

COP 21

CLIMATE, A QUESTION OF RIGHTS

Respect for women's rights is essential to society's sustainable and comprehensive development. Women represent more than half of the population and are key actors in the management of our planet's natural resources. At the same time, they bear the brunt of the effects of natural disasters and exposure to toxins. How is it possible that women participate so very minimally in decisions about the environment or the fight against climate change?

All too often women do not have access to basic human rights such as health, education, and security, but also the right to freely dispose of their bodies, to exercise their sexuality free of violence and coercion, and to choose whether and when to have children. Sexual rights are at the heart of emancipation for all, and especially for women. Such rights are a foundation that enables them to make independent choices about their health, life plan, and societal role. When these rights are ignored, all the other fundamental rights are also undermined. Universal recognition of these rights remains a major challenge in determining strategies for sustainable development.

RIGHTS AND CLIMATE ISSUES: SOME EXAMPLES

The right to education and resource management: women produce 60-80% of food in developing countries. Economic and educational gains in addition to independence would enable women to gain the knowledge and skills to own land and manage their resources efficiently and sustainably.

The right to health and food security: Food insecurity makes women and girls vulnerable to at-risk behaviour, favouring transactional sex in exchange for money or food as well as early marriage. However, these practices expose women to HIV, sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancies, and poor reproductive health.

Women and girls spend
90%
of their income for their family, compared with
30-40%
for men¹

A study of
130 countries

found that countries with higher female parliamentary representation are more prone to ratify international environmental treaties³

Women produce
60-80%
of the food
in developing countries,
while owning less than
2%
of the land²

Women and children are responsible for collecting water in
76%
of households in developing countries⁴

Gender and development: If women had the same rights as men to access productive resources, yields from their farms would increase by 20-30%, improving productivity in developing countries by 3 to 4% and thereby reducing global famine by 12-17%.

BEWARE MAKING THE WRONG "GOOD" RESOLUTIONS! UNDERSTAND THE REAL PROBLEMS!

With the approach of the climate conference in Paris, it is crucial to reaffirm the importance of a rights-based approach. Fundamental human rights must be placed at the centre of COP21 negotiations, especially since the emergence of environmental issues associated with global warming challenges has radicalized certain positions on increasing world population

and thus the issue of family planning. Two positions have become stronger, but both are equally inappropriate and problematic. On the one hand, countries in the northern hemisphere, the main source of global warming, advocate population control in poor countries from a Malthusian perspective to safeguard their development model, while developing aggressive pro-birth policies to counter "negative population growth" experienced in recent decades. On the other hand, many developing countries in the southern hemisphere, the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, neglect family planning policies, not seeing it as

1. United Nations Foundation.

2. World Watch Institute, 2012.

3. Global Gender and Climate Alliance, 2013.

4. Water.Org, 2014.

Eliminating gender inequalities in agriculture would save
100–150 millions
people from starvation.¹

Women are
14 times
more likely to die in natural disasters than men and are more affected by food shortages and lack of economic resources in the event of a natural disaster.²

a priority despite the pressing needs of their population.

Neither of these two positions recognizes sexual and reproductive rights as an essential component of every individual's well-being. Family planning is understood by some exclusively from a demographic perspective and control of births, requiring women to have a maximum number of children, which is clearly a violation of their rights, and by others as an unnecessary, if not downright secondary, good. Another perspective is urgently needed – one that combines the interactions between population growth, development, the fight against poverty, and the rights of individuals, especially the rights of women to control their bodies and for couples to make informed and independent choices.

1. FAO, 2011.
2. UN Women.

INVESTING IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR), A WINNING STRATEGY FOR THE CLIMATE.

Today, women are those most affected by climate change and scarcity of natural resources (water, wood, food ...), and are consequently most exposed to resulting impoverishment. Although impacted more severely than others by such structural inequalities, it is nevertheless women that can provide a solution to these problems, but on one condition: that we combine socio-economic development, improvements in girls' and women's status, and greater access to family planning services.

Women, as important players in social transformation, must have the opportunity to contribute to environmental policies that available resources and the needs of future generations into account. They are an essential lever in improving access to food security and water.

Such an approach was already advocated by the Program of Action

defined during the International Conference on Population and Development adopted by 195 countries in Cairo in 1994. This policy must be conducted internationally, and it is every State's responsibility to engage with the program. Only a comprehensive, collective political and economic will with wisely invested funds can help build sustainable development, promoting a society based on equality between women and men, individual empowerment, social justice, and living together in harmony.

Women who are able to make their own choices, to plan their pregnancies, experience their sexuality in safety and with respect, without dependence, without contamination with a sexually transmitted disease, without the risk of violence or discrimination, are women who can become involved in a course of study and meet their needs and those of their families. Such women are fully prepared to cope with climate change.

We therefore call for inclusion of universal ethics and responsibilities for sexual and reproductive rights in discussions and negotiations on to climate issues. The Conference on the Climate is a unique opportunity to integrate sexual and reproductive rights into all policies designed to build a healthier and more liveable planet for all, a more just world with healthy populations. It has become urgent to recognize sexual and reproductive rights and women's participation at all levels as a key issue in the fight against climate change and resource conservation.

ACTION INITIATIVES / PLANNING SUPPORTS:

A call to support women facing climate change

BY THE HIGH COUNCIL FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN (HCEFH).

You can add your name to the signatories of the attached appeal prior to the Paris Summit on Climate COP21 by following the link www.femmesetclimat.fr/#sign-it

Climate up against the wall

BY CARE FRANCE

www.carefrance.org/care-actions/campagnes/climat-pied-mur-artistes.htm

To COP or not to COP?

BY CARE FRANCE

To make the issues of climate change and the challenges of COP21 accessible to the greatest number, CARE France has launched a fun and educational site.

<http://copoupascop.carefrance.org/>

Alternatiba during the COP

BY ALTERNATIBA

<https://alternatiba.eu/2015/11/alternatiba-appelle-a-se-mobiliser-pendant-toute-la-cop21/>

World March for the climate: encouraging activism

BY AVAAZ.ORG

On 29 November 2015, the opening day of COP 21, the citizens of the world who are concerned about climate change will take to the streets.

www.jevotepourleclimat.fr/en/actualite/22446/marche-mondiale-climat-mobilisation-encourageante

"Women for Climate Justice" Day

BY ADEQUATION

On November 28, 2015 at City Hall of Paris : www.adequations.org/spip.php?article2330