



Background and Context

Climate change is the 21st century crisis but "(I)t still preventable crisis--but only just". The world is now at or near the warmest level on record in the current interglacial period, which began in 12,000 years ago. There is strong evidence that the process is accelerating. The urgency of climate change was underscored by Faith Birol, the Chief Economist of the International Energy Agency: "without serious policy shifts we may be heading toward the double crisis or insecurity and climate change...". The macroeconomics are clear with prevention now costing a good deal less than adaptation late: 1% of GDP if we act now and 5-20% if we wait...We must treat the earth as if we intended to stay...". The world has less than a decade to change its course.

Climate change threatens to erode human freedoms and limit choice and undermines global efforts to combat poverty. Today, an average one person out of 19 developing country will be hit by a climate disaster, compared to 1 out of 1,500 in an OECD country and climate change creates life time traps. Increased exposure to drought, to more intense storms, to floods and environmental stress is holding back the efforts of the world's poor to build a better life for themselves and their children. In short, climate change would stall and reverse progress in human development, including cutting down extreme poverty, health, education and nutrition.

Key mechanisms through which climate change could stall and then reverse human development:

- 1) **Climate change will affect rainfall, temperature and water availability for agriculture in vulnerable areas--** for example drought affected areas in sub-Saharan Africa could expand by 60-90 million hectares, with dry land zones suffering losses of US 2 billion by 2060; other developing regions will experience losses in agricultural production; those affected by malnutrition could rise to 600 million;
- 2) **Water stress and water insecurity--**an additional 1.8 billion people could be living in water scarce environment by 2080; Central Asia, Northern China and the northern part of South Asia face immense vulnerabilities; seven of Asia's great river systems will experience an increase in flows over the short term;

3) **Rising sea levels and exposure to climate change**--over 70 million people in Bangladesh, 6 million in Lower Egypt and 22 million in Vietnam could be affected; small island states in the Caribbean and the Pacific could suffer catastrophic damage; with over 344 million people currently exposed to tropical cyclones, more intensive storms could have devastating consequences for a large group of companies;

4) **Climate change is transforming ecological systems** -- with 3 degrees centigrade of warming, 20-30 percent of land species could face extinction.

5) **Human health** - major killer diseases could expand their reach due to impacts of extreme summer and winter conditions and heat waves; for example, an additional 220-400 million people could be exposed to malaria which claims 1 million lives annually.

Climate change is global but its effect is local. Hence, concerted actions must be undertaken at local and global levels.

Why Gender and Climate Change?

Differentiated impact of climate change on men and women-- Climate change is not a neutral process; first of all, women are, in general, more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, not just because they represent the majority of the world's poor but also because they are more than proportionally dependent on natural resources that are threatened. The technological change and instruments that are being proposed to mitigate carbon emissions, which are implicitly presented as gender-neutral, are in fact quite gender-biased and may negatively affect women or bypass them.

The negotiation process tends to be driven by a masculine view of the problem and its solutions. Women's participation in the whole process, at international, national and local levels, is very low, both in the South and in the North; skills and resources need to be developed to overcome this.

Gender, like poverty, is a cross cutting issue in climate change and needs to be recognized as such. In fact, gender and poverty are interrelated and create mutually reinforcing barriers to social change. There is a need to be strident to overcome the uninformed view of many involved in climate change that climate change is neutral, and real life examples are needed to make the alternative case clear and convincing." (Gender and Climate Change web site: <http://www.genc.internconnection.org/about.htm>).

For example, women comprised the majority of those killed and who were at least likely to recover in the 2005 Asian tsunami. In Aceh, more than 75 percent of those who died were women, resulting in a male-female ratio of 3:1 among the survivors. As so many mothers died, there have been major consequences with respect to infant mortality, early marriage of girls, neglect of girls' education, sexual assault, trafficking of women and prostitution. (in Gender Aspects of Climate Change, Gender and Disaster Network, 2005/REF).

