



[People's groups plant Christmas Tree of Hope](#)



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[Gender and Climate Change](#)

In most all economies, women's caretaking role, their access to resources and information and their level of participation in society leaves many women at a disadvantage when climate change related weather events such as storms; floods and droughts occur. In almost all developing countries women are more dependent than men on the agricultural and informal sectors, which are more vulnerable to extreme weather than traditional male-dominated sectors. The international climate change negotiation process and climate change policies at the national level must adopt the principles of gender equality at all stages, including research, analysis and design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies. (Expert Group, Commission on the Status of Women, 2008)

[3rd Session: United Nations Forum on Minority Issues](#)

The Forum, to be held on the 14th & 15th of December 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland, is a valuable platform for minority representatives to contribute their knowledge and experiences to the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, and, indirectly, to the UN Human Rights Council. Social Watch will participate in the event, which this year will be chaired by Professor Gita Sen and will feature the participation of States, specialized agencies and civil society representatives. The main objective of the Forum is to develop a set of recommendations for action-oriented themes to be submitted to the Human Rights Council.

[It's time that the EU ratifies the Migrant Workers Convention](#)

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SWP fixed up a Christmas Tree in front of the Philippine Coconut Authority in Quezon City, together with members of nongovernment organizations and urban poor groups, in time for the Bicameral Conference Committee's meeting to finalize the 2011 national budget.

Former national treasurer Leonor Magtolis Briones, SWP lead convenor, explained that the citizens' groups are actually calling for the Bicam and President Benigno Aquino III to use the lump sums to increase the budget for poverty alleviation programs instead of sacrificing certain pro-poor programs.

"They could get the funds to increase the budgets for health, agriculture, environment and education from the lump sum items such as the P21 billion (US\$500 million) Conditional Cash Transfer Program budget or the P30.5 billion (some US\$ 750 million) Unprogrammed Funds" said Briones.

The group also used effigies of Bicam members as they decorate their Christmas Tree with the Christmas balls with written wishes for the marginalized sectors. "We call on the Bicameral Conference Committee to increase the budget for Expanded Program on Immunization for infants, children and the elderly, vaccine self-sufficiency and the subsidy for health insurance premium of indigent families" said Mercy Fabros of Woman Health Philippines.

"They should increase the budget for Alternative Learning System, which is supposed to cater to the out-of-school youth. While about 20 percent of school-aged Filipino children are out of the school system, a measly budget of less than one percent of the Education budget is allocated to reach the out-of-school," said Rene Raya of Action for Economic Reforms.

"They slashed the housing budget from P11 billion to P5.6 billion. We hope that the Bicam would see it as their moral obligation to help us, homeless families and informal settlers, because we also contribute so much to our economy" said Erning Ofrazio of the Aktibong Kilusan Tungo sa Ilang Bayan (AKTIB).

Gender and Climate Change

The international climate change negotiation process and climate change policies at the national level must adopt the principles of gender equality at all stages, including research, analysis and design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies. (Expert Group, Commission on the Status of Women, 2008)

Why focus on gender in climate change?

In most all economies, women's caretaking role, their access to resources and information and their level of participation in society leaves many women at a disadvantage when climate change related weather events such as storms, floods and droughts occur. In almost all developing countries women are more dependent than men on the agricultural and informal sectors, which are more vulnerable to extreme weather than traditional male-dominated sectors.

Differentiated impacts of climate change

Climate change and extreme weather impact both men and women, but its adverse effects are likely to be more acute for women, especially poor, rural women and indigenous women. A London School of Economics study analyzing the aftermath of extreme weather events shows that "natural disasters (and their subsequent impact) on average kill more women than men or kill women at an earlier age than men".

The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report notes that "climate change is likely to directly impact children and pregnant women because they are particularly susceptible to vector-and-water-borne-diseases, e.g., malaria is currently responsible for a quarter of maternal mortality". And climate-related conflicts over resources predispose women more so than men to both domestic and community violence.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

Current approaches to climate change may intensify the effects of pre-existing gender gaps such as gender segmentation in credit and finance and information asymmetry (in terms of credit, technical assistance and transfer of technology) between men and women. While the old forms of asymmetries led to long-term chronic problems such as endemic poverty, the new forms such as asymmetrical information sharing regarding early warning and disaster preparedness are a matter of life and death.

Shared vision

It is therefore important that global climate pledges by developed countries adhere to their commitments of the Kyoto Protocol, and advance a shared vision that enables gender equality and strictly maintains the global goal of keeping increase in global mean surface temperature substantially below 1.5 or 1 degree - levels which are critical to avoid potentially massive adverse impacts to vulnerable groups including women.

Adaptation

Adaptation strategies and policies must be supportive of women's practical and strategic interests by enhancing the role of local innovation and context specific knowledge as captured by participatory research. They would also need to address the obstacles to women's participation, (such as poor infrastructure and limited time). Adaptation must hence focus on:

- The different needs of men and women in prescribing funding goals, criteria and delivery mechanisms.
- Funding mechanisms should hold to a less than 'burdensome criteria' for both developing countries as well as women's projects.
- Ensure that there are appropriate easily accessible mechanisms for compensating men, poor women and other vulnerable groups impacted by climate change.

