



 HEINRICH BÖLL FOUNDATION

Report of High-level Roundtable How a Changing Climate Impacts Women

September 21, 2007

Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations

I. SUMMARY

The Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and the Heinrich Böll Foundation North America organized a high-level roundtable entitled "How a Changing Climate Impacts Women" on September 21, 2007 at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations. The roundtable was a landmark event, one of the first high-level sessions to focus on the linkages between gender equality and climate change.

The roundtable was organized in anticipation of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Climate Change Event and was successful in putting gender equality and women's participation on the agenda of the Secretary-General's climate change team. The Secretary-General's event brought together 80 heads of state, as well as numerous ministers, with the intent of sending a message of political support for the negotiation of a stronger international agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. Policy recommendations on gender and climate change were distributed at the roundtable and endorsed by over 40 organizations globally (see policy recommendations on page 11).

The roundtable convened a diverse group of over 60 government, UN, and NGO representatives (see Annex for full participation list). The featured speakers included:

- Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Climate Change;
- Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, and Chair of Council of Women World Leaders;
- Lorena Aguilar, Senior Gender Advisor, World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Board member of Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO);
- Irene Dankelman, Board Vice Chair, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO);
- Laura Liswood, Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders; and
- June Zeitlin, Executive Director, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

Roundtable participants recognized that while there are no references to gender in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate change is not gender neutral. The gender aspects of climate change are a matter of justice, human rights, and human security. Progress on achieving the MDGs has been slowed or reversed to due to climate change, including gender equality goals. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers at the country level do not address the linkages between gender equality and climate change. It is not an oversight that gender isn't being addressed, but instead part of a systemic problem of societies and governments marginalizing women.

Participants shared experiences from Honduras, Senegal, Uganda, Thailand, Suriname, and the US (New Orleans) showing the gender dimensions of climate change and how women's participation is critical. Women have been adapting to environmental change for generations, long before scientists gave it a name. Women are agents of change, inherent problem-solvers, long-time leaders on poverty eradication and sustainability, and the best poised to contribute to climate solutions. Women have already made a visible difference in disaster responses. Poor women are the most affected by climate change, but the gender and climate change dialogue should not be limited to a focus on women as victims. The roundtable also touched briefly on the linkages between gender and mitigation, specifically a study from Sweden indicating gender differences in contributions to greenhouse gases.

The roundtable was also a call to action on gender and climate change. Gender equality is a critical component of responses to climate change at all levels—rather than isolating gender equality from other core development issues, it should be integrated in all aspects of climate change planning and decision-making. National and global policies should incorporate the gender aspects of climate change, guided by the many global agreements on gender mainstreaming and human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This will require improved international environmental governance structures, cohesion between UN agencies, as well as tools such as gender-specific indicators to guide national reporting to the UNFCCC.

Participants outlined specific steps to ensure that climate change responses incorporate gender equality, including the importance of empowering women to take a seat at the decision-making table. Women's organizations should play a central role in the post-2012 agreement process and gender experts should be part of UNFCCC delegations. The roundtable called for the accessibility of data and documentation chronicling women's unique skills in adapting to and mitigating climate change. Further research needs to be conducted on gender-specific resource patterns and other aspects of gender and climate change. In addition, carbon facilities and renewable energy technologies need to be modified to ensure they reach the poorest populations, particularly women. Finally, roundtable participants committed themselves to establishing partnerships between governments, UN agencies, and civil society to address the critical issue of gender and climate change and agreed to carry the roundtable's policy recommendations to the UN Secretary-General's High Level Climate Change Event.

II. PRESENTATIONS

The full text of select presentations can be found in the Annex.

Mary Robinson (moderator)

Chair of Council of Women World Leaders; former President of Ireland; former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The impact of climate change on women is important from a justice perspective. Women are responsible for 75% of household food production in sub-Saharan Africa, 65% in Asia and 45% in Latin America. Erratic weather causes women to spend more time gathering food, which means less time for education, personal, and family life. This roundtable will provide additional inputs and examples like this about how climate change impacts women.

Liane Schalatek (welcome address)

Associate Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation North America

I wish to thank everyone for taking the time out of a busy preparatory schedule for Monday's Special Summit to be with us today, and thanks to the German Permanent Mission to the UN for making this event here at the German House possible. This is an exciting occasion, and the Heinrich Böll Foundation is honored to be a sponsoring partner of the roundtable. This roundtable is important in preparation for the UNFCCC negotiations in Bali, and for action and activities beyond Bali, and let me mention here specifically next year's scheduled follow up on the Financing for Development process and the Doha Conference. Financing of climate change adaptation has to be a serious effort in the process if the international community wants to maintain any chance of reaching the MDGs. Gender equality is crucial to this effort, yet the official negotiations on climate change do not acknowledge gender. And experts on climate change often ask, "What does gender have to do with it?"

The series of IPCC reports this year have made it all too clear that climate change is happening now and that the response has to go beyond technical mitigation efforts and has to focus on global adaptation measures. This is not just a necessity—this is a matter of global justice. However, climate justice can not be achieved without gender justice. And climate change adaptation and mitigation measures cannot be gender neutral because climate change impacts are not gender neutral. Women are one of the most vulnerable groups affected by climate change, but they are also the most important change agents on households and community levels with regard to natural resource management as well as conflict resolution and peace building efforts. It is against this background that National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) have to start by incorporating women's voices and experiences from the onset, not just as an afterthought.

