

# WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

## **COP29 in Baku: Feminists Fight to Defend Climate Justice Amidst Rollbacks and Missed Opportunities**

### **For Immediate Release**

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**Baku, Azerbaijan** -- The Women and Gender Constituency engaged in COP29 to hold the line in defense of hard won gains by the global climate movement including feminists. Feminists knew, this year COP had a potential to roll back rights, obligations and set the world on a dangerous path of relying on carbon markets. While feminists' dedication and hard work managed to hold the line on work programmes on gender, we left Baku feeling cheated and disappointed by the process and rollback. Adoption of Article 6 decision is simply a license to pollute and the NCQG decision marks the beginning of the end of global north obligations with catastrophic impacts to be felt by communities in global majority countries.

### **On Gender:**

Feminists and allies fought tirelessly for an ambitious work program on gender, overcoming significant pushback from some countries to include language on gender equality and human rights. Despite the lack of prioritization by this Presidency, our

collective efforts secured a critical 10-year commitment with a clear roadmap leading to the adoption of the gender action plan at COP30. This milestone is a testament to our resolve, but we remain deeply concerned about the NCQG decision. Without sufficient public finance, gender-just climate action risks being an unfulfilled promise rather than a transformative reality. - **Mwanahamisi Singano, Gender Working Group Co-lead, WEDO**

## **On Finance:**

“The new finance goal adopted Sunday morning is a failure and a step backward. Its annual 300 billion USD by 2035 goal and a 1.3 trillion nebulous investment promise is inadequate in both quantity and quality and ignores the needs of developing countries and their people and communities as well as the best science for what it will cost us to stay within 1.5 degree warming. It allows developed countries as historic polluters to dodge and obfuscate their obligation to provide public support to developing countries as a climate debt owed. It does not include finance for addressing loss and damage, establishes no minimum allocation floor for the most vulnerable countries, and fails to include commitments for increasing grant-based direct access for marginalized and affected communities, including women and girls in all of their diversity. The decision does not mention human rights or for finance to be gender-responsive. Instead of providing the financial ratcheting up mechanism for more climate ambition in developing countries, with new national climate plans due next year, this outcome further undermines trust and cancels the grand bargain that was the Paris Agreement. This puts the multilateral climate regime in serious danger when we need solidarity, empathy and collective climate action more than ever. -

**Liane Schalatek, Climate Finance WG co-coordinator, Heinrich Boell Foundation Washington**

The Sunday morning NCQG decision is devastating and shows that the governments of the countries that have amassed the wealth and power to avert the most catastrophic effects of climate change, through historical pollution and extraction of resources from the communities and countries now on the frontlines of climate chaos, simply do not care about the health, rights, and lives of billions of people. The premise and the promise of the Paris Agreement was that periodically reflecting on progress and heeding the science would lead to a step-change in ambition to stay on course

toward the goals of the Agreement, recognizing developing countries' climate commitments can only be fulfilled with the support of historical polluters. Not only have we seen this promise broken, we've seen the UN climate Convention itself cast aside, evading the responsibility of developed countries to provide climate finance. The \$300 billion by 2035 goal and vague indication of a future roadmap for 1.3 trillion, possibly counting all climate investment everywhere, is nothing that changes our current course toward a 3 degree world, and is designed to avoid providing the new, additional, grant-based public finance necessary for gender-just and human-rights based climate action.

**- Tara Daniel, Climate Finance WG co-coordinator, WEDO**

## **On Article 6**

Article 6 started terribly from day one and ended dreadfully. The COP29 Presidency bulldozed the gaveling of the two Standards of Article 6.4 at the opening plenary of COP. The Standard for activities involving removals and Standard on methodology were rubber-stamped by the CMA without undergoing any negotiation by Parties. This is a procedural irregularity that must never happen in the UNFCCC COP again. The negotiations on Articles 6.2 and 6.4 happened with such lack of transparency compared to Sharm El-Sheikh and Dubai. The draft presidency decision texts for Articles 6.2 and 6.4 (carbon offset and carbon market related) are exceedingly weak in safeguards to ensure environmental integrity, avoidance of negative social impacts, just transition, respective human rights, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The inherited problems of carbon offset and carbon market such as permanence, reversals, double counting, and additionality remained overlooked. In addition, the transition of potential afforestation and reforestation activities of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism sans "additionality" will risk this new mechanism being a convenient dumping ground for CDM activities. **- Hwei Mian Lim, Article 6 co-lead, and Independent Advisor**

