

## In-session workshop on gender-responsive climate policy with a focus on adaptation, capacity building and training for delegates on gender issues

Bonn, 17 May 2016

### **Session II: The drivers of change: enabling conditions for advancing gender equality in climate change policy, planning and programmes**

#### Intervention by Ms. Rosemary Wambua

##### **Biography:**

**Rosemary Wambua** is a grassroots community leader from Kitui in Kenya. She is Chairperson of the Kitui Women Poverty Eradication Group and the Climate Justice Women coordinator in Kitui county. She has been working with local women to enhance food security, develop efficient cook stoves and enhance access to policy makers for grassroots women. Rosemary's participation in the in-session workshop on gender-responsive climate policy was supported by the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice.

##### **Rosemary Wambua's story**

Rosemary is from a semi-arid area of eastern Kenya – Kitui County.

Climate change impacts include drought and storms and the seasons are unpredictable. She started her own community based organisation to help families in her community. Then she accessed training which helped her to access information on Climate Change. She started working on climate issues to increase resilience in her community. She works with grassroots women to get organised, to support each other and to have communal funds to help women in need.

Food security is a growing problem due to unpredictable seasons and drought (Rosemary explained how hunger affects women, children and families – she experienced this herself as a child and so is passionate about finding solutions).

As a result the women accessed and introduced drought resistant crops including cassava and greengrams. This means that the women now have more food for their families and more income to send their kids to school. However access to land for the women is an ongoing issue.

Women cook on open fires - this needs lots of wood and charcoal. This is causing land degradation and the open stoves contribute to poor health for women. To respond to this problem Kenya Climate Justice Women Champions came to the county and brought the policy makers from the local government and the Ministry of the Environment to talk to grassroots women to understand the problem and find a solution.

As a result of this they empowered the women through a training in renewable energy. The women learned to make energy saving stoves 'maenbeleo jiko' which uses only one piece of wood to cook a

meal and is smokeless. It is improving women's health and contributing to safe coking. It has also reduced demand for charcoal, so fewer trees are cut down and women spend less time collecting firewood and making charcoal.

The women are also planting trees around schools and other places where they can access land. The stoves are made by women and they sell them to generate income – in this way they can be economically empowered.

Water scarcity is a growing problem – the water levels in the wells and in the rivers are declining – and the water quality is deteriorating. Women have to walk up to 10km to access water at the river and carry heavy loads to bring it home. The young girls are at risk when they travel so far on their own. The women hope to start using rainwater tanks to harvest the water from roof tops so that they can have a ready supply of clean water to drink. They are seeking support for this activity.

***Rosemary believes that she and the grassroots women she works with know what the problems are in their local area and in many cases have the solutions. Policies should be made based on their needs and knowledge and not imposed on them from above. Grassroots women have ideas and want to be heard.***