

**CLIMATE CHANGE /CLIMATE JUSTICE AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING:  
EXPLORING BEST PRACTICES. BEING A TEXT OF THE PAPER PRESENTED BY  
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BORDERS HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE AT THE 17<sup>th</sup> PRE-SUMMIT  
CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE AFRICAN  
UNION. TUESDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2011, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA.**

I congratulate the organizers of this event for their timely interventions over the years on issues relating to gender equality and promotion of women's right - (FAS and Madam Bineta to be very specific)

I have very limited time to make my presentation here today and shall attempt to address as much as possible all the points for my presentation as requested in my letter of invitation. I shall therefore be direct and brief.

I am being asked to look at **Climate Change/Climate Justice Gender Mainstreaming- Exploring Best practices** in the following contexts:

- At the sub-regional and regional level
- With specific emphasis on Africa and women in recent conferences on climate change-COP 15, COP 16 and beyond
- Identify current adaptation and mitigation strategies taking place at the regional level
- And make some key recommendations to/for the African Union.

I shall draw inspirations for this paper from different publications by OXFAM, papers presented at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, NigerianCAN, experiences drawn from personal participations at series of UNFCCC events, Newspaper publications from major news media in Africa, etc.

I hope at the end of my presentation I shall have been able to scratch the surface of this all encompassing subject on Climate Change and gender mainstreaming?

May I quickly caution that, I shall be addressing this issue on Climate Change and Gender Mainstreaming from the health angle as a Professional Nurse with other variables? But you will of course agree with me that, if there is any profession in the world over that best represents the female Homo sapiens it is the Nursing profession. In fact, the few of us who are males are being marginalized and endangered!

1.

## INTRODUCTION:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has defined climate change as a “change of climate which is attributed to directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over a comparable time periods” These changes were originally described as “ global warming”, but the terminology has evolved as meteorologists have increasingly realized that the warming of the earth results in a variety of changes in climate.

Climate change is a direct result of human-induced contributions to *Greenhouse Gases* (GHGs). These gases prevent the heat from escaping from the earth’s atmosphere. CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, water vapour and nitrous oxides are all GHGs.

Although GHGs can be generated by natural events such as volcanoes and forest fires, the increased use of fossil fuel for energy since the dawning of the industrial age has led to significant human contributions to these gases. In the pre industrial age, from AD 1000 to 1750, carbon dioxide levels increased from 275 to 285 per million (ppm), but the next 250 years, up to 2005, they rose from 285 to 379 per million (ppm), primarily as a result of human activities. These rapid increase in CO<sub>2</sub> levels has meant that a total GHG emission to the environment increased by 70% between 1970 and 2004.

Historical climate records show that Africa has already experienced a warming of 0.7°C, with global models predicting a further increase at a rate of 0.2–0.5°C per decade (IPCC, 2001)

### **What is the impact of climate change on health?**

Although global warming may bring some localized benefits, such as fewer winter deaths in temperate climates and increased food production in certain areas, the overall health effects of a changing climate are likely to be overwhelmingly negative. Climate change affects the fundamental requirements for health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.

### **Natural disasters and variable rainfall patterns**

Globally, the number of reported weather-related natural disasters has more than tripled since the 1960s. Every year, these disasters result in over 60 000 deaths, mainly in developing countries-MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

**Measuring the health effects** Measuring the health effects from climate change can only be very approximate. Nevertheless, a WHO assessment, taking into account only a subset of the possible health impacts, concluded that the modest warming that has occurred since the 1970s was already causing over 140 000 excess deaths annually by the year 2004<sup>7</sup>.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS-(MDGs)

From the foregoing, it is very evident that achieving the targets of the MDGs will be a mirage UNLESS the catastrophic effects of climate change are adequately addressed.

