



## Item 10: Interventions

[Acting for climate: Empowering women to build climate resilience](#)

UNECE Regional Review Meeting  
30 October 2019

Thank you chair.

My name is Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, and I'm the President of the Ontario Native Women's Association in Canada, today I'm speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

We met yesterday for the CSO Forum where we discussed how Indigenous Women's health is connected to climate change and the resulting environmental impacts. Indigenous women are most vulnerable as they rely on living off the land and need access to strong sustainable forests. This makes them most vulnerable to food insecurity when their traditional lands are degraded.

For our Indigenous sisters the present-day health symptoms in communities include high inequities in chronic disease, mental health, and addictions. Moreover, we cannot look at the violence against Indigenous Women without looking at the connection to violence against Mother Earth. According to traditional cultures our women are the protectors of the water and possess the knowledge needed to fulfill our role in the preservation of our natural environment for the next seven generations.

**In terms of addressing violence against Mother Earth and Indigenous Women we recommend the following;**

- Immediate environmental action plan to be developed in all member states including cuts to fossil fuel emissions, reduction of meat trade, ban single use plastic and the active cleaning and protection of all water. For Indigenous women whose very survival is intimately connected to the health of the land

gender equality can not be achieved without substantial environmental protection laws and policies developed that have clear measurable impact reports overseen by the United Nations.

- To restore balance and ensure Indigenous women's voices are heard in environmental debates and concerns within our own territories we need to disrupt the current systems of investment through critical investments in community based Indigenous women's groups in all member states. Indigenous women, Roma Women and Sami Women need to represent themselves and have investments into their own political and social development. We need to disrupt the traditional systems of investment in women in order to make systemic change
- The displacement and relocation of Indigenous women and their families due to climate change, and resulting climate disasters, as well as the impacts of resource extraction industries have significantly impacted the level of violence against Indigenous women including Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, Missing, and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Indigenous women have been targeted through legislative policies that have directly impacted their ability to maintain their role as mothers. The crisis of child welfare involvement in our families and the apprehension of Indigenous children is rooted in the pervasive poverty that has resulted from the exploitation of Indigenous lands and resources.

Thank you Chair.

## **INTERVENTION 2**

Thank you, Chair!

My name is Anne-Sophie Garrigou, I am the Editor-in-Chief of a publication covering climate action and I am speaking today on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

Today, millions of women, indigenous communities, children, and low-income families across the UNECE region and around the world are already affected by the climate crisis. Biodiversity and the state of many ecosystems around the world are fully at risk with around 1 million animal and plant species threatened with extinction, many within decades.

We know the actions of the countries in our region have massive detrimental effects on people, especially marginalized groups who are at the frontlines of climate change globally.

Almost none of the UNECE countries are on track to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement and to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently. Much more needs to be done by UNECE countries to address their devastating historical responsibility for contributing to climate disruption and global warming.

The global climate crisis can be seen as an opportunity. An opportunity to give new impetus to sustainable innovations, to rethink the existing structures, to open up breaches to transform the system for more equality and an opportunity to listen to people's voices on the ground, especially women's.

**So here are some recommendations from the civil society to address those issues:**

- Funding needs to be allocated to capacity building and inclusive participation of feminist civil society and community groups that know how to ensure gender just climate and environmental policies. Climate and environmental financing should include mandatory allocation for gender equality and gender-aware activities that fosters higher participation of women and diversity.
- Governments should commit to a 2nd Gender Action Plan under the Paris Agreement that would include progressive targets to reach gender parity in all main decision-making bodies and delegations that are negotiating on climate.
- Ensuring equal participation of women in decision and policy-making processes is not enough. We call on governments to ensure the protection of environmental and climate defenders who suffer from additional violence due to their gender.
- And finally, governments should ramp up their efforts to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and go even further by completely divesting from all extractive and fossil fuel related activities and invest in sustainable, local sectors that have committed to gender equality and to ending all discrimination against women in all their diversity. And we demand that gender-responsive national climate measures be taken.

Thank you for listening.

## INTERVENTION 3

Thank you, Madam Chair!

My name is Bistra Mihaylova, I'm representing Women Engage for a Common Future, with long experience in projects and activities related to climate, chemicals, water and sanitation in Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, today I'm speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

As we heard from our Finish panelist, climate change is directly linked to our extractive economic model, our throw-away society, our fossil fuel consumption. Not only fossil fuels for airplanes and computers, but an increasing part of global petroleum is used for derivatives such as plastics and chemicals, which we used as plastic bags, straws, cups, and then throw away.

Waste mountains burning and incinerators are emitting not only green-house gasses, but also highly dangerous toxics that accumulate in our food and our bodies, and are linked to breast cancer, reproductive diseases, diabetes, etc.

The most marginalized groups in society, often are most exposed, living in the most polluted areas. Women suffering from, for example reproductive damage due to chemical exposure are subject to social exclusion. The high health-care costs for example for cancer treatment, increase the marginalization of women impacted. I would like to stress that climate policies and action need an integrated sector and gender responsive strategy.

### **Therefore, we call for:**

- Obligatory gender and environmental impact assessments of all climate policies and programmes, with full participation of local women and feminists.
- Support women's direct access to smaller-scale climate funds (from approximately \$100,000 up to \$10-\$15 million USD) to go to women's organisations, Indigenous organisations, and rural women directly via the mechanisms created by the UNFCCC such as the Green Climate Fund. We strongly warn against using mechanisms outside of the framework of the Paris Agreement; for example, we oppose a recapitalization of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism under the Climate Investment Fund.
- Align National Climate Plans with the global chemicals conventions aimed at eliminating hazardous waste and chemicals, the Basel Rotterdam Stockholm

Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

We would like to hear the panelists ideas about this.

Thank you chair