If action on climate change is partly about reducing vulnerability and building resilience then it is important that vulnerable groups do not suffer disproportionately from its adverse effects. Women, figure among such vulnerable groups. (Point de Vue, Bulletin African Bioresources, Oct. 2001).

Lack of Women's Participation- Women and environment experts have raised concern over the absence of women in the discourse and debate on climate change, a global mainstream issue that is currently impacting on the entire world. "An overall assessment of the climate change debate to date shows women are patently absent in the decision-making process. Their contributions in environmental policies are largely ignored. Decision-making and policy formulation at environmental levels such as conservation, protection and rehabilitation and environmental management are predominantly male agenda. The climate change debate is an indicator of how gender issues tend to be omitted, leaving rooms for complex market-driven notions equated in terms of emission reductions, fungibility and flexible mechanisms. Nevertheless, in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development reflected in Agenda 21, one notes the key role ascribed to women as principle actors in the management of natural resources

and the development of sustainable and ecologically sound policies. Perhaps the fact that there are few trained women environment specialists tends to accentuate this gender deficit in environmental policy. Institutional weakness in women's organizations and under-representation in informal decision-making are factors that lend to swing the pendulum away from their oft-valuable input".

Women can contribute to the solution- The involvement of women in areas of environmental management and governance should not be perceived as an afterthought. Women's roles are of considerable importance in the promotion of environmental ethics. Their efforts in waste management through recycling are re-use of resources are an indication of the extent of their significant input to community development. Women in rural areas, due to their daily contact with the natural habitat for the provision of food, fodder and wood, tend to have sound ecological knowledge that could be useful in environmental planning and governance.

Women are most vulnerable to the bad effects of climate change and yet women are absent in the decision-making process, the discourse and the debate on climate change, a global mainstream issue that is affecting the entire world. Changing and influencing the course of climate change and preparedness thru disaster risk reduction are the two main strategies which women must understand and engage in.

Women must understand and engage in mainstream issues. And gender must be taken up as part and parcel of these mainstream issues. Women must understand these mainstream issues and how they are affected by it as well as how they can become part of the solution. It is in this spirit that the **Third World Congress of Women in Politics and Governance** is organized this year, focusing on **gender and climate change**.

The current imperative is for women to understand the phenomenon of climate change and its impacts and implications at individual, household, community and national levels.

Objectives of the Congress

Overall Purpose

To provide a forum for leaders and decision-makers at all levels in formulating a gender responsive legislation and programs related to gender in climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) To understand the phenomenon of climate change, its impacts and its implications and study the appropriate risk reduction strategy;
- 2) To review and examine the gender aspects in climate change and disaster risk reduction and formulate appropriate actions to address these aspects;
- 3) To define the roles women can play in addressing the impacts of climate change and disaster risk reduction programs and policies at the global, national and sub-national levels; and
- 4) To identify and define the action agenda for parliamentarians, policy advocates and women leaders to support global and national actions to adapt gender responsive legislation and programs related to gender in climate change and disaster risk reduction.

The Congress Program

The Congress program has been designed to generate discussions on climate change in the community of practitioners, including legislators/parliamentarians and senior executives, who could translate the

"global talk" into "local walk" in their respective countries of origin. Legislative action to support adaptive national responses to climate change is a strategic intervention to address the challenge of the century. The emphasis of the Congress is adaptation to climate change and endeavors to define and elaborate actions toward adaptation, risk reduction and preparedness.

Adaptation entails actions that moderate harm or exploit benefits, of climate change. **Mitigation** entails actions that minimizes or cushions the adverse impacts of climate change. **Preparedness and disaster risk reduction** is about building individual and community capacities to position themselves and their communities so that the likelihood of climate change-induced disasters is reduced; the intensity or adverse impacts of disasters are cushioned and that inhabitants are able to respond promptly, expeditiously and effectively.

And in all these actions, special attention was given to defining how women and gender could be mainstreamed. In other words, the Congress should define how women can be given the social space to participate, influence and benefit from the global and local responses to climate change.