- ✓ *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*-impossible due to drought and famine and flooding.
- ✓ *Achieve Universal Primary Education*-Impossible as a result of flooding, increased rainfall, or epidemics due to climatic conditions
- ✓ *Promote gender equality and empower women*- Impossible as women are the worst victims of climate change effects
- ✓ *Reduce Child mortality*- a pipe dream as children are more prone to health hazards due to climate change
- ✓ *Improve Maternal health*-Impossible with an unequipped man power, poor living condition due to climate change etc
- ✓ *Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and other health diseases*-Malaria spread more during increased rainfall, especially in Africa, mission impossible
- ✓ *Ensure environmental sustainability*-Far worse, as erosions are on the increase, flooding wiping out a whole town, deforestation etc
- ✓ *Develop a global partnership for development* -this may be very difficult as countries worst hit will be at a disadvantage to negotiate.

**Africa's Vulnerability to Climate Change:** From the foregoing you will all agree with me that Africa is more vulnerable to the effect of Climate Change with the resultant high impact on women than men, Africa lack sufficient resources both financial and human to adapt to climate change and its extreme vulnerability.

It is widely acknowledged that the negative impacts of climate change will hit the poorest in the poorest countries hardest. Since women constitute the majority of the world's poor and are often more dependent on natural resources, they are likely to be disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change. At the same time, women are often left out of conversations about adapting to climate change, even though they are in the best position to provide solutions. Examples of vulnerability include but not limited to the followings:

### **a). Agriculture**

Agriculture represents 30% of Africa's GDP and climate change threatens this economy because it is highly dependent on agriculture. For example, it is predicted that cereal crops yield will decline up to 50% by 2080. Women are the main producers of the world's staple crops up to 90% of the rural poor's food intake and producing 60-80% of food in Africa. Maize, Sorghum, millet and groundnut yields have a strong association with the year to year variability of ENSO (El Nino/Southern Oscillation) in Africa.

For southern Africa, productivity is expected to drop by 20-50% in extreme El Nino years. If global climate change moves more towards El Nino-like conditions, crop production will decline.

#### **b). Forestry**

Since forest products account for as much as 6% of the economic product of several African countries, climate change is a critical threat. Women's livelihoods and social roles rely directly on forest resources to meet the nutritional, health and cultural needs of families and communities; forest resources are crucial to woman's income generating capacities, while men are involved in timber extraction and the use of non timber forest products for commercial purposes. Due to this division in labour, women living or near the forest are differently and disproportionately harmed by deforestation and have stronger interest in preservation.

Forests are already stressed due to harvesting of timber, fuel wood and clearing land for settlements and agriculture.

#### **c). Water scarcity**

River flow rates are predicted to decrease. The Nile region for example, most scenarios estimate a decrease in river flow of up to 75 per cent by 2100. Women have limited access to tillable land therefore such impacts of global warming reduce the productive land available thus reducing crop yields.

The time consuming task of gathering and transporting water is also usually the responsibility of the women, as water becomes scarce the work overload increases drastically as they have to walk longer distances in search of water. It has been estimated that women in developing countries spend an average of 134 minutes a day collecting water for their households (Rosen and Vincent, 1999). This increases the rate of school dropouts for young women as they take on extra workloads, reducing the opportunities for women to participate in nontraditional activities that would empower them. The cost of water even for urban women will increase, denying accessibility.

According to a study, fetching water for domestic consumption in a Zimbabwean family showed that women contributed 91% to this task with men spending 1 hour of the total household time on this chore and women 9.3 hours. ( *Mehretu & Mutambira (1992) in Gender & Energy tool kit, UNDP/ENERGIA (2004)*

#### **d). Energy & Climate change**

In Africa, Women and girls spend long hours everyday collecting wood, agricultural residues and dug for use as fuel-time that could be used for more productive activities. Their opportunities for education and income generation are limited by lack of modern energy services, and as a result their families and communities are likely to remain trapped in poverty. (UNDP, 2001). There are, however, variations among countries as time spent gathering biomass depends on geographical location, time of year, climate events and loss of control over local resources.

