

## **Climate Change Is a Women's Issue**

**Video Statement by Thanh Xuan Nguyen**

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As government leaders converge in New York for the Summit on Climate Change, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) calls upon world leaders to work together and take urgent action to ensure that a new climate agreement comes out of Copenhagen in December.

An agreement in Copenhagen is possible. But its success it depends on it being equitable and just.

At WEDO, we have been working for twenty years toward the goal of a healthy, peaceful and sustainable planet. Climate change is happening now and is setting back global development efforts by decades. The impacts of climate change magnify existing discrimination and inequalities. And that means that women- as the majority of the poorest worldwide- are highly vulnerable.

Women are not simply victims – they are innovators, organizers, educators, caretakers, leaders, agents for change and more! Throughout the world women are responsible for community resource management, women make up the majority of agricultural laborers, women are the primary family caretakers, and women are the first to rebuild households and communities following disasters and conflicts.

That is why participation of women is critical to the global deal. Gender equality is widely recognized as necessary for poverty eradication and sustainable development. The equal participation of women and men must be incorporated into all aspects of the climate negotiations to ensure effective outcomes.

Industrialized countries must take the lead and fulfill their responsibility to address climate change. It is imperative that governments develop strategies to enhance women's and men's access to critical resources and decision-making, in order to reduce poverty, protect environmental resources, and ensure that all communities – and especially poor communities - can better cope with climate change.

As governments convene in Copenhagen this December, they must ensure that women have a voice in how countries adapt to climate change. A climate change agreement will only be effective if it reflects the impacts of climate change on women, as well as women's roles in curbing climate change.

Now more than ever, in the interests of the planet and all humanity, we appeal to the UN, governments, and civil society to acknowledge that climate change is a matter of human rights and women's rights. It is time to take action and make bold commitments.

Thanh Xuan Nguyen, WEDO Executive Director