## **On Peace and Demilitarization:**

"Despite claims that COP29 would be a 'COP of Peace,' the conference once again failed to address the direct links between the climate crisis and militarism. The 'Baku

Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief, and Recovery,' touted as a milestone initiative, fell short of tackling critical issues, such as the accountability and responsibility of militaries for emissions and environmental destruction. The commitment of 300 billion USD by 2035 and the vague call for scaling up climate finance to 1.3 trillion USD are not only woefully inadequate but also morally indefensible when global military spending was 2.4 trillion USD in 2023 alone. Notably, the increase in military expenditures between 2022 and 2023 was 200 billion USD—almost as much as the proposed climate funding. There is an urgent need to divest from war and militarism and invest in climate justice. The NCQG should have been an opportunity, yet COP29 failed to deliver.” **Karen Hallows, Co-Lead, Peace and Demilitarization Working Group**

### **On Loss and Damage:**

Negotiations ended on a Rule 16, which means this will be taken up next year. Serious disagreements persist on ensuring the loss and damage architecture is coherent and complimentary. But the real issue is that developed countries did not put any money on the table for addressing loss and damage. - **Tetet Lauron, WGC representative on the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage Board, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung**

### **On the Global Stocktake:**

The follow-up process of the Global Stocktake crystallized tensions over the provision of finance necessary to implement the COP28 decision to transition away from fossil fuels, with many Parties trying to avoid any transparent accountability mechanism. Our repeated demands for a bottom-up, inclusive process addressing the structural gender barriers that prevent women in all their diversities to be recognized and supported as powerful actors of change, and to ensure that progress can be measured more precisely through the generation, collection and use of gender-disaggregated data, were blatantly neglected. -**Anne Barre, GST Working Group co-Lead, WECF International**

### **On ACE- Action Climate Empowerment:**

Finally, after two rounds of negotiations, including the implementation of 16 procedural rules without an agreed text, on November 15 at 5 p.m., an ACE decision was adopted to approve the 2023 and 2024 reports on ACE Action Plan activities, with

very light language on financial support for ACE implementation. A strong reference to the need to have ACE in the GST Agreement was included. Today, at the end of COP29, we could state that all the participation language that we strongly advocated is not in any GST text anymore and this is really sadly unacceptable: nothing for us, without us-

**Floriea Di Ciommo, co-lead Action Climate Empowerment Working Group, cambiaMO**

### **On Just Transition:**

“The absence of leadership from the COP29 Presidency in enabling meaningful negotiations on the Just Transition Work Programme was a profound failure to respond to the urgent calls from people around the world. The delays we witnessed at COP29 are not just procedural—they undermine equity and the transformative change needed. The global North wants to impose on us not only its language and narratives, but also its trap to continue with those cycles of exploitation and appropriation without any clear guarantees on human rights and gender equality. Without the provisioning of the finance needed. This process cannot be turned into the playground of multilateral development banks nor the shop for dangerous distractions such as carbon markets or geoengineering. This derailed any vision towards just transitions. We will fight back at COP30”

- **Gina Cortes, Feminist Just Transition co-Lead, WGC**

### **On Adaptation:**

“Adaptation negotiations at COP29 were once again marked by lack of agreement on the urgently needed financial, technological and capacity building support towards developing countries. It is essential to elevate adaptation to the same level as mitigation under the UNFCCC to ensure that the necessary support flows towards adaptation measures.

For a third consecutive time, following COP28 and SB61, there was no resolution on the support needed for National Adaptation Plans. While we are pleased to see that the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) decision includes indicators on means of implementation and finally establishes a permanent agenda item for adaptation, these

decisions mean nothing without adequate and accessible finance reaching those who need it the most.