#### **e). Health**

Malaria is already reported to have increased in Rwanda and Tanzanian highlands as a result of temperature rise. South Africa: malaria suitable area may double with 7.8 million people at risk by 2100.

Rift valley fever which is associated with heavy rainfall events is also expected to rise with climate change (an example cited is the recent havoc on livestock in Northern Kenya).

Because of their roles in relation with household water supply and domestic chores, women are particularly at risk. Children and pregnant women are particularly susceptible to water borne diseases such as diarrhea and cholera (same with malaria-worse in HIV cases). Poor access to health care aggravates the situation.

#### **f). Refugees, Migration and conflict**

It is estimated that by 2050 there will be 250 million people who will be forced to flee their homes due to drought, desertification and extreme weather events.

In the past drought has caused conflicts among pastoralists in Uganda and Kenya and even forced Ethiopian troops to stop Somalis crossing the border in search of pasture and water.

In Africa, migration of the rural poor to rural or urban areas for work is a clear example of gender difference in social and cultural roles. Men able bodied will move to other areas for work whilst women are left managing food production and household work. However there has been an increase in the number of women headed households with a lot of work to do and few resources increasing their vulnerability and marginalizing the woman and aggravating poverty.

**g). Ignorance of the Climate Change process**

Sadly the climate policy and the debate are of little relevance to the grassroots population. The concept of global warming is still novel and the preserve of civil society groups and discussed in conference rooms world wide- excluding the participation of masses. Dealing with the impacts of climate change is indeed dependent on community management. Why then don't we widen the debate? Who bears the brunt of the environmental degradation? It is time that we increased the full participation of these groups.

An overall analysis of the climate change debate reveals that women are largely excluded and are under represented. Unfortunately female participation in the decision making process; in the instruments and measures of mitigation and adaptation is still very low. It is therefore the men's perceptions that are taken into account in the planning processes. As a male perspective dominates in climate protection and climate adaptation planning processes, it fails to take into account the practical and strategic needs of women.

**Why Gender and Climate?**

Biological differences between men and women are obvious and acknowledged by all, however the difference in roles within communities, access to information, economic and social factors have to be analyzed for successful implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures. There is a need to differentiate between men and women as far as the climate change process is concerned because of the different roles the two sexes play in society today hence the different ways in which they will be affected by the climate change policies designed.

Behavioral patterns of women and men, young and old, rich and poor differ greatly. The activities carried out by women and men differ significantly, and they both impact climate change differently. Men and women perceive climate change differently and they react differently to it. It is therefore important to note however that even then climate change will affect both groups differently.

The social roles and responsibilities of women and men are different as well leading to the different degrees at which they depend on the natural resources within their communities which will be destroyed by the impacts of climate change.

#### **Efforts to address Vulnerability**

Several concrete efforts to address these vulnerabilities in Africa have been cited. A growing interest in gender aspects of climate change has become evident in the climate policy processes, with more awareness raising, more learning and engaging in discussion.

Platforms for voices and concerns of women in the climate change debate have been established. Several caucuses and fora are in place, allowing for the brainstorming and information sharing on best practices in mitigation and adaptation strategies amongst women and gender activists. The gender and climate change network, a global network has served at the several COPS as an opportunity to interact and the pave way on the gender dimension in climate protection. Other partners such as FAO ,WEDO, the Gender and climate change network Africa and more serve as support for further advocacy and awareness raising for gender justice in the future climate regime.

In Africa, Women are playing important roles in tropical forest preservation as an adaptation strategy. For example, in Zimbabwe, women's groups (over half of 800,000 families living in communal areas are headed by women) manage forest resource and development projects through woodlot ownership, tree planting and nursery development. To address the scarcity of fuel wood and poverty of rural women, Mama Watoto's group was formed in Kenya. This scarcity had forced women to collect wood from food reserves thereby exposing them to legal penalties. In response the women formed "women made forests" in sections in their farms. The afforestation programme improved soil fertility, reduced illegal harvesting and increased the vegetation cover in the kambiri region that could sequester carbon (FAO, 1994).

