

WOMEN GENDER CONSTITUENCY

of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

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Women at COP 20 Blast Failure for Real Action in Lima:

“Time to Stop Calling and Start Doing. Leaders, You Have 12 Months to get it Right.”

[Lima, Peru; Sunday, 14 December] As COP20 comes to a close, the members of the **UNFCCC’s Women and Gender Constituency**, representing hundreds of thousands of women and men from around the world, respond to the failure of the Lima outcome to reflect the urgency of the climate crisis.

For over two weeks in Lima, WGC and Women’s Caucus members participated directly in the negotiations, held press conferences, conducted advocacy trainings, wrote articles, released reports and briefing papers, joined demonstrations and marches and collaborated with dozens of colleagues from around the world who participated through all this action in the COP in Lima or in support activities back home in local communities. In spite of these efforts, and those of many allies in Civil Society, the COP failed to move substantially forward towards the ultimate goal of agreeing on a plan to avert climate catastrophe, although in the final hours it agreed to an outcome in order to keep work moving towards Paris next year.

Bridget Burns, of the Women’s Environment and Development Organization in the US, and co-focal point of the WGC summed up the WGC’s evaluation of COP 20: *“Governments should be immediately implementing a renewable and safe energy transformation, protecting threatened ecosystems, and ensuring that the rights of the most vulnerable and impacted communities, including women, children and indigenous peoples and ecosystems are respected and protected, but here at COP 20 in Lima, in spite of working almost 2 days overtime, they did not come close to reaching this goal.”*

Although COP 20 did see the launch of the '[Lima Work Programme on Gender](#)', which aims to advance implementation of gender-responsive climate policies and mandates across all areas of the negotiations, this critical initiative faced challenges as well, with governments trading language on “gender equality” for “gender balance.”

Burns continued: *“The WGC insists that a fundamental framework of a strong “rights-based” agreement that is focused on climate justice must be the goal for COP 21 to be held in Paris, France, in 2015. Without gender equality, women’s rights, indigenous peoples rights and climate justice, including financing for loss and damage, a rapid transition to safe and renewable energies, massive commitment and emissions reductions by the developed world, and full participation of those most impacted, the programme of work to be done will be incubated and launched within an empty shell and will do little to support the lives of millions nor protect the precious ecosystems upon which we depend for our survival.”*

Reinforcing the frustration felt by all, the words of **Marina Parvin, from the Indigenous Mundas community in Bangladesh and representing the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)** were read by **Carmen Capriles of Bolivia** to bleary-eyed delegates around 3:00 AM in the closing moments of the extended negotiating session, *“I have travelled all the way from Bangladesh, leaving my home and family, hoping to see a commitment to an effective and equitable new agreement that is binding, ambitious and transformative; a commitment to uphold human rights, gender equality, and the rights of future generations.”*

Parvin continued: *“It pains me that when I go back, I will tell my people that wealthy governments just talked about which lands will be lost, communities displaced, cultures destroyed and which lives are less important.”*

AWLPD’s Regional Coordinator Kate Lappin, based in Thailand emphasized the key demands of the Women and Gender Constituency at COP 20, *“We didn’t come here to negotiate gender equality on a dead planet. We’re not asking for women to be half the displaced population, half of those killed, half of those who lose their livelihoods and future. Every single word of this document relates to women’s human rights and we won’t rest until every single word is fair and serves to create a just, sustainable and equitable future for women and men.”*

Sabine Bock, Energy and Climate Director for Women in Europe for a Common Future said, *“We can only get an ambitious and adequate agreement, if women and men equally decide, contribute and benefit from all climate policies and actions. Provisions on Technology and Mitigation will also only be effective when Gender Equality is included in the implementation of climate-safe technologies. And, in fact, at WECF, we have seen in our work on a daily basis that women and men are already jointly implementing climate solutions in local communities – for example solar collectors in the South Caucasus and Eastern Europe. These solutions must play a major role in the Paris Agreement - and the Agreement must reject completely big hydro, nuclear and fossil fuels of any kind.”*

Mrinalini Rai, an indigenous activist from India and Nepal, added, *“It is time to recognize that we need ‘System Change, Not Climate Change’, and that System Change should begin by recognizing the rights of the most vulnerable and making them central to the climate discussion, not in the periphery.”*

Isis Alvarez, from Colombia and representing the Global Forest Coalition in the WGC, found encouragement for the future outside the walls of the UNFCCC meeting. *“I am glad the Peoples’ Climate Summit was also held in Lima parallel to the UNFCCC COP 20 negotiations. While listening and following at the latter, one could lose all hope for real climate action and climate justice, but at the Summit, you could actually get to know the ‘real’ people on the frontlines of climate change, listen to their voices and hear their proposed solutions. It helps you believe again in local and genuine actions that we can take now. If we all wait in line for an agreement between governments (that might already come too late or not even come at all) we might just cook ourselves together with the planet while we are waiting.”*

Trish Glazebrook, U.S. Representative for Gender CC: Women for Climate Justice, made clear: *“Gender is not an ‘add-on issue’. Women are half the world’s people. We are most of the world’s farmers, health-care workers and teachers. We deserve and demand equal partnership in climate negotiations and implementation.”*

Osprey Lake of the Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) in the United States, where the battle over the Keystone XL Pipeline and the development of the Alberta Tar Sands is raging, addressed the failure of the COP to deal with the central point of ending fossil fuel extraction: *"With the COP taking place in Peru, it is the first time a UNFCCC meeting was held in an Amazon country. Indigenous women from the Amazon echoed what social movements are demanding worldwide: if we want to address climate change, we have to have a transition away from extractive economies. We must leave 80 percent of the current fossil fuels reserves in the ground."*

The climate talks have again failed to reflect the daily realities of peoples and communities around the world, and the words of **Usha Nair, co-focal point of the WGC from All India Women's Conference**, are clear. *"The Women and Gender Constituency wants the agreement to focus on real solutions - not false solutions like nuclear energy, fracking, geo-engineering and mega dams. We are concerned at increased corporate involvement in climate action that encourages profit motives and moves away from social commitment and compassionate involvement. We urge increased focus on public-citizen participation for more democratized actions on climate change. We also call for sufficient finance, appropriate technology and adequate provision for loss and damage."*

"From now to Paris we need leadership at all levels - local, national and international. And we need leaders to deal seriously and honestly with the crux of these talks - global inequality and historical responsibility - and to make progress on a fair, just, equitable and transformative global partnership to combat the ever escalating climate crisis."

Visit the Women and Gender Constituency website for more information: www.womengenderclimate.org

The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) - made up of international, regional and national networks working on the intersections of women's rights, gender equality and the environment- is the formal space for women's and gender civil society organizations to debate, streamline and strengthen the positions, and engage effectively in the UNFCCC climate change negotiations. The Constituency draws upon global commitments to gender equality and women's rights, especially as they relate to climate change and related commitments and Conventions. The Constituency works to ensure human rights and a gender perspective is incorporated into UNFCCC negotiations, plans and actions. **Website:** www.womengenderclimate.org

Member Organizations: All India Women's Conference (AIWC); Asia-Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APFWLD); Centre for 21st Century Issues (C21st); ENERGIA, part of the ETC Foundation; LIFE- Education Environment Equality e.V.; GenderCC; Global Forest Coalition; Huairou Commission International; Council for Adult Education (ICAE); Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR); Women Environmental Programme (WEP); Women in Europe 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).



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