Irene Dankelman (framing the discussion)

*Vice Chair, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO);
Coordinator of Sustainable Development, University of Nijmegen, Netherlands*

Our purpose is to make this roundtable a landmark in the endeavors to bring a gender perspective to the climate change agenda, particularly to the Secretary General's High Level Climate Change Event on Monday.

Following Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, I met women such as Liza from the Ninth Ward who lost everything but became a leader in a local movement addressing shortcomings in the recovery process. Gender inequality is the most pervasive and persistent form of inequality. The third UN Millennium Development Goal on gender equality still has a long way to go in this era of global environmental change. Not only are women adversely impacted by climate change, they also contribute in a different manner than men to its causes and to its solutions. Very valuable lessons can be learned from the rich documentation and literature around the gender-differentiated impacts of disasters and disaster mitigation, adaptation and recovery, for example the lessons collected by the Gender and Disasters Network. Women's empowerment and active participation in climate change policy planning and implementation are preconditions for any policies in the area of climate change to be successful. More data is becoming available about the gender aspects of climate change and the importance of women's participation, but these connections are not automatically made by every planner, researcher, and politician. This is clearly reflected in the road that the UNFCCC has traveled.

WEDO, with its partners, intends to keep advocating for gender equality in global climate change negotiations and to bring a strong gender perspective to national adaptation strategies in a new initiative. The goals of the roundtable are to examine women's agency and vulnerability in an era of climate change and to be advised by the participants on what is needed to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated in mitigation and adaptation policies and measures. The co-sponsors of this Roundtable—the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and we at WEDO—have developed Policy Recommendations on Climate Change and Gender Equality with twelve recommendations for the High-Level Segment, the UNFCCC COP and beyond.

Gro Harlem Brundtland (key note address)

Former Prime Minister of Norway; Special Envoy to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Change

Climate change is a global security issue, a question of freedom and fundamental human rights. It is also a question key to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals—taken as a whole, the MDGs are about improving the lives and conditions of women. Climate change is already an imminent threat and the projected changes in the earth's climate are an environmental concern with severe social and economic implications. Climate change represents a serious challenge to sustainable development, social justice, equity and respect for human rights, also for future generations. Poor people are more vulnerable to climate change due to their limited adaptive capacities to a changing environment. Among them, the rural poor, and rural women and girls are the ones most immediately affected by climate change.

Climate change is not gender-neutral. Women are generally more vulnerable, representing the majority of the world's poor. They are also more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. Some of the factors that influence the higher vulnerability of women to disasters include lack of means and assets to ensure their own safety in situations of flooding, landslides and storms. With changes in climate, traditional food sources become more unpredictable and scarce. This exposes women to loss of harvests, often their sole sources of food and income. The risk of contracting a serious illness can also be further

aggravated by environmental effects caused by climate change. Almost half of all urban residents in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are victims of diseases associated with poor water and sanitation facilities. We already have internationally agreed commitments, which should be transformed into reality. Women will make a difference, using their knowledge and experience, also on issues related to the management of natural resources. Women in leadership positions—at national, local and community levels—have already made a visible difference in natural disaster responses, both in emergency rescue and evacuation efforts and in post-disaster reconstruction.

We all should advocate the participation of all stakeholders in the process leading to a post-2012 agreement. I can convey the support of the Secretary-General for the inclusion of women and their organizations in this vital process. In my consultations on Climate Change as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, I have been constantly reminded of the importance for developing countries and vulnerable communities of adapting to climate change, and of the need for resources to build the resilience needed to reduce risks and promote sustainable development. This must include the promotion of a more gender-sensitive and participatory approach in this area, and I know that the Secretary-General supports us on this. First, we need to mainstream a gender perspective in all aspects of climate change planning and decision-making. Second, in order to make informed decisions, we need to collect comprehensive data disaggregated by gender. These efforts will enable us to draw on all our resources, including those from the United Nations system, as we confront and pursue the key challenges of climate change.

Lorena Aguilar (expert address)

***Board member of Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO);
Global Senior Gender Advisor, World Conservation Union (IUCN), Costa Rica***

I spoke with Doña Vera Sanchez, who is a survivor in Honduras of Hurricane Mitch, which was the second most devastating hurricane in the history of the Atlantic Ocean and killed 18,000 people. Vera is a single mother of three children, and like other women on the coast had not been involved in any of the preparatory meetings about disasters. When the winds, waves, and flood hit the Atlantic coast of Honduras, Vera walked inward, holding on to the hands of two of her children and holding her baby. When the current became too strong, she was forced to let go of her two children, and she never saw them again. She spent three days breastfeeding her baby in a tree, then was rescued and sent to a shelter, where she encountered much despair and violence. After a month, she returned to her community, but there was nothing left, she was alone, and had no land or money to her name. She concluded, “I still believe that Mitch had something against women.”