## **STRATEGIES FOR MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION**

The single most important way to advance issues related to climate change, and` related issues of environmental and human health and peace is, to *improve the education of females in the developing world*, according to Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson and other leading scientists. For this to be effective, it must occur from the local to regional level, while being supported at the highest level in international negotiations within the UNFCCC climate regime. Nowhere is that more true than for us in Africa. Last week, on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011, the UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro remarked to the organizational session of the Economic and Social Council, in New York, thus:

*This year, the Economic and Social Council will focus part of its energies on education. Since the World Education Forum in Dakar one decade ago, more children are getting a formal basic education than ever before. We have seen greater progress on the education in the Millennium Development Goals than on any other.*

*But greater progress is not enough progress. There are still some 72 million children missing out on primary school. One in six adults cannot read, two thirds of them women. These are not just our mothers and sisters and friends; these are the drivers of our economy our best assets in the fight for development. That is why the empowerment of women is another area where the Secretary-General sees great strategic opportunities, especially as UN Women starts to function.*

- Copenhagen and Cancun - what I heard and experienced related to gender and climate change was much divisiveness than unity. Perhaps this is the best time to call for unity through empowering women to be leaders rather than victims through local capacity building efforts. These begin with strong partnerships and through trust building from the heart as well as among those with the skills that could benefit local women and by extension, their communities. This is where Nurses come in.
- COP 16 SIDE EVENT BY NURSES ACROSS THE BORDERS AND SEATRUST INSTITUTE USA: THEME: *HUMAN HEALTH: The Issue offor Climate Change Adaptation Strategies*, as part of catalyzing a COP 16 Health Coalition.

Two specific objectives of the AU are addressed in the type of project used as an example in this talk.

- i. To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;
- ii. To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health in the continent.

The goal of this project is to build capacity building through sharing knowledge and professional partnerships among African nurses and other health practitioners as local leaders and educators, community representatives in climate change and health issues and participants with colleagues across national boundaries in climate change decisions and substantive data collection on climate change and health related diseases across Africa.

- This we intend to achieve by the training of Nurses to be provided by SeaTrust Institute on Malaria Prevention Intervention.
  - Using a Life Cycle thinking approach, creating access to the areas of climate, medical and social science as these relate to malaria interventions through direct training and engagement with the science and processes of applying the knowledge in practice; providing tool for nurse to use in the education of the population

that the nurses serve; and through learning to engage in the policy process in a meaningful way on health and climate change issues. These health professionals will at the same time be collecting data on the climate related diseases and sharing this information with others facing similar issues to help craft strategic and practical shared beneficial outcomes throughout Africa

- Assisting nurses in educating others, focusing on women
  - Ensuring follow up activities and support for those nurses to learn to spread the knowledge among other health professionals as well as patients
  - Honoring their professional expertise and position of trust as both disseminators of adaptation knowledge and as appropriate and well-placed collectors of local surveillance data on climate-related diseases.

The second objective that was achieved in Cancun by the Partnership between Nurses Across the Borders and SeaTrust Institute was the formal Launch of a COALITION ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE: The idea was nurtured in COP 15 by 27 individuals cutting across the global North and South, and berthed at COP 16! Now in collaboration with the World Health Organization, which acts to liaise with NGOs, global agencies and nations, the Health Coalition is building momentum through engaging traditional health partners with other climate change actors in a different approach to reaching agreement. An immediate goal of the Health Coalition is to have the role of health explicitly recognized and stated in the UNFCCC texts at the Cancun meetings. The work will continue after the conclusion of COP 16. In addition to policy engagement, the Health Coalition engages in tangible activities that build awareness and engagement with health and climate science

SeaTrust and Nurses Across the Borders are the joint focal points for this Health coalition.

