

# **Global Warning: Women Matter!**

## **Draft Statement by Women at COP11 & COP/MOP1 (Dec 7, 2005)**

All UN processes are mandated to embody the principles and practices of gender analysis and gender equality. Deliberations and decisions within the UNFCCC framework should integrate considerations of the different roles, strengths and vulnerabilities of women and men. Shaping climate policy from the gender perspective would signify an important step both toward gender justice and toward a global society in which sustainable climate protection is not merely a vision but a practical reality.

**Poverty:** The negative effects of climate change are likely to hit the poorest people in the poorest countries hardest. Because women constitute the majority of the poor in developing countries and communities highly dependent on local natural resources, they are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Even in the developed world, increasing costs for energy, transport, healthcare and nutrition are likely to affect women, including single mothers, more than men.

At times, more women than men die in **natural disasters** - because warning information does not reach them, they have never learned to swim, or are not allowed to leave their homes without a male relative. In other cases, more men than women lose their lives because they engage in 'heroic', risky action to save others.

In many developing countries, women are responsible for fetching water and firewood – tasks that become ever more burdensome and time-consuming due to widespread **drought and deforestation**. Fewer girls will go to school; fewer women will have opportunities to engage in income-generating activities.

**Mitigation:** Relating to the different roles they fulfil in society, there are significant differences in energy use between women and men - in terms of purposes (caring work, income generating work, leisure) and amounts (men driving cars, and bigger ones).

Existing **transport** systems in many countries have been designed with a specific view to middle-aged full-time working men, neglecting women's higher dependency on public transport and their specific needs when they look after children and elderly. Integrating a gender perspective would make transport systems both more user-friendly and more climate-friendly.

Successful mitigation and adaptation will have to be context-specific, and participatory. When developing adaptive measures, all members of communities must be part of a climate change **planning and governance** process. Only the full participation of women and men in planning and decision-making will deliver effective results.

**Public awareness:** Governments will need much more popular support, as well as pressure, to deliver the necessary changes for climate protection. Women around the globe are more concerned about environmental risks than men as they are the ones responsible for the well-being of their families (nutrition, health, education). They are more convinced that behavioural changes will need to be part of the solution. Women connect effectively with women in and beyond their communities. And they are responsible for transmitting values and cultures to the next generations. They are the most obvious 'natural ally' for everybody concerned about climate change – and the biggest possible constituency to the cause.

**COP11 & COP/MOP1 outcomes:** It would be extremely helpful for women worldwide – activists and researchers – if reference to gender were included in the outcome documents of the Montreal conference. References to gender could be integrated into several decisions, for example:

- Regarding a **mandate** for future negotiations on post-2012: "integrating gender specific conditions and impacts relating to all policies and measures"
- Regarding **adaptation**: "design gender sensitive adaptation policies and measures; ensure women's full participation in adapting processes of planning and decision-making"
- Regarding **CDM**: "ensure full participation of women in planning and implementation of CDM projects, including the affected communities; integrate gender impacts assessments in project planning and evaluation"

**Climate change, in all its aspects, is a truly global challenge. We need to address it with the utmost urgency, in solidarity, and doing justice to all people – young and old, South and North, East and West, women and men, girls and boys. We can only achieve this bold goal if we come together as a global community, learning from each other and with each other how to protect our climate within the framework and under the core principles of the United Nations - peace, justice, and sustainable development.**