



Femmes Africa Solidarité

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Information Note

From: Communications Office, FAS Dakar

PRETORIA, 19-20 November 2011: Consultative Continental Dialogue on the Impact of Climate Change on Women – Preparing for Durban and Beyond

International advocates for climate justice, climate change and technical experts, government ministers and representatives from international organizations and civil society from across Africa have convened in Pretoria November 19 & 20, 2011 to address the challenges of women and climate change. The historic context of South Africa hosting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP17) is an opportunity for African women to gather, exchange views and inform the world of the consequences of climate change on their sisters throughout Africa.

The impact of climate change on agriculture is a significant issue for African women, as women play a major role in food production and security. Climate change can also threaten the progress made so far on gender equality and women's empowerment, and further compound current challenges such as water scarcity, food security, and many health issues. African women, and indeed women all over the world suffer from the effects of climate change, but they can, and must, be a part of the solution.

The Meeting's focus is on garnering a holistic, coordinated approach to Climate Change, recognising that to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), it is imperative to appropriately address the impact of climate change and develop suitable measures to combat it.

The events included remarks from Honourable Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane & Honourable Minister Edna Molewa of South Africa, Ms Baleka Mbete of the Progressive Women's Movement, and many notable experts on women and youth, as well as environmental and climate change issues.

The event continued with statements from leaders such as Ms. Assetou Koite, President of the Pan African Women's Organisation; Dr Agostinho Zacarius, United Nations Resident Coordinator; Ms. Litha Muyimbi-Ogana, African Union Director of Women, Gender, and Development; and Janet Kabeberi-Macharia, Senior Gender Adviser for the United Nations Environment Programme.

Ms. Bineta Diop, **Executive Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité and Coordinator of the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC)**, a network of 55 organizations working together on gender advocacy, offered perspectives on the constraints and opportunities regarding the impact of climate change on women in Africa. The GIMAC was further represented by over thirty participants from women's and youth organizations across Africa.

Also featured was an inspiring documentary tribute to the recently departed Ms. Waangari Maathai, Founder of the Green Belt Movement, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and longtime advocate for women's rights and climate justice throughout Africa and the world. A moment of silence was observed in her memory, and a tree planting ceremony took place after the closure of the Meeting.

Several commissions took place to explore specific issues, including *Continental Perspectives on Climate Change: Challenges, Approaches and Strategies*, *SADC Regional Strategy on Climate Change, Preparedness, Disaster Risk: Reduction and Building Community Resilience*, and *Climate Change Funding: Challenges, Approaches and Strategies*. At the conclusion of the conference, a Declaration was issued that will be presented at the upcoming COP17 Summit.

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