

**Human Rights Council 11th Session
2nd - 18th May 2009, Geneva**

Statement by Finland

**Panel on human rights and climate change
15th May 2009**

Mr. President,

Finland considers this discussion very timely. I focus on two aspects: participation of women and of indigenous peoples.

Women are not only particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Women are also a critical but grossly underutilised resource in combating climate change. Finland facilitates addressing the challenges of climate change by engaging and empowering women at all levels. The role of women should be incorporated in the legal arrangement that will supplement or replace the Kyoto protocol. It should also include a gender based strategy and work programme.

The President of Finland and the President of Liberia convened this March in Monrovia the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security. This forum made a powerful call for action on climate change and participation of women (see annex to this statement). Recommendations included, to mention a few:

- Gender specific capacity building for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
- Support to women's organisations and networks.
- Relevant consumer information and price policies for environmentally sound consuming.
- Creating job opportunities for women for example in relation to renewable household energy.

The voices of these women should be heard also in this discussion.

The second point I want to raise is the need, also included in the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, to establish ways and means of ensuring participation of **indigenous peoples** on issues affecting them. In their recent meeting the Arctic Council Ministers acknowledged that indigenous peoples in the Arctic are taking a leading role to use best available traditional and scientific knowledge to help understand and adapt to challenges related to climate change. The Ministers also welcomed initiatives to build the capacity of indigenous peoples in this regard. We should benefit from such initiatives globally.

Thank you Mr. President.

**CALL FOR ACTION ON GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE INTERNATIONAL BY THE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY
MONROVIA, LIBERIA 7- 8 March, 2009**

We participants in the Gender and Climate Change sessions representing women leaders of governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, academia, media and other stakeholders thank Their Excellencies, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of the Republic of Liberia and President Tarja Halonen of the Republic of Finland for convening the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership, Development, International Peace and Security 7-8 March in Monrovia, Liberia. The colloquium provided a forum to reflect on the impact of climate change in developing countries on the daily lives of women, in particular, and also women's possibilities to participate in mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In the light of our deliberations we:

Recognise that climate change will undermine most seriously efforts to poverty eradication and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, so that it raises serious questions of climate justice and equity. Recognise that a gender sensitive strategy is a precondition to the rising challenges of sustainable development.

Note with concern the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change presented in its 4th Assessment Report, that climate change may affect most strongly the poorest regions and people, especially women, young people and children through impacts on agriculture, food security and availability of water, which are traditionally women's tasks in many developing countries.

Recognise that women and young people have the skills and capacities to adapt to climate change, and they can also be powerful actors e.g. by planting trees, maintaining forests and developing ecological food production and sustainable household energy which are also creating new sustainable jobs. Likewise they can play central role in changing the consumption and production patterns to sustainable ones. Thus awareness raising, information and using traditional knowledge as well strengthening women's networks is important.

Acknowledge the historic momentum of the ongoing negotiations on a new global and comprehensive climate agreement and the commitment of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to agree on the new commitments and action in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Call upon all Parties and relevant intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations and other stakeholders to cooperate and to do their utmost to achieve the new agreement on climate change, and in this process pay particular attention to encouraging women to participate in the negotiations and urge parties to incorporate gender considerations into the new agreement in order to lay foundation for gender-sensitive efforts to implement the agreement in the most cost effective way.

Further call upon governments and other stakeholders to create an enabling environment for participation of women at the local, national regional and international level in decision making on climate change and in activities to implement these decisions.

Request governments, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN system in the context of delivering as one, other relevant international organisations and financing institutions in the context of current and coming programmes and priorities to support the implementation of the climate commitments and actions by planning for information sharing, training and other forms of capacity building to encourage women's participation in the mitigation and adaptation activities including risk prevention and management as well as making the necessary resources and technology available both for men and women. Special consideration need to be given to developing gender sensitive financing.

Recommendations for further action

In the discussions under the theme climate change and gender four main issues were considered:

- (i) basic information in the gender related impacts of the climate change
- (ii) what can women do to address climate change
- (iii) financing climate activities by women
- (iv) support and cooperation by the UN agencies for gender specific climate issues.

The main recommendations for more efficient participation by women in combating climate change included the following:

Information, awareness rising, and knowledge

- Sufficient, understandable information on the impacts of climate change on the daily lives of women and possibilities of women to act on climate change should be provided by governments, NGOs and local communities.
- Awareness raising on the climate change at the local and national level as the prerequisite for women and men to participate at all levels in mitigation and adaptation to the climate change should be supported.
- Traditional knowledge of women that depend on natural resources for their livelihood, adaptation (drought tolerant crops, seeds, plants, water storage etc) and mitigation measures and should be better utilised.

- Information, knowledge and weather forecasts and early warning systems should be made available at the local, national and regional levels for both women and men to develop the relevant adaptation activities including risk management and prevention in real time.

Capacity building and women's networks

- Gender specific capacity building for mitigation and adaptation should be developed. Capacity building actions should include, among others, the above mentioned awareness raising, information, knowledge, education, training and forecasting systems.
- Existing women's networks and organisations such as the Network of the Women Ministers and Leaders on Environment and Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance should be strengthened. Women organisations at all levels from the local level to the international level should be supported.

Environmentally sound consumers

- The role of women as environmentally sound consumers should be supported by relevant consumer information, labelling of products and price policies.

Mitigation and adaptation related job opportunities for women

- Sustainable mitigation and adaptation action, such as renewable household energy systems (solar, biogas, biomass, energy saving devices (solar cookers, stoves), maintaining tree nurseries and planting trees, ecological regenerative agriculture should be developed and supported and in so doing create job opportunities that women would also get decent jobs and improve the income of their families.

Mitigation of impacts of major climate related social and natural developments and catastrophes

- Gender specific programmes of urbanisation (housing, waste management, water supply, food security) should be developed.
- Gender specific programmes should be developed to address the social, economic and environmental problems of migration, conflicts and natural catastrophes caused by climate change.

Funding of mitigation, adaptation and capacity building

- Gender considerations should be included in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all funding of climate activities by financial institutions, including the regional funds and those managed by the GEF, in particular and the Adaptation Fund. The REDD and Carbon trading should be developed so that also women would have access to these cooperative arrangements.

Cooperation within the UN system for support of participation of the women in influencing climate change

- The Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other Rio Conventions as well as the UN System should strengthen their synergies and cooperation to deliver as one and support the participation of women in the adaptation and mitigation to the climate change through capacity building, training, information sharing and technology.

Participation of youth in climate activities

- Role of women in informing and rising the awareness of youth should be supported while providing training, education and increasing the participation of youth and funding for their relevant climate activities. In this regard, governments should give particular attention to youth priorities, e.g. on cleaner energy sources.