



MEDIA ADVISORY

Women's Environment & Development Organization

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WOMEN'S ADVOCATES PRESS GOVERNMENTS TO INCLUDE GENDER EQUALITY IN FINAL AGREEMENT

Copenhagen, December 8—Women will continue to advocate in Copenhagen, Denmark this week in order to secure gender references in the final outcome document of the international climate change meeting (COP-15).

Earlier this year, intense advocacy efforts resulted in a draft of the negotiation text that included more than 40 references to women and gender. As the discussions continued and the massive negotiating text began to shrink, the number of references decreased.

But despite the decrease, women are quick to point out that this year's climate change negotiations have already made history.

“Not only have negotiators begun to tackle the gravest, most comprehensive problem of our time, but they have included gender equality in those discussions, too,” said Cate Owren, Sustainable Development Coordinator at the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

Only a year ago, there was not a single mention of women or gender issues in relation to global climate change policy. According to many development experts, the impacts of climate change won't be felt equally.

In many parts of the world, gender inequalities still hinder women's equal access to decision-making, formal financial systems, land ownership, reproductive health care, and education and information, undermining their well-being in addition to that of their families and communities.

While the focus over the next two weeks will be to secure the political momentum to move a final agreement forward, women recognize that the actual work is only just about to begin.

“The real measure of Copenhagen will be what happens after the thousands of government officials, NGOs, activists, and journalists go home, said Monique Essed-Fernandes,” WEDO Board Chair.”

“Collectively, I believe that we can avert the worst affects of climate change,” Essed-Fernandes added. “Together, we can find ways of adapting and mitigating its effects. We are just getting started in our efforts to develop equitable climate change policies that will benefit those who are most vulnerable—primarily women.”

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