Women and climate change

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The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted the own-initiative report drafted by Nicole KIIL-NIELSEN (Greens/EFA, FR) on women and climate change.

Members recall that women represent approximately 50 % of the world's population and that they still have relatively more responsibility for everyday consumption choices, childcare and household activities. Women consume more sustainably than men and show greater willingness to act to preserve the environment by making sustainable consumption choices. In addition, statistics show that between 75 and 80 % of the world's 27 million refugees are women and children and that they are affected more by climate change.

Recognising that climate change exacerbates gender discrimination in addition to its other catastrophic effects, Members emphasise that **averting dangerous climate change must be the highest priority of the EU both in domestic and external policy**.

They call in particular on the Commission and the Council to:

- **mainstream and integrate gender in every step of climate policies**, from conception to financing, implementation and evaluation;
- include – at all levels of decision-making – gender equality and gender justice objectives in policies, action plans and other measures relating to sustainable development, disaster risk and climate change, by carrying out systematic gender analyses, establishing gender-sensitive indicators and benchmarks and developing practical tools; underlines that the climate change negotiation process must take into account the principles of gender equality at all stages;
- consider climate change and its negative impacts **as a development issue** with gender implications that is relevant to all sectors (social, cultural, economic and political), from the local to the global level.

Recalling that the proportion of women in political decision-making and especially in climate change negotiations is still unsatisfactory and little to no progress has been made (women account for only 12 to 15 % of heads of delegation and around 30 % of the delegates), Members welcome the growing awareness of the gender aspect of climate change in the high-level climate talks, and interventions by high-level actors. However, they stress the need to see concrete action to include more women ,in EU climate diplomacy, at all levels of decision-making and especially in climate change negotiations, by means of measures such as introducing **40 %+ quotas in the delegations** (as the Parliament had reminded the Commission and the Member States in its resolution on the climate change conference in Durban (COP 17).

Members call on the Commission and the Member States to collect country-specific and gender disaggregated data when planning, implementing and evaluating climate change policies, programmes and projects, and to **mainstream gender-sensitive statistics in all environment-related policy areas**, in order to improve the measurement of the general situation of women and men with regard to climate change.

The EU and the Member States are called upon to assess to what extent climate-related policies take account of women's needs, and urges them to apply a gender-based perspective when formulating gender-sensitive sustainable development policy.

Adaptation: the report calls on the Commission and the Member States to set up easy-to-use tools for gender impact assessments of projects throughout project life-cycles, such as the tools used for development projects.

Given that women are globally very active at civil society level, Members call on the Commission to:

- facilitate and support the networking of women's organisations and civil-society actors;
- envisage programmes whereby the transfer of modern technologies and know-how can help developing communities and regions adapt to climate change;
- provide development aid for accessible programmes to sink wells using renewable energy sources and simple, easy-to-maintain water treatment systems;
- highlight the importance of relying on the knowledge of women and encouraging local solutions that have very concrete influence on people's daily lives, such as the project 'Girls in Risk Reduction Leadership' in South Africa, or several projects to help women's groups install drinking water facilities and toilets in Indian slums;
- integrate the gender issue into strategies for preventing and managing the risks associated with natural disasters;
- make more efforts to ensure better prevention, treatment and access to medicine and drugs – especially for women, as they are a vulnerable group, particularly in their capacity as care providers;
- develop a principle of '**climate justice'** given that the greatest injustice of our failure to tackle climate change effectively would be the detrimental effects on poor countries and populations, and on women in particular.

Underlining that 70 % of the world's poorest are women, who carry out two-thirds of all work done but own less than 1 % of all goods, Members note that they are denied equal access to and control over resources, technology, services, land rights, credit and insurance systems and decision-making powers and are thus disproportionately vulnerable to, and affected by, climate change.

Mitigation: Members emphasise that **targeted policies are needed to avoid gender-segregation and discrimination in the green economy**, where new technology and science jobs are already almost exclusively male-dominated. They stress, in this connection, the importance of entrepreneurship in terms of opening up the green economy to both women and men.

They also stress the important role played by women in implementing mitigation measures in daily life, e. g. through energy- and water-saving practices, recycling measures and the use of eco-friendly and organic products, as they are still seen as the primary managers of these resources in the home.

Members call for measures to:

- launch awareness-raising campaigns at the grassroots level, focusing on everyday consumption choices related to household and childcare activities;
- launch a study focusing specifically on the gender dimension of mitigation policies;
- encourage women to pursue technical and scientific training and careers in the environmental and energy technology sectors, since the need for expertise in this area will guarantee women secure jobs with a stable future and ensure greater awareness of women's needs when it comes to defining climate change policies;
- support a reform of existing mechanisms and funds to make them more transparent, inclusive and reflective of the contributions to emissions reductions by local communities and particularly women and to promote these principles in future climate-related treaties, mechanisms and bilateral cooperation efforts, with a view to developing better ways to ensure the economic empowerment of women;
- set up a toolkit to encourage inclusive decision-making, as was done in the transport and energy sectors in Malmo (Sweden) and in the Vollsmose area (Denmark);
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- develop indicators to evaluate the gender impact of projects and programmes and to promote gender budgeting in climate-related policies, whether these policies are conducted at international, national, regional or local levels;
- develop tools and guidance for the gender analysis of mitigation policies and programmes, and related research programmes and activities.

Members recall that **avoiding dangerous climate change and limiting the increase in average temperatures to 2° C, or 1.5° C if possible**, compared with pre-industrial levels, **is necessary and absolutely critical** in order to avoid dramatic negative consequences for women and other vulnerable groups.

Pointing out that climate change will inevitably lead to migration from regions affected by calamities such as droughts or floods, Members call on the EU to keep in mind the need to protect women in any camps set up for internally displaced persons and refugees. They reiterate the importance of identifying gender-sensitive strategies for responding to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change. They take the view, therefore, that urgent research is required on how to manage environmental migration in a gender-sensitive manner.

Financing: the report calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes and strategies that use gender analysis to improve the welfare of women and girls. It calls for such programmes and strategies to include innovative financing solutions such as micro-credit schemes, in particular in emergency cases such as those of climate refugees. Members stress the need for financing mechanisms to reflect women's priorities and needs, and for the active involvement of organisations that promote gender equality in the development of funding criteria and the allocation of resources for climate change initiatives, particularly at local level and in the activities of the **Green Climate Fund**.

Members call on the Commission and the EU delegations to support scaled-up, **new and additional funding** particularly for adaptation actions which directly benefit women and call for the provision of such adaptation funding to be exclusively in the form of grants.

The Commission and the Member States are called upon to support the development of renewable energy sources in developing countries, through transfers of technology and knowledge.

Lastly, Members point out with concern the negative impact climate change may have on the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular those linked to the condition and protection of women.