

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN  
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES**

**IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.org>**

**Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities  
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales**



**IAW Action Sheet August 2009, no. 4**

To all IAW members and supporters,

Gender perspective impacts Climate Change which is the most important and urgent matter that the world at large must face up to and take action. What is the effect now? How will it affect women across the world? The absence of a gender perspective in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change means women are still being sidelined and are not allowed to be directly involved.

The effects of Climate Change on women must be recognised and addressed at the forthcoming Conference of the Parties (COP 15) on Climate Change scheduled for December 7 - 18 2009 in Copenhagen. All IAW member organisations and individual members are urged to plan and work together and with other NGOs in a cohesive fashion to ensure the best possible outcomes. By really concerted and ongoing efforts – YES WE CAN make a difference.

Please use the attached Open Letter based on the CEDAW Statement as the basis for writing to your Foreign Office, your Ambassador, and your relevant Ministers and bureaucrats. Talk to and promote collaborative action with other NGOs so that they become active too and call for action by their members.

The IAW, through the initiative of one of our New York representatives at the UN, Soon-Young Yoon, co-sponsored a very successful side event on Gender and Climate Change during the Commission on the Status of Women this year. Soon-Young reports that some CEDAW committee members thanked the IAW and the Global Gender Climate Change Alliance for opening an opportunity for it to take a stand on such an important issue.

Now it's your chance to initiate more action on this vital subject!

Please advise Secretary-General Lene Pind [iawsec@womenalliance.org](mailto:iawsec@womenalliance.org) of any action that you are taking.

IAW Newsletter / News Flash :	Joke Sebus	<a href="mailto:iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net">&lt;iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net&gt;</a>
International Women's News :	Priscilla Todd (English)	<a href="mailto:iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org">&lt;iaw.iwnews@womenalliance.org&gt;</a>
	Mathilde Duval (French)	<a href="mailto:aifnfi@womenalliance.org">&lt;aifnfi@womenalliance.org&gt;</a>
Membership Officer :	Pat Richardson	<a href="mailto:iaw.membership@womenalliance.org">&lt;iaw.membership@womenalliance.org&gt;</a>
Treasurer :	Rakesh Dawan	<a href="mailto:iaw.treas@womenalliance.org">&lt;iaw.treas@womenalliance.org&gt;</a>

20th August 2009

OPEN LETTER TO PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UN:  
STATEMENT OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) COMMITTEE ON GENDER AND  
CLIMATE CHANGE

The local and national non-governmental organizations, working together in the International Alliance of Women, support the CEDAW Committee in its concern about the absence of a gender perspective in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other global and national policies and initiatives on climate change. You have a unique opportunity to demonstrate to the world your seriousness and determination to respond to the statement of the CEDAW Committee that a gender perspective is essential in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other global and national policies and initiatives on climate change.

With your support of the statement of the CEDAW Committee on Climate Change, women can look forward with hope to the debates during the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) on Climate Change December 7 - 18 2009 in Copenhagen. The following is the statement made by the CEDAW committee at its 44<sup>th</sup> session, New York 2009.

*From CEDAW's examination of States Parties reports, it is apparent that climate change does not affect women and men in the same way and has a gender-differentiated impact. However, women are not just helpless victims of climate change - they are powerful agents of change and their leadership is critical. Gender equality is essential to the successful initiation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of climate change policies. Women's right to participate in all levels of decision-making must be guaranteed in climate change policies and programmes.*

*Women are the main producers of the world's staple crops, but they face multiple discriminations such as unequal access to land, credit and information. Particularly at risk are poor urban and rural women who live in densely populated coastal and low-lying areas, drylands and high mountainous areas and small islands. Vulnerable groups such as older women and disabled women and minority groups such as indigenous women, pastoralists, nomads and hunters and gatherers are also of concern.*

*Safety nets and insurance for social protection are essential to national adaptation plans as part of poverty reduction strategies. <sup>1</sup> However, many women do not have access to health care facilities and social security. <sup>2</sup> And while CEDAW recognizes that all women have the right to adequate standards of living, housing and communications as well as immediate shelters during crisis situations due to natural disasters, women often face discrimination to access these. The crisis in climate change potentially open new financing, business and employment opportunities for women living in cities as well as countryside, but gender 'inequality' persists in these sectors.*

*Sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive policies and program guidelines to aid Governments are necessary to protect women's rights to personal security and sustainable*

*livelihoods. Policies that support gender equality in access, use and control over science and technology, formal and informal education and training will enhance a nation's capability in disaster reduction, mitigation and adaptation to climate change.*

*The Bali Action Plan that emerged from the 13th Conference of Parties to UNFCCC reaffirms that economic and social development and poverty eradication are global priorities, and affirms that a shared vision needs to take into account "social and economic conditions and other relevant factors."*<sup>3</sup>

*As the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change noted, climate change has differential impacts on societies varying among regions, generations, ages, classes, income groups, occupations and gender lines.*

*Gender equality — including equal participation of women and men as well as accounting for the differentiated impacts on women and men from climate change and its response measures— should be included in UNFCCC agreements, in alignment with various international agreements. Included, but not limited to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and ECOSOC Resolution 2005/31. The CEDAW committee calls on States Parties to include gender equality as an overarching guiding principle in the UNFCCC agreement expected at the 15th Conference of Parties in Copenhagen.*

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Technical Summary, report by Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007, Cambridge U. Press, Cambridge, UK 2007 p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> See Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world, UNDP, New York 2007.

<sup>3</sup> [Decision 1/CP.13, preamble and 1(a)].