



Climate change and gender





Finland has together with many partners worked for recognition of the important role of women in all activities on climate change during the recent negotiations on the new agreement on climate change. Inclusion of a provision on gender in the new text will open women better possibilities to participate in the adaptation work and capacity building and receive finance and technology.

Empowerment of women makes local work more effective

Climate change is a very serious threat to sustainable development and will endanger the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Combating climate change is directly linked with poverty eradication. Therefore, it is important that we reach a comprehensive new agreement on climate change by the end of 2010.

The most important measures to mitigate climate change will involve increasing the use of renewable energy, reforestation, and halting the rate of deforestation. Adapting to climate change will affect agriculture, food security and water management. Regenerative ecological agriculture can also provide a good mitigation tool. In developing countries, women are traditionally responsible for performing these functions; in Africa it is estimated that 80 per cent of food production is managed by women.



Matti Nummelein



Matti Nummelein

Why is the contribution of women so important?

An analysis by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates that the worst impacts of climate change will be on the poorest regions and the poorest people, who have the fewest resources for meeting the changes brought by increasing droughts, floods or storms. As many as 70 per cent of these poor people are women.

This means that poor women will have to struggle with the impacts of climate change. However, these women can also be powerful agents of change. Empowerment of women in planning and decision-making as well as in implementing measures to mitigate climate change will make our common efforts more effective, especially at the local level. Influencing climate change will require full commitment and action by both women and men.



What is needed for women to become empowered?

Finland will therefore continue to draw attention to the positive role of women in the negotiations about the new climate agreement. It is important that the new agreement and UNFCCC activities supporting its implementation will encourage participation of both women and men. Likewise, it is important that the activities of the financing institutions and the UN and other international organizations will also support women's efforts to influence climate change.

In order for women to contribute actively, men and women need to understand the process of climate change and share information on countering its negative impacts. It is essential that women are provided with equal access to the knowledge, resources and technology which are necessary to influence climate change. It is also important that women participate more actively in the negotiations shaping the new comprehensive agreement on climate change. For this purpose Finland has provided funds which are administered by Women's Environment and Development Organization on behalf of Global Gender and Climate Alliance (E-mail: Eleanor@WEDO.org).

What can we do together?

HE Tarja Halonen, the President of Finland, received in connection of the COP 15 of the UNFCCC the Torch on Millennium Goal No 3 for her work on promoting the active participation of women in climate negotiations and all activities related to climate change.

So far the negotiations have produced draft texts which include also references to gender and active participation of women. Finland will continue to promote the participation of women in the negotiations and urges that these negotiations lead to positive results. Finland works with the interested Parties and other partners for, that the new agreement will include provision on the gender and promotion of the participation of women.

In receiving the Torch, the President made the following commitments and welcomes other governments to join them. Finland will:

- support integration of gender perspective into National Adaptation Programmes of Action and their implementation.
- promote such forestry, water and sanitation projects where stronger gender emphasis can enhance mitigation and adaptation potential.
- encourage participation of women in the negotiations on the new climate agreement through a specific Women Delegates Fund (WDF) and support gender-sensitive awareness raising.
- promote gender and social equality in all Finnish development policy and cooperation where mitigation and adaptation will gain increasingly importance.



The delegation of Finland was awarded First Gender Championship Award during the COP 15 in Copenhagen. Female delegates celebrating with Finland the Award.



Niklas Tallqvist

The International Colloquium of Women Leaders was convened in Monrovia 7-8 March 2009 by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and President Tarja Halonen of Finland. The high-level meeting attracted more than a thousand participants, including several heads of states and governments as well as women in prominent positions as cabinet ministers, leaders of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, and leaders in the fields of business, academia, the media, and other stakeholder groups.

The colloquium focused particularly on the impact of climate change on the daily lives of women in developing countries and on women's own possibilities to participate in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The colloquium issued a Call for Action which emphasises the importance of women's participation in the current negotiations regarding climate change and of incorporating gender considerations in the new agreement. The Call for Action can be found at the home pages of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland: formin.fi > *international cooperation* > *climate change* > *gender*.

Further information

Unit for International Environmental Policy
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
tel. +358 9 1605 5592 · E-mail: keo-60@formin.fi

Päivi Kannisto, Adviser, Gender Issues
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
tel: +358 400 328 016 · E-mail: paivi.kannisto@formin.fi



Finland to the UN Security Council in 2013-2014



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