We are also deeply disappointed that gender equality was nearly excluded from the GGA decision once again, only to be added back in the last iteration. Adaptation is a climate justice issue, and there is no climate justice without gender justice. We will continue to fight for this recognition.” - **Dr Demet Intepe, Adaptation Working Group co-Lead, Practical Action**

### **On Agriculture:**

“There was a lot of activity on food and climate at COP29, which began on Day 1 with a meeting of heads of state and ministers to take stock of progress towards the COP28 Declaration. Two more countries - Tanzania and Vietnam - signaled their intent to join the Alliance of Countries for Food Systems Transformation, which reported progress in each of its five founder countries since its inception. But food was largely absent from the formal negotiations and the finance discussions, and so there is still work to be done to bring food squarely into the heart of the climate process.” - **Gertrude Kenyangi**

### **On Technology:**

“The technology negotiations were characterized by deep polarization among the countries, with gender being one of the critical issues. The mere mention of the word gender led to the failure to approve the annual report of the technology mechanism for the first time in the few COPs I have attended. This is not an isolated fact that only happened in technology, but it is a clear sign that COP29, far from being an opportunity to protect human rights and gender equity, was a contentious and in many cases regressive space.” - **Valeria Pelaez, Technology Working Group co-Lead, WECF International**

### **On Mitigation:**

“The Mitigation Work Program failed its mandate to urgently scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade. Not only did COP29 not deliver on the trillions, but it failed to raise ambition and to move to action. Parties need to

understand the urgency of ensuring that the MWP outcome can serve its mandate to keep 1.5 alive. Countries failed to build trust and consensus on aligning MWP with GST outcome and NDCs, phasing out fossil fuels, and financing the just transition.”

**Farzana Faruk Jhumu, Youth Leader of Feminist Action for Climate Justice (FACJ) action coalition, Bangladesh**

## **ABOUT WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY**

The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) is one of the nine stakeholder groups of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Formalized in 2011, the WGC now consists of 51+ women’s and environmental civil society organizations, and a network of 1100+ advocates, 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 to work 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 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Website: [womengenderclimate.org](http://womengenderclimate.org); Twitter/X: [@WGC\\_Climate](https://twitter.com/WGC_Climate); Instagram: [wgc\\_climate](https://www.instagram.com/wgc_climate)

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## **REACTIONS OF WGC MEMBERS TO COP29 OUTCOMES:**

“COP29’s failure to prioritize gender justice is yet another demonstration of the wrong turn taken in Baku. Despite the critical need for ambitious gender-just climate outcomes, negotiations faced persistent push backs against anything that could strengthen the Lima Work Programme on Gender, culminating in a weak outcome. Women - in all their diversity - on the frontlines and standing up for environmental rights are facing unique threats, as they challenge the exploitation of land and natural resources while confronting entrenched gender discrimination. The final decision is a missed opportunity to ensure

comprehensive protection and support for women environmental human rights defenders. The absence of a political commitment at the COP to protect their fundamental rights further marginalizes their voices and weakens the pursuit of just and effective climate action. Now, the new Gender Action Plan must fill this gap.” - **Camilla Pollera, Human Rights and Climate Change Program Associate, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)**

“The work program on gender, thanks to the efforts of feminists holding strong on human rights and gender equality in the face of backlash and threats of regression, is a relief coming out of a COP that spectacularly failed to meet climate finance needs. Regretfully, it misses addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, diversity, gender-based violence or human rights defenders. Across agenda items, so much more is needed to stop false solutions and ensure health and rights, so that those who are most impacted by the climate crisis, including girls, adolescent girls, women and gender-diverse people, are leaders and beneficiaries of climate action, not marginalized by it.” - **Eleanor Blomstrom, Senior Manager, Policy and Advocacy, Women Deliver**

