meant to tackle gender inequalities. The blatant attempts to eliminate reference to the protection of environmental human rights defenders and human rights is especially alarming given women’s critical role in advancing climate action and because they face disproportionate impacts, and women environmental human rights defenders are often violently targeted. The Gender Work Programme is a critical opportunity to advance the respect, protection and promotion of human rights in climate action, and we won’t accept any backtracking.” -Camilla Pollera, Center for International Environmental Law
- “It is a wake up call once again. Climate crisis is looming heavily, already impacting the marginalized in a big way particularly in developing southern countries. There are enough scientifically proven studies to show how underprivileged women and children are worst affected by the excessive heat waves, unseasonal heavy rains and recurring natural as well as climate induced disasters. Parties need to move beyond discussion to action. Let the COP29 outcome be a bit more assured than a losing hope event.” -Kalyani Raj, All India Women's Conference
- “We are devastated. Around the world, we see human rights being violated, and commitments to gender equality and diversity systematically eroded. Women and girls in all their diversity are on the frontlines of the climate crisis—bearing its most severe impacts while simultaneously offering transformative solutions. Yet, their leadership is ignored, and their rights are undermined. COP29 cannot afford to fail those who are most affected and most capable of driving change. The integrity of human rights and gender equality must remain non-negotiable.” - Maria Blomenhofer, Women Engage for a Common Future
  - “Human rights are non-negotiable in international law and are central to effective climate action. The disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls is well established. In the context of shrinking civic space, backsliding on previously agreed text is a warning bell. Delegates must not betray their mandate at COP29;

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rights and leadership of women and girls in all of their diversity should be a key component of the Lima Work Programme.” - Marta Schaaf, Director of the Programme on Climate, Economic and Social Justice, and Corporate Accountability, Amnesty International

- “Women won’t wait! Justice delayed is Justice denied! The male-dominated decision system has failed to deliver yet again at this 29th COP. The next course of action to get Justice may be drastic. Desperate situations call for desperate measures!” - Gertrude Kenyangi, SWAGEN, Uganda
- “It is absurd to negotiate a text about gender if parties refuse to link it with human rights and recognize that women in all their diversity are not just one monolithic block but have specific needs and rights. Climate action without financial support and intersectionality, including decolonial practices, is inherently unjust.” -Dorothy Hove, Gender and Climate Justice Knowledge Coordinator, Oxfam
- “To take out from the text reference to Land and Environmental Human Rights defenders is to make a deep injustice from the recognition, procedural and distributive points of view. We need to protect their deep knowledge, critical for framing local policies aligned with the Paris agreement goals.” - Floridea Di Como, CambiaMO, Spain.

## TUNGO

- “We witness firsthand how in the Global South climate change exacerbates existing gender inequalities, impacting women and marginalized communities disproportionately. From heat waves that endanger our health to floods that displace families and disrupt livelihoods, the stakes are dire. Yet, here at COP29, we see a troubling retreat from commitments to human rights and gender equality. An ambitious Gender Action Plan is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It must ensure that the voices of women workers, especially those in vulnerable sectors, are centered in climate action. We demand parties hold firm on agreed human rights language and deliver a comprehensive and inclusive work program. Climate justice is not possible without gender justice, and gender justice cannot be

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achieved without recognizing and addressing the realities of women workers in Global South.” – Dur e ( Pakistan United workers Federation )

## YOUNGO WOMEN and GENDER

- “We do not accept the backsliding progress. We need to acknowledge that all human beings, regardless of their identity, should have equal rights and opportunities in all aspects of life. An ambitious working programme is essential to ensure that we continue working towards gender equality in the years to come.”

## Supporting organisations

- “Recognition and inclusion of Gender in the UNFCCC texts was hard fought and essential to effectively address climate change, as well as for human rights and dignity. The Lima Work Programme on Gender was established ten years ago. Back sliding on long agreed positions disrespects past agreements, does not serve current challenges we face, and undermines and distracts from the critical work that needs to be done at COP29. We are in a far worse place in terms of conflict and climate impacts now than ten years ago. What legacy do Parties want to leave from these negotiations?” Francesca de Gasparis, Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute, Safcei