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes that “the impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poor persons within all countries, and thereby exacerbate inequities in health status and access to adequate food, clean water, and other resources.” We also know that 70-80% of overall deaths were women in the 2004 Asian Tsunami. In Bangladesh, women suffered the most following the cyclone and flood of 1991. Among women aged 20-44, the death rate was 71 per 1000, compared to 15 per 1000 men. Warning information was transmitted by men to men in public spaces, but rarely communicated to the rest of the family. Without secure access to and control over natural resources (land, water, livestock, trees) women are less likely to be able to cope with permanent climatic change or willing to make investments in disaster mitigation measures. We women from

the South wonder... When will the politicians and scientists recognize that climate change is not gender neutral? When is enough?

Several areas deserve attention in relation to climate change. The international climate change negotiation process, as well as climate policies at regional, national, and local levels, must adopt the principles of gender equity at all stages – from research to analysis, and in the design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies. This applies in particular to the process towards a post-2012 climate protection system. We must invest in research areas such as: gender specific resource-use patterns; gender-specific effects of climate change; gender aspects of mitigation and adaptation; women's capacity to cope with climate change; and gender related patterns of vulnerability. And finally, governments should aim to ensure the involvement of women and gender experts when they prepare their contributions for the international and national processes, and ensure women's participation at international and national meetings.

III. INTERVENTIONS

Rejoice Mabudafhasi

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Affairs, South Africa

Climate change is a threat to humanity, the environment, and developing countries, and women in particular. Women are responsible for gathering and collecting food, water and energy, therefore climate change impacts more on them. And the problem is worse due to a scarcity of resources. Women in developing countries are the most vulnerable. In the event of natural disasters, such as floods, they become environmental refugees. We need to understand the impact of climate change on women and to educate the community. The science is clear that climate change will hit developing countries and women most quickly. There is a need to empower women to influence policy and create gender-sensitive links to poverty. There is also a need to promote awareness and share information in rural communities in order to prevent illness and death, especially by disasters. The Network of Women Ministers of Environment, along with IUCN, the Council of Women World Leaders and WEDO, will host a side event in Bali a day before the ministerial segment of the UNFCCC COP to look at this issue of gender and climate change further.

Purnima Mane

Deputy Executive Director, UN Population Fund (UNFPA)

Climate change is a highlight of UNFPA's work. At a recent high-level UN meeting, the first item on the agenda was climate change: the vast majority of the UN is working on this issue, even if in an indirect manner. We are asking ourselves what it is that we can do in-house at the UN. I am delighted to hear about these linkages, in terms of how women and gender can be featured in climate change. I think we need to focus on women as agents of adaptation, and would like to join hands with other organizations to work on this. We also need to focus on how climate change disproportionately impacts poor women, and governments need to analyze and identify the gender-specific impacts and protection measures related to disasters and other environmental changes. We must consider how women can be equipped to participate and be at the table. Women are not always aware of their own innate capacities and knowledge they have that could help deal with climate change - they can and must participate. We also would support the

development of gender-specific indicators to use to report to the UNFCCC and the Clean Development Mechanism, as well as practical tools that would allow gender equality to be incorporated in climate change initiatives. For example, we would support the development of a mechanism to fund projects that make renewable energy technologies more available. This is an important initiative, and please count us in for whatever effort we can undertake jointly.

Ulrike Rohr

Genanet, Germany

We followed UNFCCC negotiations from the very beginning and for some years we have been coordinating women's involvement in the annual climate change conferences, and lobbying for the inclusion of gender considerations. Beyond a doubt, equal participation might help to change the structures of the negotiations, making them more effective, but actually it does not necessarily result in gender-sensitive debates. You will hardly find any gender reference in the outcomes of the UNFCCC conferences. Because the climate change debate is focusing mostly on economic impacts, efficiency, or technological problems, increased women's participation may help to target climate change mitigation and adaptation more holistically, to frame the debates by the principles of sustainable development. And once the debates are broadened and reframed, there are entry-points for social and gender issues. Nevertheless, against the background of our long-term experiences, we want to encourage the process to make a step forward and to engage not only in women's participation but in a mandatory involvement of gender experts in national and international climate policy in general and in the UNFCCC negotiations in particular. Gender experts should at least be part of each delegation of the parties to the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol. We are prepared to strengthen our network, and to build up a competence center on gender and climate change. For Bali, there are already lots of gender activities in the pipeline. What is needed from governments and the UNFCCC Secretariat is a clearly stated and demonstrated political will. And we need champions to spearhead gender issues in the debate.

Gerd Johnson-Latham

Deputy Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

I represent the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, but I am speaking now as an independent expert. The discussion that we normally have is focused on women as victims. We need to look at what makes women victims. The main problem is that there is a consumer-oriented way of defining a good life. Women still don't have rights. More women than men live in a sustainable manner. And men who live unsustainably live in a much more comfortable way. Women cause less carbon emissions. A recent study that I developed in Sweden entitled "Do Women Leave a Smaller Ecological Footprint than Men?" showed that women drive less and have a lesser impact regarding carbon emissions—only 25% of car usage is by women and two-thirds of women don't own cars. Women's involvement in climate change decision-making is a human right. Women are agents of change. If we get more women in decision-making positions, we will have different priorities, and less risk of climate change.

