Role of women in the green economy

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The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted the report by Mikael GUSTAFSSON (GUE/NGL, SE) on the role of women in the green economy.

Members recall that due to gender roles, women do not affect the environment in the same way as men, and in many countries women's access to resources, and their opportunities to manage conditions and adapt, are curtailed by structural norms and discrimination. They also note that it is the poorest people, an estimated 70% of whom are women, who will be hardest hit by climate change and the destruction of the ecosystem.

This is why they put forward a series of recommendations stressing that the **transition to a green and sustainable economy** is essential to reducing environmental impact, **improving social justice and creating a society in which women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities**.

Recalling that the "green economy" covers aspects such as the ecosystem, consumption, food, growth, transport, energy and the welfare sector, Members call on the Commission and the Member States to compile age- and gender disaggregated data when strategies, programmes and budgeting projects are being planned, implemented and evaluated for the environment and climate sectors. They regret that gender concerns and perspectives are not well integrated in policies and programmes for sustainable development and point out that **the absence of gender perspectives from environmental policies increases gender inequality**.

Members call for:

- the establishment of gender mainstreaming mechanisms at international, national and regional levels in policies;
- the support and promotion of specific research and studies on how the conversion into a green economy will affect women and men in different sectors, and on women's essential role in facilitating the transition;
- the systematic inclusion of a gender-equality perspective in the definition, implementation and monitoring of environmental policies at all levels;
- the promotion of gender equality as a key issue when designing, and conducting negotiations on, future regulations and programmes for the EU structural funds (the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)), as well as the Common Agricultural Policy;
- the improvement of awareness about the importance of converting to a green economy and about the positive effects of gender-sensitive environmental policies.

Sustainable consumption: Members call on the Commission and the Member States to **introduce gender equality into all environmental policy areas, and at all levels of economic decision-making.** This could start with the application of a new, social and climate-friendly indicator on growth, which includes non-economic aspects of wellbeing and sets its primary focus on issues related to sustainable development such as gender equality, poverty reduction and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Members underline that work to meet people's legitimate demands for housing, food, provisions, energy and jobs must always be carried out so that ecosystems are conserved and climate change is limited. They also emphasise that **GDP is a measurement of production and does not measure environmental sustainability**, resource efficiency, social inclusion or social development in general. They call for the

development of clear and measurable indicators that take account of climate change, biodiversity, resource efficiency and social equality.

Sustainable transport: the Commission and Member States are called upon to:

- create sustainable transport systems which take equal account of women's and men's transportation needs and which, at the same time, have a low impact on the environment;
- reduce the environmental and energy impacts of the transport sector and to improve equality by working to increase access to IT systems and traffic-efficient planning;
- introduce a transport hierarchy that clearly indicates which mode of transport should be prioritised for overall environmental and traffic targets to be achieved;
- integrate the impact of the use of transport by public authorities in the state audits carried out by respective auditing authorities;
- promote remote working by means of social and tax incentives;
- significantly strengthen local public transport by increasing the quantity and quality of transport services, by improving the safety, comfort and physical accessibility of transportation modes and facilities.

The welfare sector and green jobs: Members encourage women's entrepreneurship in the development of environmental protection and environmentally friendly technologies. In this context, they call on the Member States to ensure that women are equally represented in political decision-making bodies as well as in government-appointed bodies and institutions dealing with defining, planning and implementing environmental, energy and green jobs policies. They refer to the fact that female workers are strongly under-represented in the renewable sector and especially in science- and technology-intensive jobs and that it is, therefore, especially important that the Member States develop action plans to encourage more women to choose courses and careers within fields such as engineering, natural sciences, IT and other areas of advanced technology. In this regard, Members propose a series of measures including support for women's access to microcredit for small business, training to facilitate women's access to new "green" jobs and emerging technologies with a low environmental impact, and support for social security, family planning and child care. Once again, Members stress the need to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data on the distribution of financial resources in correlation to gender-divided sectors and green innovations.

Sustainable policies in international relations: Members call on the Commission to fully recognise and address the multiple effects of environmental degradation on inequalities, in particular between women and men, and to ensure the promotion of women's equal rights in the elaboration of new policy proposals in the field of climate change and environmental sustainability. With this in mind, they call for indicators to assess the gender-specific impact of projects and programmes.

Lastly, they call for: i) access to clean water is of major importance to girls and women in many parts of the world; ii) particular attention to be paid to the fact that billions of people are totally dependent on biomass for energy, the use of which can give rise to health problems; iii) the development of programmes for the transfer of modern technology and expertise to help developing countries and regions adapt to environmental changes.