



Climate Change *Facts*

Climate change is an established scientific fact. Humans contribute with our rising output of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and other products of fossil fuel consumption. Policies to halt climate change must address human impacts as well as technical aspects of the problem if they are to succeed. Women are essential to the solutions.

U.S. inaction is harming people at home and abroad

- The U.S., with only 6 percent of the global population, has been the **largest contributor to climate change**, producing the most greenhouse gases per capita in the world.
- Hotter weather is **raising U.S. death rates** among the very old and the very young and for those with heart and lung conditions. The cost: \$31 billion per year by 2100.¹
- **Warming seas** are blamed for increasing the number and severity of tropical storms and hurricanes in the North Atlantic, and for changing patterns of droughts and floods worldwide.
- **Food emergencies** in Africa, often from drought or flood, have risen three-fold every year since the mid-1980s.²

Women are essential to climate change solutions

- Women produce **60 to 80 percent of the household food supply** in most developing countries and have long experience in coping with environmental shifts.³
- Women **carry water, gather wood** for fuel, and **manage household resources** worldwide. They are also the chief caregivers for victims of weather-related and other natural disasters.
- **Acknowledging gendered divisions of labor**, especially in the agriculture and informal sectors, is essential in drafting policy, not only to support the most vulnerable populations but also to enlist their knowledge.

Worldwide, women are disproportionately affected by climate change

- **The world's poor suffer most** from erratic weather and its disruptions because they live in substandard housing in marginal land subject to drought or flood, or in crowded urban areas lacking essential services – **and women are the majority of the world's poor.**
- Discrimination means women worldwide are the **first to lose their homes and their jobs** after weather-related disasters, and the last to receive credit, technical help and education on energy and resource conservation.

The new U.S. congress can restore U.S. leadership against global warming through comprehensive legislation

- **Legislation** must also reflect the particular impact of climate change on women and their role as key agents in the U.S. and global response.
- **Gender-specific data** should guide discussions on the impact of climate change, possible policy remedies and their effects.
- Women, their advocates and gender experts must **take part in the debate**, and their recommendations must be heeded.



Women's Environment & Development Organization
355 Lexington Avenue, Third Floor, New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.
Tel: (212) 973-0325
Fax: (212) 973-0335
E-mail: wedo@wedo.org
Website: www.wedo.org

Notes

- ¹ Deschenes, Olivier and Greenstone, Michael, "Climate Change, Mortality, and Adaptation: Evidence from Annual Fluctuations in Weather and Mortality," National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. (NBER) Working Paper No. 13178, NBER, Cambridge June 2007.
- ² New Economics Foundation (NEF) and Working Group on Climate Change and Development: "Up in Smoke 2," NEF, London 2005.
- ³ FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), "FAO focus: Women and Food Security", <http://www.fao.org/focus/e/women/Sustin-e.htm>. Accessed 6/24/08.