



ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

6, Bhagwandas Road, New Delhi, India.

Submission based on Decision 18/CP.20 - Lima Work Programme on Gender

All India Women's Conference is privileged to make this submission to UNFCCC based on the Lima Work Programme on Gender (Clause 13).

Climate Change Impacts on Women

"Women are predominantly responsible for food production, household water supply and energy for heating and cooking. As climate change impacts increase, these tasks are becoming more difficult."

http://unfccc.int/gender_and_climate_change/items/7516.php

In India, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) also draws attention to the fact and notes, 'The impacts of climate change could prove particularly severe for women. With climate change, there would be increasing scarcity of water, reduction in yields of forest biomass, and increased risks to human health with children, women and the elderly in a household becoming the most vulnerable. With the possibility of decline in availability of foodgrains, the threat of malnutrition may also increase. All these would add to deprivations that women already encounter and so in programmes, special attention should be paid to the aspects of gender.' (NAPCC, pg. 12)

The 11th Five-year Plan of India (Five-Year Plans (FYPs) are centralized and integrated national economic programs) notes that, 'Women and girls spend a great deal of time gathering fuel, adversely affecting their (health), productivity and education. About 92% of rural domestic energy still comes from unprocessed biofuels (firewood, crop waste, cattle dung), and 85% of rural cooking fuel is gathered from forests, village commons and fields.'

Women spend maximum number of hours in a day in kitchen and they need clean, safe, appropriate and affordable energy. According to a recent

Internal Energy Agency report, the highest cause of premature deaths in India is due to asphyxiation because of household air pollution caused by cooking with bio-mass. Use of dirty cooking fuel has been responsible for killing 3.5 million women and children each year. With their traditional ability to adapt, women will benefit from access to technology which promotes self-sufficiency, technology that is on small-scale and can be managed on local level.

Women as Agents of Change

“However, women have knowledge and coping strategies that give them a practical understanding of innovation and skills to adapt to changing environmental realities as well as to contribute to the solution,” the UNFCCC web-site continues.

If the traditional wisdom possessed by women as stewards of natural resources is recognised and built upon, it can provide rare insights into age old mitigation strategies. If this is complimented with access to new and emerging technologies, women can indeed transform the conditions not only in their homes but across the globe.

Technology Informatics Design Endeavours (TIDE) is an organisation promoting sustainable development through technological interventions. The role of technology for women’s energy needs and socio-economic development is not adequately understood by predominantly male technology developers, often with limited understanding of the energy and livelihood needs of poor, rural women. TIDE has been working in the area of technology development and energy access for women for over two decades. They have demonstrated that though there are barriers that must be overcome, technology access can become an enabler for low carbon development. Some examples of their work where women are earning incomes through low carbon actions are : construction of smokeless stoves, on farm drying of fruits, vegetables and marine product using biomass and solar dryers, women delivering an energy service like sale of solar lights, use of fuel efficient, smokeless wood burning stoves for women’s enterprises (tea stalls, canteens, cooking in schools for mid-day meals, preparation of

sweets and snacks for sale), value added products from locally grown millets etc., leaf plate making and cashew processing

Another aspect inhibiting active participation of women in climate change activities is lack of access to finance to provide appropriate solutions to the family and community, based on traditional wisdom or assisted by emerging technology. It has been recognised that if women are given control of resources, the whole family benefits and as a consequence, the community is set on the path of progress. Recognising this, the National Food Security Act, 2013 passed by Indian Parliament introduced the practice of issuing Ration Cards (entitlement for food grains at subsidised rates to the poor and needy) in the name of the eldest female member of the family, changing the age old system of recognising only the male as head of family. This is directed at improving access to food, food security and health of millions of families across India. In a similar way, access to climate finance in the domestic sector could be channelled through women to ensure appropriate and assured action in the interests of the family and the community.

Themes to be highlighted in the Workshops : Suggestions

Based on the above, it is suggested that the following themes be dealt with in detail in the proposed workshops at SBI 42 :

- Access to safe, affordable technology solutions and clean energy for households
- Access to climate finance for women

Conclusion

" Yatranaryastupujyante, ramantetatradevataha," exhorts the ancient Indian scripture Manusmriti. It means, "Where women are treated with due respect, there the Gods gladly reside."

Let due recognition of women's contributions and ensuring women's rights pave the way for an equitable, gender responsive, safe world for future generations!