Discussions on gender and climate change adaptation and risk reduction were organized in three (3) major plenary sessions on the first two days of the Congress. The discussions were intended to shed light on key issues, such as the following:

Plenary Session 1: Gender in Climate Change Adaptation: Development Perspectives, Issues and Challenges:

The plenary session presented the development issues and concerns pertaining to climate change adaptation as a mainstream concern and the links to women and gender concerns. Climate change must now be viewed as a development issue, rather than as a contingency or emergency matter. The session explored the impacts of climate change on women and children and how they could play a role in the responses to challenges of climate change.

Organizers and Co-Chairs: UNEP and the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC)

Plenary Session 2: Gender in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

With climate change, disaster risks will heighten. Thus, the focus of the discussion was on the challenges of reducing disaster risks and making disaster risk reduction as a tool for adapting to climate change. The Hyogo Framework for Action, a global guide for action toward disaster risk reduction, was presented and its worldwide application was assessed. In support of disaster risk reduction is the campaign to have hospitals that are safe from disasters and to encourage more legislative action. Cross-cutting these discussions was the role of women in disaster risk reduction as a practical step in climate change adaptation.

Organizer and Chair: United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR)

Plenary Session 3: Women in Politics and Governance in the Era of Climate Change

The era of climate change calls for everyone's involvement--men and women. Thus far, women have been in the margins of the discourse on climate change adaptation and puts to waste women's wisdom in disaster risk reduction. This session thus focused on women's proactive engagement in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, with emphasis on legislation that could be spearheaded by women parliamentarians at the national level. Such legislation should be in support of measures to promote climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction that take into account women's potential contribution in responding to the challenges of climate change.

These three (3) plenary sessions were meant to inform the discussions in the parallel sessions which transpired on the second day. There were two (2) sets of parallel sessions:

Set A: Thematic Sessions: This was organized around specific thematic issues and participants were mixed together. Groupings were cut across geographic regions. The participants were broken up into smaller discussion groups to further explore and elaborate vital issues on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The first set was focused on climate change and its marked impact, not only on agriculture and food security but also on health. In fact these issues were the focus of the discussions of the two parallel sessions. On health, the notion of Hospitals Safe from Disasters as initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN/ISDR was presented. In the second parallel session, [OXFAM](#), an international non-government organization, shared its experiences in the field of sustainable agriculture and food security. The third parallel session endeavored to integrate the various ideas in the plenary sessions as they lead to possible legislative actions.

CAPWIP was the coordinator for these thematic sessions. The results of the discussions were reported during the Plenary Session 4.

Set B: Geographic Sessions: The participants were grouped according to their geographic origin namely: Africa, Asia (East and Southeast, South, Central and West), Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands including Australia and New Zealand.

WEDO was the coordinator of these parallel sessions and the results of the regional workshops was presented during the Plenary Session 4.

Plenary Session 5 was the concluding plenary session. This was co-chaired by GGCA and IUCN. This plenary compiled and consolidated the recommendations of the parallel sessions and the output served as information outputs to the Call to Action that was presented for adoption of the body in the plenary.

Conference Mechanics

Opening Ceremonies: The Congress opened with welcome remarks from CAPWIP and short messages from its partners and co-organizers. Officials from the Philippine Senate and the House of Representatives had brief welcome remarks as well. Keynote addresses were delivered by the heads of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). There were video taped messages from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Founder of the Greenbelt Movement of Kenya.

CAPWIP has designated Facilitators to ensure the smooth flow of the sessions. All sessions were documented and tape recorded. Participants to parallel sessions designated a chair and a rapporteur/presenter from among them. Staffs from CAPWIP Secretariat were designated to assist each of the parallel sessions in the recording of their proceedings. Discussion guides were provided for the parallel sessions and was circulated accordingly. The Facilitators also provided instructions and guides for the small group presentations to the Plenary Session. The results of the various discussion groups were synthesized and presented in the final Plenary Session.

