

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznan, 1-12 December 2008

A Report by the GDN Representatives

The 14th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), along with the 4th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, took place from 1 – 12 December 2008 in Poznań, Poland. The Conference was organized by the Secretariat of the UNFCCC and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Poland. The two-week long conference was attended by 12,000 participants, which included than 190 government delegations, representatives from environmental, business and research non-governmental organizations and media.

Box No. 1: UNFCCC and COP (Source: UNFCCC's Website)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is one of the most important environmental agreements to address global climate warming. This international environmental treaty was produced at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The treaty is aimed at stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

The supreme authority of the Convention is the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP), the sessions of which are held regularly (once a year) and aim at establishing the rules of implementation of UNFCCC. The government delegations of the countries which have ratified the Convention (the Parties to the Convention) and observers take part in the negotiations and sessions of the Conference. In addition to the plenary sessions and the meetings of working groups, the agenda of the Conference includes a number of side events (presentations, seminars, happenings and exhibitions) as well as those preceding the COP (events, debates etc.), with the main purpose of drawing attention to the problems related to global climate change. Large activity in this scope is demonstrated by non-governmental organizations which are numerously represented at the Conference and the host.

The COPs-14 was held in Poznan, Poland in December 2008. COP-14 was described by the CC experts as the "midway point" and 'the next step toward a comprehensive agreement' which may result during COP-15 in Denmark in 2009.

GenderCC– women for climate justice is the global network of women and gender activists and experts from all world regions working for gender and climate justice. The network was started at COP9 in Milan (2003), when some organizations (LIFE, ENERGIA, WECF) invited to an informal meeting to discuss whether the issue 'gender' should be given more attention at climate change negotiations. Since COP-9, GenderCC is trying to participate in events organized around CC to mainstream gender into different policies, frameworks and structures. To mainstream gender into CC, GenderCC does try to work with groups like Gender and Disaster Network (GDN), Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) etc.

Ms. Rosemary Enie from Cameroon and Ms. Maira Zahur from Pakistan on the invitation of GenderCC represented GDN in COP-14 in Poznan. Following were the activities of GDN members:

Daily Caucus: During COP-14, people interested in the gender dimensions of climate change used to meet on daily bases to discuss key issues regarding negotiations, lobbying points, strategies and networking with the relevant stakeholders. This meeting was given a name of 'Women Caucus'. Representatives from GDN participated in almost all the caucus meetings and also had the opportunity to chair on one occasion.

GenderCC's booth in the exhibition area: To share information and to network with stakeholders around gender justice and climate policy, GenderCC was allocated a booth in the exhibition area during COP-14. This booth was the centre of group activity during the event e.g from this point, publications were presented, interviews to the media were given, and many discussions with participants took place.



The booth also gave the opportunity to the GDN representatives to share their point of view in relation to CC, disasters and adaptation.

Gender Justice in Times of a Changing Climate International Conference: A day-long side event entitled 'Gender Justice in Times of a Changing Climate - International Conference' was held on December 5th 2008. About 100 participants from 41 countries participated in this event. Discussions in the conference revolved around a) what are the special needs of each region in terms of CC b) what are the challenges to integrate gender into CC policy, c) which strategies are promising and d) what can be the different recommendations for the international level? Representatives from GDN prepared briefing papers from their respective countries for this event. The briefing papers were used as source of discussions during the event.



Press Briefing – It’s a Gender Celebration: To present the view of GenderCC in front of media a press briefing was held on December 9th 2008. This press briefing was preceded by walk entitled as “Gender Celebration’. This little walk around the venue did generate some support for the briefing.

Side Event: Gender and climate change experts from Africa, Asia Latin America and Pacific presented experiences and achievements, gaps and strategies for making the future climate regime fair to vulnerable group on December 11, 2008. A representative from GDN was also part of the panel.



Expectation of GenderCC from COP-15 (Copenhagen)

Following were the expectations of GenderCC from the UNFCCC, parties and other stakeholders for the COP-15.

1. reasserts, that real solutions to the climate crisis can only be achieved when there is gender justice.
2. demands the UNFCCC process to commit to the integration of the gender dimension into all policies, mechanisms, programmes and institutional frameworks.
3. urges UNFCCC Parties to adopt a resolution on gender justice which fulfills the binding obligations on gender and human rights that the UN have already endorsed.
4. calls for a one-day plenary session specifically dedicated to gender in order to discuss the gender dimension in the ongoing negotiations before Copenhagen.
5. calls upon the UNFCCC to acknowledge the many solutions women already have and the actions they take on the ground to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
6. suggests a high level expert advisory group on gender whose findings and recommendations should be considered official inputs in the process.

Action: Emissions Down - Human Rights Up

On December 12, 2008, the group of GenderCC organized a sit-in in front of the main entrance of conference hall. The slogan emissions – down, down ---- human rights up, up did spark an interest in the participants.

we look after your children
and your aged
and your sick
we care for the forests
and the wetlands
and harvest even the deserts for life
we are half the population
we are women
and can you believe?
we don't believe in carbon markets
we don't believe in redd
we don't believe in cdm
to save our children
or our climate
we will not trade in life
women for life
women for climate justice
women for human rights

can you believe?
we produce half your food
we provide half your water

(was distributed at the event)



The Outcome from the COP-14

Considering that the COP-14 provided a platform for GenderCC to present their point of view, a space to network and lobby with relevant stakeholders and a avenue to put forward their demands/suggestions, the event was categorized as a success by the group.

Generally, at Poznań, the finishing touches were put to the Kyoto Protocol's Adaptation Fund, with Parties agreeing that the Fund would be a legal entity granting direct access to developing countries. Progress was also made on a number of important ongoing issues that are particularly important for developing countries, including: adaptation; finance; technology; reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD); and disaster management. Parties agreed that the first draft of a concrete negotiating text would be available at a UNFCCC gathering in Bonn in June of 2009.