

**Messages from the focal points of the UNFCCC observer constituency of youth non-governmental organizations (YOUNGO) on the occasion of International Women's Day 2014**

**Ms. Danaé Espinoza**



Women are agents of change. We are mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, housewives, teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, students, athletes, artists, farmers, leaders; we are the way by which culture and tradition is transmitted for present and future generations and architects of many pillars of society. Although the key role of women in addressing climate change has become increasingly apparent in recent years, it has not been easy, but not impossible, to position issues related to women and gender in climate change policy-making and actions.

Many of the programs to mitigate climate change, especially at the local level, are focused on women and made by women, which creates a multiplier effect with an international impact. As women we have the knowledge and skills to adapt to climate change while reducing poverty and hunger, to defend our human rights, to create ways and technologies to get access to clean water, and especially to ensure the continuance of the natural ecosystems for life.

It is therefore necessary to emphasize the key role of women in global agendas. In fact, gender issues are already part of the discussions on the post-2015 Development Agenda, which is good news for future international agreements. As a young woman and as part of YOUNGO I can say that many young women are active in the climate change process and have been very supportive with ideas, activities and projects of this constituency of which all young people are a part. I am very proud to also be part of this group and it is important to mention that this is the first time that two women were chosen to be focal points from the Global North and the Global South. This is a big step and opens up new opportunities for the inclusion of women and reflects the efforts of youth working on climate change towards gender equity.

**Ms. Sabrina Marquant**



Although climate changes affect women differently and more severely, they are important agents of change in their local communities and the international arena. As a YOUNGO focal point, I have seen many initiatives and programs launched in order to empower young people as leaders at the local, regional and international levels. A majority of these initiatives and programs have been successfully set up and lead by young women.

In the lead up to 2015, fostering dialogue is essential. To get an ambitious 2015 climate agreement, we have to focus our energy on developing innovative ways of dialogue and cooperation in order to push governments to introduce more concrete actions into climate negotiations. This is the only way to change the narrative and to make sure COP 21 won't fail.