Monique Essed Fernandes

Board member of Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO); Senior Policy Advisor, Planning and Development Cooperation, Suriname

Last year in Suriname, in 2006, it was the first time there was a natural disaster. There was a major flood, which flooded about 40 villages in the interior, part of the Amazon region. Traditionally,

people know the regular rhythm of the river, when the levels go up and down. And yet for the first time, something happened that they could not foresee. Women did the usual thing when the river rises. They put all their household possessions in dugout canoes and sat on the river waiting for the flood to subside, but the water did not subside. Farms, schools, and homes were all flooded, and after days there was nothing left. No one had listened to the women when they expressed doubts about re-building by the river. Women are able to be change agents but their expertise must be listened to. Furthermore, no one talked to the women about climate change effects and their knowledge of how to deal with environmental changes.

There is a need to facilitate documentation and dissemination of indigenous women's experiences and knowledge in disaster management. And if you are talking about gender and climate change you have to talk about implementing CEDAW. It is an old issue but it has to come to the fore. You will also have to support gender budgeting, and natural resource management by women.

George Pataki

Former Governor of New York; US Representative on Climate Change to UN General Assembly

I am happy that the roundtable is being held at this time, as there are a myriad of issues related to climate change, and let me say that we could well have missed the impact of climate change on women. I will make two comments: First, we have heard powerful anecdotes. What we need now is gender specific data on climate change. Second, I am an optimist. The global community is serious about limiting the negative consequences by moving toward carbon neutral actions, but adaptation will be required.

Previous climate discussions have missed the disproportionate effect of climate change on women, but it will no longer be ignored if we get specific documentation of the impacts on women and how to help women adapt. There is a need for research, gathering data and documentation of gender specific consequences of climate change. We need to adopt carbon neutral actions and address the disproportionate outcome of climate change on women and lesser developed countries. Women's rights need to be addressed; women's vulnerability to climate change effects may be directly linked to denial of basic human rights to women. Following up on the earlier comment on CEDAW, the disproportionate impacts on women may be a direct consequence of this neglect.

Winnie Byanyima

Director of Gender Team, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

I agree with Governor Pataki on the importance of documenting the roles and contributions of women to mitigate and adapt to climate change at the grass roots in developing countries as opposed to only focusing on the vulnerability of women. I grew up in Uganda and my mother was a women's activist. I would see women working together in groups to protect water resources and use as little firewood as possible by changing recipes. Women are more often seen as victims, not as contributors.

Sharing an important innovation at UNDP, there have been many attempts to use carbon financing mechanism, but it has not benefited the poorest countries or women, and we have

come up with the MDG carbon facility. The challenge will be to make sure that these resources go to support poor women and that they are not excluded. The program plans for UNDP in the next four years will support documentation and dissemination of women's indigenous knowledge. Climate change will require partnerships and women must sit together to achieve consensus, especially between women in the South and in the North.

Stefan Delfs

First Secretary on Climate Change, Office of the UN General Assembly President

The General Assembly President recognizes the many dimensions of climate change and the links between climate change, human rights, health, and food security. There is a need for immediate action. We should not just wait to see what comes out of Bali with so many things we can do now. We need to develop strategies to work hand in hand with other development partners. Cohesion is still lacking, especially between agencies. The statements on gender and climate change that WEDO made through the roundtable are appreciated – beyond the Secretary-General's high level climate change event on Monday there will be a continued focus on gender.

Janet Macharia

Senior Gender Advisor, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

Climate change impacts women, whether they are coming from the South or North. At UNEP, we are fully committed to working with our partners on climate change and appreciate that the environment has a gender component. We are working closely with WEDO and IUCN and appreciate the commitment of NGOs to push this gender component. Climate change is at the top of UNEP's agenda but we want to see it cut across everything we do. Climate change has turned around many development achievements and is affecting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is a cross cutting issue that requires a multi-pronged approach from different partners and that NGOs and individuals work together.

Yassine Fall

Senior Economic Advisor, UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

There is a lack of a framework for addressing climate change and for policy coherence at the national or country level. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) at the country levels do not directly address the climate change impacts on women. For example, in Senegal there is serious flooding and we need to address the episodes of flooding and drought that are affecting women's lives. We must document what has been done and what is needed from global to local level. How can we influence and frame policy at national level to include women?

Laura Canuto

Expert in the Environment and Sustainable Development Department, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Poverty has the face of a woman. Women are most vulnerable to effects of climate change, and this has been exacerbated by climate change. When there are doomsday predictions, it is usually the women who are interested in doing something about it. There is need to look at women as agents of change—women may be better consumers and more attuned to be efficient and save

natural resources. There is a need to bring together the collective wisdom of women as problem solvers.

Sansanee Sahussarungsi

Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations

We need to document the impact of climate change on women. In Thailand, women have long been the leaders of poverty reduction and sustainability. Women have been involved in reforestation. There is a need to empower women at local, national and global levels. Empowerment of women in mitigation needs to be embedded into the national country development agendas.

