



Presentation at the Side Event, Women Building Resilience Towards a Responsible Future: OWG 7, 7th January 2014

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The new and emerging challenges such as Climate Change have had adverse effects on populations in the LDCs. The people in the LDC, especially women have no capacity to absorb shocks and surprises, adapt to sudden undesirable changes precipitated by both natural disasters such as Climate Change and Man-made disasters such as armed conflict. Manifesting as prolonged droughts, violent thunderstorms of short duration resulting in massive flooding and landslides, Climate Change has exacerbated the vulnerability of people in the Least Developed Countries. Prolonged droughts are on record for causing 100% crop failure, compromising the Food Security of millions of people. Flooding destroys crops and infrastructure; and provides breeding ground for disease vectors such as Mosquitoes. Landslides bury entire villages claiming lives and destroying property. Needless to say Climate Change negates

whatever efforts are made towards development and keeps populations in the LDC rotating in vicious cycle of poverty, deprivation, food insecurity, weakness, low productivity, low investment and generally despair.

Promoting industrialized agriculture to address the rising food insecurity, which is really treating the symptoms of Climate Change rather than the root cause, has made a bad situation worse. Industrialized agriculture promotes:

- Use of hybrid seeds and other planting materials. These require a lot of irrigation. There are already reports of reduced water levels in natural water bodies like L. Victoria, and R. Nile. Massive irrigation will exacerbate the drawdown irreversibly.
- These hybrid seeds must be protected from pests and diseases with pesticides; and from weeds with herbicides. Use of these chemicals kills off pollinators such as honey bees. On a technology poor continent like Africa, where agricultural production depends on natural systems and conditions, this could cause 100% crop failure, translating into food insecurity the magnitude of which we have not witnessed to date.
- Climate Change has rendered formally arable land unsuitable for agriculture. It has therefore reduced the economic base of a population whose major economic activity is agriculture.

This has adverse effects on local communities and especially on women. Women's socially constructed roles namely:

- Reproductive
- Productive
- Community roles

require that they produce food for their households, take care of the sick and the young. They are known to provide 80% of the agricultural labour force. A woman in Sub-Saharan Africa maintains a 16 hour work day. A situation like I have outlined above will:

- Increase women's workload as they move longer distances in such of fuelwood and water
- Rob women of time to invest in education, skills training and other development activities, thus threatening the gains made since the Forth World's Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

Civil Society Organizations and Social Movements as organized in the Women's Major Groups are convinced that it is the relentless pursuit of growth through profit that creates and entrenches unsustainable production and consumption. Sustainable production and consumption can only be achieved when the needs of the present generation are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is therefore incumbent on our generation to utilize our natural resources such as soils, water, biodiversity, energy, etc responsibly, mindful that they are finite but renewable. Deliberate decisions to take multi-dimensional

actions at Community, National and Global Levels must be made.

At Community Level

There is urgent need to build community resilience. Grassroots communities must be equipped to absorb shocks and surprises, adapt to sudden and unplanned changes and to bounce back. This will take investment in:

- **Ecological Agriculture rather than Chemical Enhanced Industrial agriculture.**

Ecological agriculture with its simple, cost-effective practices and technologies which are easy to replicate and within the reach of every smallholder farmer, can sustainably supply food for the human population in Uganda and the world at large, as well as income for the world's 1.3 billion farmers. It can play a critical role in the global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the mitigation of climate change. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that the sector could mitigate its carbon dioxide emissions by 80 to 88 percent. Farmers can reduce their emissions by adopting efficient irrigation technologies, switching to alternative renewable energy sources (e.g., wind and photovoltaic-powered pumps, solar dryers, and biogas), eradicating use of chemical inputs, and minimizing post-harvest food loss. Ecological agriculture also enhances natural resource conservation. On the other hand, because Industrial Agriculture depends on fossil fuel energy sources, it is said to contribute between 14 and 30 percent of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

Other areas important to invest in are:

- Early warning systems.
- Transfer of labor saving and other appropriate. Technologies e.g. energy saving devices, rain water harvesting facilities at household level.
- Value addition through agro-processing
- Demand driven participatory agricultural research that prioritizes community needs and incorporates indigenous knowledge.
- Affordable low carbon transport.

At National Level

1. Good Governance

Strong and consistent political will and strategies are a pre-requisite for policy formulation that is people – centered, democratic, participatory, inclusive and transparent. For instance, are results in elections a true representation of the people’s will? Does the government in power have the people’s mandate to run their affairs?

2. Political, Administrative and Corporate Accountability

It is imperative for National Governments to acknowledge and assume reasonability for actions, products, decisions and policies. A mechanism should be in place for citizens to hold their governments answerable for consequences resulting from their actions. For example, in November 2012, Development Partners had to withdraw Aid from Uganda after the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament unearthed misappropriation of billions of

shillings meant for rehabilitation of Northern Uganda which suffered a 20 year armed insurgency.

3. Commitment to International Instruments.

African Heads of State and Government under CAADP committed to increasing investment in agriculture to at least 10% of the budget allocation. To date Uganda's agricultural budget allocation is still a paltry 4%.

At Global Level

1. Equitable participation and share of benefits.

Currently, government and NGOs in the geographic north which have resources to maintain an international presence, dominate systems and structures which ensure global wealth accrues to them. Geographical South Civil Society organizations and social movements have symbolic representation at international meetings e.g. the UN Committee for Food Security (CFS), in spite of being closer to their grassroots constituencies, which have hands-on experience of the most pressing development issue. Women's voices are lacking in discussion, negotiation, and decision making on environmental and climate-based policy their intimate relationship with the consequences of climate change notwithstanding. According to the Center for Environment and Population, at past meetings discussing the global environment, women led only 10 percent of delegations. In 40 percent of delegations, the participants were 100-percent men.

2. Dismantle the exploitative Development Paradigm

Pursue socio-economic transformation rather than relentless pursuit of profit. There is an urgent need for a democratic restructuring of asset ownership. It is estimated that the wealthiest 30% in the world account for 87% of global wealth, while the poorest 20% own less than 1%. Much of the wealth of the top 1% is being used for speculative transactions that lead to asset inflation, financial volatility and ultimately busts and economic crises that hit the poor and vulnerable sections of society most severely.

3. Equitable redistribution of ownership of and access to natural resources (land, water, and energy) as a common good; as well as wealth and finances.

The trend in the global south is Land Grabbing by wealthy “investors”.

Equity can be achieved through:

- Land reforms to protect the poor against the wealthy.
- Pro-poor fiscal and trade policies.
- Development Assistance to finance widely accessible social provisions.
- Progressive taxation on income and corporations.

4. Corporate Accountability must be a cornerstone of sustainable development. Corporations and International Financial elites must be held accountable for their dangerous and fickle actions that have affected many poor families e.g. in the recent global financial meltdown.

Strong regulatory frameworks for large corporations with mandatory reporting requirements and accountability mechanisms should be adopted rather than relying on mere voluntary commitments.