Results of the Congress

A **CALL TO ACTION** and a legislative agenda emerged out of the discussions during the Congress. These two (2) outputs will be used to guide future action and programming in response to climate change and will be handed by Congress organizers to the UN System through its various partners. The results will serve as a tool for advocacy at the national and global levels to urge national authorities to take action for climate change adaptation and risk reduction. Their attention will be called to pay attention to gender aspects of impacts and national responses.

Post Congress Actions

Papers will be compiled, edited and eventually published into a resource book. The proceedings of the Congress will be prepared and disseminated to all participants.

Congress Organizers and Partners

- [Center for Asia Pacific Women in Politics \(CAPWIP\)](#)
- [United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction \(UN/ISDR\)](#)
- [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#)
- [United Nations Development Fund for Women \(UNIFEM\)](#)
- [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#)
- [United Nations Global Center and Climate Alliance \(GGCA\)](#)
- [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#)
- [Women's Environment and Development Organization \(WEDO\)](#)
- [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#)
- [Coordinating Committee on Women Parliamentarians of Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU/CCWP\)](#)

Congress Schedule

The Congress was held from **October 19-22, 2008** at the [Dusit Thani Hotel, Makati City, Philippines](#).

CONGRESS PAPERS FOR DOWNLOAD

Day 1

- [Congress Information Sheet](#)
- [Programme](#)
- [Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters](#)
- [Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management: Legislating Gender-Responsive Mitigation, Adaptation and Women's Participation Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, Vice President, Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, ADB](#)
- [Power Point Presentation of Ursula Schaefer-Preuss](#)
- [Opening Statement of Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#)
- [Mainstreaming Gender in Climate Change Policies: Urgencies, Challenges and Perspectives, Irene Dankelman, Vice President, WEDO/WECF](#)
- [The Global Gender and Climate Alliance, Rebecca Pearl, Coordinator, Global Gender and Climate Alliance \(GGCA\)](#)
- [Climate Change Adaptation, Hanna Uusimaa, Junior Professional Officer, UNEP ROAP](#)
- [Is There A Connection Between Gender and Climate Change, Lorena Aguilar, Global Senior Gender Adviser, IUCN](#)
- [Climate Change and Children: A Human Security Challenge, Vanessa Tobin, Philippine Representative, UNICEF](#)
- [Welcome Speech of Hon. Prospero Nograles, Speaker, Philippine House of Representatives](#)
- [Welcome Speech of Senator Loren B. Legarda, Philippine Senate](#)
- [Welcome Speech of Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr, Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources \(DENR\), Philippines](#)
- [Welcome Speech of Dr. Jung Sook Kim, President, CAPWIP](#)
- [Keynote Address: Gender and Climate Change: The Impact on Trade, Dr. Supachai Panichpakdi, Secretary General, UNCTAD](#)

- [Keynote Address: Dr. Salvador Briceño, Director, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction \(UN/ISDR\)](#)
- [Summary of Plenary Session 1: Mainstreaming Gender in Climate Change Adaptation](#)

Day 2

- [Gender, Disaster Risk Reduction and Legislation, by Dr. Cheryl L. Anderson, Director, Hazards, Climate and Environment Program, University of Hawaii Social and Science Research Institute](#)
- [Environment and Disaster Reduction in a Changing Climate--Entry Points for Gender, Clara Nobbe, Associate Program Officer, UNEP](#)
- [World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2008-2009: Hospitals Safe From Disasters with a Gender Perspective, Linda L. Millan, M.D, M.P.H, Director, Building Healthy Communities and Population, World Health Organization \(WHO\) Western Pacific Region](#)
- [Challenges for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, Dr. Feng Min Kan, Senior Coordinator for Advocacy and Outreach Coordination Unit, UN/ISDR](#)
- [Overview, Plenary Session 2, October 20, 2008](#)
- [Making Disaster Risk Reduction a Tool for Adopting to Climate Change: Report of UN-ISDR Consultative Meeting with Parliamentarians, Senator Loren Legarda, Philippine Senate](#)
- [Progress of Women in Politics and Governance, Updates, Gaps and Areas for Further Action, Dr. Jung Sook Kim, President, CAPWIP](#)
- [The Journey from Beijing: The Long, Winding and Bumpy Road Toward Equality, Development and Peace, Patricia B. Licuanan, President, Miriam College/South East Asia Women's Watch \(SEAWWatch\)](#)
- [Mainstreaming Gender in Legislation in Aid of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction: The Challenge to Women in Politics and Governance, Hon. D'Ness Florence Gbinigie-Erhabor, Project Manager, Forum of Nigerian Women in Politics \(FONWIP\)](#)
- [Gender-Sensitive Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Aceh, Dr. Socorro L. Reyes, Chief, Asia-Pacific and Arab States, UNIFEM](#)
- [Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management: Legislating, Gender-Responsive Mitigation, Adaptation and Women's Participation, Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, Vice President, ADB](#)

