

Submission from the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice 3 February 2016

Views on matters to be discussed at the in-session workshop on gender responsive climate policy with a focus on adaptation and capacity building, and training for delegates on gender issues during the 44th session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

FCCC/2014/COP20/18, paragraphs 12 & 13

The Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice proposes that the second in-session workshop on the Lima work programme on gender includes:

1. A discussion on the meaningful participation of grassroots women in the design, planning and implementation of adaptation and capacity building climate actions and the value of recognising this under the UNFCCC
2. An opportunity for grassroots women to present on their experiences in developing adaptation and capacity building actions that are gender sensitive.

Recognising the value of the participation of grassroots women in the design, planning and implementation of climate actions under the UNFCCC

The second in-session workshop under the *Lima work programme on gender* should allow for a dedicated discussion on the meaningful participation of grassroots women in the design, planning and implementation of climate actions at all levels in order to:

- Further the recognition of grassroots women as agents of change in the development of local and national responses to climate change
- Further empower grassroots women to act upon that agency
- Ensure that the global climate response and fora under the UNFCCC benefits from the knowledge of grassroots women.

The *Lima work programme on gender* could use the occasion of the second in-session workshop to pioneer a new approach and provide a platform for the direct engagement of grassroots women.

Inclusion of grassroots women as participants in the workshop would allow them to share their experiences of effective and gender responsive climate actions in the fields of adaptation and capacity building. This would complement the examples provided by Parties and bring to life the contribution local communities and women are making to climate action (as emphasised for example in paragraph 136 of the decision on adopting the Paris Agreement). To ensure effective

participation, the design of the workshop should allocate time to allow delegates and observers present to give due consideration to the presentations made by the grassroots participants.

The Foundation has positive experience of using this approach at international meetings. In April 2013, the Foundation and the Government of Ireland co-hosted a conference, called Hunger-Nutrition-Climate Justice, which was designed to provide the opportunity for grassroots engagement. One third of conference participants were grassroots practitioners. The conference demonstrated that, by listening to the realities of people, especially women, living on the front line and their experiences of both the problems and the solutions that work, policy makers and political leaders can garner critical evidence to make policy development more relevant, responsive and effective¹. The conference format also highlighted that preparing grassroots participants for their roles as presenters, policy champions or panellists is essential for them to participate meaningfully. A key recommendation emerging from the Foundation's research into women's participation is that, in order to fully realise meaningful participation, women need to be supported with training, networks and access to resources². This is a particularly acute need for grassroots women.

The focus of the workshop on adaptation and capacity building provides an appropriate landscape for grassroots contributions as there are many examples of local participation in action to build resilience and capacity to climate impacts. There are critical linkages between community resilience to climate change, development, poverty and gender-based inequality. Typically, poor women are the most vulnerable and marginalised segments of at-risk populations—vulnerability and marginalisation that often increases in the wake of a climate change related disasters³. Moreover, grassroots women play a unique role in agriculture, food security, livelihoods, income generation and management of our natural resources. As such, their knowledge and expertise is an essential input into the design of climate responses that protect people and the planet.

Sustainable, people centred approaches to adaptation to climate change are most effective when they take into account the experiences and capabilities of grassroots people living with and finding solutions to climate change. By facilitating the participation of grassroots women in the workshop, further opportunities for including grassroots women in discussions under the UNFCCC could be promoted.

We would encourage other Parties to also consider how they can enable the participation of grassroots women at this in-session workshop.

¹ Shine & McCabe, (2014) - Listening and Learning: A case study on engaging active participation by grassroots practitioners at an international conference available at <http://bit.ly/1UdXlrF> (Accessed 3 February 2016)

² MRFCJ (2015) Women's Participation: An Enabler of Climate Justice available at <http://bit.ly/1PaPTFO> (Accessed 3 February 2016)

³ GROOTS International & UNDP (2011) – Leading Resilient Development available at <http://bit.ly/1lmXtyg> (Accessed 3 February 2016)

Women's engagement in community based climate action in La Aguada, Chile⁴

As a member of the local neighbourhood organisation Junta de Vecinos La Aguada, Celia Reyes has become involved in decision-making processes and the design and implementation of climate action in her community.

Since 2008, the O'Higgins region of Chile has experienced recurrent drought which has rendered many rural livelihoods impossible. This has caused several families from Cecilia's small community to migrate to towns and villages. Celia is unwilling to leave the land where she was born and wishes to ensure a better quality of life for her two young daughters.

Through her participation in her neighbourhood organisation, she was able to build on her existing skills and knowledge by participating in training on solar energy and rainwater harvesting. This has enabled her to maximise benefits for her family. The project was developed by the community of La Aguada in consultation with municipal authorities, a local institute for agricultural research and the United Nations Development Programme. Having lived with the realities of the injustices caused by climate change, Celia Reyes has worked with other members of her community to develop solutions that not only increase resilience but also enable access to the benefits of low carbon development.

Research Findings

Recent research completed by the Foundation finds that grassroots women's participation is not just the right thing to do, it is also the smart thing to do – the case studies presented in the research showcase the positive benefits for people and planet when women are enabled to participate⁵. The 6 recommendations emerging from the research are:

- Increase the participation of women in climate actions at all levels
- Understand the context in relation to women's ability to participate
- Shift the emphasis from women's representation to women's meaningful participation in climate actions
- Invest in training and capacity building to enable meaningful participation
- Document the good work that is going on to enable women's participation and share lessons learned.

⁴ MRFCJ (2015) *Rights for Action Putting People at the Centre of Action on Climate Change* available at <http://bit.ly/1Zr2a8> (Accessed 3 February 2016)

⁵ MRFCJ (2015) *Women's Participation: An Enabler of Climate Justice* available at <http://bit.ly/1PaPTF0> (Accessed 3 February 2016)