

WOMENS TRIBUNAL ON CLIMATE JUSTICE CHARTER OF DEMANDS

EQUITY AND JUSTICE in CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS: DEMANDS OF WOMEN EXCLUDED BY IDENTITY, WORK AND DESCENT

We, women from Dalit, Adivasi, Muslim and other marginalized communities, specially agricultural labourers are affected first and worst by the impacts of climate change, namely rise in temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, drought & floods and sea level rises.. In discussing the distribution of adverse effects of climate change, the UN IPCC rightly points out, “Those in the weakest economic position are often the most vulnerable to climate change....They tend to have limited adaptive capacities, and are more climate dependant on climate sensitive resources such as local water and food supplies” (IPCC, 2007:9). In India, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) placed the protection of “the poor and vulnerable sections” of society through “an inclusive and sustainable development strategy, sensitive to climate change”. We appreciate both the national and international recognition of vulnerability issues in the efforts to address climate change.

We believe that women from dalit, adivasi, Muslim and other socially marginalized communities are largely in ‘the weakest economic position’ and so most vulnerable to climate change. They are also the ones who work the most with climate-sensitive resources of land, water and forests.

The additional disabilities of identity and work and descent based exclusion in our highly hierarchical and socially stratified society makes us invisible, our voices unheard and puts barriers to our equitable participation and benefit sharing in climate debates on development and interventions.

While recognizing the efforts at consensus building on low-carbon energy use, clean development mechanism, etc. and joint implementation, we are concerned that the international and national approaches to climate change are highly technology and market oriented and do not articulate the ‘rights’ of citizens, particularly of the most marginalized women, to benefit from these and be equal participants in these initiatives.

We are concerned that the debate and the proposed measures for adaptation and mitigation remain at the macro level and do not reflect the priority concerns of marginalized women .The existing poor nutritional status , high maternal ,child mortality rates of girl children &women in such communities is grudgingly acknowledged . With even the basic needs &entitlements as citizens not ensured , spiraling food prices, higher burden of disease, poor public health services with 80% out of pocket medical expenditure , we the already discriminated & neglected cannot be victimized further with the negative impact of climate change .

International and national debates about increased green house gases, temperature increase, sea level rise, desertification, floods, hurricanes cyclones and changes in agricultural seasons dialogue with the private sector, the academia but not with the most vulnerable women who will be affected first and directly by the adaptation and mitigation measures and strategies. In view of our disproportionately high dependence on climate and climate sensitive resources, this exclusion further erodes our rights to resources, livelihood and development.

We do not find any engagement with us on strategies to address our water shortage, fall in wage labour, displacement, migration, reduced crop outputs, increased pest attacks, increased incidence of diseases, the lack of infrastructure or services to adequately address them and the lack of extension and knowledge dissemination services to help us cope with the changing situation. This despite the fact that many of us have been coping with changing climatic conditions over the years and are change agents who can inform policies and government practices. We have preserved seeds of flood resistant, drought resistant, saline resistant crops which are being pirated by large corporations along with unjust patent regimes

This tribunal is a departure in bringing the concerns and constraints of invisible and excluded women and demand that national/ international governments and the private sector adopt proactive strategies providing the space for us to participate in knowledge sharing, designing and implementing adaptation and mitigation measures to ensure food security, water, livelihood, well being and development interventions at our end.

We appreciate the government efforts in identifying the eight missions, some of which are directly related to our well being and livelihood and we have the following demands from the same:

1. The state recognizes women who are visibly affected (forest dwellers, fisher folk, women farmers, peasants & agriculture workers) and other women who are not so visibly affected (agricultural workers, other wage workers, non boat owners in fishing) by climate changes to ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable.
2. Along with the practical needs of women in coping with the changing climate, government addresses the strategic needs of women for reducing their vulnerability. Such strategic needs may be addressed by restoring the ownership rights of women in access, control, and management of resources of livelihood- land, water, and forests.
3. State maps vulnerable locations and vulnerable populations in disaggregated manner and track how climate changes impact their lives and ensure that adaptation and mitigation measures equitably covers both above sections with special focus on girl children and women.
4. State recognize women engaged in agriculture as farmers and ensure equal opportunities and access to adaptation related extension services, credit, inputs, and market services that ensure their livelihood.
5. Recognise life and livelihood systems of forest dwellers and prioritize forests conservation efforts over afforestation with the full participation and decision-making of women forest dwellers.
6. The changing environment requires new research and new knowledge creation in adaptation and mitigation. Women being a critical link in protection of resources and sustainable development, they should be made the central point of reference in all these research. We demand that new research takes care of the need for developing appropriate technology for women to cope with the changing situation.
7. Demand that capacity building measures for adaptation include alternate livelihoods in emerging market opportunities, including decentralized low-carbon energy production, for marginalized women.
8. Demand a replacement of the export led growth strategy with a strategy for sustainable development.
9. Collect information on traditional knowledge base and current efforts of women in combating climate changes and these are adequately mainstreamed into adaptation policy-strategy.
10. All government policies meant to provide relief to the vulnerable sections of the society such as the PDS and all governance systems meant for protection of common resources such as the forest departments need to be adequately sensitized towards gender issues.
11. State build in insurance mechanism for marginalized women for the loss of livelihoods/assets as a consequence of climate changes
12. Ensure that climate negotiations at the international and national levels ensure equity within and across nations and do not sacrifice the right to development and equitable share of resources including climate related resources to girl children and women from excluded communities.
13. Ensure that a certain proportion of adaptation funds is planned by and used by women.

We are concerned currently being the fourth largest greenhouse gases emitter and agree with the urgent need for a comprehensive 'low carbon pathway.' We urge that this should include promoting low chemical and organic farming practices, and rights and control of COMMUNITIES over land, water and forest issues in the wake of shrinking resources,.

We require the government to take a leadership role in the climate negotiations at the global level because there are limits to adaptation and the rich, industrialized countries must reduce their emissions substantially and urgently by keeping their promises at Kyoto and Bali as part of UNFCC and taking binding emission reduction targets.

Technology transfer linked with Intellectual Property Rights would not be in the interest of the women, the poor as well as climate change mitigation & adaptation efforts. We, the weakest women, demand this from the Government of India.