Irena Zubčević

Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations

We must ask ourselves as UN representatives, what can we do here? There is a need to find out what really happens with implementation, and ensure coherence of policies, for example through the environmental governance negotiations through the UN. We must make it clear that climate change and gender is very important. There needs to be better coordination between UNEP and UNDP. Also, the comment Suriname made about CEDAW is very important.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Laura Liswood

Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders

On the issue of global security we would be well served to broaden our audience to ministers of defense and finance who deal with these issues in a different way. Women are an important part of global security—we must think about women as part of global security. Especially when doing construction or providing resources, we must ask who gets most of money and support. Disproportionately these resources go to men. The message should be broadened to those who spend much time and money looking at these issues.

June Zeitlin

Executive Director, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

This was a very rich discussion and there were many good suggestions, though much more research is needed. More and more we are documenting stories and collecting data. The roundtable's interventions can be arranged around two key areas: information and action.

A lot of information gathering and research has already been carried out by WEDO and others. Women have been adapting to climate change long before scientists gave it a name. There is a gap between what women are doing and what is happening at the policy level. The solutions and creativity generated by women must be translated into policy and activities. Some may say that we are preaching to the converted, but the point of this roundtable is to arm each person with information so that they can preach to the unconverted and to carry this message to the General Assembly—especially because people don't make the connection between gender and climate

change. Han Seung Soo, who couldn't join us today at the last minute, and Gro Harlem Brundtland, in their roles as Special Envoys on Climate Change to the UN Secretary-General, will carry this message to the Secretary-General's high level climate change event on Monday.

The second point is on action. It is not just an oversight that gender is not being addressed. It is part of a systemic problem where societies and governments marginalize women. Women's machinery is inadequate to implement broad mandates governments have given us. Governments need to focus on gender parity and have the tools to address not only climate change, but the integration of gender equality, in order to realize a sustainable world. Gender should not be isolated or put in a box but rather integrated in all climate change action.

V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER EQUALITY

The following recommendations in the area of climate change and gender equality were developed on the occasion of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Climate Change Event and the High-Level Roundtable "How a Changing Climate Impacts Women" organized by Women's Environment and Development Organization, Council of Women World Leaders, and Heinrich Böll Foundation.¹

September 2007

- The UN Secretary-General and governments should send a strong message to this year's UNFCCC COP-13 in Bali that gender equality is to be integrated as a cross-cutting issue in the negotiations and debates and that women's equal participation must be ensured. Governments should draw on the innumerable global agreements that relate directly or indirectly to gender equality and climate change², as well as gender expertise within the UN system and at the national level.
- Given that women's knowledge and participation has been critical to the survival of entire communities in disaster situations, governments should take advantage of women's specialized skills in various aspects of their livelihood and natural resource management strategies that lend themselves to mitigation and adaptation.
- Since climate change disproportionately affects poor women, governments should analyze and identify gender-specific impacts and protection measures related to floods, droughts, heat waves, diseases, and other environmental changes and disasters. The global community should prioritize reducing the high levels of female mortality rates resulting from climate-induced disasters and livelihood changes.
- Given the vulnerability of the poor, and particularly women, to climate change, adequate funds must be allocated by Annex I countries to help these groups adapt to the impacts.
- Practical tools should be developed that allow governments and institutions to incorporate gender equality in climate change initiatives.
- Governments at national and local levels should develop strategies to enhance women's access to and control over natural resources, in order to reduce poverty, protect

¹ These recommendations also draw on policy recommendations developed by the UNFCCC women's caucus and the CSD Women's Major Group.

² Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992); Johannesburg Plan of Action (WSSD 2002); Paragraph K of the Beijing Platform for Action (4th World Conference on Women 1995); World Conference on Human Rights (1993); International Conference on Population and Development (1994); World Summit for Social Development (1995); Millennium Declaration (2000); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); Convention on Biodiversity (1992); Convention to Combat Desertification (1994); Ministerial Declaration of the 3rd World Water Forum (2003); Children's World Summit (1990); Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (1996); World Summit on Food (1996); Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005)

environmental resources, and ensure that women and poor communities can better cope with climate change.

- Governments and institutions should enhance opportunities for education and training in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Capacity building and technology transfer measures should draw on priorities put forward by women and poor communities.
- Women's participation in climate change related debates and planning must be enhanced by tools and procedures that augment their capacity and sensitize decision-makers to the advantages of equal participation.
- The UNFCCC should develop a gender strategy, invest in gender-specific climate change research, and establish a system for the use of gender-sensitive indicators and criteria for governments to use in national reporting to the UNFCCC Secretariat, adaptation planning, or projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).
- Market-based approaches to curbing climate change, such as the Clean Development Mechanism, should be made accessible to both women and men and ensure equitable benefits, considering that women and men do not have equal access to natural resources such as water and energy, land titles, credit, or information. In particular, the CDM should fund projects that make renewable energy technologies more available to women and meet their household needs.
- The gendered impacts of biofuels as a solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions should be assessed, in cooperation with gender experts and women's organizations.
- Since the UNFCCC emerged from UNCED, which outlines nine major groups that are essential to sustainable development, women and all major groups should be included as official focal points in the UNFCCC.

