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In Celebration of Women's Month 2012

The THREATS of
CLIMATE CHANGE
ARE NOT
GENDER NEUTRAL

A compilation of excerpts on
how climate change impact women

CLIMATE CHANGE WILL AFFECT WOMEN MORE SEVERELY THAN MEN

by: Julia Whitty, March 8, 2007, 11:29am PST



- The following came from a disturbing report from the World Conservation Union on global warming predicting that the physical, economic, social and cultural impacts of global warming will jeopardize women far more than men.
- The report, *Gender and Climate Change* (<http://www.iucn.org/>), concludes that women are more severely affected by climate change and natural disasters because of their social roles and because of discrimination and poverty. To make matters worse, they're also underrepresented in decision-making about climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, and, most critically, discussions and decisions about adaptation and mitigation.

U.S.A.

- Hurricane Katrina and the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami disproportionately affected women far more than men.

FRANCE

- For example, the 20,000 people who died in France during the extreme heat wave in Europe in 2003 included significantly more elderly women than men. In natural disasters that have occurred in recent years, both in developing and in developed countries, it is primarily the poor who have suffered--and all over the world, the majority of the poor are women.

ASIA TSUNAMI

- In the 2004 Asia Tsunami majority of those killed and among those least able to recover were women. In Aceh, 75 percent of those who died were women, resulting in a male-female ratio of 3:1 among the survivors.
- In the Himalayan region of Nepal, it became clear that environmental degradation had compounded stress within households and pressure on scarce resources. Pressure on children, particularly girl children, to do more work and at an earlier age was increasing. Girls do the hard work, have the least say and the fewest education options. Programmes that concentrate only on sending more girls to school were failing as the environmental and social conditions of the families deteriorated.



- There is a need to refocus the thinking and the debate on energy and climate change to include a human rights perspective. Integrating a rights-based approach to access to sustainable and affordable energy is an approach that will recognize

Source: motherjones.com/blue-marble/2007/03/climatechange-will-affect-women-more-severely-men

'CLIMATE CHANGE PUSHES POOR WOMEN TO PROSTITUTION DANGEROUS WORK'

by: Joseph Holandes Ubalde, GMA NEWS.TV November 19, 2009 1:19pm

- **PHILIPPINES** • The effects of climate change have driven women in communities in coastal areas in poor countries like the Philippines into dangerous work, and sometimes even the flesh trade, an United Nations officials said.



- Suneeta Mukherjee, country representative of the United Nations Food Population Fund (UNFPA), said women in the Philippines are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change in the country.
- "Climate change could reduce income from farming and fishing, possibly driving some women into sex work and thereby increase HIV infection." Mukherjee said during the Wednesday launch of the UNFPA annual State of World Population Report in Pasay City.
- But as the sea's resources are depleted due to overpopulation and overfishing, fisherman start losing their livelihood and women are forced to share the traditional role of the man in providing for the family.
- In an interview with the Inter Press News Agency, Marita Rodriguez of the Centre for Empowerment and Resource Development, Inc. said women are taking the brunt of climate change.
- "Aside from their household chores and participation in fishing activity, they have to find additional sources of income like working as domestic helpers in affluent families," she said.

Source: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/177346/news/nation/climate-change-pushes-poor-women-to-prostitution-dangerous-work>

ZAMBIA: THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN

by: Delphine Zulu and Perpetual Sichikwenkwe, 3 November 2011



- It is undeniable that it is woman who has to walk long distances to fetch firewood and water in the face of drought and desertification. It is women who hold households together when the ecosystems come under strain due to climate change and other causes.
- These are some of the challenges that most women go through in the light of climate change as they are also the most hit by natural disasters and it is equally a well known fact that women are held responsible for food security of the households despite being at the receiving end of the negative impact of climate changes.

AFRICA, ZAMBIA

- Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change and climate variability, and is already under pressure from climate stresses.
- Africa's vulnerability to Climate Change is increased by the climate-dependency of its major economic sectors, and the existing development challenges such as poverty, weak institutions, limited infrastructure, limited access to technology and information, as well as complex disasters and conflicts.
- It is for this reason that Zambia will this year be among many international countries that will converge in South Africa at the 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) with a challenge to ensure that whatever outcome from this international gathering should be at least of help to address different issues including the impact that Climate Change has on women worldwide.
- "As a woman who is a head of my family, I go through a lot of stress when my crops fail. It means I will have nothing to sell and nothing for the family to eat. I will have to think and work harder to find a way to feed the family and still get money to do other things.
- "In our community you find men with families who are also having so much stress, when their crops fail." This is a cry of many women affected by climate change.
- The women have always complained that they lack information on climate change, its effect on their crops and lives and how to prepare themselves in such situations. Sometimes, women and other farmers have taken climate change to be an effect of witchcraft simply because they do not understand its causes and how to deal with the problem.
- Millennium Development Goal Campaign national coordinator Dennis Nyati said climate change affects everyone but it is more pronounced on vulnerable people such as women.
- If women who are the most affected with the problem are not availed with information that is vital to solving most of the problems that they go through or experience, it will be difficult for them to take an active role in fighting the effects of climate change thus reducing poverty among themselves, their families and society at large.

