

## **Women as a Group Major Statement on Climate Change** **Wednesday, May 2**

In November 2006, the Green Belt Movement, founded by Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai, and the World Bank's Community Development Carbon Fund Project signed an Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement (ERPA) to reforest two mountain areas in Kenya. Women's groups will plant thousands of indigenous trees on 2,000 hectares of the Aberdares and Mt. Kenya forest ranges. By 2017, the trees they plant will have captured 375,000 tons of carbon dioxide and restore soil lost to erosion and support regular rainfall – essential to Kenya's farmers and hydro-power plants, the country's main source of electricity. Planting the trees also provides poor, rural women with a small income and with it some economic independence and a greater measure of control over their lives.

We share this case to illustrate two points:

The first point is that the inclusion in the Chair's draft text of women's involvement in decision-making relating to adaptation, as well as disaster risk reduction and adaptation technologies, accurately reflects the importance of women's contributions. We thank you for acknowledging the value of women's involvement in climate change initiatives.

The second reason for sharing this case is to demonstrate that women's participation is only the first step. Policies and programs related to climate change, such as the partnership between the World Bank and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, often present an opportunity to address deeper inequalities. Existing conditions and existing discrimination will always determine who is most impacted by natural disasters and other drastic environmental changes. For this reason, climate change often magnifies gender inequality. For example, when natural disasters cause more difficulty in securing water and fuel wood, women carry a heavier burden, their time is taken away from income-generating activities, and traditional roles are reinforced. Given this reality, we request that the Chair's text call on governments to incorporate measures to achieve gender equality in climate change policies and programs. This would include:

- Analyzing and addressing gender-specific resource use, management and control patterns;
- Recognizing that women are already more vulnerable to poverty than men and therefore have specific needs in climate change policies and programs; and
- Identifying women's particular capacities in managing households and natural resources that lend themselves to mitigation and adaptation.

While the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol are the primary fora for negotiating emissions related to climate change, they have so far failed to integrate social and gender-related concerns about climate change impacts. The CSD, therefore, can play an important role in highlighting women's particular vulnerabilities and potential contributions in this area. Gender equality should be included in the CSD-15 outcome on climate change because it is one of the primary challenges in society and because it is an official cross-cutting issue of the CSD.

Given the health and environmental risks associated with nuclear power plants, Women do not view nuclear energy as a sustainable alternative for greenhouse gas emission reduction programmes. In addition, we recommend strong action to prevent destruction of land and communities as a result of coal and uranium mining operations, large-scale hydropower projects and commercial ethanol production.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that the focus on fossil fuels in the Chair's text is a cause for grave concern. The Chair's text should instead reflect a renewed momentum toward the development of renewable and safe energy technologies that have proven to reduce emissions and contribute to curbing climate change. Developed countries that are the major sources of

greenhouse emissions should take the lead on reducing emissions, and non-binding agreements should be discouraged.