Endorsements for these policy recommendations

- Actionaid International, **Kenya**
- Actionaid International, **Zimbabwe**
- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development, **Thailand**
- Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development, **Tunisia**
- Bahá'í International Community, **United States**
- Brighter Green, **United States**
- Center for Women Policy Studies, **United States**
- Center for Women's Global Leadership, **United States**
- European Women's Lobby, **Belgium**
- Genanet / LIFE e.V., **Germany**
- Gender and Disaster Network, **United Kingdom**
- Gender and Energy Research and Training, **South Africa**
- Gender and Water Alliance, **Netherlands**
- Gender Equality Incorporated, **Canada**

- Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE), **Mexico**
- International Alliance of Women, **United States**
- International Association of Women in Radio and TV, **Nepal**
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), **Nepal**
- International Federation of University Women, **Switzerland**
- International Gender Policy Network, **Czech Republic**
- International Planned Parenthood Federation–Western Hemisphere Region, **United States**
- International Technology Development Group (ITDG)/Practical Action, **United Kingdom**
- IWRAW Asia Pacific, **Malaysia**
- Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, **United States**
- MATCH International Centre, **Canada**
- Media Mix Enterprise, DOHS (Mahakhali), **Senegal**
- National Federation of Women’s Institutes, **United Kingdom**
- National Society For Earthquake Technology, **Nepal**
- Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), **Finland**
- Redr, **India**
- Risk RED - Risk Reduction Education for Disasters, **United States**
- Rozan, **Pakistan**
- Saathi, **Nepal**
- Southern Africa Human Rights NGO Network (SAHRiNGON), **Tanzania**
- Thanal, **India**
- Toronto Women's City Alliance, **Canada**
- United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society, **United States**
- WIDE – Women in Development Europe, **Belgium**
- WIDE European Working Group, **Switzerland**
- WOMANKIND Worldwide, **United Kingdom**
- Women and Environment International Magazine, **Canada**
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), **United States**
- World Conservation Union (IUCN)
- Zenab for Women in Development, **Sudan**

VI. ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

The Council of Women World Leaders is a network of current and former women presidents and prime ministers. The Council's mission is to mobilize the highest-level women leaders globally for collective action on issues of critical importance to women and equitable development. A ministerial initiative that engages sitting and former women ministers and cabinet members is an integral and essential part of promoting good governance and enhancing the experience of democracy globally by increasing the number, effectiveness, and visibility of women world leaders. Find more information about the Council of Women World Leaders at www.cwwl.org.

Founded in 1991, the **Women's Environment & Development Organization** (WEDO) is an international organization that advocates for gender equality in global policy. Working in key global forums such as the UN, WEDO advocates for and seeks to empower women as decision makers to achieve economic, social and gender justice, a healthy, peaceful planet and human rights for all. Find more information about WEDO's work on climate change and gender equality at www.wedo.org (click on "sustainable development").

The Heinrich Böll Foundation is a non-profit organization striving to promote democracy, civil society, human rights, international understanding and a healthy environment internationally. The Heinrich Böll Foundation is affiliated with the German Green Party and is headquartered in Berlin, Germany with 25 offices worldwide and cooperative partnerships with more than 200 organizations in more than 60 countries. Find more information about the Foundation at www.boell.org and www.boell.de.

ANNEX 1: Full text of presentations

ANNEX 2: Participant list

Irene Dankelman (framing the discussion)

***Vice Chair, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO);
Coordinator of Sustainable Development, University of Nijmegen, Netherlands***

Also on behalf of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

I am extremely happy to welcome you all to this Roundtable and to say a few words to frame our discussion. Our purpose is to make this meeting a landmark in the endeavors to bring a gender perspective to the climate change agenda, particularly to the Secretary General's High Level Climate Change Event on Monday.

When I participated in the *Educating Women for a World in Crisis* conference of the Tulane University last February in New Orleans, one of my main encounters was with Liza, a woman from the Ninth Ward, who showed us around on the plot which once carried her house and her household. Liza was a victim: she had lost everything and reconstruction of a new home or any compensation was still far away. But she also became a leader—after Katrina waved away her livelihood—in a local movement addressing major shortcomings in the recovery work and re-establishing community life. Personal stories of women hit by environmental change are around us everywhere. We just need to see them.

As you all know, climate change will exacerbate personal and community disasters like these, and certainly increase existing inequalities. Amongst these, gender inequalities are the most pervasive and persistent the United Nations Millennium Development Goal number 3 has still a long way to go in this era of global environmental change. Not only are women adversely impacted by climate change, they also contribute different from men to its causes and to its solutions, and look at the issue with a different perspective.

In this context very valuable lessons can be learned from the rich documentation and literature around the gender-differentiated impacts of disasters and disaster mitigation, adaptation and recovery. Lessons that for example the gender-disaster network collected, and which we should understand in order to make the best decisions on climate change: here in New York, in Bali, in our own countries and communities.

Many more data that speak to the need for a gender-specific approach in climate change are coming to the surface these days. Women's empowerment and active participation in climate change policy planning and implementation are preconditions for any policies in this area to be successful. But that is not perceived automatically by every planner, researcher, politician. This is clearly reflected in the road the UNFCCC has traveled. UNFCCC stems from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992), where—after a strong lobby from women's organizations such as WEDO and REDEH—gender equality was recognized as a main working area for sustainable development, and women as one of its nine major groups. But not much of this gender approach is reflected in the UNFCCC: Rio Principle 20 and Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 seem to have gotten lost in the convention and even in the work of important organizations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Only recently, since the Climate Change Conference (COP) in December 2003 in Milan,

thanks to organizations such as GenaNet and women environment ministers, the interest in gender issues around UNFCCC has started to grow.