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201111030352.html>



EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN IN AFRICA

by: Wambui E. Karanja, an environmentalist by profession

- (Wambui Karanja)- What does gender have to do with the environment? Surely climate change does not discriminate between men and women. First of all, 'gender' does not mean exclusively women. If men were the under-represented half of the world's population, agreed, women would stand up for their rights as much as they would stand up for their own.
- Second, climate change does discriminate between men and women — as an example, with increasing desertification and the retreat of the glaciers, the threat climate change poses to human existence is enormous. Africa is said to be one of the world's most vulnerable continents to the effects of climate change although it contributes minimally to the problem. The difficult social and economic setting of most Africans, especially women and children, worsens the situation.
- In general, women's lives are more intimately connected to the environment more than men. Often, men tend to be away in the cities while the women look after the children and work on the land in rural areas.
- Many women depend on the ecosystem, which is threatened by the scale of climate change. Women in Africa, particularly in the rural areas, are responsible for conducting subsistence farming that is the main source of food. As climate change unfolds, it will result in unpredictable weather patterns and most likely affect the quality of soils with negative consequences for the levels of food production. There need for policy interventions that address the impact of climate change on women's livelihoods. In particular, it is important to involve women in the design of policies and the implementation of solutions so that there is long-term ownership of potential solutions. Women's vulnerability to climate change needs to be researched so that solutions meets the specific needs on this already marginalized group in society. In addition, policies need to reflect women's lived experiences of climate change so that appropriate interventions can be put in place to reduce the impact of such changes. Educating women about the impacts as well as ways to reduce the impacts of climate change is also a crucial component. Providing extension services to women farmers on appropriate technological innovations, improved storage facilities and resource management services is also key to stemming the impact of climate change on women. *(underscoring provided)*
- One of the key components of global action on climate change should be measures to adapt to changes that are already unavoidable. Women must find another means of making a living. In contrast to the options open to many men, few women can respond to drought, for example, by relocating to cities or other rural areas in search of work. Women are often tied down by the need to care for children, or social obstacles to mobility; they are also frequently without even the smallest cash savings of their own or assets to sell to bridge hard times.

- Women have a lot of knowledge useful for adaptation because they work with the environment through their household duties: include fetching water, gathering firewood and fruits and farming. In Ghana for instance, women constitute about 51 percent of the population and about 30 percent of them are heads of households. Incidentally, a lot of Ghanaian women depend on their ecosystem to provide food, energy, water and medicine; and it is this ecosystem that is under threat.
- Given the variety of women's daily interactions with the environment, they are the most keenly affected by its degradation. Women's income from their livelihoods and other economic activities will become critical thus making them poorer.
- Most policy makers and practitioners have now started to recognise the different ways in which climate change impacts on the poor, vulnerable, and socially excluded women and men. However, making adaptation policies and programmes sensitive to gender issues does not simply mean 'adding on' a concern for women. It also requires a nuanced understanding of gendered forms of vulnerability, and a stronger commitment of resources — financial, technical, and human — to address specific gendered priorities. *(underscoring provided)*
- It would be a mistake to solve the climate change impacts without integrating women in the process, or improving their status and economic empowerment since women's management of local natural resources is crucial. Governments are urged to give women an equal say in how funds given to poor countries to help them adapt to climate change, are managed and spent.
- Women's participation can ensure that problems are solved more creatively. A step ahead for women can be equivalent to a leap for mankind.

Source: <http://www.pambazuka.org/au/monitor/comments/2690/>

THE THREATS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ARE NOT GENDER - NATURAL

by: Global UN Commitments, Resolutions and other Intergovernmental Outcomes Linking Gender Equality

- The effects of climate change will vary among regions, and between different generations, income groups and occupations as well as between women and men. Due, in part, to their lower adaptive capacities, developing countries and people living in poverty are likely to experience significant impacts.
- Women form a disproportionately large share of the poor in countries all over the world. Women in rural areas in developing countries are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood, because of their responsibility to secure water, food and energy for cooking and heating. The effects of climate change, including drought, uncertain rainfall and deforestation, make it harder to secure these resources. By comparison with men in poor countries, women face historical disadvantages, which include limited access to decision-making and economic assets that compound the challenges of climate change.

- It is therefore imperative that a gender analysis be applied to all actions on climate change and that gender experts are consulted in climate change processes at all levels, so that women's and men's specific needs and priorities are identified and addressed.

Source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/

"The challenge of climate change is unlikely to be gender-neutral, as it increases the risk to the most vulnerable and less empowered social groups. In the formulation of global and national approaches, as well as in the strategic responses to specific sectors, gender awareness, substantive analysis and inclusive engagement will be necessary."

Source: *Overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change - Report of the Secretary General (A/62/644), January 2008.*