Mitigation

Gender friendly mitigation should stress the provision of decentralized renewable energy in rural areas and promote the conservation, sustainable livelihoods and natural resources management practices of women and indigenous peoples. Adequate financing, technology and capacity must be provided to enable mitigation actions in developing countries that enhance gender equality and empower women.

Technology

Technology funding and projects must seek to facilitate the elimination of the substantial barriers to entry (i.e., credit, information gaps) and the adoption of technology faced by women. Women's - more so than men's - acquisition of technology is blocked by upfront purchase prices or administrative costs. Within the context of the present negotiations framework it is important to:

- Establish within funding mechanisms, special or thematic windows dedicated to capacity building and the development of projects among cohorts of male and female actors who have been traditionally marginalized.
- "Enhancing the endogenous technologies and capacities of developing countries" in a manner that enhances the empowerment of women and indigenous men and women

Climate financing

It is important that gender equality and women's empowerment and social equity priorities are included as key drivers of climate change financing. Ultimately, poverty reduction, sustainable development, the financing of gender equality and women's empowerment outcome-sensitive -adaptation, mitigation and technology development and transfers necessitate:

- Inflows of new, additional, non-debt creating and predictable funds. Developing countries cannot meet critical poverty reduction and gender quality targets if they are burdened with financing climate related adaptation and mitigation.
- No diversion of current ODA flows from social and development imperatives towards climate change financing.
- Adequate scale of financing to meet the agreed full incremental costs of the adaptation and mitigation measures

required for protecting and maintaining the lives of women and men in developing countries and in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

- New Fund under the Convention and the control of the COP. This new fund must integrate gender analysis and priorities into all of its aspects.
- A gender and social impact analysis of carbon markets and emission reductions projects currently implemented in developing countries.

Outcomes

The outcome from climate negotiations must reflect a clear gender analysis and perspective and women's effective participation must be assured at all levels of the climate policy and climate change financing architecture. Successful fair and equitable climate change policy and finance that promote sustainable development will safeguard women's and men's lives. Likewise, implementing sustainable gender equality interventions that enhance women's empowerment and overall social equity, can have large, sustainable development dividends that can be immensely beneficial to the achievement of global climate change policy.

Source: TWN

3rd Session: United Nations Forum on Minority Issues

The Forum, to be held on the 14th & 15th of December 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland, is a valuable platform for minority representatives to contribute their knowledge and experiences to the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, and, indirectly, to the UN Human Rights Council. It also provides a wonderful opportunity for minority representatives, NGOs, state parties and UN officials to meet, mingle, share ideas and learn about important issues related to the rights of minority populations. The previous Session of the Forum was very successful; over 500 delegates were present and over 100 actively participated in the discussions!

The Third Session of the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues will focus on the topic Minorities and Effective Participation in Economic Life.

The Forum on Minority Issues was established to provide a platform for promoting dialogue and cooperation on issues related to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

It is designed to provide expertise to the work of the Independent Expert on minority issues. The Forum is meant to identify best practices, challenges, opportunities and initiatives for the further implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/minorities.htm>). In the year following the Forum, the Independent Expert will present a set of recommendations to the United Nations Human Rights Council under the Forum's theme.

Related information:

Note by the independent expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall, on minorities and effective participation in economic life http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/docs/MinorityForum3Conceptnote_en.pdf
Draft recommendations on minorities and effective participation in economic life
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/docs/MinorityForum3DraftRecommendationsENG_.pdf
Programme for the 3rd Session: United Nations Forum on Minority Issues

It's time that the EU ratifies the Migrant Workers Convention

Social Watch along with a number of international, national and European platforms, signed the Petition, an initiative of December 18, asking EU Member States to ratify the Migrant Workers Convention.

20 years ago, the UN General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, also known as the Migrant Workers Convention. We believe that the 20th anniversary provides an excellent opportunity for the European Union to live up to its core values and stand firm on the rights of migrant workers.

The Convention constitutes the broadest framework in international law for the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families and provides guidance to States on how to respect the rights of migrants while developing and implementing labour migration policies.

Yet, to date, no EU Member State has signed or ratified the Convention. Non-ratification brings the core values of the EU into question. The Member States of the European Union can no longer fall behind but must demonstrate in concrete terms their willingness to be held accountable for migrants as they have done for decades in relation to international treaties protecting other vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

The Member States of the European Union must ensure that the fundamental rights of migrant workers and their family members are guaranteed. We call on the 27 EU Member States to ratify this international Convention.

Sign the petition

<http://www.december18.net/ratify-migrants-workers-convention>

See all the signatures

<http://www.december18.net/node/2207/signatures>

Related information:

See full text of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by the General Assembly in its 451/158 resolution, on December 18, 1990.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cmw.htm>

Resources on the UN Migrant Workers Convention

http://www.december18.net/un_migrant_workers_convention

SOCIAL WATCH IS AN INTERNATIONAL NGO WATCHDOG NETWORK MONITORING POVERTY ERADICATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

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