

UNEP-Women's Major Group on COP21

Based on the Document: 'Proposed resolution for UNEA on Paris Agreement' & 'A Reality Check on the Paris Agreement from the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC)'

While the others might want us to move forward with the process, the Women and Gender Constituency provided a reality check.

So, what does it really mean to promote an effective implementation of a weak agreement? We are talking about a binding legal document that doesn't recognize historical responsibilities and continues to undermine the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; hence, it lets countries decide how much longer and how they still want to continue to pollute, leaving all commitments to weak voluntary Intended National Determined Contributions (INDCs).

It is true that Parties to the UNFCCC committed to maintain a global average temperature below 1.5°C but they failed to recognize and understand that in some areas such as Islands States, this 'limit' has been exceeded already by far and that it is already too late. The latest IPCC report says that doubling of greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere compared to what they were in 1750 will likely result in warming between 1.5°C to 4.5°C. Scientists haven't managed to narrow this down since the IPCC was first set up. So, if the low figure is true, really radical action could limit warming to less than 1.5°C but if it's the medium or higher figure then there's no chance at all. For the Women and Gender Constituency, seeing this goal on paper is not enough. We demand it in actions as the proof of full commitment to that goal, not vague aspirations.

Thus, '*making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development*' will result highly difficult especially in light of the corporate take over of the climate negotiations; the quality of and a goal for scaling up adequate and predictable, largely public finance which is highly needed, lost a lot of political strength while business interests that have lobbied hard in our home countries will be the first to benefit from the agreement as it fundamentally does not address the needs of the most vulnerable countries, communities and people of the world. It fails to address the structures of injustice and inequality which have caused the climate crisis and hold the historical polluters sufficiently to account. What happened in Paris was that governments maintained their commitment to corporations over people and signaled opportunities for profit to be made from crisis. The Green Climate Fund – for instance - is increasingly being captured by multilateral development banks and international private entities with poor track records. The lack of transparency and preponderance of big banks and international entities over national and sub-national entities blatantly defies the GCF mandate of being more responsive to the needs of vulnerable developing countries and communities.

What is left unclear in the Paris Agreement is how soon will the international community and specifically the world's rich countries succeed in raising the estimated 100 billion dollars per year needed by 2020? Paragraph 54 on the agreement means no money on the table prior to 2020, just intention of mobilisation. In Cancun, Parties had agreed to developed countries mobilising USD 100 billion per year by 2020. With the Paris Agreement, a five-year extension has been granted in order to reach this target and a new quantified goal will be set for the period after 2025.

The Women and Gender Constituency has long argued that climate finance should come from taxing the highest 1% of emitters. A tax on high emitters of between 5-10% would provide at least USD 150 billion per year. Funds can also be derived from harmful industries. 80% of GHG emissions are caused by the burning of fossil fuels and the subsidies to this sector accounts for USD 5.3 trillion a year. Redirecting these subsidies prioritizing women and the poor could anchor a transformative shift.

Besides, a common understanding on what entails truly 'sustainable energy' is urgently needed. Currently, 'clean' energy sources allow dirty energies like large-scale wood-based bioenergy to be recognized as a 'renewable' energy source, and even harmful hydropower also enters the category. But what does an innovative' large hydropower dam means for an entire ecosystem? What does the establishment of a single 500,000volt tower in a rural area means to people, plants, animals, soil organisms and water sources? We are sure that there are real solutions out there such as solar and wind-power, and that genuine transformation to a low carbon society requires further analysis of what is that will actually take us on that path and what would drive us apart.

Critical issues like clear emission reductions without offsetting and misleading market approaches; ensuring the quality of technologies which should be safe and socially and environmentally sound; the responsibilities of developed countries to take the lead, the responsibility to protect people's rights and our ecosystems including indigenous peoples and women's rights, have been either surgically removed throughout the text or lack specificity; that we are not protecting food security but instead are protecting food production, all of them, are issues that jeopardize the whole 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Agenda and its SDGs, such as Goal 12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production, to name but one example. Unsustainable food systems are not given enough attention and most rhetoric, fails to recognize the importance of this issue, not just on the context of climate change but also in the context of poverty eradication. A clear example is the increased deforestation in Paraguay – also undermining Goal 15 - and associated social problematic (Goal 1) due to GM soy and cattle ranch expansion. Exclusionary methods such as increased carbon trading which are now expanded to the agricultural sector, and land use change (LULUCF); the flawed 'Net zero emissions' principle and unproved technologies such as BECCs, gained further support while the human rights language was weakened.

The 'loss and damage' mechanism mentioned in Article 8, that would have meant compensation to those most affected from climate change, lost all significance on paragraph 52

when it states *“that Article 8 of the Agreement does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation”*. At the same time, climate refugees continue to be ignored and the agreement failed to be transformative and legally recognize them.

Perverse initiatives endorsed by the Paris agreement such as Climate Smart Agriculture surrender too much power to already powerful multinational corporations monopolizing the food industry setting the stage for the further demise of small peasant farmers especially women and their related traditional knowledge. Already a report from FAO (2014) demonstrated how agroecology could feed the world without the need for harmful and misleading technologies while empowering small scale farmers.

We know that climate change is the greatest threat to rights in our time, and we know that women often bear the brunt of these impacts. We believe that operational language on gender equality, alongside other fundamental rights, in Article 2, defining the purpose of the agreement, would have gone far to ensure that all forthcoming climate actions take into account the rights, needs and perspectives of women and men and encourage women’s full and equal participation in decision-making. This was the moment to set the right path, the just path for climate action. But it just didn’t happen. SDG 13 needs to go beyond the Paris agreement.

To call this an ‘ambitious agreement’ is totally misleading. Civil society organizations and social movements openly protested the outcome of the negotiations.

Women of the world have been calling for climate justice, and we know that calls for climate justice are empty without acknowledging that ‘justice’ requires a remedy, justice is delivered when reparations are provided, and justice is essentially for accountability.