"COP29 is over but the decisions made will have terrifying consequences for communities the world over. The financing negotiated at COP29 was appalling both in terms of quantity and quality, and going forward, we will continue to demand that Global North countries increase financing that is owed, and that governments not only stop fossil fuel expansion, but also bring an end to fossil fuel subsidies and growing military budgets. Instead these funds need to be directed toward a Just Transition and real climate solutions—funds need to go to supporting life, not death and extraction. Additionally, the gaveling of Article 6 at COP29 is a giant step backward and will pave the way for the furtherance of carbon markets. And let us be unequivocal here—carbon capture and storage, geo-engineering, carbon offsets, carbon credits, biodiversity credits and other market-based schemes are false solutions that perpetuate climate chaos, Indigenous rights violations, and injustice. These schemes allow polluters to continue business as usual, all while delaying the real action we so urgently need. Thanks to the efforts of the WGC constituency, we saw a clear push to include



language about the care economy in the Just Transition Work Program. Ending in Rule 16, the text is disappointingly lost, however our movements to recognize paid and unpaid care work continue to grow. Most importantly, we are not giving up! No matter what happens in the halls of the UNFCCC process, our movements and networks are defining and creating the world that we know is best for our communities and our living Earth." **Osprey Orielle Lake, Executive Director, Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN)**

“The push for intransparent markets among other dangerous distractions does not come by accident. The number of big polluters combined with a COP29 Petro-Presidency require a re-orientation of this process at least with a strong Conflict of Interest Policy and an exclusion of COP hosts that obstruct the Paris Agreement.” - **Pat Bohland, LIFE e.V.**

“Just Transition negotiations at COP29 were characterised by deep procedural injustices. The absence of leadership from the COP29 Presidency that hindered negotiations on the text between Parties trying to constructively engage is a profound failure. With negotiations ending in Rule 16, we are disappointed that processes to push the work program towards actionable outcomes by COP30 and recognition of informal work and the care economy for the first time will be lost. What happened here is unacceptable. Feminists, workers, grassroots communities and people around the world demand the prioritisation of people and planet over extractive economies. We cannot wait any longer. We urge Parties to do the necessary work between now and SB62 to ensure that justice is delivered and that we see actionable outcomes from the Just Transition Work Programme at COP30 next year.”

“These meetings is about the people, women and girls in all their diversities who cannot afford to be in some of these spaces but are living testament to the devastating effects of climate change and it is their lands and forest that’s been negotiated upon with decisions on how it should be used, what trees to plant, when and how so that it could meet the demands carbons harvesting in an effort towards solving the climate crisis. While the idea of carbon markets might sound innovative and transformative in

terms of providing green job and building a green economy, the rate at which the space is mostly crowded with polluter lobbyists is indication that the intends is not to transform the lives of these women and girls but to continuously enrich the pockets of the rich.” - **Dr. Zoneziwoh Mbongulo-Wondieh, Women for a Change**

“I do not know if the gender decision at [COP29 Azerbaijan](#) to extend the Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) by 10 years and review its Gender Action Plan by next year is a win. I can only count it as a win on the ground that another opportunity has been given to advance gender balance in the work of the UNFCCC and Parties.” - **John Baaki, Women Environmental Programme (WEP), Nigeria.**

“The science is clear: We must cut emissions in half by 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5 °C. China and the Arab Group [so-called emerging economies] instrumentalized their Global South position to perpetuate their petro-patriarchal structures while leaving the most affected people, even in their own countries, behind.” **Laureen Akinyi Ododa, Mitigation working group co-Lead, Kenya**

“Petro-patriarchy is building its wealth on the climate crisis. If Global North countries are as human-rights based as they claim they are, then they must take the lead in ending fossil fuels in a just manner, redirecting these funds toward public climate finance. Oxfam analysis shows that a wealth tax on the world’s millionaires and billionaires, many of whom male from the global north investing on fossil fuels, could raise at least 1.7\$ trillion per year. Opposing mitigation and finance was completely unnecessary and disappointing.”

**Alba Saray Pérez Terán, Mitigation working group co-Lead, Oxfam Belgium.**