Women, gender equality and climate justice

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The Committee on Womens Rights and Gender Equality adopted the own-initiative report by Linnéa ENGSTRÖM (Greens/EFA, SE) on women, gender equality and climate justice.

The report noted that women are particularly vulnerable to climate change and experience its effects disproportionately because of their social roles, such as providing water, food and combustible materials to the family and caring for others. Women are responsible for more than 70 % of water chores and management worldwide.

In regions most affected by climate change, 70 % of all women work in the agricultural sector, yet seldom participate in developing climate policies. Women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die during natural disasters.

Women are not only victims but effective agents of change in developing mitigation and adaptation strategies within their communities and in decision-making positions and must be empowered to do so. They are still under-represented in climate change decision-making bodies at the national level in EU Member States.

In this regard, the Commission was specifically called on to:

- integrate climate change into all development programmes at all levels;
- promote new financing solutions, revised upwards, and additional funding, particularly regarding adaptation activities which would directly benefit women;
- develop indicators and collect gender-disaggregated data when planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating climate change policies, programmes and projects;
- target the relevant programmes on the areas affected by disasters, to step up efforts to deliver aid to those regions, and to act to resolve the problems induced by disasters there, paying particular attention to the situation of women and children;
- facilitate and support the networking of womens organisations and civil society activities as regards the development and implementation of climate change policies;
- ensure that women are equal participants in, and beneficiaries of, all climate change consultations, programmes and funding organised with EU support at national and local levels;
- take the initiative to produce a comprehensive communication with the title Gender equality and climate change building resilience and promoting climate justice in mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Given that women not only perform the bulk of unpaid household and care work but also make the majority of everyday consumer decisions, the report stated that, if provided with accurate information and options, they can impact on sustainability through their choices. Research has shown that by choosing local food products consumers could reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by up to 5 %.

Members called for gender-sensitive action to ensure that women are seen not only as beneficiaries of climate action, but also as clean energy technology entrepreneurs. They welcomed the Commissions call for proposals on women and sustainable energy, making EUR 20 million available for the implementation of activities promoting womens entrepreneurship in the sustainable energy sector in developing countries, and encouraged the Commission to increase this amount in future.

They considered that the three financial mechanisms under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Adaptation Fund (AF) should unlock additional finance for more gender-responsive climate investment policy.

Lastly, Members requested that climate-induced displacement be taken seriously. They are open to a debate on establishing a provision on climate migration and called for the establishment of a panel of experts to explore this matter at international level. They urged the issue of climate migration to be placed on the international agenda and for strengthened international cooperation in order to ensure climate resilience.