WEDO, with its partners, intends to keep advocating for gender equality in global climate change negotiations. Our focus going forward will be to bring a strong gender perspective to national adaptation strategies in a new initiative. WEDO has several partners on the ground ready to launch this work. This roundtable is an opportunity for us to begin to work also with many of the governments around this table on adaptation at the national level.

Now that climate change is recognized as the main manifestation of human-ecological interactions with deep impacts on human security, now that regimes for post-2012 are being discussed and adaptation strategies are being developed, now that the Secretary General calls together the United Nations for a High-Level Event on Climate Change to prepare for stronger positions at the next COP in Bali, now more than ever time is there to bring a gender perspective to this global phenomenon. That is why you, women leaders and gender experts, governmental representatives and UN agencies, are here: to bring a strong message to the High Level Event and beyond.

We want to examine women's agency and vulnerability in an era of climate change. We want to hear from you, and be advised by you on what is needed most to bring a strong gender perspective to the UN Climate Change deliberations and to make women's voices heard at every level of climate change negotiation, mitigation and adaptation. We need arguments, knowledge, but most of all advice on how to strategize for that.

The co-sponsors of this Roundtable—the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and we at WEDO—have developed a Declaration on Climate Change and Gender Equality with twelve recommendations for the High-Level Segment, the UNFCCC COP and beyond. These also draw upon policy recommendations from the UNFCCC women's caucus and the CSD Women's Major Group. This declaration is open for endorsements. We wholeheartedly invite you to sign on to it as well, and to include these recommendations in your interventions on September 24th.

We not only want women to have a voice in the debate on the phenomenon of climate change that impacts so immensely on our lives, and livelihoods. We are also convinced that this will actually change the contents of the global and local climate change and sustainable development agendas. Like Bella Abzug—with Wangari Maathai, Vandana Shiva, Chief Bisi, and Thais Corral, one of the founding members of WEDO—once said: “*We women do not want to be mainstreamed in a polluted stream, the stream should be clear and healthy.*” A healthy stream of water, a healthy stream of air, our atmosphere... To make that happen, we invite you all to join that movement, that ‘wave’³—at every level. Let's start today.

³ WAVE: The First Global Women's Assembly ‘Women as the Voice for the Environment’ was held in Nairobi, in October 2004, under auspices of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

Gro Harlem Brundtland (key note address)

Former Prime Minister of Norway; Special Envoy to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Change

Is climate change a global security issue?

Is it a question of freedom and fundamental human rights?

No doubt.

Is it a question key to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals?

Absolutely.

And not just about the key goal of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Taken as a whole, the MDGs are not least about improving the lives and conditions of women.

Climate change is already an imminent threat. The planet's warming is indisputable. Adverse effects are already felt in many areas, affecting agriculture and food security, oceans and coastal areas, and water resources.

The projected changes in the earth's climate are an environmental concern with severe social and economic implications. Climate change represents a serious challenge to sustainable development, social justice, equity and respect for human rights, also for future generations.

The impacts of climate change disproportionately falls on developing countries and communities with low adaptive capacity. The human impact depends on sex, age, income and occupation.

Poor people are more vulnerable to climate change due to their limited adaptive capacities to a changing environment. Among them, the rural poor, and rural women and girls are the ones most immediately affected by climate change.

In our already deeply divided world, global warming is magnifying disparities between rich and poor, denying people an opportunity to improve their lives.

Climate change is not gender-neutral. Women are generally more vulnerable, representing the majority of the world's poor. They are also more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. These detrimental effects can already be felt in the short-term—through emergencies such as landslides, floods and hurricanes. More women than men died during the 2003 European heat wave and as a result of the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in the United States.

Some of the factors that influence the higher vulnerability of women to disasters include lack of means and assets to ensure their own safety in situations of flooding, landslides and storms.

In some regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, the majority of women are responsible for subsistence food production. With changes in climate, traditional food sources become more unpredictable and scarce. This exposes women to loss of harvests, often their sole sources of food and income. With cash crops becoming scarce, food prices increase and this makes the situation even worse.

The risk of contracting a serious illness can also be further aggravated by environmental effects caused by climate change. Almost half of all urban residents in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are victims of diseases associated with poor water and sanitation facilities. Women will not only

be affected by the disease itself but also by the increased work caring for sick family members. Not surprisingly, a direct correlation has been observed between women's status in society and their likelihood of receiving adequate health care.

Women often act as agents for change. Last week, here in NY, in the presence of the Secretary General, we celebrated the impressive results of such collaborative action in Senegal and some other African countries, led and inspired by women. Molly Melching, the leader of TOSTAN, received The Hilton Foundation Humanitarian Prize, having demonstrated how women can lead effective cultural and societal change, improving the lives of girls and women, securing better lives for all.

Active involvement of women in decision-making at the local, national and international levels is crucial for global governance.

We already have internationally agreed commitments.