Day 3

- [Health Impacts of Disasters and Climate Change: Challenges to Hospitals and Public Health Systems, Dr. John Juliard Go, National Professional Officer, WHO](#)
- [Making Hospitals and Health Facilities Safe from Disasters, Dr. Carmencita A. Banatin, Director III, Health Emergency Management Staff, Department of Health \(DOH\), Philippines](#)
- [HOspital Preparedness for Emergencies \(HOPE\), Prof. Dr. Teodoro Javier Herbosa, Emergency Medicine, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia](#)
- [Women's Vulnerability and Policy Framework for Climate Change Adaptation--Vietnam, Mr. Le Cong Thanh, Director General, Department of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment](#)
- [Everybody's Contribution Will Count For Influencing Climate Change, Action Agenda for Strengthening Women's Participation, Aira Kalela, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland](#)
- [Panel on Women, Food Security and Climate Change: Overview, Challenges and Initiatives](#)
- [Mobilizing Women to Demand U.S. Action on Climate Change, Rachel Harris, US Climate Change Campaign Coordinator, WEDO](#)
- [Parallel Session 4: The Role of Parliamentarians in Mainstreaming Gender in Legislation in Aid of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction](#)

- [Recovery Aceh After Earthquake and Tsunami: Looking at Women's Participation in Housing Construction in Aceh Jaya, Aceh, Indonesia, Kalyanamitra Foundation](#)
- [Climate Change and Women in Agriculture, Maria Daryl L. Leyesa, Rural Women Center Coordinator, CENTRO SAKA Inc.](#)
- [Parallel Session on Food Security, Recommendations](#)
- [A Perfect Storm? Women, Food Security and Climate Change, Ms. Ines Smyth; Gender Global Gender Advisor, OXFAM](#)
- [Sustainable Management of Rangelands in Tanzania, Professor Raphael E. Mwalyosi, MP for Ludewa Constituency](#)
- [In Aid of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction: A Gender Responsive Agenda, Esther Penunia, Secretary General, Asian Farmers' Association \(AFA\)](#)
- [Gender and Financing for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in the Philippines, Athena Peralta](#)
- [Climate Change Adaptation, Dr. B. Resurreccion, Gender and Development Studies, Asian Institute of Technology Thailand](#)
- [Proceedings: Parallel Session Pacific Region](#)
- [Proceedings: Parallel Session: South Asia and West Asia](#)
- [Proceedings: Parallel Session: North America and Europe](#)
- [Proceedings: Parallel Session: East and Southeast Asia](#)

Day 4

- [Closing Remarks; Women: Pillars of Community Resilience in the Face of Climate Change, Hon. Angelo T. Reyes, Secretary, Department of Energy \(DOE\), Philippines](#)
- [Closing Remarks; Changing the Climate: The Role of Women Parliamentarians on Climate Change, Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, President, Committee of Women, Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\)](#)
- [Gender in Adapting to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management in the Pacific, Hona Holan-Hako, President, Women Collective Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom](#)
- [Closing Remarks, Khunying Supatra Masdit, Founding President, CAPWIP](#)
- [Lyrics of "One Earth" by Coritha](#)
- [Manila Declaration](#)

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