Using the Coalition as a model of partnerships with committed NGOs to be expanded throughout Africa.

A more unified Africa is one of the stated AU goals . Addressing strong partnerships among our countries not only speaks to this goal but to encouraging trust among global partners that time and resources spent building the capacity among our female population in particular is time and money well spent.

**The Role For/Of CoNGOs:** This is a 'network of networks of NGOs globally. Today, Four African NGOs seats on the Board of CoNGOs, and by tomorrow, the Regional Committee for Africa will be publicly introduced to all NGOs present at this forum after

its approval by the previous Board of CONGO after a long drawn struggle by FAS leadership with the active support of Nurses Across the Borders. We intend to maximize this network within the African and global regions to promote this partnership in line with the AU goal above.

#### OTHERS-

- Plant flowers or have a small garden within your compound
- Instead of driving your cars to work use the public transport system to reduce CO2 emissions
- Use bicycles -very common in Denmark and China and good for your health also.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Mitigation activities, including Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), capacity building, technology transfer, vulnerability studies and projects for adaptation should target the poor - majority of who are women. In most countries, households with a lower average income and level of education are likely to generate lower emissions, but also have a lower mitigation and adaptive capacity. If women can access CDM funds for climate action, then they could gain some benefits such as obtaining cleaner technologies for household energy usage.
2. Effective climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies will require development of different technologies that can be adopted by various categories of stakeholders. These technologies must be acceptable, affordable, available and assessable. Technological developments related to climate change should take into account men's and women's specific priorities and needs and make full use of their knowledge and expertise. Of concern is the question: "Are the technologies that are likely to be promoted CDM, going to meet the particular needs of women?" From the current policy very limited opportunities for the improvement of cooking technology or fuel supplies are likely to benefit poor rural women
1. All UN processes are mandated to embody the principles of gender equality .To build a future climate regime that is effective ,sustainable and just gender sensitive mitigation and adaptation policies and measures should be designed and necessary resources provided for this.

2. To ensure gender and climate justice, there is a need for governments, international agencies and all stakeholders need to:

Recognize the vital urgency of gender equality in the growing crises of climate change issues and demonstrate leadership through top -level support for gender mainstreaming.

3. Ensure that women participate in all decisions related to climate change at all levels, in order to build a truly global and effective alliance for climate protection and gender justice.

4. Ensure gender mainstreaming -from UNFCCC to IPCC to national and local institutions dealing with climate change -including installing a “gender watch system within the UNFCCC and related processes.

5. Collect and publish gender disaggregated data taken at every level and where possible.

6. Undertake gender analysis of all climate change policies, programs, projects and budgets-from research programs to mitigation measures and adaptation plans.

7. Agree measurable gender related targets and create practical tools that help integrate gender equality in climate protection.

8. Develop gender sensitive indicators to use in national governments; local and international communications.

9. Design capacity building, education, and training in gender sensitive way and enhance women’s access to them.

10. Invest in gender trainings to support processes of change towards gender equality, sensitizing both men and women on the importance of gender analysis in the work that they are doing.

11. Appropriately and sustain ably support all aspects of gender mainstreaming

12. There is an urgent need for our older women to begin to mentor and encourage their younger generation in their advocacy work. Take a look at the room, you can count the young ones at your finger tips. FAS is doing very well in this regard.

13. My sisters, you should avoid the dangers of making GENDER a purely FEMINIST matter. Gender refers to both males and females-so you should take absolute ownership of that terminology gender. It is a known fact that men are more powerful by virtue of their position of authority, but then, these men have wives, sisters, daughters’ even mistresses amongst you. So why not use what you have to get what you want? Confrontation will be counter productive.

CONCLUSION: I conclude by telling you a short story of THE MARRIED WOMAN AND THE MAD MAN.

Thank you for your attention.

Great Women! Beautiful Women! Excellent Women!

Pastor Peters OMORAGBON