Let's move these commitments to reality and make real efforts to involve women. Women will make a difference, using their knowledge and experience, also on issues related to the management of natural resources. Women in leadership positions— at national, local and community levels—have already made a visible difference in natural disaster responses, both in emergency rescue and evacuation efforts and in post-disaster reconstruction. We have seen the same in the management of essential natural resources, such as fresh water.

We all should advocate the participation of all stakeholders in the process leading to a post-2012 agreement. I can convey the support of the Secretary-General for the inclusion of women and their organizations in this vital process.

The Bali Climate Change Conference in should set out a road map for a comprehensive agreement, under the UNFCCC process, an agreement that should be reached by 2009.

In my consultations on Climate Change as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, I have been constantly reminded of the importance for developing countries and vulnerable communities of adapting to climate change, and of the need for resources to build the resilience needed to reduce risks and promote sustainable development. This must include the promotion of a more gender-sensitive and participatory approach in this area, and I know that the Secretary-General supports us on this.

First, we need to mainstream a gender perspective in all aspects of climate change planning and decision-making. Second, in order to make informed decisions, we need to collect comprehensive data disaggregated by gender.

These efforts will enable us to draw on all our resources, including those from the United Nations system, as we confront and pursue the key challenges of climate change.

Thank you!

Lorena Aguilar (expert address)

***Board member of Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO);
Global Senior Gender Advisor, World Conservation Union (IUCN), Costa Rica***

I would like to start this presentation with the words of Doña Vera Sanchez, a survivor from Hurricane Mitch in Honduras. Mitch (1998) was the second most powerful and devastating hurricane in the history of the Atlantic Ocean. It killed more than 18,000 people and caused thousands of million dollars in material losses.

It seems like it was yesterday...

I lived on the Atlantic coast in Honduras. At that time, I was a single mother of three kids, my husband had left us some time ago. I built a very "rustic house" close to an estuary. With my older son I collected mollusks, did some fishing from the coast and processed (dried and salted) some of the smaller fish that the fishermen gave up.

One morning some of my neighbors said that they had heard on the radio that a big storm was coming and that it had winds of about 290 Km per hour. I remember thinking, what is a 290Km wind?

Most of us on the coast were women with our sons. What should we do? We had no idea. Some women commented that they had heard from their husbands that we had to take some precautions. Unfortunately, none of us had ever been invited or went to meetings dealing with this type of situation.

Then it happened. The winds, the waves, the flood. I took my three kids and started walking inland. Very soon the current was so strong, I could not hold all of them, my oldest son was holding my daughter. My hands were holding my youngest baby. The water snatched them, I saw my son trying to swim... I lost sight of them.

I climbed a tree, it was very cold, I could not sleep. Other animals, especially the snakes, were trying to save themselves as well. I was in the tree for almost three days, I was lucky I could breast feed my baby.

I was rescued and sent to a school. I was so lost; I kept on looking for my other two kids. Nothing. Life in the shelter was not easy, too much violence. I had no one to defend me...

I came back to my community almost a month later, nothing was left. There were some organizations supporting some reconstruction efforts. Again it was very difficult for me, I was alone, I had nothing, no land under my name, no money. I still believe that Mitch had something against women...

Doña Vera is just one voice....

As predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "climate change impacts will be differently distributed among different regions, generations, age classes, income group, occupations and genders" (IPCC, 2001). The IPCC also notes: "the impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poor persons within all

countries, and thereby exacerbate inequities in health status and access to adequate food, clean water, and other resources.”

We now know as a fact that:

- In the 2004 Asian Tsunami, 70-80% of overall deaths were women.
- During emergencies, women are less likely to have access to information about assistance than men. In Bangladesh women suffered the most following the cyclone and flood of 1991. Among women aged 20-44, the death rate was 71 per 1000, compared to 15 per 1000 men. Warning information was transmitted by men to men in public spaces, but rarely communicated to the rest of the family.
- Without secure access to and control over natural resources (Land, water, livestock, trees) women are less likely to be able to cope with permanent climatic change or willing to make investments in disaster mitigation measures.

We women from the South wonder... When will the politicians and scientists recognize that climate change is not gender neutral? When is enough...?

In light of this, women from all around the world pointed out several areas that deserve attention in relation to climate change:

- Despite its status and development within the United Nations international system, climate change policy-making has failed to adopt a gender-sensitive strategy. The international climate change negotiation process—as well as climate policies at regional, national and local levels—must adopt the principles of gender equity at all stages: from research, to analysis, and the design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies. This applies in particular to the process towards a post-2012 climate protection system or “regime”.
- Invest in research in areas such as: gender specific resource-use patterns; gender-specific effects of climate change; gender aspects of mitigation and adaptation; women’s capacity to cope with climate change; and gender related patterns of vulnerability.
- Governments should aim to ensure the involvement of women and gender experts when they prepare their contributions for the international and national processes, and ensure women’s participation at international and national meetings.



**Levers of Global Security:
*Examining How a Changing Climate Impacts Women***

Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations
Friday 21st September 2007
13.15-15.00

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on Climate Change and former
President of Norway*

Mary Robinson
*Former UN High Commissioner for
Human Rights, former President of
Ireland, and Chair of Council of Women
World Leaders*

Liane Schalatek
*Associate Director
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